

SOCIAL AWARENESS IN STORY COMPREHENSION

DANIEL M. WEGNER
Trinity University

TONI GIULIANO
University of Texas at Austin

This experiment tested predictions derived from a social awareness analysis of story comprehension. According to this analysis, a person is aware of the social world at any point in time in two distinct ways: The person is "focally aware" of something, thinking about it and holding it in conscious attention; and the person is also "tacitly aware" of some social entity (self, another person, or a group) that provides a perspective on the target of focal awareness. The analysis suggests further that focal awareness of a social entity (a person or a group) leads the person to retain characteristics of the entity in memory, whereas tacit awareness of a social entity induces the person to retain goals of the entity in memory. Subjects in the present study read a story in which an initial paragraph led them to adopt the tacit perspective of one of three social entities—a person, a group comprised of that person and another, or a third person. This induction of tacit awareness resulted in enhanced recognition of the goals of the tacit entity on a subsequent multiple-choice recognition measure. And, as expected, it also enhanced recognition of the characteristics of the social entity that was focal from the tacit perspective.

A person cannot be aware of all aspects of the social world at once. Certainly, all the potential targets of thought cannot be considered at the same time. And even if they could, there are various social perspectives on each target that also seem to be adopted only one at a time. This means that in any particular instant, a person's social awareness is limited to just one of many possible forms—each form characterized by a specific target and a specific perspective. This paper develops a systematic way of understand-

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ing this idea, and reports an empirical test of this system in the context of story comprehension.

SOCIAL AWARENESS

Our analysis of social awareness begins with the notion that a person is typically aware of the social world at any point in time in two quite different ways (see Wegner, 1982; Wegner & Giuliano, 1982). One sort of awareness corresponds to the common definition of the term: attending to something, holding it in consciousness, or otherwise understanding it as the target or topic of thought. We call this "focal awareness," and in line with prior commentators (e.g., Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Taylor & Fiske, 1978; Tesser, 1978), we suggest that it is typically limited to a narrow range of experience at any one time. Thus, the person can focus on different things in turn, noticing perhaps the self, another person, a group, an event, an object, or the like; but the person cannot entertain multiple targets of focal awareness at once. We believe, however, that such focal awareness is regularly accompanied by a simultaneous state of "tacit awareness," and it is at this point that our analysis departs from the usual usage of "awareness."

The philosopher Polanyi (1969) originally developed the idea of tacit awareness to account for an intriguing fact of object perception. He noted that when one looks through a telescope, for example, it is erroneous to say that one is focally aware of the telescope. Rather, one is focally aware of some distant object by means of the telescope. So, although the telescope obviously contributes in a crucial way to what is held in focal awareness, it remains outside of focal awareness itself. Polanyi suggested that this contribution be conceptualized in terms of one's tacit awareness of the telescope. In this sense, then, one is tacitly aware of a walking stick when one feels the earth with its point; one is tacitly aware of a fishing rod and line when one senses the tug of the fish; and one is tacitly aware of a radio transmitter, electromagnetic waves, and a radio receiver when one listens to an opera going on in a distant city. The objects we hold in tacit awareness serve as unheralded conduits for our focal awareness.

Polanyi went on to extend this reasoning in a clever way. He noted that in stepping away to hold the telescope in focal awareness, to look *at* it rather than *through* it, one remains tacitly aware of one's own sensory and interpretive systems. Likewise, in feeling the walking stick, manipulating the fishing pole, or examining the radio, tacit awareness of self remains. By this reasoning, one can only become focally aware of anything because one is first tacitly aware of oneself. We believe this line of argument can be

generalized to include the possibility of tacit awareness of social entities other than the self as well. Imagine, for instance, watching a friend who is having difficulty untying a shoelace. Rather than focusing on the friend and becoming concerned with his apparent clumsiness, one might well focus on that pesky shoelace instead. The friend here serves as a cue to one's target of focal awareness, and it seems sensible to say that in this instance, one is tacitly aware of the friend. In the same way, having one's attention moved skyward by a group of people who are looking up (Milgram, Bickman, & Berkowitz, 1969) can be understood as the result of tacit awareness of the group. This language of tacit awareness, it seems, can provide a useful way of systematizing what we might call "perspectives," "viewpoints," or "interests" in everyday terms.

A person's form of social awareness is known, according to this analysis, when we know what is tacit for a person and what is focal. The person could be tacitly aware of the self, of a specific other, or of a specific group (of which the person might or might not be a member); through such tacit awareness, the person would then be inclined toward focal awareness of objects, events, or social entities that inhabit the purview of the tacit social entity. Just as the telescope guides one's attention away from things one might normally see without it, and toward things one can only see with it, tacit awareness of social entities guides one's attention toward, and lends new meaning to, features of the entity's situation that might otherwise go unnoticed. The fundamental interconnectedness of perspectives and targets that is highlighted by this language of tacit and focal awareness is, as we see it, good reason to reconceptualize the notions of "perspective" and "target" in this way.

The language of social awareness also makes it possible to understand a variety of "states of mind" previously demonstrated in social research. The sense of *déjà vu* that one may experience on encountering this system becomes understandable when it is recognized that many forms of social awareness are already known—by other names. Tacit awareness of another person, for instance, is not unlike "empathy" (Stotland, 1969) or "role taking" (Flavell, Botkin, Fry, Wright, & Jarvis, 1958); focal awareness of another resembles the "observer perspective" (Jones & Nisbett, 1971) or "value maintenance set" (Jones & Thibaut, 1958); focal awareness of self occurring via tacit awareness of another recasts ideas of "evaluation apprehension" (Rosenberg, 1965) and "self-presentation" (Goffman, 1959); focal awareness of self that arises through tacit awareness of self is a helpful way to understand "objective self-awareness," whereas tacit self-awareness alone has been known before as "subjective self-awareness" (Duval & Wicklund, 1972); tacit and focal awareness of one's own group represent states akin to "deindividuation" (Zimbardo, 1969); and tacit

awareness of one's own group with focal awareness of another group is reminiscent of the state of mind assumed in the "ingroup-outgroup situation" (Brewer, 1979). The social awareness analysis places these traditions of social-psychological research and theory into a unified system within which their resemblances can be understood and their various influences on behavior can be partitioned.

We believe that all of these states of mind are subject to a common set of rules that the tacit-focal distinction makes manifest. First, we suggest that only a single form of social awareness can be assumed by a person in a given moment. So, although there are potentially many tacit perspectives and focal targets, only one combination of perspective and target exists for the person at a particular point in time. Second, we suggest that the factors that determine the adoption of a particular awareness form can be circumscribed in terms of a specific set of cognitive, affective, and attentional variables (see Wegner & Giuliano, 1982). Through these variables, some entity is held in tacit awareness, other entities or things are held in focal awareness, and yet other things remain out of awareness entirely. And finally, we suggest that the form of awareness that is assumed in any instant will channel the person's representation and processing of social information in predictable ways.

AWARENESS AND REPRESENTATION

The influence of social awareness on the processing of social information can be summarized quite simply: Incoming information is represented in terms of its relationship to the target of focal awareness. In essence, this is just a different way of saying that things are understood and made meaningful when they are considered in consciousness. The implications of this idea, however, are interesting. Suppose, for example, that one observes a person doing battle with a soft-drink machine; apparently the machine is malfunctioning and the person is upset. If one is focused on the person at this time, it is likely that one will understand this event in terms of its implications for the nature of the person. The person will be seen as "violent" or at least "irritable." If one is tacitly aware of the person at this moment, however, and so is focused on the machine, the incident is more likely to be understood as indicative of the nature of the machine. The machine may be seen as "broken," "untrustworthy," or perhaps even "diabolical." The information about the person's action, in sum, is assimilated to the person when one is focally aware of the person and is assimilated to the person's environment when one is tacitly aware of the person.

Now, suppose that one is later asked to recall what this person is like.

If one had initially encountered the person in focal awareness, the task would require only accessing one's cognitive representation of the person. Retrieval of the person's characteristics of "violence" and "irritability" should be easy. If one had originally become aware of the person tacitly, however, the retrieval process would be a bit more involved. One would have organized the information about this person as a feature of the person's environment—that "diabolical" machine. To say something about the person, one would have to infer that the person might not want to have dealings with the machine. So, instead of retrieving a *characteristic* of the person, one would retrieve a *goal* of the person—one suggested by one's recollection and evaluation of the person's environment.

In a somewhat more formal statement of this reasoning (Wegner & Giuliano, 1982), we have argued that focal awareness and tacit awareness of a social entity produce different modes of organization of information about the entity in memory. Focal awareness leads one to interpret information as it pertains to the characteristics of the social entity; the overall organization of the information might thus resemble the "implicit personality theory" structure that observers typically impose on behavioral information when they form an impression of a person (see, e.g., Hamilton, 1981). In contrast, tacit awareness of a person should lead one to interpret information as it pertains to the person's situation; the overall organization of the information would then reflect a structure like an "implicit situation theory" (Wegner & Vallacher, 1977)—an organized representation of the actions that can be done, the goals that can be met, and the problems that can be found in that situation (cf. Craik, 1973).

Any item of behavioral information can conceivably be expressed as either a goal or a characteristic of a person. The behavior of "running around the track," for example, can be interpreted as serving the goal of "wanting to run" or as showing the characteristic of "being a runner." Our point here is that the preferred interpretation—the one that will be most readily encoded and retrieved—will depend on the perceiver's form of social awareness during encoding. Focal awareness should enhance the perceiver's memory for the person's characteristics; tacit awareness should enhance the perceiver's memory for the person's goals, for these are simple translations of the situation's characteristics. These conclusions have received some support in previous research. When observers are given "impression" versus "empathy" sets, for instance, and so are led, respectively, toward either focal or tacit awareness of a person, they become more inclined to impose the expected trait-based or goal-based organization on behavioral information about the person (Hoffman, Mischel, & Mazze, 1981). Evidence from studies by Hamilton, Katz, and Leirer (1980) and Fiske, Taylor, Etcoff, and Laufer (1979), in turn, suggests that these obser-

ational sets enhance memory in the expected directions for information that can be classified, post hoc, as characteristic-related and goal-related. Such support can be assembled only through the reinterpretation of past research, however, and one purpose of the present study was to provide a direct test of the differential memory effects of focal and tacit awareness.

AWARENESS OF A STORY

We wished to examine the memory effects of focal and tacit awareness in an uncontrived setting, and decided that the reader's social awareness of characters in a story might provide the proper arena. A story plot, after all, represents a complex social world in microcosm, and any effects of social awareness on memory that can be observed in that context should be quite directly generalizable to every day life. We were also attracted to the paradigm of story comprehension for another reason: Much of the professional lore of story writers involves concepts that are readily assimilable to the social awareness framework.

Beginning writers are commonly taught, for example, to establish, a coherent "point of view" early in the story—be it that of the writer, the reader, a story character, or yet someone else. They are also admonished to develop the "motivation" for this point of view as a means of getting the reader involved in the story. It is not surprising, then, that research on story comprehension has often centered on perspectives and goals in stories. Some researchers have examined the organizing function of perspectives, finding that readers led to take different points of view on a story are more likely to organize and recall story ideas relevant to that point of view (e.g., Anderson & Pichert, 1978; Bower, 1978; Owens, Dafoe, & Bower, 1977; Pichert & Anderson, 1977). Other researchers have noted the similar function of goals, finding that goal information facilitates understanding and memory for stories and other complex event sequences (e.g., Bower, 1978; Owens, Bower, & Black, 1979; Schank & Abelson, 1977; Zadny & Gerard, 1974).

The social awareness framework, of course, suggests that these two research themes are highly interrelated. Taking a perspective entails tacit awareness of a particular social entity, and so should make information relevant to the entity's goals more readily encoded, organized, and drawn upon in memory. Thus, understanding and remembering a story may not be facilitated by goal information generally, but only by goal information that applies to the particular entity in the reader's tacit awareness. Evidence for this proposition has been provided by Owens *et al.* (1977). Subjects led to take the perspective of a particular story character—through

an initial story paragraph introducing the character's point of view—were later more likely to recall story ideas relevant to that character's goals.

In an important counterpoint to the emphasis on goal information shared by most story comprehension researchers, the social awareness analysis suggests that information about the characteristics of certain social entities may play a role in story understanding. In particular, once the reader has adopted tacit awareness of a certain social entity as a way of organizing the story, the reader is then likely to hold in focal awareness any other social entities expressed or implied by the story. Twists and turns in the story plot, of course, could lead the reader to focus on a variety of objects, events, and social entities in a sequence determined by the tacit entity's meanderings. Information relevant to the characteristics of each focal item should be readily assimilated to the observer's knowledge structure for processing items in focal awareness, and should be easily retrieved when needed.

This tendency of focal awareness to enhance memory for characteristics of a social entity should be particularly apparent when the observer is focally aware of the entity for some time. Although the content of the story could often determine such duration of focalization, there is a variable of social structure that might have similar impact even across variations in content. Quite simply, once the reader is tacitly aware of a social entity in a story, the reader's focal awareness can be localized if there is only one other entity remaining. Tacit awareness of Jack, for instance, strongly implies focal awareness of Jill, for there is no one else in the story. Even when there are multiple characters in the story, this principle could hold. Tacit awareness of Snow White, for example, could lead the reader to focus on the seven dwarfs as a group. Such focal awareness would lead the reader to remember characteristics of the group of dwarfs, but not to remember the characteristics of any individual one. This general principle can be conceptualized as a variation on the figure-ground principle in the perception of social groupings (e.g., Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Wegner & Schaefer, 1978). In essence, once a portion of the field of social entities in a story is taken as the "ground," through tacit awareness, the remainder is likely to be taken as "figure" and given focal awareness. This allows the reader to understand, in at least one way, all the social entities in the story.

The present experiment brought together these several lines of reasoning for examination in the context of a single story. Subjects read a story in which three young women (Janet, Susie, and Ellen) spent an afternoon shopping in a mall. Using the technique of Owens *et al.* (1977), we induced subjects in one condition to become tacitly aware of Janet by having them read an initial paragraph about her trip to the mall. A second condi-

tion was arranged to find out whether subjects could become tacitly aware of a group in this story context; here, the initial paragraph featured the group of Janet and Susie approaching the mall together. A third condition starred Ellen in the opening paragraph. The story all subjects then read contained a series of episodes common to a shopping trip, and interspersed in these were statements directly relevant to each of the key social entities—Janet, the group of Janet and Susie, and Ellen. One set of statements conveyed goals of the entities, and another conveyed their characteristics.

A multiple-choice recognition measure given later assessed the degree to which subjects could recognize which character or characters had been associated with each of the statements about goals and characteristics in the story. One prediction for this measure was that subjects made tacitly aware of a social entity would be more accurate in recognizing the goals of that entity. Thus, tacit awareness of Janet, the group of Janet and Susie, or Ellen was expected to enhance memory for the goals of each. Our second prediction for this measure was that focal awareness of a social entity would lead subjects to become more accurate in recognizing the characteristics of that entity. By the figure-ground reasoning elaborated earlier, we believed that subjects in the "tacit-Janet" condition would probably focus on the group of Ellen and Susie; that subjects in the "tacit-Ellen" condition would probably focus on the group of Janet and Susie; and that subjects in the "tacit-group" (Janet and Susie) condition would probably focus on Ellen. We included characteristics in the story for two of these likely targets—the Janet-Susie group and Ellen. Subjects made tacitly aware of Ellen or of the group were expected to exhibit better recognition of the characteristics of the complementary social entity in each condition—either the group or Ellen, respectively.

METHOD

SUBJECTS

A total of 98 undergraduate students (71 female and 27 male) participated in the study. Of this group, 56 volunteered in return for extra credit in their introductory psychology classes at Trinity University, and 42 participated in partial fulfillment of introductory psychology course requirements at the University of Texas at Austin. On the basis of poor performance on free recall of the story, eight of these subjects were judged to be unmotivated, and their data were deleted from the analysis. The criterion for elimination was correct recall of the gist of less than 10% of the story sen-

tences. With similar numbers deleted from each condition, the final sample contained 29 in the tacit-Janet condition, 31 in the tacit-group condition, and 30 in the tacit-Allen condition.

THE STORY

The "Shopping Spree" story was a narrative about three girls—Janet, Susie, and Ellen—on an afternoon trip to a mall. The initial paragraph of about 150 words described the activities of one social entity (either Janet, the group of Janet and Susie, or Ellen) in the car on the way to the mall. This paragraph served as the manipulation of tacit awareness, establishing an initial "point of view" in each of the three conditions. The paragraph contained little information about any specific characteristics or goals of the entity, aside from the goal of getting to the mall, and consisted mainly of action descriptions. So, for example, in the tacit-Allen condition, the paragraph began: "It was a bright June morning and Ellen was standing on the front porch. She took a deep breath of the warm summer air and then set off down the walkway to her car." The paragraph ended as Ellen arrived at the mall. The subjects in the tacit-Janet condition read a paragraph in which "Janet" was substituted for "Ellen," and the subjects in the tacit-group condition read the paragraph with "Janet and Susie" substituted (along with appropriate grammatical changes).

The remaining 537 words of the story were identical across conditions. This segment contained a number of specific goal statements and characteristic statements for each of the key social entities (Janet, the group, and Ellen), as well as an embedding context that described the movements of the characters and some features of the mall. So, for instance, one paragraph early in the story read:

In the first store they all looked at clothes. Janet and Susie wanted to move quickly and not waste any time. Ellen wanted to try on everything she saw. So while Ellen tried to find an outfit that would go with her red hair and green eyes, Janet and Susie looked at scarves for their long hair. After a little while, Ellen decided that this store was too expensive and that she could go elsewhere to find lower prices. Susie, showing her usual assertiveness, insisted on staying a few minutes more. In her tactful manner, Janet managed to smooth things over.

This paragraph contains several of the embedded statements about goals and characteristics. "Janet and Susie wanted to move quickly and not waste any time" represents a group goal, whereas "Ellen wanted to try on everything that she saw" represents Ellen's personal goal. The state-

ment that Ellen had "red hair and green eyes" was included as a characteristic of Ellen; the fact that Janet and Susie had "long hair" was taken as a group characteristic; "assertiveness" was included as a characteristic of Susie; and having a "tactful manner" was considered a characteristic of Janet. In general, goals in the story were signaled by the word "want," and characteristics included physical features and personality traits. The distinctness of these two categories of statements was evidenced in preliminary ratings of story statements by a group of four undergraduate student judges. Told only that a characteristic was a "relatively permanent quality of a person" while a goal was "something that the person needs, wants, or intends to do," these judges classified statements as either goals or characteristics and reached agreement with our classifications 95% of the time for characteristics and 88% of the time for goals.

PROCEDURE AND RECOGNITION MEASURE

Subjects were run in groups of 10 to 15 by a female experimenter, and were assigned to conditions by the random distribution of experimental booklets. Subjects were asked to read the story carefully and were alerted to a 5-minute reading time limit. At the end of this time, they were given a free-recall task used to assess their motivation, and then were administered a multiple-choice recognition task designed to tap the major dependent variables of the study.

The recognition task was comprised of 42 questions about the goals and characteristics of the social entities in the story. For each question, the subject was presented with the letters E, J, and S (for Ellen, Janet, and Susie), and was asked to circle those letters (none, one, two, or three) that represented the correct answer to the question. So, for instance, the question "Who had red hair and green eyes?" was correctly answered by circling E, and the question "Who wanted to move quickly and not waste any time?" was correctly answered by circling both J and S. For some questions, all three characters were correct (e.g., "Who looked at clothes?"), and for others, none was correct (e.g., "Who was wearing a white blouse?"). In all, questions were asked about three characteristics and three goals each for Janet, Ellen, and Susie, and about an additional, independent set of four goals and four characteristics that were jointly applicable to Janet and Susie.

The dependent variables of interest were those expected to be influenced by the different tacit perspectives in the three conditions. No hypotheses were put forward regarding recognition for the goals or characteristics of Susie or for the actions of either of the other characters that

could not be deemed relevant to their goals or characteristics, so these variables were not analyzed. Six scores were calculated for each subject, each reflecting the proportion of correctly recognized story statements in a particular category of statements. These categories included the goals and characteristics of Janet, the group, and Ellen.

RESULTS

Our first general prediction was that goal recognition would be enhanced for the tacit entity in all three conditions. This possibility was tested by means of a 3×3 analysis of variance, with condition (Janet, the group, or Ellen) as a between-subjects factor and the social entity whose goals were to be recognized (Janet, the group, or Ellen) as a within-subjects factor. The mean proportions of a given social entity's goals correctly recognized, by condition, are shown in Table 1. The analysis revealed a significant main effect for social entity, $F(2, 174) = 27.44, p < .001$, indicating that the goals of certain entities were generally easier to recognize than the goals of others. This was accompanied, however, by a significant interaction of condition and social entity, $F(4, 174) = 2.67, p < .05$, showing that memory for the goals of different entities was indeed dependent on condition. The general hypothesis that subjects would be more accurate in recognizing the goals of their tacit entities was tested by means of a planned comparison among the three cells representing this combination (i.e., memory for Janet's goals in the tacit-Janet condition, the group's goals in the tacit-group condition, and Ellen's goals in the tacit-Allen condition) and the remaining six cells in the design. The mean proportion of goals recognized for a tacit entity was .70, whereas the proportion for other en-

TABLE 1
Mean Proportion of Accurately Recognized Goals by Social Entity and Condition

CONDITION	SOCIAL ENTITY		
	JANET	GROUP	ELLEN
Tacit-Janet	.72 ^a	.48	.73
Tacit-group	.57	.57 ^a	.79
Tacit-Allen	.62	.47	.82

Note. Comparisons among entries in a particular row should be considered in light of the significant main effect for social entity.

^aThe mean proportion in this cell is significantly greater than the overall mean for other cells in its column, $p < .05$.

tities was .61. This comparison was significant, $t(87) = 2.75$, $p < .01$, indicating that tacit awareness of a social entity generally enhanced recognition of the entity's goals. Specific comparisons between the mean for a tacit entity and the mean for that entity in the remaining (nontacit) conditions were also performed. By this analysis, the expected enhancement of goal recognition was found to be significant in the case of Janet, $t(87) = 2.71$, $p < .05$, and the group, $t(87) = 2.06$, $p < .05$, but not in the case of Ellen, $t(87) = 1.30$.

Our second general prediction was that characteristic recognition would be enhanced for the social entity complementary to the tacit entity in two conditions. Recognition of characteristics was expected to be greater for Ellen in the tacit-group condition than for Ellen in the other conditions, and likewise, greater for the group in the tacit-ElLEN condition than for the group in other conditions. To test this, we performed an analysis of variance paralleling the one above on characteristic recognition; means for this analysis are shown in Table 2. A significant main effect for social entity, $F(2, 174) = 14.97$, $p < .001$, indicating that recognition of characteristics differed for different entities, was accompanied by a significant interaction of condition and social entity, $F(4, 174) = 2.44$, $p < .05$. As in the case of goals, then, memory for the characteristics of an entity was dependent on condition. We expected this interaction to represent a specific tendency for greater recognition of characteristics for Ellen in the tacit-group condition than in other conditions and for the group in the tacit-ElLEN condition than in other conditions; accordingly, we made a comparison between the mean for these two cells (.83) and that for the four comparison cells (.72). This comparison was significant, $t(87) = 2.80$, $p < .01$, indicating that recognition of characteristics was generally enhanced for social entities when they were likely to be focal in the story. The specific

TABLE 2
Mean Proportion of Accurately Recognized Characteristics by Social Entity and Condition

CONDITION	SOCIAL ENTITY		
	JANET	GROUP	ELLEN
Tacit-Janet	.63	.66	.79
Tacit-group	.63	.65	.86
Tacit-ElLEN	.61	.80 ^a	.78

Note. Comparisons among entries in a particular row should be considered in light of the significant main effect for social entity.

^aThe mean proportion in this cell is significantly greater than the overall mean for other cells in its column, $p < .05$.

comparisons between the mean for a focal entity and the mean for that entity in other (nonfocal) conditions proved significant in the case of the group, $t(87) = 2.90$, $p < .01$, but not significant in the case of Ellen, $t(87) = 1.50$.

These analyses reveal that the major predictions for this study were supported. It is worth noting, however, that while the mean differences were all in the expected direction and were significant in overall analyses, the hypotheses were not significantly supported in the instance of one story character, Ellen. Given that the overall entity main effects observed in the analyses of both goals and characteristics were largely attributable to a marked inflation of recognition for Ellen items, it may be that these specific nonsignificant effects might be traceable to an overall ceiling on the recognition of information about Ellen. Although we did not fashion the story with Ellen in mind, she turned out to be its "most memorable character"—one for whom social awareness variations had only a reduced impact.

We elected to conduct additional analyses to satisfy our curiosity on two points. First, we wondered whether forms of awareness only enhance memory, or may also attenuate it. When one becomes tacitly aware of a person and develops an acuity for processing the person's goals, for instance, a compensatory reduction in the capacity to retain information about the person's characteristics might emerge. To gauge this possibility, we tested the difference between the mean recognition of characteristics in the three cells that represented tacit entities (i.e., Janet in the tacit-Janet condition, etc.) and that in the remaining six cells; we found that this difference fell short of significance, $t(87) = 1.20$. And, in the analysis of goals, a similar comparison was made to determine whether recognition of goals of an entity might be diminished by focal awareness of the entity. The mean accuracy for Ellen's goals in the tacit-group condition and the group's goals in the tacit-Allen condition was not significantly less than the mean for those goals in the other conditions, $t(87) = 0.51$. These comparisons show, in sum, that awareness forms did not act to decrease recognition memory in this study. Apparently, variations in social awareness functioned primarily to enhance memory in the expected directions.

A final analysis was done to assess the validity of an alternative interpretation of the primary findings. This "response-bias" interpretation arises on noting that the present measures of accuracy represent only the tendency of subjects to make correct inclusions or "hits"—saying that an item appeared in the story when it did. The observed results might also have been obtained if subjects had simply attributed any goal to a tacit entity (accurately or not), and any characteristic to a focal entity (again, accurately or not). To examine this, we repeated the analysis of both goals

and characteristics on such "false-alarm" responses (e.g., for Janet's goals, the proportion of all goals other than Janet's—those of Ellen, Susie, the group, and those that appeared in the test as distractors—that were incorrectly ascribed to Janet alone). These analyses revealed a tendency to overascribe both goals and characteristics to Ellen, and a tendency to underascribe both goals and characteristics to the group. These tendencies represent main effects of entity, however, and in the absence of condition $\times$ entity interactions, it is fair to conclude that a response-bias interpretation of the accuracy results is unwarranted.

DISCUSSION

The social awareness analysis of story comprehension processes led us to predict two special effects of awareness on memory, both of which were observed in this research. When we induced readers to become tacitly aware of a social entity in a story by giving them an initial paragraph introducing the entity's point of view, their recognition memory for that entity's goals was strengthened. This manipulation was also designed to direct the reader's focal awareness toward the single entity remaining to be understood in the story. In the two experimental conditions in which memory for this remaining entity was assessed, memory for the characteristics of this focal entity was generally augmented. Although not all the relevant individual comparisons reached significance, it is nonetheless notable that, overall, the different forms of social awareness had divergent yet predictable effects on memory for the qualities of social entities in a story.

The present findings also signal a more subtle effect of social awareness on story comprehension. The variations in social awareness we induced in the different conditions seem to have impinged not only on the specific features of social entities that were retained in memory (i.e., goals vs. characteristics), but also on the degree to which potential social entities were perceived as actual social entities by readers. A straightforward partition of the character population in the story, after all, would lead to the conclusion that the social entities involved were simply the three characters—Janet, Susie, and Ellen. Yet when the social awareness manipulations were imposed, subjects in two conditions appeared to understand and remember the story as if the group of Janet and Susie could be represented as a unitary social entity. Tendencies were observed for the common features of the group to be retained—group goals in the tacit-group condition and group characteristics in the tacit-Allen condition—and so for the group to be understood in the same way that a single character

might be understood. Although the present data do not allow a detailed analysis of this phenomenon, they do suggest that the role of social awareness at this basic level of social cognition may be an important one. Different forms of awareness of a story may dictate that a particular character be seen as an individual, that the character be seen only as part of a group, or perhaps that the character not be accorded status as a social entity at all (cf. Ostrom, Pryor, & Simpson, 1981).

The implications of social awareness for story comprehension may extend beyond those illustrated in this research. Certainly, it must be recognized that the present results represent the effects of only a limited number of forms of awareness of an admittedly simple story. In the complexities of the epic novel, the investigative journalist's report, or the Shakespearean play, the reader's social awareness could well be permuted in ways that only begin to be tapped by this analysis. The writer's repertoire of stylistic tricks could lead the reader from tacit to focal awareness of a social entity and back again; to tacit awareness of a person who, in sympathizing with another, leads the reader to tacit awareness of that second person as well; to tacit awareness of entities in different subplots who later are revealed to be in opposition. The complexity of the influence of social awareness on memory in such circumstances would rival the intricacy of the stories themselves, and the present findings would serve at best as a rudimentary guide.

The social awareness analysis provides some relief from this complexity, however, by indicating certain aspects of story comprehension that should remain unchanged despite story convolutions. First, we would argue that a reader can only become involved in the hypothetical social world of a story through the vehicle of a tacit perspective. This perspective provides a goal structure for the reader to think about and maintains the reader's interest as the goals are being pursued. The second aspect of story comprehension emphasized in this framework is the regular direction of the reader's focal awareness by the tacit perspective that is engaged. In short, at any point in the story, the reader is thinking about something or someone of concern to the tacit perspective. This focal target probably also influences the reader's interest and engagement, as it is clear that some things are more interesting to think about than others. In time, it might be possible to use social awareness analyses in even more penetrating ways to investigate why some stories are better than others—and why some readers are better than others.

At the most general level, the social awareness analysis exemplified here in stories may be useful in understanding real-life stories. This framework, after all, provides a unitary means of symbolizing many of the states of mind in which the individual may encounter the social world.

With the partitioning of these states in social-psychological theory, it becomes possible to predict when individuals will become concerned with understanding the characteristics of people and groups, when they will become concerned with conceptualizing the goals of people and groups, and when certain people and certain groups will remain excluded from their awareness entirely.

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