

The Fallacy of the Private-Public Self-Focus Distinction

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ABSTRACT Taking the distinction between Aristotelian and Galilean modes of thought (Lewin, 1931) as a background, the bifurcation of the self-focus concept into "private" and "public" types of self-focus is discussed critically. A theoretical connection between the private-public distinction and other central concepts within the self-awareness literature is found to be lacking. Further, it is found that (a) the relation between the theoretical definitions of "private" and "public" and their respective empirical definitions is not explicated, that (b) the public half of the dichotomy does not involve a focus of attention toward or away from the self, and perhaps most important, that (c) the conceptual work surrounding the private-public distinction illustrates how an Aristotelian approach to theorizing prevents the raising of pertinent questions.

The concept of self-focused attention is not new; it was mentioned with some regularity by symbolic interactionists, particularly by Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934). Processes associated with the self, as well as the notion that the self is multifaceted, were treated at length by James

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(1890, 1910). A methodology for studying self-focused attention emerged as early as 1932, when Wolff focused the attention of experimental subjects onto themselves by means of confronting them with their own recorded voices.

The psychology of self-focused attention has not, however, contented itself merely with figuring out what produces self-directed attention, or with ascertaining what kinds of people are likely to be "self-aware." Rather, under the influence of James, symbolic interactionism, and the research of Wolff, psychology has begun to concern itself with a set of associated processes related to self-focused attention. By processes we mean simply the kinds of relations among experiential and motivational states, as well as the behavioral concomitants associated with self-focused attention. Although numerous concepts can be associated with self-focused attention, we shall delineate only those four that have been analyzed within the context of self-awareness theory (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). These four, taken together, address a series of interrelated psychological events that characterize the workings of people who either become self-aware, are self-aware, or do not want to be self-aware.

Before beginning with the characterization of these four concepts, an outline of what is to follow seems appropriate. The main body of this manuscript addresses a distinction between two types of self-focused attention, introduced into the literature by Fenigstein, Scheier & Buss (1975). Within the context of Lewin's (1931) analysis of Aristotelian thinking in psychology, this distinction between public and private self-focused attention will be examined critically: The public-private distinction is said, in this critique, to cast the psychological functioning of the individual solely in terms of concrete, empirical definitions, thus neglecting the underlying psychological processes. This is said to hold true independent of whether the public-private distinction is operationalized in terms of experimental manipulations or by means of self-report scales. With these remarks as an opening, we will first attend to the history of the concept of self-awareness. Then Lewin's treatise on the development of theory is summarized, and finally, we shall turn to the critical evaluation of the public-private distinction.

Four Concepts as a Unit

1. Focus of attention. Humans are limited in capacity with regard to the number of objects that can be attended to, and thus one may postulate that attention is directed either toward the self or outwardly at any given

moment in time. How is self-focus produced and ascertained? In over 50 years of research the dominant experimental technique has confronted subjects with physical manifestations of themselves. In Wolff's (1932) pioneering efforts, subjects listened to their own voices and saw pictures of their own hands and physical profiles. Scales designed to measure self-directed attention were also not without precedent (Paivio, Baldwin, & Berger, 1961). Shibutani (1961) suggested a potential operationalization of the symbolic interactionist concept of self-consciousness. He proposed that social disruptions and awkwardnesses generate self-focus, which in turn results in being controlled by the generalized other. The idea regarding social awkwardness or nonfit has since been realized empirically (Duval, 1972, 1976; Wegner & Schaefer, 1978).

2. Salience of parts of the self. Given that attentional capacities are limited, how is self-focused attention distributed or divided among the different facets of self? James (1890) pioneered the cataloging of self-components and formulated a principle (1910) whereby certain self-components would alternately dominate human functioning. James's approach to the salience issue was to draw distinctions among dynamic, and less dynamic, parts of the self. Apart from a recent effort to elaborate on James's thinking (Wicklund, 1979), a theoretical analysis of the salience issue is still lacking.¹

The concept of salience is, however, critical to the issue of self-focused attention. The psychological workings of induced self-awareness can be understood most readily if one assumes that self-focused attention is volatile, in the sense of gravitating toward the most salient self-aspect.

In order to understand the dynamics of self-focus it is important to know which self-aspect is in the person's momentary focus (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). In a self-awareness study on creativity (Hormuth, 1982) it was assumed that subjects who were self-aware with respect to their own creativity would manifest creativity-relevant behavior, more so than their less self-aware counterparts. One obvious way of assuring that

1. We do not mean to suggest that there is an absence of empirical attempts to examine the relative salience of aspects of the self. The most notable example is an experiment by Vallacher and Solodky (1979), in which self-aware subjects' achievement concerns overrode concerns about ethicality. Thus, even in the absence of a theoretical model concerning the factors that influence salience, it is possible to perform research to ascertain which parts of the self come to the fore when attention is focused on the self.

subjects focus their attention on the creativity dimension is to instruct them to do so. Duval and Wicklund, however, postulated that such a blatant approach would not be necessary. Rather, as long as a person could be made self-aware of any particular self-dimension, a general predilection toward self-focus would become established. The exact content of the self-focus would then depend on the self-aspect on which attention comes to rest, that is, the aspect with the strongest momentary potential for becoming salient.

In Hormuth's study subjects were rendered self-aware by looking into a mirror, that is, a physical aspect of the self was brought into focus. This means of engendering self-focus affected, in turn, the subjects' creativity, a phenomenon that points to the dynamic interrelation of the various components of self. This kind of methodology, whereby self-focus with respect to Component B is set off through an initial self-focus toward Component A, has been employed in virtually all self-awareness experiments. This procedure is in line with the original theoretical assumptions of objective self-awareness theory and it allows one to rule out objections regarding demand properties that would follow were subjects simply instructed to "Please think about your creativity."

3. Avoidance of self-focus. Wolff (1932) was the first to document empirically an avoidance-of-self-awareness process. Using recognition of someone else's voice as a baseline, he found strong tendencies to avoid recognition of one's own voice. At issue here is more than simply classifying someone as self-aware or determining which facet of self is salient; rather, Wolff assumed the existence of a tension state with an impact beyond that of the mere awareness of being self-focused.

Among others, Huntley (1940) and Sackeim and Gur (1978) have found comparable avoidance effects. However, there is not an automatic aversion to all aspects of self. For instance, Wolff found that pictures of one's hands or of one's profile were not avoided. The differential avoidance tendency, as a function of which facet of self is salient, can be explained readily by bringing the Jamesian concept of pretension into the picture. As a concept approximately equivalent to aspiration, ego-ideal, ideal self, or personal standard, pretension is the psychological criterion against which one's subjective attainments or subjective standing are compared.

The motivational principle of avoidance implies that a person would be especially prone to avoid the condition of self-focused attention if

self-focus rests on an inadequate aspect of self. This principle of avoidance was proposed by Duval and Wicklund (1972) and has been since amply demonstrated experimentally. In a study by Duval, Wicklund and Fine (in Duval & Wicklund, 1972) subjects were made to have a satisfactory or unsatisfactory standing on a particular dimension, such as creativity (Dimension A), and were then provided with an opportunity to avoid a self-awareness-invoking stimulus (mirror) that served to focus attention on one's face (Dimension B). Subjects for whom an inadequacy in creativity was salient showed a pronounced tendency to avoid the mirror, a result that demonstrates the dynamic interplay of two rather disparate facets of self. Further studies by Archer, Hormuth and Berg (1982), Gibbons and Wicklund (1976), and Greenberg and Musham (1981) have shown very similar effects.

The concept of self-awareness, therefore, entails much more than the question of whether the person is or is not in a self-aware state. A further critical issue is the person's subsequent motivation: When the subjectively realized self does not match the pretensions set for oneself, the individual is motivated to leave the state of self-focused attention.

4. *Motivated change.* The writings on symbolic interactionism of Mead (1934), and thereafter of Shibutani (1961), proposed that the self is relevant only when one is self-conscious. One's values or morals (the "generalized other" in symbolic interactionist language) are brought to the fore through self-consciousness. Thus the self-aware person should steer behavior in the direction of achievement, creativity, or honesty, given that such virtues are a part of the acquired generalized other.

Such behavior is referred to by Duval and Wicklund (1972) as discrepancy reduction. The self-aware person is said to reduce disparities between personal standards and present standing, given that avoidance of the self-focused condition is not possible. In other words, the person who is in possession of certain standards (Mead's generalized other),² acts on those standards only when attention comes to rest on the aspect of self that is relevant to those standards. Illustrations can be found in Carver (1975), Gibbons (1978), and Hormuth (1982), in which behavior was

2. The term "generalized other" was not employed by Mead to designate the thinking of specific others at the moment when the generalized other is in focus. Rather, "generalized" refers to the idea that the initial influence of others becomes abstracted into a value system that is no longer dependent on the person's cognizance of those others.

brought into line with personal standards concerning punitiveness, pornography, and creativity, respectively.

The avoidance of self-awareness, as well as the process of discrepancy reduction, indicates that self-awareness involves more than simply "being in a state" or "realizing one's presence within a state." Rather, dynamic processes are associated with self-focus, such that people may be motivated to alter their present condition.

A Contrast of Modes of Thought: Two Ways of Approaching the Self-Awareness Issue

Lewin (1931) characterized two approaches to scientific conceptualization—the Aristotelian and the Galilean—for psychology. The contrasts he drew have central implications for the bifurcation of the self-focus concept, which is the object of the critique to follow. Accordingly, it is necessary at this point to compare those two models of science.

The fundamental question of "Why does the organism behave?" is answered quite differently by each of the two models. Within the Aristotelian system behavior is explained by reference to the organism's category membership. In Lewin's language, this category has some historical or geographical referent as its basis. In order to categorize organisms based on a historical criterion, they must be grouped according to a particular facet of their past, whether this be overt behavior, thought patterns, or physical characteristics. Organisms could be grouped in relation to whether they have acted aggressively, whether they have read a certain theme into a projective test, or whether they have a certain sex or any other easily observable physical characteristic. People could alternatively be divided up on the basis of a geographical criterion, that is, in terms of the organism's surroundings. Examples would be the country of origin, but also size of family, exposure to particular kinds of stimuli, such as pollution, whether one is exposed to helplessness-inducing conditions, or whether one happens to be standing in front of a mirror. Thus the criterion for classification within the Aristotelian system of thought is not necessarily a part of the person's history in the sense of personality or physical differences, for people can also be classified solely on the basis of their surroundings.

A central aspect of Aristotelian classification is that the organism is assigned an essence via the act of classification. In Lewin's terminology, the association of a person with a score on a scale or with a particular stimulus context results in the Aristotelian-thinking investigator's im-

puting an essence to the organism, this essence serving as the explanation and presumed instigator of the behavior in question. This means that the answer to "Why does the organism behave?" stems immediately from the individual's membership in the ascribed category: "The organism does this because it is an X-Type—as assessed by such-and-such instrument," or perhaps "The organism does this because it is in the presence of an X-Type stimulus."

As an aspect of this quick overview of Lewin's analysis of the two modes of thought, it is necessary to point out two general misunderstandings of his analysis. First of all, his critical review of the Aristotelian mode of explanation is not to be confused with an attack on the use of individual differences. To the contrary, Lewin emphasizes that adequate explanations must refer to the unique aspects—that is, the entire momentary condition—of the organism. Second, Lewin's critique in no way implies that scientists should eliminate all categories. Clearly, no abstract thinking can take place in the absence of categories, whether these relate to empirical events or to more abstract concepts. Rather, the important point in Lewin is the concern with Aristotelian explanation: When the organism's psychological functioning is equated with category membership, the category defines the organism's essence, and it is this mode of explanation that Lewin rejects.

The Galilean approach, as characterized by Lewin, is quite different in nature. Behavior is not explained simply by citing the organism's stimulus condition or score on a scale, that is, by making reference to the organism's historical or geographical category. Rather, behavioral phenomena are viewed as the product of many psychological forces acting simultaneously on an organism at any given moment in time, independent of whether those forces emanate from the current situation or the organism's past.

Even though a particular manipulation or measured personal quality can be used to tap into one of these forces, the explanation of the subsequent behavior does not reside in that manipulation or personal quality. Accordingly, the explanation cannot reside in referring to the particular situation in which behavior occurred or to the type of individual who executed the behavior, or to the specific person-situation interaction. Rather, the explanation must be grounded in the characterization of the organism's position among all relevant forces.

Thus scientific progress within the Galilean mode involves uncovering the set of underlying variables or forces that function jointly in creating

particular behavioral phenomena, and viewing the various kinds of behavioral episodes in terms of a few abstract variables and principles that are not reducible to a single manipulation or individual difference score. This means that the Galilean approach conceives of the observed behavioral episode as a product of the interworkings of several underlying abstract forces.

For the Aristotelian mode of thought, on the other hand, scientific progress is seen in relation to the development of ever more finely-tuned categories, such that many different behavioral episodes can be classified reliably and distinctly. Although Lewin allowed that the Aristotelian approach may well yield reliable predictions, he favored the Galilean mode of thought unequivocally, owing to its orientation towards the uncovering of general forces that act on the individual, independent of how the individual might be classified.

Galilean and Aristotelian Directions in Two Approaches to Self-Awareness

Self-awareness theory: a set of dynamically-related factors. As in self-awareness theory (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Wicklund, 1975), the four factors introduced at the beginning of this paper are viewed as integral components of the functioning of self-aware persons. In this light it would be inadequate to classify people solely in terms of a manipulation or personality scale, as self-aware or not self-aware, and then proceed with a simple prediction of their behaviors. The reason is that the prediction of behavior, and certainly the organism's cognitive and motivational condition as well, can be more adequately captured when the person is regarded as subject to all of these factors simultaneously.

For example, knowing only that the organism is presently in a self-focused condition does not convey the functioning of the subject under study. On the cognitive side, one would need to know which aspect of self is salient at the moment. On the motivational side, one would need to know whether the person is experiencing a discrepancy and whether the individual has the chance to avoid self-focus. Only then would one be in a position to predict what the individual's course of action will be. The central feature of such an analysis, viewed from a Lewinian perspective, is that the human who is functioning is not reduced to its category membership. The factor of self-awareness has psychological and behavioral significance for the organism only with respect to several

other pertinent factors, that is, salience of self aspects, avoidance tendencies, and discrepancy reduction tendencies.

Public/private self-consciousness: classifying the organism with respect to one factor. Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975) sought to construct a scale that would measure individual differences with respect to self-focused attention. After a factor analysis had been performed on the items comprising this scale, a set of three factors emerged. They could have chosen to eliminate items that did not appear to tap directly into the direction-of-attention concept, but instead, they chose to retain all of the items and proposed two kinds of "self-focus" scales and one "social anxiety" scale. At this point a problem arises: Assuming that attention per se is a contentless concept, without characterizable qualities, such that it can be directed toward any of numerous possible events, then in what sense could there be two types of self-directed attention? Conceptually, one would think that attention, when directed toward the self, could come to rest on one component of self or another, but it is difficult to conceive of different "qualities" of self-focused attention. This conceptual problem has never been addressed by those making use of the public/private self consciousness distinction. Rather, the "solution" has been to reduce the psychological functioning of the person to the terms "public" and "private" without a corresponding analysis of these two "qualities" of attention.

Much of the critique to follow stems from this conceptual problem, but first, in order for this critique to have a context, the conceptual thinking surrounding the public/private distinction must be introduced.

The theory surrounding the "private" condition. With respect to the type of self-consciousness labeled "private," Scheier, Buss and Buss (1978) remark that "A person high in private self-consciousness is more attentive to his perceptions, thoughts, moods, and feelings . . . he is in better touch with himself" (p. 134). The condition of "private self-consciousness" is said by Buss (1980) to "intensify the affective charge of bodily stimuli, moods, motives, fantasies, and self-esteem . . .," (p. 13) and also "polarizes the affective component of any private event—positive aspects become more positive and negative aspects become more negative" (p. 14). In addition, the condition of private self-consciousness is presumed to lead to a certain "clarification": ". . . to make all private events, both affectively charged and neutral, clearer and more distinct . . ." (p. 14).

It is quite obvious that no factors other than being, or not being, privately self-conscious are brought to bear on the analysis of the person's momentary functioning. For example, whether the person desires a particular mood state is irrelevant to the analysis (hence such concepts as discrepancy reduction are irrelevant), whether the person might want to leave the state of private self-awareness is not pertinent, and whether the mood state is salient plays no explicit role.

The theory surrounding the "public" condition. "Public" self-consciousness is also associated with a set of predictions and characterizations. According to Scheier et al. (1978), the person who is "publicly" self-conscious is concerned with the following issues: "How do others see me?" "Do I look all right?" and "What kind of impression am I making?" (p. 134). Buss (1980) extends this characterization in stating that "Most of those high in public self-consciousness are concerned about themselves as social objects . . . They need assurance from others, feedback about the impression they are making" (pp. 34–35). Scheier and Carver (1983) note that "public" self-consciousness attunes the person to self aspects that are related to "self-presentation or self-portrayal" (p. 126).

In contrast to the "private" variety of self-consciousness, the "public" version does not postulate the enhancement of purity, or extremity, or vividness of particular thoughts and feelings. Instead, the primary concern of the publicly self-conscious person is with respect to the desires or pressures created by specific others. Thus, the person who is categorized as publicly self-conscious is assumed to be socially dependent and/or socially responsive.

Five Central Aspects of Aristotelian Self-Awareness Theorizing

Having summarized the central ideas surrounding the public/private distinction, we will now examine those ideas, or hypotheses, from the perspective of Lewin's distinction between two modes of scientific thought. More specifically, the public/private concept will be compared with the original self-awareness theory by means of applying criteria that stem directly from Lewin's considerations.

1. The significance of particular operational definitions. Within the Galilean mode of theory-construction the crucial variables are construed, on an abstract plane, as psychological processes that have a mu-

tual impact on one another. Hence the organism's behavior is understood as a product of the joint workings of several factors. The attempt to probe into these processes empirically requires that these variables be operationalized. For example, it may be postulated that social disruptions (Shibutani, 1961) generate self-focused attention, or that symbols of one's self components (Duval & Wicklund, 1972) bring about self-focus, or that experiencing oneself as a minority would bring about self-focus (Duval, 1976). Further, one should be able to demonstrate that the operationalization in question has successfully instigated the corresponding concept (variable). This kind of success can be documented by (a) showing that the theoretically deduced outcome occurs and that it relates sensibly to other theoretically deduced outcomes, or by (b) finding some direct evidence for the existence of the psychological state that has presumably been generated. For instance, direct evidence for a cognitive orientation toward the self can be found in work by Carver and Scheier (1978), Davis and Brock (1975), Stephenson and Wicklund (1983), and Wegner and Giuliano (1982). The method employed in these studies involved subjects' responding to ambiguously written materials. That is, subjects had to complete unfinished sentences. Subjects' self-orientation could then be analyzed, resulting in a self-awareness index. It should be noted, however, that such an index is not entirely infallible. When we consider the dynamics of the self-awareness process, it would seem likely that the individual who is strongly motivated to avoid the self-aware state would be particularly disinclined to respond in a self-oriented manner. Such a measure thus should be regarded as a rather sensitive matter, since the immediate history of the respondent might well affect the results.

By the reasoning of the Galilean approach there is no one best route to operationalization; many possible operationalizations of a concept are appropriate. The scientist's conceptual language relates primarily to the psychological processes themselves, and is not restricted to describing the situational contexts and individual differences that might be employed in operationalization. In short, given that the psychological processes are central, any given operational definition is easily replaceable.

The Aristotelian method of theorizing and theory-testing is radically different. Placing the organism into a category in order to explain behavior is equivalent to reducing the organism to one particular empirical category. The organism is not viewed in terms of a conceptual framework, but rather receives an essence, as defined in terms of a specific and relatively irreplaceable operationalization.

This approach receives a classic exemplification in the development of research on the public/private self-consciousness distinction. Here, no alternative measuring instrument has ever been proposed. From the outset (Fenigstein et al., 1975) self-consciousness was defined exclusively in terms of the person's scores on the two sub-scales. An earlier self-consciousness scale (Paivio et al., 1961) has never been considered, implemented, or criticized. What is more, no one has ever published an alternative self-consciousness measure or suggested an "improved" measure, which is particularly surprising in light of the disturbingly high correlations between the private and public self-consciousness measures.³

3. Fenigstein et al. (1975) made no a priori proposals regarding the possible relation between the two scales. However, since they have treated the "private" and "public" scales as reflections of different aspects of the self, it would stand to reason that thinking about one aspect would preclude thinking about the other aspect (as suggested by Buss, 1980, p. 38). It follows that the two scales should be inversely correlated.

On the other hand, a strict Aristotelian mode of thinking would disregard this issue of limited attention and simply assume that the categories do not correlate. Since the overall goal is to gain category purity (Lewin), the absence of a correlation would be seen as ideal. Carver and Scheier agree:

... being low in one aspect of self-consciousness does not imply that a person is high in the other aspect. That is, they are not two ends of the same dimension. The two tendencies are distinct... self-consciousness is not a uniform 'awareness.' It is specific to public or private components of the self (1981, p. 46).

But it turns out that even a further argument can be made, this one by Buss (1980):

People may be aligned on a dimension that starts with excessive attention to oneself and ends with virtually no attention to oneself. To some extent, those who attend to themselves are above average in both public and private self-consciousness... (1980, p. 45).

Thus three arguments are possible. What are, then, the correlations between "private" and "public"? It turns out that confusion about conceptual matters is not resolved on the empirical front: Fenigstein et al. (1975) .23, .26 (two samples); Scheier (1976) .34; Carver & Glass (1976) .33; Turner, Scheier, Carver & Ickes (1978) .31; Turner (1978a) .35; Turner (1978b) .56; Heinemann (1979) .39; Carver & Humphries (1981) .42; Dickstein, Wang & Whitaker (1981) .43, .63 (two samples); Smith & Greenberg (1981) .44; Hoover et al. (1982) .42; Cheek (1982) .44; Cheek and Briggs (1982) .39; Bernstein (1982) .61; Angleitner, Filipp & Braukmann (1982) .73; and John (1983) .29. There isn't much one can say about these correlations, except to note that they obviously do not refer to two independent psychological states. More important than the correlations themselves is the theoretical weakness which they suggest. From the preceding remarks of Buss (1980) and of

Further, no serious theoretical analysis followed upon the failure to validate the public self-consciousness measure, using the validation scheme begun by Davis and Brock (mentioned above). Given that this validation technique showed that the private measure, as well as certain manipulations, related directly to self-focus, one would expect the public measure to be discarded or reevaluated, given its failure by the validation devices (Carver & Scheier, 1978). Obviously, operationalizations other than the original sub-scales have been ruled out, a phenomenon indicative of the tendency to neglect the psychological functioning of the self-aware person. Instead of a treatment of the psychological forces impinging on the self-aware individual, the end result of the public/private analysis has been a reduction of the presumed self-conscious human to a single empirical category.

Finally, it is congruent with Lewin's analysis that a different label is employed, depending on whether the empirical category has to do with the scale or with a manipulation. When the self-focus variable is defined in terms of scale scores, it is labeled "self-consciousness"; when defined through a manipulation, it is called "self-awareness." This differential labeling insinuates that different qualities of self-focus are implied, depending on whether the condition is measured or manipulated. But in what way might there be two different psychological qualities of self-focus? The conceptual issue has never been dealt with.

Buss (1980) has proposed entire lists of specific manipulations for public and private self-awareness—writing in a diary and looking into a small mirror are said to create the private state, whereas audiences, television cameras and three-sided mirrors are supposed to generate the public state. Thus in the realm of situational manipulations, in contrast with the scale, there is not a strict 1:1 correspondence between the organism's state and the empirical definition thereof. That is, more than one empirical definition of the psychological condition is possible.

However, the critical question here is whether these various manipulations were in fact generated from the theoretical considerations surrounding the public/private distinction. There is very good reason to think that this has not been the case. First of all, the "public" and "private" manipulations proposed by Buss (1980) were generally well-

Carver and Scheier (1981), we have no way of knowing just what the correlations should look like. At the very least, it is clear that the development of this private/public distinction has disregarded the psychological factors that might be responsible for these consistently high correlations between the two sub-scales.

known and standard procedures in already-existing self-awareness research (cf. Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Wolff, 1932). Secondly, Buss's suggestion that mirrors would induce private self-awareness does not match his theoretical statement, which is that private self-awareness entails a focus on private (non-observable) aspects of self. Given that a person's face is rather open to public observation, one wonders about the sense in which "reflected-face" self-awareness is a "private" self-awareness.

To summarize: The point here is that the specific operationalization is of central significance to the Aristotelian mode of theory development, and that by dwelling exclusively on the predictive properties of specific empirical definitions of self-consciousness/self-awareness, the relation between those empirical definitions and the psychological condition of the person is thereby neglected and forgotten.

2. The alternative explanation. In planning how to tap into psychological processes relevant to the investigation, the Galilean is aware that not all operational definitions are appropriate to the process in question, and further, that certain operations elicit alternative processes. For instance, although an audience might be suitable for engendering self-focused attention, an audience might also generate conformity pressure.

Within the Aristotelian mode of thinking the issue of alternative explanations can hardly arise, for the empirical category, by itself, defines the human's psychological condition. In the words of Lewin, the empirical category imparts to the organism an essence. Therefore, it is impossible that the researcher working from this perspective would be concerned with the notion "alternative explanation," because the human's condition is already defined exclusively through the empirical category that is in question.⁴ By way of comparison, if a scale or manipulation is

4. Only one place in the literature on public/private—in Carver and Scheier (1981, p. 49)—is the possibility discussed that there might be alternative explanations for the public or private effects. The approach taken to rule out alternative explanations is referred to by the authors as "discrimination validity." Foremost in the Carver and Scheier discussion is the necessity of ruling out something like conformity readiness or social dependency as an "alternative explanation" for public self-consciousness effects. Based on a correlation of $r = .06$ between social desirability (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964) and public self-consciousness (Turner, Scheier, Carver & Ickes, 1978), Carver and Scheier (p. 49) seem content that the public scale has nothing to do with such constructs as responsivity to social demands of the situation. On the other hand, how are we to explain the findings of John (1983) and Tunnell (1984),

used simply as one of many possible operationalizations of a psychological concept (the Galilean mode), and especially if that concept is said to be related theoretically to other concepts, then one is also likely to sense that the operationalization might set off processes that are not immediately pertinent to the concepts under study.

3. *The nonmediated relation between the empirical aspect and the organism's psychological state.* In the Aristotelian mode, the empirical aspects define the organism's essence exclusively. For instance, when "private" self-awareness is brought into play by means of a "private" manipulation, the investigator is thereby urged—according to the theoretical statement of Buss (1980)—to consider the organism as governed solely by this state. No other psychological processes that would require additional variables can come into play. As a result, the assertion that "private" self-awareness leads to an intensification and clarification of "private" experiences leaves us guessing with respect to how these effects can come about. An adequate answer would require the consideration of mediating processes and variables that would thereby be relevant. The exclusive focus on empirical definitions is surely incompatible with considerations of such processes.

If we begin with the assumption that at least four factors are associated with the psychological processes surrounding self-awareness (see pp. 492-496, above), then the application of the Buss (1980) model would require that three of these factors be eliminated as explicit aspects of the self-awareness process. This has indeed been done. For one, a discrepancy-reduction factor plays no explicit role in the theorizing: "... no negative discrepancies between behavior and some standard (standards are not part of the theory) are assumed" (Buss, 1980, p. 102). Furthermore, neither the avoidance factor nor the salience factor is integral to the workings of the "private" and "public" states, thus leaving us with a theoretical system that employs only the self-focus factor. Finally, the self-focus factor is treated in an unusual, theoretically unjustified manner, in that the self-focus concept appears to have two different "qualities"—public and private—but nowhere is the nature of these two qualities of attentional focus elucidated.

which suggest that the public scale correlates highly with the person's readiness to abide by the pressures of the immediate social milieu? We are led to think that the social desirability scale is not adequate for assessing the various social orientations that are built into the public self-consciousness measure.

More generally, how many kinds of self-directed attention could there be? Perhaps there could be one type that oscillates back and forth versus a second that is steady and unwavering? This question has no ready solution within the psychology of attention, and it is important to point out that the solution within the public/private scheme entails confusing the contents of attention with the direction of attention. In other words, the "type" of self-directed attention is not defined independently of the contents of attention; instead, "type" of self-focus (i.e., public or private) is defined through the contents of two alleged parts of the self—the public and private. How is it that this confusing of direction of attention and contents of attention came about?

The term "private" implies an awareness of self-components that are not readily observable by others (Buss, 1980). When the person is "publicly" self-aware, however, attention is supposed to move to self-facets that are publicly observable (Buss, 1980). Therefore, one of two parts of the self must be salient for people who are said to be self-conscious/self-aware. All of this leads to the conceptualization of three categories of people: Those who are not self-aware at all, those who are "privately" self-aware, and those who are "publicly" self-aware. Within the context of the Fenigstein et al. (1975) contribution, one might easily have imagined an alternative conceptual approach. Instead of trying to argue that there are two kinds of self-awareness, it would have been much more efficient to assume that chronic self-awareness can indeed be measured, and that the salience of certain self-aspects can be determined independently from this. For example, Vallacher and Solodky (1979) employed a self-awareness variable and varied salience independently by focusing subjects' attention on either achievement aspects of self or on a moral aspect of self. Certainly such an approach does not exhaust the possibilities for developing further techniques for inducing or measuring salience of self aspects.

More important, however, for the present critique, is that the equating of the functioning of the organism with a given empirical treatment (manipulation or measurement) does not allow for such developments. To the contrary, this kind of "conceptual parsimony" halts theoretical progress, for the interrelation of certain variables, such as self-focus and salience of self-aspects, becomes a definitional issue and not a theoretical one. Defining a person who looks into a three-sided mirror as thinking about "public" aspects of self discourages the exploration of other possible variables that might control what becomes salient for that person.

4. *Criteria for theoretical progress.* Lewin's Galilean mode of theoretical development begins by homogenizing the organisms under study, that is, by regarding them as subject to the same set of scientific laws, no matter what kind of category membership they may already have (e.g., child vs. adult or man vs. woman). The preexisting or potential category is simply neglected. One tries to uncover the complex of interrelated variables that determine behavioral functioning, and since such a system of interrelated variables would be viewed as applying universally, it is thereby necessary that categories of organisms not be used as explanation.

On the other hand, development in Aristotelian theory proceeds by dividing the organisms into progressively narrower categories, the sole criterion being that of more exact prediction. The self-consciousness approach divides the human into two types—public/private—rather than treating self-focus as a unitary phenomenon. Thereafter, two fundamentally different kinds of effects are coordinated to two types of self-consciousness (and hence to two types of people): The private type shows intensification of experiential states, while the public type manifests a social orientation.

Progress in the public/private concept has, in line with Lewin's description of Aristotelian development, consisted of further subdistinctions among the original categories. A case in point is the dividing of public/private self-consciousness into public/private body self-consciousness (Miller, Murphy & Buss, 1981). It is unclear how far this kind of theory-building might be extended, but presumably, it would move in the direction of public/private skill self-consciousness, public/private attitude self-consciousness, and so forth. The reason for thinking that further developments would have this quality is quite simple: The criterion for success, with such a mode of development, is that of predicting accurately.

5. *Explaining prototypical behavior.* Aristotle postulated that the organism "seeks perfection" within its assigned category. By this is meant that membership in a category is said to define the ultimate essence of the organism. This essence is assumed, in turn, to propel the individual to behave in ways that are typical of that category. Therefore, for each category a set of behaviors is implied that defines prototypically what members of a certain category will do. Should the individual exhibit behaviors that are not prototypical, such behaviors immediately "fall out"

of the respective category and cannot be explained. For instance, should a person be classified as "publicly self-conscious" but then behave in ways that are not prototypic for the "public" category, there is no way in which the public/private concept can resort to other variables or processes to explain the "category-contrary" behavior. It must be left unexplained.

The Galilean approach, however, need not focus on prototypicality of behavior. Since there is no dividing up of organisms according to particular category membership, there is no such thing as "category-prototypic" behavior. The exact behaviors that are enacted depend entirely on the flux of several interacting forces, which affect the organism at a given point in time. Self-focused organisms may, therefore, either try to move themselves from the self-focused condition or attempt to improve their standing with respect to salient ideals. Given such considerations it would be impossible to argue that there are "self-awareness-prototypical" behaviors; the outcome of the interworkings of the relevant behaviors can lead to very different kinds of manifestations.

One of the most dramatic implications of the Aristotelian emphasis on the prototypical is the necessary neglect of phenomena that are not seen as representative of the category in question. For instance, avoidance of the self-focused condition is a phenomenon that is not treated within the public/private language in that avoidance is not included within the prototypical set of public or private effects. Even though the phenomenon of avoidance has already been documented (Archer, Hormuth & Berg, 1979; Duval, Wicklund & Fine, in Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Gibbons & Wicklund, 1976; Greenberg & Musham, 1981; Wolff, 1932), the public/private conception's fixed orientation toward a certain prototypical behavior pattern blocks the recognition of the fact of avoidance.

Disjunction between Theoretical Concept and Empirical Definitions: A Review of Public/Private Research

The objections we have raised can be illustrated clearly through a look at the literature that is regarded as evidence of the public/private concept. In particular, a critical look at this literature reveals a striking absence of connection between theoretical background and empirical realization of this background.

The public self-consciousness scale: not self-consciousness at all. In view of the contents and characterization of the "public" self-conscious-

ness scale, we have little reason to think that the scale actually bears on the focus of attention dimension. This accusation stems from the following several research findings.

1. *Confounding public self-consciousness with other kinds of dispositions.* In a recent study by John (1983), using college students from the University of Oregon, the public self-consciousness scale was found to correlate with the following characteristics: insecure .40; assured — .28; fearless — .34; at ease — .37; passive .27; traditional .29; self-monitoring .35; and conforming .35. The picture that emerges from these correlations is that of someone who is less than secure, who is not without fears, who is relatively passive, who goes along with tradition, and who tends to conform.

A study by Tunnell (1984) shows analogous correlates with respect to public self-consciousness. Using personality inventories from Jackson (1974, 1976), Tunnell found significant mean differences for people with low versus high public self-consciousness scores, with regard to anxiety ($p < .001$), conformity ($p < .001$), disinclination to risk-taking ($p < .05$), value orthodoxy ($p < .05$), affiliation ($p < .01$), lack of autonomy ($p < .001$) and social recognition ($p < .001$). Just as in the data of John (1983), high public self-consciousness is positively related to a kind of social dependency.

Finally, in a correlational research program by Cheek (1982), one of the central variables was the "willingness to change one's behavior in order to get along with others . . ." (p. 1259). This tendency carried the name "other-directedness" and resulted from a factor analysis (Briggs, Cheek & Buss, 1980) of Snyder's (1974) self-monitoring scale. The correlation between other-directedness and public self-consciousness in the Cheek (1982) study was $r = .53$.

These patterns build a strong case that the so-called public person relies on the dictates of others in lieu of acting independently and/or contra-normatively. The important question now becomes: If the "public" scale does in fact measure a kind of social dependency or readiness to abide by social demands, then the concept "public self-consciousness" becomes superfluous, since the predictions associated with public self-consciousness could also be made through applying the concept of "high social dependency."

One could of course argue that, even though the scale represents other constructs, it is still in part a measure of public self-directed attention, and therefore is a theoretically useful instrument. However, such an ar-

gument necessarily implies that it is not essential to establish causal factors with precision, and that it suffices to show that socially dependent people (who may also happen to be self-focused in some manner) show socially dependent behavior.

2. *The effects of public self-consciousness: conformity and social dependency.* As evidenced by the questionnaire studies of John (1983) and Tunnell (1984), the public self-consciousness measure would appear to tap directly into the individual's social sensitivity, social dependency, conformity readiness, and the like. To be sure, the research undertaken in the context of public self-consciousness appears to further support the charge that something like social dependency is being investigated, albeit under the title of "public self-consciousness." In one of these studies (Miller & Cox, 1982) public self-consciousness was correlated with the extent of female respondents' use of makeup, whereby the latter was operationalized through (a) daytime use of makeup (based on 14 types of makeup women frequently wear), (b) length of time spent applying makeup, and (c) amount of makeup typically worn (p. 749). The correlation between this index of makeup usage and public self-consciousness was $r = .32$.

A comparable correlational study was conducted by Solomon and Schopler (1982). Subjects were asked a series of questions regarding their interest in clothing, their concern with the social acceptability of clothing style, their degree of dependence on clothing as a means of experiencing a "psychological lift," the extent to which choice of clothing is built into their daily itinerary, and so forth. The correlation between such concerns with clothing and public self-consciousness was $r = .42$ (but only for males; among female respondents, there was practically no relation between these variables). Thus high publicly self-conscious individuals seem particularly concerned with their outward appearance in social situations.

Standard conformity effects can also be shown to correlate with the extent of public self-consciousness. For instance, Froming and Carver (1981) placed subjects in a setting bearing some similarity to that of Asch (1956). The tendency to yield to others correlated with public self-consciousness at a level of $r = .30$. Related effects have been reported by Carver and Humphries (1981). Among a sample of Cuban immigrants, those who were high in public self-consciousness were especially prone to espouse a socially acceptable (i.e., anti-Castro) view toward the leader of their former homeland. Similarly, Scheier (1980) placed sub-

jects into a conflict situation, in which they anticipated discussing an issue with a partner whose opinion was contrary to their own. The effect of this anticipated social interaction resulted in moderation: High publicly self-conscious subjects altered their opinions in the direction of the discussion partner to a greater extent than the less publicly self-conscious subjects.

In a slightly different vein, Tobey and Tunnell (1981) examined the accuracy of high and low publicly self-conscious subjects in predicting the impression they would make on judges. Each subject sat before a video camera and answered standard interview questions. Subjects then predicted, via a semantic differential, what kind of impression their answers would make on judges. Subsequently the actual ratings of judges were correlated with the subjects' predictions. The high publicly self-conscious subjects made predictions with the greatest accuracy, which may indicate that (a) they were more interested in giving the judges accurate information, (b) they were in some manner or other better "self" observers, or (c) they were generally more inclined to adapt themselves to the immediate social surroundings.

In one of the first studies using the public self-consciousness measure, Fenigstein (1979) examined the relation between the public scale and social sensitivity. During the course of a group discussion on restrictiveness of dormitory living, confederates either systematically accepted or rejected the subject. The variable under consideration was the subject's subsequent liking for the group and tendency to prefer to affiliate with the same group later. The results showed clearly that the high publicly self-conscious subjects were not only more inclined to dislike the group following rejection, but were also disinclined to affiliate with the same group after having been rejected, thus demonstrating the high degree of social sensitivity or social vulnerability of high publicly self-conscious individuals (cf. Buss, 1980; Carver & Scheier, 1981).

In each of the foregoing studies the focus was on the variable of public self-consciousness, as defined or operationalized by the Fenigstein et al. (1975) scale. In every study the explanation, to the extent that an explanation was explicitly offered, consisted of the observation that publicly self-conscious people are either more socially sensitive, more attuned to others' opinions, or more inclined to adapt themselves to the social setting. Particularly striking in the context of these many studies is the failure of the investigators to note a highly viable alternative explanation, which would make the concept of self-consciousness or self-focus fully

superfluous in each of the aforementioned settings. As mentioned above, John (1983) and Tunnell (1984) demonstrated that a general readiness to be socially dependent, fearful, agreeable, conformity-prone, and so forth is reliably correlated with a tendency to manifest "high public self-consciousness." If we may propose altering the label of the "public self-consciousness" scale to "social dependency," one is thereby provided with an alternative explanation of the foregoing studies—an explanation that makes the collected results of those studies tautological: Dependent people tend to act in a dependent manner. It is precisely this kind of tautology that Lewin (1931) had in mind in criticizing the Aristotelian mode of thought. The category as an explanatory concept comes to the fore with such salience that the psychology underlying the category is blurred or forgotten.

Public self-consciousness fails by the criterion of the pronoun index. Hoover, Wood, Wegner and Knowles (1982) administered the public and private scales to a sizable number of subjects who were then asked to respond to a series of incomplete sentences. This validation procedure stems from that of Davis and Brock (1975) and others. Once the subject had completed a sentence, the form of the completion was coded according to the extent of self-relevance (i.e., counting the numbers of "mes" and "Is"). The results are something of a blow to the public self-consciousness scale. The correlations between public self-consciousness and the tendency to insert *Is* and *mes* was actually negative: With *Is*, the r was $-.14$; with *mes*, it was $-.26$. Equally pertinent are the corresponding data from Carver and Scheier (1978), revealing essentially no relation ($r = .07$) between the extent of "public" self-consciousness and one's tendency to think in the first person.

Thus the set of items said to refer to "public" self-consciousness can just as readily be referred to as social dependency, or the like. The predictions stemming from the "public" scale entail nothing more than forecasting that socially dependent people will behave in socially dependent ways. Since people scoring high on the "public" scale appear to be comparatively low in self-focus—at least not higher than their low self-conscious counterparts—the connection between being high on this scale and self-awareness is at best nebulous.

Manipulations of public self-awareness: is self-awareness necessarily implied? In manipulating "public" self-awareness, the key issue is what kind of manipulation can bring about the effects that Fenigstein et al.

(1975) defined as characteristic of the individual who scored high on the public scale. Such a manipulation should define the same human essence as that defined by the public scale, that is, a human who is socially dependent.

Buss (1980) has listed several stimulus conditions that are said to set off the public state: a video camera, a large, three-sided mirror, and an audience. Whether these kinds of stimuli in fact produce a psychological state that differs fundamentally from that produced by so-called "private" stimuli is a matter we will discuss below. Aside from that issue, this stimulus list was taken to heart by several researchers, as illustrated by the following experiments.

Froming, Walker and Lopyan (1982) selected subjects opposed to punishment in learning situations and confronted them with an evaluative audience. Since the subjects believed that they were less prone to favor punishment in learning than were most other people, it was reasonable to assume that they would attribute a relatively strong propunishment orientation to the audience. The results were straightforward: Using the Buss (1961) shock apparatus, subjects were more punitive when confronted with an evaluative audience (the evaluative audience was said to be evaluating the subject as a teacher) than with a nonevaluative audience or with no audience at all.

Froming et al. (1982) interpret this apparent conformity finding to mean that

... public situations (i.e., presence of other people) lead subjects to an implicit examination of the self relative to the members of the audience. The fact that this typically results in attempts to manage one's self-portrayal (Schlenker, 1980) suggests that audiences focus one's attention on the overt or public aspects of the self. This line of reasoning is also given indirect support by the fact that dispositional *public* self-consciousness has been found to be associated with the tendency to adjust one's public display, either in anticipation of interacting with others ... or when others are actually present ... (pp. 477-478).

Why, then, do these effects of public self-awareness take place? What is the explanation? The reader finds nothing more than a characterization of the essence of the "public" person—a readiness to abide by the sentiments of the immediate social milieu, a sensitivity to the thinking of those immediately present.

A further mixing of self-awareness terminology and social dependency terminology is found in a forced compliance experiment (cf. Festin-

ger, 1957) by Scheier and Carver (1980). The "public" condition of self-awareness was generated by means of a video camera. It was argued that the video camera would make subjects aware of the public aspects of themselves, and thereby result in a change in attitude in the direction of the counter-attitudinal essay. Their prediction was confirmed, but their explanation of the effect is not a convincing integration of self-awareness thinking and the cognitive dissonance process. The authors suggest that the effect stems from self-presentational concerns promoted by the public manipulation. However, the implication is that the manipulation did not induce dissonance reduction *per se*, nor self-awareness-mediated dissonance reduction, but rather resulted in subjects' attempting to manage a favorable impression of themselves (Carver & Scheier, 1981, p. 338).

Thus the general line of reasoning associated with the application of public manipulations (a video camera, audience, or large three-sided mirror) is quite apparent: The induction of public self-awareness is tantamount to the creation of a concern with one's relation to a specific other person or audience. Just as with the scale-based definition of the public condition, a manipulation-based definition of the public state is problematic, and for similar reasons:

1. "Public" manipulations are said to trigger only the "public" part of self-awareness, whereas a separate list is required for the induction of "private" self-awareness. The "public" manipulations are said to make the person directly aware of some observable part of self, while "private" manipulations are defined as making the person aware of some nonobservable aspect. However, the fact that a small mirror (which quite clearly makes one aware of an observable part of self) is included in the "private" list brings this line of reasoning into question. This problem brings us again to Point 1 (see above, p. 500): The Aristotelian mode of theorizing devotes its attention entirely to the empirical definitions, and consequently, little attention is paid to how these empirical definitions capture the qualities of the psychological state under consideration.

2. The public/private conception sees no parallel between the effects of "private" and "public" self-awareness. Private self-awareness is said to engender an intensity, or extremity, of "private" experiences, whereas public self-awareness is said to have behavioral correlates, in the sense of one's accommodation to the immediate social milieu. Further, the connection between the so-called experience of public self-awareness, that is, the self-focus state *per se*, and the behavioral tendency to conformity is ill-defined. It does not suffice to claim that the behavioral tendencies

stem directly from the experience of the alleged "public" self. One would also want to know why the publicly self-aware person shows such behavior. What are the driving forces behind such effects? Further, how can focusing on one's "public" self impart direction to behaviors that are directed toward other people?

3. The effects observed in research with "public" manipulations lend themselves readily to social dependency explanations, just as in the case of the "public" scale. Even if investigators consistently point to the concept of "social self," there is never a description of the properties of that self, a serious theoretical problem which will be pursued next.

The "public" self: a cross-situational entity? Traditional theories concerning the functioning of the self have defined the self (and/or component selves) as having a certain continuity (Allport, 1961). Self cannot be equated with momentary behavior, nor with momentary commentaries about one's being, for these are lacking a foundation in a longer-range continuity of self-feeling. James (1890) was explicit on this point, even in the realm of his social self, in stating that the person carries internalized representations of the values or perspectives of broad reference groups. Of course, the school of symbolic interactionism is of the persuasion that the self is a reflected accumulation of perspectives—not just the momentary and fleeting perspective of one particular other person.

In sharp contrast to the above, the "public" self that is under consideration here does not have any continuity. The person who is publicly self-aware is unaffected by preexisting self-components, in that the direction imparted to behavior stems entirely from the immediate social situation. In short, there has never been any characterization of the contents of the "public" self, and if one looks at the "public" paradigms, it becomes clear that the immediate social milieu serves as the contents.

As a consequence, the public manipulation must induce the desired behavior without moving the focus of attention onto an existing aspect of self, and this is accomplished by creating social pressures. In the course of such research, the investigator labels the manipulation a "self"-focus manipulation (or the relevant scale is labeled a "public self" scale), but in fact, the function of these operations is simply that of increasing the person's orientation toward group-induced pressure. Thus it becomes understandable why Buss (1980, p. 38) has argued that public self-focus, by itself, is insufficient to elicit behavior. The person must first be confronted with a public situation, which induces the behavior directly.

Clearly, given that the public self is impermanent and content-free, there would be no way for such a self to impart direction to behavior.

The private self: not private at all. The theoretical definition of the private condition was said by Buss (1980) to be self-consciousness/awareness, with respect to self-aspects that are not observable by others. Examples were said to be "toothache," "taste of an apple," "an urge to kill," or "a flicker of fear" (p. 5). Such facets of the self, assuming that they are reasonably defined as "self"-facets, are presumably the ones that are studied in research on private self-consciousness/awareness.

But let us see how the private concept is in fact realized in the research. In a study by Froming and Carver (1981) conformity pressures were induced within an Asch-type (1956) paradigm. Public self-consciousness was found to correlate positively with influenceability, while private self-consciousness correlated negatively with amount of influence. The first question that comes to mind, if we are to view this study as a direct derivation of the Buss (1980) theoretical statement, is "Which type of self is being studied within this paradigm—the public, or the private?" If the person's judgment (i.e., the main dependent variable) is indeed the self-aspect under scrutiny, then the investigator must make a decision, with respect to that paradigm, as to whether the subject's judgment is private or public. It cannot be both, as long as it is assumed that the public/private concept has something to say about the paradigm. But indeed it was both: For some of the subjects the judgment was defined as a private matter (i.e., high private self-conscious people), and for the others it was a public matter (the high public self-conscious group).

What we see here is once again an instance of Point 1 (see p. 500, above), namely the reductionistic tendency of Aristotelian thinking. Quite aside from the theoretical necessity of being able to establish whether the relevant self-aspect (i.e., a subject's judgment) is public or private, one neglects that psychological and theoretical issue, and refers instead simply to people who are categorized as public or private. The relation between operationalization and theoretical construct is completely lacking in this instance.

With respect to the more concrete question "What is private about private self-consciousness/awareness?", the Froming and Carver paradigm is one of many that raises a serious problem for the use of the private concept. For the "private" subjects in the Froming and Carver study one must assume that the subject's judgment (or tendency to make a judg-

ment) is private; in the study by Froming et al. (1982) one has to assume—for subjects confronted with a mirror—that the attitude in question is private; in the paper by Scheier et al. (1978) one has to assume (for the privately self-conscious subjects) that the aggressive tendency is private, and so forth. But this is a question of definitions. As soon as the attitude, personality trait, value or whatever else is measured, it is no longer a private matter. One might insist that the real object of study is the “inner” attitude or value, but from the standpoint of the respondent this makes very little psychological sense. Once the attitude is expressed openly, or when the person anticipates having to express it openly, it becomes observable and the person can become concerned with the reactions of others.

The question of deriving operationalization from theory does not surface in the relevant investigations; one simply employs the given empirical definitions, and then by definition the person is functioning privately, or publicly. It is questionable, then, whether anything is added by calling the private self-focus research “private.” The “private” manipulations that are characteristically used, as well as the “private” scale, do appear to relate to the self-focused state, but this should not be surprising. The manipulations already have a history in self-awareness research and the scale has a clear face-validity, not to mention its validity in the validation paradigm of Carver and Scheier (1978). The objection here is simply to the term “private”; there is no psychological justification for it.

Conclusion

The development of the public/private concept has followed Lewin's formula for Aristotelian theory-building rather closely. The five central points in arriving at this conclusion are as follows:

1. The particular empirical definition of the psychological essence of the person is of utmost significance. There is no attempt to probe for underlying conceptual variables. Despite substantial empirical difficulties in separating the public and private aspects (see footnote 3), the original empirical definitions have persisted rigidly.
2. Although the idea of alternative explanations has received cursory treatment from Carver and Scheier (1981, p. 49), the relevant empirical work consistently ignores the omnipresent threat of reasonable alternative explanations. The unyielding adherence to an empirical definition of a process and the implicit reduction of a process to that definition make

the concept of alternative explanation irrelevant in dealing with the public/private concept.

3. The nonmediated relation between the empirical definition and the psychological essence is illustrated most poignantly by the private/public scheme's conceptual "parsimony." The conceptual variables that have been shown to be important in the context of previous self-awareness research (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Wicklund, 1979) are completely neglected. Quite aside from the reasons for this regressive theoretical development, the end result is a tautological relation between the conceptual factor of self-consciousness/awareness and its empirical definition. Consequently, self-focus phenomena that require the consideration of additional psychological concepts are excluded from the analysis by definition.

4. The development of theory has a highly curtailed meaning with the public/private conception. Increased breadth in the array of psychological variables is not the goal. The initial variables of public/private self-consciousness/awareness have been preserved in their original form and no further concepts have been added. Development has taken place only in the sense that the variables have been further subdivided (e.g., public/private body self-consciousness).

5. Prototypicality in behavior is that which is explained. Rather than viewing a certain self-focus scale, or manipulation, as tapping into a manifold set of interrelated variables, and hence into a manifold set of potential reactions, the self-awareness approach criticized here describes a prototypical set of reactions for individuals who are classified as high, or low, on the self-consciousness/awareness dimension. If a private (or public) person does not behave in the prototypical manner indicated by these characterizations, then the behavior cannot be dealt with by the public/private system. It follows that new insights into the self-focused person's functioning can hardly be expected to go beyond the existing descriptions of prototypical behavior. It is thus apparent why Lewin viewed the abandonment of the Aristotelian mode of thought as a prerequisite to progress in psychology. Finally, the adherence to a narrow range of self-awareness-prototypical behaviors compels one to ignore existing self-awareness-related phenomena that are by definition not prototypical. In this sense the public/private system is not only intolerant of new phenomena, but also favors the neglect of certain key self-awareness-related phenomena.

The place of individual differences and the future of self-awareness research. Our purpose here is not to criticize an individual-difference

approach to self-awareness phenomena. The kind of approach that we have characterized as Galilean does not, by any means, exclude the use of individual differences in understanding the psychological condition of the organism. To be sure, measurement of the individual's existing personal standards (Carver, 1975; Gibbons, 1978; Hormuth, 1982; Pryor, Gibbons, Wicklund, Fazio & Hood, 1977) has been a central aspect in self-awareness research. Lewin's research group in Berlin (e.g. Mahler, 1933; Ovsiankina, 1928) employed individual differences in order to help understand the dynamics of task-resumption phenomena. Even Atkinson (1957), a rigorous Lewin scholar who has drawn upon many components of Lewin's thinking in the development of his theory of achievement motivation, has viewed individual differences as highly useful tools in understanding subjects' selection of tasks of various difficulty levels.

What we are proposing here is the abandoning of those elements of the Aristotelian self-awareness approach that, in our opinion, inhibit theoretical progress: The first of these elements is the equation of a psychological state (or trait) with a single empirical definition. The second is viewing the self-aware organism as exhibiting a fixed and standard set of behavior patterns. We are suggesting that progress within self-awareness research might be made more readily by raising such questions as: What kinds of circumstances, particularly social circumstances (cf. Shibutani, 1961), bring forth self-awareness and for what reasons? To what extent is self-awareness sought after, or repugnant, and why? When the organism becomes self-focused, exactly what aspect of the person is in focus, and what factors determine the salience of certain aspects?

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