Me Doig'sll's Conception
of the
Group Mind
by
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HODGUGALL'S CONCEPTION OF THE GROUP MIND

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I.  Introduction - Dr. McDougall, the Scientific sponsor of group mind - others who have touched on the theory - a brief statement of what the concept entails.

II. An outline of the leading theories of the nature of Society, Contractual, Organic, Psychologic, and their exponents. McDougall’s Group Mind a florescence of the last named.

III. The concept of Group Mind examined - what it implies - how developed by McDougall.

IV. Criticisms of the concept, especially by Maciver - Similar views expressed by Cooley, Ellwood, Widdings - Perry’s inquiry as to reality of concept.

V. An estimate of the worth and validity of the concept.
Sociology may be defined as the science of the processes of human associations. Consequently, a sociological element has been present in the works of all thinkers who have reflected upon human experience. The Old Testament prophets, Plato, many of the Church fathers, have contributed much of value to the Science of bidding's, Descriptive & Historical Sociology. But the Science of Sociology, as distinct from philosophy, had its inception barely one hundred years ago, in the "Cours de Philosophie Positive" of Auguste Comte. Sociological problems have been implicit in the philosophies of all ages, but it is only in the last century that they have been regarded as the subject matter of a special science.

Just as the consideration of general sociological problems, in a philosophic rather than scientific manner, may be traced back to very early days, so may the concept of a group mind be shown to be of ancient origin. McDougall, himself, traces his theory back to that of the Greek city-state. But though latent in Greek thought, particularly in the dictum of Aristotle
that man is a political animal the idea had received little attention through the ages, and in its scientific application to the problems of group life, may be said to be as original with McDougall as the evolutionary theory with Darwin. Dr. McDougall is the originator of the concept of a group mind, which is claimed to be exactly and entirely what the term implies. Group mind is not a metaphor or an analogy with McDougall, it is a demonstrable fact.

Dr. McDougall does not claim to stand alone in maintaining his conception - one feels that he is rather pleased to share the responsibility with Mr. E. Barker, who outlines a somewhat similar conception in his "Political Thought in England from Herbert Spencer to the Present Day", from which McDougall quotes freely in the introduction to his "The Group Mind".

Germain idealist philosophers, too, with their theories of the state as a super-individual, a magnificent and superhuman individuality, are admitted by McDougall to have influenced him. Yet he disclaims any belief, "provisionally at least", in a super-individual consciousness which also com-
prises the consciousness of the individual members of the group, and demonstrates the mischief that such an idea, deifying the state and subordinating the individual, has done. His attitude in this is to take what is valuable in the conception of the state as advanced by Kant and Hegel, and avoid the gross and patent errors into which they and their followers fell in their efforts to serve the State of Prussia.

For such attempted discrimination, he has been accused, notably by some American reviewers, of being under the influence of a war-bred hostility to all things German. Walter Lippmann, in the "New Republic", roundly accuses him of prejudice. C. H. Bartlett, too, speaks of McDougall's partisan attitude (British Journal of Psychology, Vol. 11, page 344). On the other hand, the reviewer in the London "Times" states that he "verges on Freitschke".

The French writers on sociological problems, for whose viewpoint McDougall expresses a hearty sympathy, have dealt mainly with groups of low organisation, and have consequently left largely untouched an examination into the phenomena to be explained by a conception of a group mind. Dealing with crowds,
mobs, fortuitously gathered groups, these latter stress the degrading influence of participation in group life.

There are others, however, and have been since the days of Aristotle and his "political animal", who point out that man only reaches his highest development in group activity. Such a conception is back of the tremendously powerful movements of the "Service Clubs" of our own day and land.

At the outset, then, McDougall recognizes a paradox - on the one hand group life ennobles, on the other it degrades. "The resolution of this paradox is the essential theme of this book ("The Group Mind", page 28). And he sets about to resolve it by aid of his theory: A Society which has enjoyed a long life and has become highly organized, acquires "a structure and qualities which are largely independent of the qualities of the individuals who enter into its composition and take part for a brief time in its life (op. cit. page 12). In other words it develops a collective mind or collective soul.

Not a collective consciousness, be it observed. That conception, elaborated by Kant and Hegel, he repudiated, "provisionally". It becomes necessary to examine Dr. McDougall's conception of mind, and
we find that he defines it as "an organized system of interacting mental or psychical forces" (op. cit. page 13). Mind and consciousness are not identical. It is this conception which enables him to solve the paradox mentioned before. A highly organized group, such as the British Nation, can be endowed with a collective mind, and those who participate in its life may feel the ennobling influence of such a mind. The fortuitously gathered crowd has no such mind, for its elements are not organized and inter-related, and consequently there is no restraining influence on the activities of its members, who act at a sub-normal moral level, because of the sharing of responsibility for their acts.

Group mind, with McDougall, exhibits in its higher manifestations esprit de corps. Mobs lack it, necessarily. The imperfectly organized nation lacks it. In this we obtain a hint as to the great practical use of McDougall's conception. Stated in terms of this idea, education is largely the building of a group mind.

It is upon pragmatic sanction that McDougall relies. "The conception of a group mind is useful, and therefore valid (op. cit. p. 12)". Society, he states, has certain inherent
qualities which it does not owe to the units presently composing it. Furthermore these units display certain qualities and characteristics as members of a society which they do not exhibit alone. Society, the group, has therefore an individuality, a mental life, a mind. The chief charm and quite possibly a considerable share of the value of Dr. McDougall's work lies in its happy wedding of science and philosophy. He is not afraid to generalize, where generalization seems well founded, though he realizes the dangers of the practice. Without generalization there is no intellectual progress - not even in the realm of science. There is a refreshing breadth about Dr. McDougall in very distinct contrast to the scrappy, microscopic methods of some of his critics.

After having reviewed some of the characteristic groups which exhibit the group mind, Dr. McDougall's book goes on to discuss what he terms the most important kind of group mind, that of the nation-state. His discussion as to what constitutes a nation, under what conditions true nationality can exist, how a nation exhibits the working of its mind in action, is a practical application of his theory. The group spirit he claims to be "the supreme agent of human
The necessity of arriving at an accurate conception of society is certainly fundamental to all social progress, and it is recognized by McDougall and many other "psychological sociologists" that many of the errors into which society has been led and is still being led are due to a faulty or insufficiently reasoned conception. Dr. McDougall, in his "An Introduction to Social Psychology", "Psychology, the Study of Behaviour" and "The Group Mind", stresses the importance of a sound psychological foundation on which to rest the superstructure of the social sciences. Too often this has been ignored, and political and social writers have assumed an almost wholly rational basis for community interests. There is little doubt that much of the hopelessness of the endeavor to reconcile capital and labor, nationalist and internationalist, materialist and idealist, is due to a lack of knowledge of the fundamental traits of human nature or to failure to take these into account.

Here again the value of such a work as that of Dr. McDougall is evident. We get little help from
most psychologists, who spend their time, quite properly, in an investigation of the minutiae of their science, the results of which investigations are unintelligible to the layman. The relationship of their findings to other facts of life he fails to grasp, even if he has faithfully investigated. It is true that such a one might wade through volumes of psychological literature and emerge with the haziest ideas as to how these facts of mental life had any direct bearing upon his life, or the welfare of the community of which he forms a part. Such a work is performed for him by the philosopher-scientist—in the realm of group life, more successfully performed by Dr. McDougall than by any of his contemporaries.

Dr. McDougall's views are a modification, or perhaps one might say a florescence of the third and most truly scientific of the leading conceptions of society, the psychological view. Other widely held and influential views are those of the contractual nature of society, and the view of society as an organism. Purely mechanistic and materialistic conceptions are also possible.

The contractual view of society is briefly that society exists because of a contract entered into by, or implicit with, the individuals composing it. Men have seen the value of combinations, and have entered into them,
sacrificing certain of their liberties of action in order to participate in the benefits of community life.

As with other philosophic ideas, the contract theory of society is of ancient standing. It was held long ago by the Epicureans. Little, however, was made of it until the 17th & 18th centuries, when it was elaborated by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. With the 19th century the popularity of the idea waned, but it still has adherents. Its most distinguished adherent of our times is De Greef, a Belgian Sociologist of international repute.

Though not the dominant theory of the nature of society among sociologists and psychologists, it is fair to say that it is the conception of the man in the street. The writer has put the query "Why do we live in communities?" to scores of persons not markedly scientifically or philosophically inclined, and without technical education along these lines, and the type answer is "because we realize that we can get more safety and enjoyment out of life that way". The theory is held at any rate implicitly, by the great majority of our professional socialists. The actual words of an orator addressing a gathering of working men recur to the memory: We (i.e. the workers) entered into a very bad
bargain when we became a part of the present day society, and, as the agreement was the result of misrepresentation and treachery on the part of those who are now benefitting by it, we don't have to keep it”.

The obvious criticism of the contract theory is, of course, that it is not broadly psychological, but intellectualistic. There is no doubt that it will explain the more artificial forms of social organization, perhaps those which are the highest in the evolutionary scale. Industrial organization does rest upon this basis, and it was to it, primarily, that the speaker just quoted had reference. But, as his subsequent remarks showed, he regarded all social organization in the same light, and that this is a false view and one that may lead to dangerous consequences is obvious. The contract theory certainly does not explain the origin of cooperation. It may be held as an ideal, towards which social organization should work, but it cannot explain social organization as we have it.

One gathers that an attempt is at present being made to realize such an ideal in Bolshevist Russia, and the experiment may be fairly stated to have failed. The Bolsheviks have "sold" the idea of a contractual society by bayonets rather than by reasons. The case of the conscientious objector during the war is a clear example of the break down of the theory. Society very speedily
demonstrated that it was not contractual. As an ideal the theory is tenable, and may be put into practice in a society which will consist entirely of normal individuals each of a high degree of intelligence. Mental tests are beginning to tell us that no society is as yet within measurable distance of that condition.

And certain writers are even of the opinion that as an ideal the contract theory is untenable. It is intellectualistic - it ignores certain potent biological and psychological facts from which there is no escape. Society is far deeper that a mere thing of mutual agreement on reasoned grounds, though, at any rate in some of its forms, it contains this element.

That there is nothing in common between Dr. McDougall's conception of society and the view just commented upon, is obvious. Indeed he makes no reference to it or its exponent H. De Greef. He does, however, take space to examine a second and widely held view, that of society as an organism.

This latter, too, dates from Greek days. In the middle ages the obvious analogy between a society and the body and its parts was elaborated by many writers. Nicolas of Cues named the offices of state the limbs, the laws the nerves, the imperial decrees the brains, the fatherland the skeleton, the transient human beings
the flesh. The first modern of repute to champion the theory was Herbert Spencer who, in an essay, "The Social Organism", published in 1860, gave a clear and emphatic statement of it. Schaffle and Lilienfeld elaborated Spencer, the latter regarding the organic conception not as an analogy, but as an accurate description of society. Certain modern French Sociologists of "L'institute International de Sociologie" notably Fouillé, adopt as a working theory a fusion of the organic and contractual theories, and regard society as a "Contractual Organism".

The value of this conception is rather historical than actual. It was an effective protest against the contractual theory, emphasizing as it did the biological nature of society, and minimizing the intellectual element. So long as the term organism was employed in a broad, philosophical sense little objection was to be found with it. So used it emphasizes the unity of society and is a useful metaphor. But so soon as those to whom the idea appealed began pushing it to its logical conclusion, the inevitable opposition was encountered.

Many eminent Sociologists have given detailed criticism of the theory. H. Zardé devotes a chapter to it in his "Études de Psychologie Sociale", published in 1896. His criticism is necessitated by a recrudescence of the theory, which he had believed exploded, in the
work of M. Rene Worms, a Russian Sociologist. The conception is referred to by M. Tarde as "cette vieille métaphore (op. cit. p. 120)". After a slashing attack dwelling particularly upon the absurdity of entertaining the idea that an individual can compose an integral part of three organisms at one and the same time - as would be the case of an Austrian by nationality, who might be of German race and of the Roman Catholic religion - M. Tarde ends his discussion by saying: "Le fait est que l'idée de l'organisme social, au fond, est du pur mysticisme (op.cit.p.135)...... Le reproche que je fais à la thèse de l'organisme social, c'est d'être le déguisement positiviste de l'esprit de chimère. Stérile en vérités - car elle nous découvre rien que ce que nous savions déjà, et ce qu'elle prétend découvrir, elle ne fait que nous le traduire en langage obscur - elle est remarquablement féconde en illusions, en visions chimeriques, apocalyptiques parfois, et aussi en aveuglements systématiques (op.cit.p.127)".

In his work "Community" (p.75) Professor Maciver is equally contemptuous. He adds to the discussion by attacking Fouillee's compromise between the contractual and organism theories, by which society is described as a contractual organism. (It may be noted, parenthetically, that in the "Group Mind" (p.241-2),
McDougall more or less accepts this compromise, but since his entire viewpoint is psychological one may doubt that he has done so deliberately after a due consideration of what the view entails. Community, Maciver's term to avoid the ambiguities of the word "Society", is not a constructed organization, it is a life. This is essentially, too, the position of Professor Ellwood and of Professor Giddings.

Unlike the contractual theory, the idea of society as an organism finds little popular favor in our day. As can be readily seen, it is a conception which would make an appeal and be to a degree applicable in a static society, one in which men had found their level and were content. But in the ferment of modern politics its inadequacy is evident. The hands and feet wish to be the head, or, at any rate, wish to have something to say in the selection of a head, and no pretty little fables as to the dignity and beauty of working unseen and unsung at the humble task to which one has been born will content them. Unfortunately, the cells of the social organism have not relinquished consciousness to a specialized group. Rather like some of the lower annelids, each little segment wishes to crawl in its own direction when the ties that bind it to its fellows are cut.
There remains the psychological theory of society, which asserts that the unity of society is that of a psychical process. Society, especially in some of its more artificial forms, contains the contractual element; it has, too, many of the characteristics of the organism; but its unity is primarily psychical. In other words, the most significant elements in society are subjective. Professor Ellwood points out that this conception must not be confused with the contractual theory, which it superficially resembles (Sociology in its Psychological Aspects pp.388, 389). Not is it to be taken as a modification of the organic theory. It contains the elements of value in both these, allowing on the one hand for the intellectual factors, which increase in importance as society advances in the evolutionary scale, and making allowance on the other hand for the blind, biological forces of organic nature. So far, Fouillee's contractual organism. But to this is added a recognition of imitation, sympathy, conflict, control and instinct. It is synthesis succeeding the analysis of earlier thinkers.

Professor Giddings recognizes three forms of this conception and regards them all as "modernized forms of very ancient notions". (Descriptive & Historical Sociology p.4 et seq.) There is first of all the view of Durkheim and Le Bon, that society is explained by
the contagious influence exercised upon the individual by an aggregation of living beings, that it is a phenomenon very like that of suggestion. Tarde is responsible for the second variation of the idea. Society to him is explicable in terms of imitation. The third view is that of Professor Hiddings, himself, and is summed up in his famous term "consciousness of kind". Like response to a given stimulus among a number of individuals gives us the inception of cooperation; unlike response explains competition and individuation. From these to the complexities of modern life is a logical step. It is in the fact that it explains variation as well as similarity, that Prof. Hiddings claims a superiority for his conception over those of Durkheim and Tarde, which he agrees, may adequately explain cooperation.

III.

After this brief examination into the theories of society which have mainly influenced sociologists it will be obvious that Dr. McDougall's idea of a group mind is a development of the psychological theory, or, as was said before, a florescence of it. He agrees with Durkheim in emphasizing the enormously important
role which suggestion plays in human life; he states in "An Introduction to Social Psychology" that in "making imitation the very essence of social life" M. Tarde "hardly exaggerates its importance (op. cit. p. 333.) For Professor Giddings one feels that Dr. McDougall has less sympathy. In discussing those (Group Mind p. 7) who "have made vast assumptions about the constitution and working of the human mind" he mentions that "Prof. Giddings has discovered the principal force underlying all human associations in consciousness of kind".

McDougall carries us much farther than these thinkers, giving us not a theory to account for the origin of society - there he is evidently quite willing to go with M. Tarde - but a theory which will explain society as we have it, and which will enable us to control its future workings.

Following out his belief that there is a group mind, McDougall begins an examination into different groups to test the validity of his conception. He first considers the mental life of the crowd. This is a sphere of group life which has been very thoroughly studied. While there is no concourse of human beings which does not exhibit the rudiments of organization; there are masses of human beings, fortuitously gathered,
in which the element of organization is negligible. Such is the crowd. To exhibit any psychological element at all there must be some centre of interest - a fire, an arrest, a "human fly", what not. The most striking psychological characteristic of the crowd is the spread and intensification of emotion. McDougall rejects the idea of collective consciousness to explain crowd psychology, though retaining an open mind on the question, and finds that suggestibility is sufficient to explain the observed phenomena. Crowds do not display the group mind. Mind being an organized system of interacting mental forces, is a term inapplicable to the psychic phenomena of a crowd, which are not organized.

He then turns to the highly organized group, of which he takes the army as a type. In it he finds, clearly evidenced, group will, an aspect of the group mind which modifies its collective life and raises it to a much higher level than that of the crowd. Groups which have a mental life fall into two great classes - natural and artificial groups. The natural groups are those rooted in kindship, such as the family, and those determined geographically, for example the inhabitants of the Isle of Man. The artificial groups are of three
kinds, purposive, customary or traditional, and those combining the two last attributes. Examples of the first are the social club and the commercial company; of the second, the castes of the Hindu world, and the Free Masons; of the third, the Christian Church and the ancient University. (The Group Mind, p. 122 et seq.)

But the "most interesting, most complex, and most important kind of group mind" (op. cit. p. 135) is that of the nation-state. Dr. McDougall examines the current conceptions of nationality and finds them inadequate. Nationality is a thing essentially psychological. Throughout his discussion of the concept of nationality, McDougall maintains a strictly scientific attitude. He discusses the ideas of Providence, the Destiny of Nations, the genius of a people, the unconscious soul of a nation, the spirit of the age, and finds them unscientific, weakening to the sense of responsibility, justifying egoistic conduct. The more scientific conceptions are examined next: the attempt to explain history by a rigid application of Darwinian principles; to see it as the stage of an economic struggle between classes, as does Marx; or to attribute all differences of national character to physical environment, as does Buckle.
McDougall's interpretation of history is in terms of national mind. The mind of a nation is exceedingly complex, and occupies a position midway between the two extremes of the crowd and the highly organised group, mentioned before. In it the influence of the past is of greater importance than in other group minds. What then are the conditions necessary to the existence of a highly developed national mind and character? (It may be stated here that, in McDougall's view, which is stated in full in his "Psychology, the Study of Behaviour", mind and character are two aspects of the same thing, of that "organised system of mental or psychical forces, which expresses itself in the behaviour and the consciousness of the individual man". Such a system has two aspects, which are really indivisible, but may be considered abstractly apart, namely, the intellectual or cognitive, and the volitional, conative, or affective. Mind if the first, character the second.)

The essential condition is some degree of mental homogeneity, and it is here, by the way, that Dr. McDougall feels doubtful of the future of the United States. His discussion of racial characteristics, their durability and influence, is exceedingly interesting and far-sighted, but is apart from our present
purpose. Other conditions are freedom of communication, leaders, common purpose, national responsibilities, and continuity of national life. (op.cit.p.150 at seq.)

It is when Dr. McDougall discusses as he does in Part III of "The Group Mind", the development of irrational mind and character, that the immense practical significance of the conception of a group mind is evident. Civilization does not mean an improvement in racial qualities, indeed there is evidence which seems to point in an opposite direction. What it does mean is that intellectual and moral traditions are improved, and this improvement depends upon scientifically sound social organization. In other words, continued improvement depends upon development of group mind. The race making period has passed, and human evolution now differs from the evolution of animals in being group evolution. Nations are becoming self-conscious, or rather, since they have had self-consciousness in germ, it is becoming richer in content. Just as individual evolutionary development consists in a growth of self-consciousness, so with the nation. "Man", says Browning, "is put on earth to grow a soul". Nations must grow souls as a further step in their evolution. As one takes Dr. McDougall's idea it is
that just as men developed a sentiment for family before they developed one for the nation, so must they develop one for the nation before they can love all humanity. Perhaps Tennyson was not, after all, a reactionary when he declared that the best cosmopolite loved best his native country. Older civilizations perished through a lack of knowledge of natural laws. Our civilization may be saved by realization of the nature and power of community. "Thus the group spirit, rising above the level of a narrow patriotism that regards with hostility all its rivals, recognizing that only through the further development of the collective life of nations can man rise to higher levels than he has yet known, becomes the supreme agent of human progress", are Dr. McDougall's concluding words. (op. cit. p.413)

IV.

While no one can fail to recognize the intense earnestness of purpose of Dr. McDougall's work, and its scientific viewpoint, his theory of a group mind has not been acceptable to all sociologists. Perhaps his most redoubtable critic is Professor Maciver.
In discussing false perspectives of community, Maciver gives considerable space to refutation of the idea of community as a mind or soul, that is, the idea of a group mind.

His first objection is fundamental. McDougall's definition of mind as an organized system of mental forces he considers totally inadequate. The individual mind, says Maciver, is something much more integral, isolated, than this. "It has a unity other than that of such a system (Community p. 77)."

But Maciver does not very plainly indicate what his more adequate conception of mind is. Unlike McDougall, Maciver, more economist than psychologist, does not seem to realize that mind is not necessarily the isolated and perfectly integrated unity which he would consider it. The work of Dr. Morton Prince particularly has profoundly shaken any such conception.

Dr. McDougall's definition of mind is perhaps as rigid a one as the present development of psychological theory will permit.

Maciver's second objection is in the nature of a reductio ad absurdum. "If England has a collective mind, why not Birmingham, and why not each of its wards? If a nation has a collective mind so also
have a church and a trade union". To the positing of collective minds there may be no end. McDougall disposes of this objection by pointing out that such a question is merely one of degree, and that the point where mental interaction becomes sufficiently organized to justify the term group mind is a question of purely academic interest. Who can set a lowest limit for the emergence of individual consciousness in the animal series? Yet who would deny mind to man for this reason? (Group Mind p.15)

Maciver's arguments are rather neatly disposed of by McDougall who quotes an eloquent passage, expressing forcibly the beliefs upon which the conception of a group mind rests, from a "recent work on sociology", which recent work is Maciver's "Community". (op. cit. pp.18, 19) It is not unjust to say that Maciver repudiates McDougall's conception of a group mind, yet discusses community very largely in terms of such a conception.

The view of Professor Giddings, the most influential of American Sociologists, has been mentioned. To him social mind is "the concert of thought, emotion and will" of individual minds (Elements of Soc. p.120; Hist.& Dec. Soc. p.185).
A somewhat similar view is expressed by Professor C.H. Cooley, in "Social Organization" (p. 4), where he states: "The unity of the social mind consists not in agreement but in organization, in the fact of reciprocal influence or causation among its parts by virtue of which everything that takes place in it is connected with everything else, and so is an outcome of the whole". These views are, of course, in substantial agreement with those of McDougall. They recognize the phenomena with which McDougall deals, and take a rather similar view as to their manifestations, but make no attempt to give to them so rigid an interpretation as he does.

Professor Ellwood (Soc. in its Psych. Aspects, p. 331) argues for the retention of the term "social mind", purely on the grounds of convenience. He says, "it should be allowable to speak of the social mind, provided that we understand that that term is simply a name for the mental life, the psychical unity of society". In none of the three works just mentioned is this statement of the nature of the social mind mentioned in connection with the theory of Dr. McDougall. His views are not considered by the writers.

Ralph Barton Perry has an extended criticism of the theory of a group mind in The American Journal
of Sociology for May 1922, under the title, "Is There a Social Mind?" He states that while there indubitably is a social mind, in the sense in which we can speak of "an infant mind" or a "scientific mind", there is no a priori reason for positing a social mind in the sense of a group mind. To him the theory of a group mind is self-contradictory, whether one adopts the soul-substance theory or the introspective theory of mind; in the first case the self-contradiction arises from the definition of mind as indivisible (though it should be pointed out that McDougall himself is an adherent of this view (Body & Mind), and has taken care to obviate this difficulty in stating his conception of group mind); in the second case, the introspective theory regards mind as private, precluding the possibility of a shared mind. Perry finds fault with what he regards as McDougall's attitude, that of group superior to individual, and states that social wholes are, rather, inferior - "as a whole, society is inferior to man". He quotes with approval a statement of Durkheim, "Society is a reality, sui generis".
Dr. McDougall is a pioneer in a broader outlook on social psychology. His conception of group mind places the foundations of a study of society upon firmer ground than does the work of earlier students in that field. Some vaguer principle was relied upon by them to explain social phenomena. "Imitation", "suggestion", "gregariousness", while undoubtedly explanatory of much, fall short of an explanation of the inextricably involved relationship of man to his social environment. That Dr. McDougall's theory does afford a satisfactory basis is evident - it is pragmatically sound. The same conception of Society underlies the "Human Nature and Politics" and "The Great Society" of Mr. Wallas. Oddly enough, too, it is given succinct expression by H.G. Wells in his "First and Last Things". He says, "Socialism is to me no more and no less than the awakening of a collective consciousness in humanity, a collective will and collective mind".

But Dr. McDougall goes beyond these thinkers in advancing his conception as a fact of psychology, of scientifically sound and capable scientific proof. It is the logical outcome of a lifetime of psychological
thinking and writing. To it he gives the prestige of
an eminent scientist, one who must rigidly adhere to the
methods and findings of his science, and to whom the
latitude which is permitted to the journalistic dreamer
or the utopian novelist is not allowable.

Undoubtedly the crux of the theory lies
in the definition of mind. One cannot but feel,
after following McDougall through his "Physiological
Psychology", "Body and Mind", "Psychology, the Study
of Behaviour," "An Introduction to Social Psychology",
and "The Group Mind", that, granting his definition
of mind as "an organized system of mental or pur-
posive forces", he has succeeded in proving his
point. If mind is such, there is a group mind.

Now, to arrive at a satisfying concept of
mind brings one dangerously near the discussion of
material and immaterial, at which commonsense so
violently shies. Examining the thousand and one
definitions offered, one fails to find anything
more illuminating than the dictum of Dr. McDougall.
Both Mr. F. C. Bartlett, and Mr. Molver criticize
McDougall's definition of mind as inadequate, but
neither offers one which is more adequate.
The truth of the matter is that neither science, in the narrower acceptance of the term, nor common sense can offer any definition of mind except in terms of its manifestations. That there is some factor in the individual life that must be taken into consideration and can only be labelled mind is evident; its nature is not at all evident. So says common sense. The philosophers and scientists run the gamut from soul substance to muscle-twitch. We may place Dr. McDougall at the top of the scale — for undoubtedly it is the top — and regard him as a believer in soul substance. One feels that to Dr. McDougall mind has myriad facets from which we individuals strike momentary gleams.

The ideal of group mind is one to which one feels as does Dr. McDougall, himself, as expressed in Body and Mind, in regard to immortality — we do not want to believe but evidence is so strong that we feel compelled to do so. Common sense will resolutely set its face against the doctrine, for it smacks of the transcendental. That matters little, however. Our civilization carries on it the stamp of great minds; leaders are its most important element. If the theory of a group mind is adopted
by Sociologists generally, it will eventually be accepted in practice.

The writer would in the meantime, to borrow a phrase from his author, "provisionally reject" the conception. Is it any more than a statement of the undoubted fact that the social inheritance, the teachings of the past experience of the race, crystallized in writings, has an enormous influence upon the lives of succeeding generations? Were a second caliph to arise to burn all the libraries of the world, as the first Caliph did the library of Alexandria in 640 A.D., would he not very effectively destroy the group mind, as well as furnish fuel for the public baths? Does not the group mind, that organized system of mental forces, find its organization largely in books and constitutions and codes?

One feels that Dr. McDougall's definition of mind, is after all, inadequate. It fails to satisfy. True, there are no definitions that do. But if the science of psychology could commence by defining mind with accuracy its task would be completed. Definition is the end rather than the beginning. That community is greater than the sum of its parts seems to have been proved - mathematical reasoning is here
inadequate. Shall we call that which is added to the sum of these parts to produce the new whole "group mind"? So long as we recognize the real and practical importance of this new element, and this Dr. McDougall has clearly demonstrated, we have grasped the central idea of his group psychology. But nomenclature is important, and it would seem premature to label this element "group mind".
# Bibliography

## Chapter I

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