

PSYCHOLOGY AS SCIENCE OF SELVES.

TO the present confusion of even the primary conceptions of psychology much obscure teaching and many futile controversies are due. This essay attempts to mediate between opposing theories, by insisting on the equal validity of two underlying forms of psychology, and by tracing sharply the larger outlines of one of these divisions.¹ The first of them may perhaps be named 'Atomistic Psychology.'² It treats of contents-of-consciousness as such, that is, of psychic phenomena, considered without reference to any self, and its primary procedure is the analysis of these psychic facts into irreducible elements and the classification of complex phenomena according to the preponderance of given elements. For the second of these ultimate forms of psychology I have vainly sought a satisfactory name. It is distinct from the science of the bare psychic contents, and has been variously regarded as a study of conscious functions, of mental operations and of activities of the self. Most simply, and with adequate recognition of the profoundly social nature of the self, this form of psychology may be treated as the science of conscious selves. It distinguishes these, first, as they refer to things and feelings³ or to other selves, and, second, as they refer to different kinds of self, myself or my fellow, in different relations. And though analysis into elements is possible in both sorts of study, it is significant that the methods of atomistic psychology are of secondary importance in the science of selves.

The validity of a psychology of the sort first outlined, a structural science of contents-of-consciousness, is very generally admit-

¹ Cf. M. W. Calkins, *Elements of Conscious Complexes*, *PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW*, VII, 4, p. 377.

² The term 'atomistic' is used in a figurative sense and implies neither philosophic materialism nor psychological associationism (on the ordinary view of it). This conception of 'atomistic' psychology is indeed in its underlying principles that of Titchener's 'Structural Psychology' (*PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW*, VII, 5) and Bradley's *Phenomenalism in Psychology* (*MIND*, Jan., 1900).

³ This term is occasionally used throughout this paper as the indispensable though equivocal synonym for the awkward expression 'content-of-consciousness,' or for the German 'Vorstellung.'

ted, even by those who question either its adequacy or its utility, and who limit severely the scope of its application. They none the less grant the bare possibility that conscious experiences may be studied, without an explicit reference to selves, as mere analyzable phenomena. The upholders of this structural method, on the other hand, deny the right of the science of selves to the very name psychology. Some of them go so far as to challenge its claim to be enrolled among the sciences. Such a study of the relations of selves, they say, may be sociological and ethical, or may be philosophical, but has no part nor lot with psychological science.

With this issue the present paper is mainly concerned. It aims to show the possibility of such a psychology of selves by considering, in the first place, the essential distinction between philosophy and science. This difference may be stated in somewhat the following fashion: Science is an investigation of facts; philosophy is an attempt to study the self-dependent whole-of-reality. These bare statements will gain in significance by a closer scrutiny of the meaning of 'fact.' The word is used as synonym for the more technical term 'phenomenon,' and the 'fact' or 'phenomenon' is considered as possessing the following characteristics: (1) it is one-of-many; (2) always a dependent bit of reality, never the self-dependent or the whole; (3) it is taken for granted or assumed, without question of the nature of its reality or of its own relation to the whole-of-reality. It follows from this last criterion that sciences are more or less fundamental in the degree in which they take their facts for granted, so that chemistry, for instance, is a more fundamental science than physiology, because it has analyzed protoplasm into elements; and yet the most fundamental of sciences does not become philosophy until it ceases to deal with the related manifold of fact, and attains the conception of a self-dependent reality.

Qualities, things, moments, and events are readily admitted to be 'facts,' and careful reflection will show that selves also may be treated as facts for science. This implies that they are taken for granted, without inquiry about their bearing on 'reality,' and also that they are critically observed and classified, on the basis

of their relation with each other and with facts of every other order. It is clear, however, that this scientific study does not stand in the way of a philosophy of selves. One might as well suggest that the physical sciences prevent the cosmological discussion of nature! Indeed, the scientific study of selves is consistent with any form of philosophy. Selves may be regarded from the dualistic point of view as a form of reality coördinate with matter; or, from the standpoint of pluralistic idealism, the inter-related system of selves may be treated as the final reality; or, finally, in terms of absolute idealism, reality may be conceived of as an absolute self, and the individual selves may be thought as related, by virtue of their manifestation of this Absolute. Yet no one of these metaphysical systems precludes the scientific treatment of selves, that is, the study of selves without reference to any form of ultimate reality. In truth, if one admit, as one must, that 'selves' are as obvious a category as 'things' in every-day experience, then a science of selves must be possible, for science is distinguished from the unreflective consciousness only by its critical and systematic method, so that every object of ordinary observation is *ipso facto* an object for science.

Chronologically preceding the distinction of selves from all other facts, inner or outer, there is undoubtedly an early undifferentiated stage of experience, in which neither self nor feeling nor thing is recognized as such. Gradually, by methods at which we can only roughly guess, through interest in the peculiarly fascinating experiences which we later associate with people, and through imitation, at first unconscious and then reflected upon, there occurs an intermediate stage in the development of consciousness, in which this inchoate, undistinguished experience is replaced by a consciousness of oneself in close connection with other selves. With the hypothetical details of this development we are not here concerned; they have been marked out with rich suggestiveness by Professor Baldwin¹ and by Professor Royce.² It is significant, however, that this recognition of oneself as related to other selves probably precedes and certainly

¹*Social and Ethical Interpretations*, ch. i. *Mental Development in Child and Race*, pp. 334 ff.

²*Studies of Good and Evil*.

does not follow, the distinction between selves and all other facts, psychic or physical. In other words, the distinctions of conscious content, and of physical things from oneself, are less simple and less primitive than the contrast between oneself and one's fellow. Moreover, the psychic and physical events and the physical things are unquestionably subordinate to the selves, being indeed fairly described as facts-for-a-self.

It thus appears that the term 'psychology,' if used in both the senses suggested, does cover the study of phenomena of two different orders: a study on the one hand of 'selves,' the more fundamental facts, and on the other hand of conscious contents, facts *for* these same selves and distinctly subordinate to them. This double use of the term 'psychology' may nevertheless be justified by the suggestion of an important contrast between physical things and psychic contents, which indicates the close connection of the contents-of-consciousness with the self. The intimate nature of this difference is reducible to this, that the physical fact is supposed to be common to all selves, to be shared by the self with his fellows, whereas the psychic fact is regarded as private, unshared and less readily communicable. This burglar, for instance, is a common object for my fellow and for me, though my own particular view of him, and my own overpowering fear of him, are exclusively my own, and distinct from his corresponding percept or feeling. We need not pause to ask in what sense experiences may be shared; we may even question the possibility of an object really 'common' to several observers. These, however, are metaphysical problems, and the universal assumption of the shared experience, whether or not it is founded on reality, is enough for the purposes of psychological classification. From its attribute of being a common object of consciousness has followed the every-day inference that the physical fact is independent of the self, and thus 'external' to it, whereas the psychic fact, unshared and closely connected with the individual self, is not subjected to this externalizing process. Thus the study of psychic contents, no less than the scientific study of selves, is fairly opposed to the physical sciences. For though physical phenomena are really common facts for many selves, they are con-

stantly conceived as external to the self and their really ideal nature is unnoticed.

We have thus two main classes of facts : selves and facts-for-selves ; and the latter group divides into two again, the private facts or contents of consciousness, and the shared facts, events or things. Corresponding with these divisions we have two categories of science: (1) the science of the self and of facts referred to the self, psychology ; and (2) the physical sciences of facts regarded as independent of the self. The following table shows this more clearly :

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sciences : | Facts (Phenomena) : | Sciences : |
| ‘ <i>Self-Psychology.</i> ’ | I. Selves. II. Facts for Selves. | |
| | ┌───────────────────┐ | |
| ‘ <i>Atomistic Psychology.</i> ’ | a. Contents of Consciousness. | b. Physical Things and Events. |
| | | ‘ <i>Physical Sciences.</i> ’ |

There is still another contrast between atomistic psychology, or the science of psychic contents, and psychology, as the science of conscious selves. It is parallel with a distinction to be made in the domain of the physical sciences. Physical facts include, first, events and moments, marked by an irrevocableness and an entire lack of permanence, and connected by the irreversible relations of time and causality ; and, second, things and mathematical quantities, possessing self-identity and permanence, and related in a necessary connection of reciprocal and reversible determination.¹ Thus, strictly speaking, only an event and never a thing is a cause, and, on the other hand, every thing or quantity affects and is affected by every other. In the same sense, contents of consciousness, of which atomistic psychology treats, are irrevocable events, temporally and causally connected with each other in an irreversible succession. Selves, on the contrary, possessing a certain identity or permanence, are not regarded from the temporal standpoint as causally related to each other.

II.

This wide divergence in method between the analytic study of contents-of-consciousness, and the science of consciousness, whose

¹ Cf. an essay by the writer, *Time as Related to Causality and to Space*. MIND, VIII, N. S. No. 30, April, 1899.

“primary interest is . . . to understand . . . not to analyze into elements,” is enforced with precision and with rich illustration in Münsterberg’s chapter on “Psychology and History.”¹ But Professor Münsterberg applies the name ‘psychology’ to the analytic science exclusively, and designates as ‘history’ what we have regarded as the psychology of selves. His argument lays stress on the definite advantage of distinguishing in name such diverse methods of study.

In briefest outline Münsterberg’s position is the following: Psychology, like physics, is an analytic and causal science which deals with ‘objects’; but these objects are ‘individual’ whereas those of physics are ‘over-individual.’ There is, however, a group of sciences which study in an anti-causal manner subjective attitudes or the ‘real subject’; and these, also, are so differentiated that history “deals with the real subjective will-acts,”² in so far as they are ‘individual,’ whereas the normative sciences treat of ‘over-individual’ will-acts, that is, of duties, of ideals, and of truths.

In contrasting this theory of the nature of psychology with that of the present paper, it is important in the first place to emphasize their points of agreement. Both distinguish the study of selves from metaphysics, and real experience from the scientific study of experience.³ Both accentuate the difference between an analytic and causal study of contents of consciousness, and, opposed to this, a science, called by the one theory a study of ‘subjective acts of will,’ and by the other a study of selves, but admitted by both as a science which is not essentially ‘causal.’ At this point the theories diverge in that Münsterberg denies, as has been stated, the name ‘psychology’ to the second form of study, treating it instead as ‘history.’

There are certainly objections to this terminology which are worthy of consideration. The first is the argument from tradition: Professor Münsterberg virtually excludes from psychology discussions and systems which from time immemorial have been known as ‘psychological.’ The older forms of the so-called

¹ *Psychology and Life* (and *PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW*, VI, 1).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 225 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 200 ff.

'faculty psychology' are metaphysically-tinged dissertations on what is often at heart a psychology of the self; and—passing to modern times—such systematic works as Höffding's, Brentano's, and Stout's, like the genetic psychology of Baldwin's later books, and like Royce's discussions of the social consciousness, would, if strict judgment were meted out to them, be despoiled of the title psychology. Professor Münsterberg really admits this in regretful allusions to pseudo-psychology.

A second objection to Münsterberg's definition is the degree to which it overstrains the ordinary meaning of 'history.' He is entirely right, of course, in rejecting the distinction between psychology as 'nomothetic,'¹ as science of 'general facts,' and history as 'idiographic,' for both, as he shows, treat of single facts, but lead by way of these to generalizations. But history differs from the study of selves, or of subjective will-attitudes, in two important particulars: first, in so far as it takes the temporal point of view; second, and more fundamentally, because it deals with the deeds of selves, that is, with externalized acts of will, with wars and migrations, inventions and industries. History, therefore, is not a simple science at all. It is like the temporal form of physical sciences, in that it treats of causally connected actions and events, and it is also like the science of selves, and goes beyond the physical sciences, in that it discusses these outward things and happenings as manifestations of the inter-related selves. It is distinguished from psychology in either of its forms, because it takes account neither of mere percepts, feelings and the like, abstracted from external acts, nor of selves as selves, apart from their deeds.

Up to this point, however, the questions at issue are mainly verbal and concern only the meaning of Münsterberg's terms, 'psychology' and 'history.' A far more serious difficulty is involved in his opposition of 'reality,' the whole reality, as material of history, to the 'remodelings of reality,' with which psychology deals. His position, in brief, is this: The subjective will-attitudes of which history treats are real. For that reason, indeed, they are never 'understood' but are merely 'appreciated';

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 186 ff.

they are "not objects which we perceive . . . but we acknowledge them . . . as subjects."¹ On the other hand, psychology has to do with artificial and abstract 'constructions,' or 'objects,' and has therefore "left reality behind." The significance of this theory lies in the vigorous idealism of its teaching that "subjective acts of will and objects of will form the reality, the whole reality,"¹ and in the force of its antithesis between science and reality, "the immediate experience which we live through."² The error of the theory is its assumption that history, any more than psychology, has to do with immediate reality. Indeed, Münsterberg himself has virtually corrected this conclusion by the assertion: "Reality is neither art nor science, but life."³ Scientific study is always, indeed, reflective observation and is never immediate experience. The material of science is always, therefore, a remodeling of reality, even if the science is 'history' and its facts 'subjective will-attitudes' or 'selves.' It is true that the self-as-fact-for-science is a less artificial and secondary construction than the mere content of consciousness, but none the less it is itself 'unreal,' in the sense that it is a 'remodeled' form of the intimately real immediate experience.

III.

An inevitable corollary of this doctrine of two distinct and valid forms of psychology, is the truth that every conscious experience may be studied after two different fashions. It may, in the first place, be dissected by the structural psychologist and described as a complex of elements. These will be not only 'sensational' and 'affective' but 'transitional' elements as well, that is, they will include, not merely hues and sounds, pleasantness and unpleasantness, but 'feelings' of likeness and difference, of 'and' and 'but' and 'more.'⁴ The emotion, for instance, is, on this basis, distinguished from the percept, *not* because it is referred to a self, but because affections are its most significant

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 198.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 196.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 200; cf. E. Thorndike, *PSY. REV.*

⁴ Cf. James, *Principles of Psychology*, I, p. 243; M. W. Calkins, *PSYC. REV.*, VII, 4, p. 384.

constituent. The concept is not a result of the mind's comparing activity, but a complex distinguished by the 'transitional' feeling of likeness.

But there is still another way of treating these psychic facts and all others. Instead of regarding them as mere contents-of-consciousness, abstracted as far as possible from the selves for whom they are facts, we may frankly acknowledge them as experiences of these selves, no longer speaking of 'percepts,' 'emotions,' and 'volitions,' but rather of 'perception,' of 'emotion,' and of 'will.' We must go on to discuss these distinctions in a little more detail.

Perception is very clearly a consciousness of sharing the experience of a number of other selves. The more closely, indeed, we observe ourselves perceiving, the more surely we discover in the background of experience the consciousness of other people, actually or conceivably present, who see what we see and hear what we hear. The perceived, as opposed to the imagined, is, indeed, in our every-day consciousness that which everybody present is supposed to share with us,¹ as contrasted with our unshared individual experience. This is, in fact, the only psychological distinction between perception and imagination. From the atomistic standpoint there is, as Titchener says,² "no fundamental psychological difference," for the only possible criterion, in this case, the greater vividness of the percept, fails of justification in many cases, normal as well as abnormal. Unless then we mark off perception, by the purely metaphysical attribute of correspondence with reality, or by the physiological character of peripheral excitation,³ we shall find that its only distinction is this consciousness of sharing the experience of others. This is also the reason why we always try to prove the perceptual character of a given experience by showing that it was shared by several selves. It was a real ghost, or mouse, or table-tipping, we argue, else it would not have been seen, or heard, or felt by all these people.

¹ As psychic fact, the percept also is, of course, unshared, but this is a conclusion of reflective, not of immediate consciousness.

² *Outlines of Psychology*, § 43.

³ Cf. Titchener's account, in his elementary treatise: *Primer of Psychology*, § 39.

And, whatever the value of this argument, it indicates the nature of perception, as an experience assumed to be 'common.'

From this point of view, once more, emotion is the consciousness of oneself in passive relation with others. The truth of this account of it has seldom in fact been questioned. Almost without exception¹ psychologists define the affective experience as a relation to oneself. Even Titchener, one of the most consistent of atomistic psychologists, makes a classification of emotions as 'subjective' and 'objective,' and distinguishes affections from sensations by their relation to selves²—the fact that "from the point of view of ordinary life they are not looked upon as inherent in objects . . ." but "our own peculiar property . . . within oneself."³ The passivity of the emotional experience is no less evident to introspection than the fact that it is a relation of myself to other selves. We have only indirect control of our feelings; we do not hope or fear, love or hate at command; we are a prey to our own emotions; like Werther we are "prostrate" beneath them.

With the passivity of the emotional experience we may contrast the activity of 'will' and of 'faith.' No psychological terms refer more obviously to the relation of selves. 'A volition' and 'a belief' are contents-of-consciousness and capable of analysis into atomistic elements, but will and faith are meaningless terms except as they are used of selves. They are distinguished from each other in that faith is self-abandonment, whereas will is self-assertion, imperiousness, a bullying attitude, as it were, toward people and toward things. 'The will' is thus a relation of the self, not any specific direction of the mind toward a definite and narrow end. It is a realization of my power to subordinate my environment to my use, a possession of myself which is at once a subjugation of every outlying circumstance and of every opposing self. With simple truth, indeed, I may say of myself, in the dominating attitude of will, that

¹ Cf. for illustration: Ward, *ENCY. BRIT.*, XX, p. 67 (feeling "not a presentation, but a subjective state"); Wundt, *Phy. Psy.*, Ch. X, p. 510 ("jene subjektive Bedeutung welche wir . . . den gefühlten beilegen"); Külpe, *Grundriss d. Psy.*, § 34, I ("die Gefühle als etwas rein subjektives").

² *Outline*, § 32 (1); *Primer*, § 27 (2).

³ *Outline*, § 58 (2); *Primer*, § 63.

“ I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.”

Faith, on the contrary, is an adopting, not an assertive, phase of experience. As in the relation of will I subordinate other selves to myself, so in the attitude of faith or loyalty I subordinate myself to others. Yet faith, like will, is an active, not a passive attitude of selves. It is no emotional sinking beneath the force of one's opponent or one's environment, but a self-initiated adoption of another's cause or a spontaneous espousal of his interests. Men of faith have always, indeed, like the heroes of Hebrew history, “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,” through the active identification of themselves with great causes, great theories and great persons.

The conception of conscious experiences suggested by these studies of perception, emotion, and will is developed in outline by the summary which follows :

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| A. Consciousness of oneself without explicit consciousness of other selves, | |
| I. Consciousness of facts (psychic and physical) in comparison with oneself realized as | |
| a. More ‘permanent’ than facts : | Memory. |
| b. More ‘inclusive’ than facts : | Judgment. |
| etc. | |
| II. Consciousness of oneself in connection with facts : | |
| a. In passive connection : | Feeling. |
| b. In active connection : | |
| 1. Self-assertive : | Will. |
| 2. Adoptive : | Belief. |
| B. Consciousness of oneself with explicit consciousness of other selves. | |
| I. As actually or conceivably sharing the experience of an indefinite number of other selves : | |
| | Perception. |
| II. In connection with a limited number of other selves. | |
| a. In passive connection : | Emotion, |
| 1. Without sharing the feeling of other selves. | |
| (a) Happy through other self. | |
| (1) Simple emotion : | Liking. |
| (2) With consciousness of other self as actively related to oneself : | Gratitude. |
| (b) Unhappy through other selves. | |
| (1) Simple emotion : | Dislike. |

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|--|-------------------|
| (2) With consciousness of other self as actively related to oneself : ¹ and | |
| a. Superior ² to oneself : | Terror. |
| b. Equal to oneself : | Hate. |
| c. Inferior to oneself : | Contempt. |
| 2. Sharing the feeling of other selves. | |
| (a) Happy through | |
| (1) Sharing happiness of other self : | <i>Mitfreude.</i> |
| (2) Sharing unhappiness of other self : | Malice. |
| (b) Unhappy through | |
| (1) Sharing unhappiness of other self : | Pity. |
| (2) Sharing happiness of other self : | Envy. |
| b. In active connection with a limited number of other selves. | |
| 1. Self-assertive : | Will. |
| 2. Adoptive : | Faith. |

The purpose of this paper is now attained, if the 'science of selves,' thus distinguished, illustrated, and classified, has been shown to deserve consideration as one valid form of psychology. The course of discussion has required also a brief formulation of psychology as 'science of psychic contents.' The principle of distinction should now be clear. On the one hand we have psychic contents divorced by hypothesis, for convenience of investigation, from the selves for whom, after all, they are facts; and, from the other standpoint, we have these same selves, scientifically assumed not metaphysically apprehended, studied in their diverse relations to each other and to facts of other sorts. Every conscious experience may be treated from both points of view, yet each method is especially adapted to certain purposes of study. Atomistic psychology, for instance, furnishes the easiest basis for experimentation³ and its 'psychic contents' are most readily correlated with physiological facts. The science of selves, on the other hand, though distinct from ethics, social science, and philosophy, forms the simplest introduction to each.

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¹Cf. Höfding; *Psychology* (Eng. tr.), p. 234, ff.

²This principle of division is that of D. Mercier (*MIND*, IX).

³Cf. E. B. Titchener, *PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW*, Sept., 1899.