TWO REPRESENTATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOCIOLOGY TO POLITICAL THEORY: THE DOCTRINES OF WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER AND LESTER FRANK WARD

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PART II: LESTER FRANK WARD (1841–1913)

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS SOCIOLOGICAL SYSTEM

Among all American writers there can be no doubt that Lester F. Ward has produced the most pretentious and comprehensive system of sociology. Mr. Ward was also the earliest important American sociologist. His Dynamic Sociology, which many critics consider his magnum opus, appeared in 1883, about midway between the publication of the first and last volumes of Spencer's Principles of Sociology. In addition to many articles in periodicals, Ward's sociological system was embodied in six considerable volumes. 1 Whatever may be the estimate of the future regarding


Of these works Dynamic Sociology is the best extended exposition of his social philosophy, a briefer and clearer presentation of which is to be found in the second part of his Outlines of Sociology. Pure Sociology is the authoritative exposition of his sociological system, which again is more clearly presented in Dealy and Ward's Textbook of Sociology. His social psychology is best brought together in Psychic Factors of Civilization, while his Applied Sociology is the classic exposition of his conception of social teleis.


the place of Ward in the history of sociology, it is certain that no other writer has approached the subject with a body of scientific knowledge which at all approximated that possessed by Ward. Herbert Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy* undoubtedly displays more profound reasoning powers and a greater talent for the logical marshalling of evidence, but his scientific knowledge was not at all comparable to that possessed by Ward. Ward's formal scientific career was passed as a government expert in paleobotany, to which he made contributions only second in importance to his work in sociology. Ward's predilection for introducing his botanical terminology into his sociology often gives the latter as strange, technical, and repulsive a tone as is to be found in the writings of the extreme "Organicists." Some of his scientific terms, however, such as "sympodial development," "synergy," "creative synthesis," "gynaecocracy," and "social telesis," are rather felicitous and have been quite generally absorbed into conventional sociological thought and expression.

An extended or comprehensive exposition of Ward's sociological system within the scope of the present work is manifestly impossible. Attention will be confined to a few of his cardinal contributions.

As to the subject-matter of sociology, Ward says: "My thesis is that the subject-matter of sociology is human achievement. It is not what men are but what they do. It is not the structure but the function." As nearly all of the earlier sociologists had been concerned almost wholly with an analysis of social structure, Ward's point of approach was novel and epoch-making in its significance. The divisions of sociology are two—pure and applied. Pure sociology is theoretical and seeks to establish the principles of the science. Applied sociology is practical and points out the applications of the science. Specifically, it "deals with the artificial means of accelerating the spontaneous processes of nature." Ward divides the body of his sociological system accordingly into

1 His academic career was limited to lectures at several university summer-school sessions and six years (1906–1913) as professor of sociology at Brown University.

2 *Pure Sociology*, p. 15.

genesis and telesis. The former treats of the origin and spontaneous development of social structures and functions and the latter of the conscious improvement of society. In the department of social genesis, Ward’s most important contributions may be summarized under the headings: sympodial development, creative synthesis, synergy, the law of parsimony, the functions and biological origin of mind, social statics and dynamics, and the classification of the social forces.

The natural or genetic development of society is “sympodial.” By this Ward means that type of development found in certain plants in which the trunk, after developing to a certain extent, gives off a branch or sympode, which from that point onward virtually becomes the trunk, until it is in turn displaced by another sympode. The doctrine of “creative synthesis,” which Ward adopts from Wundt, he explains as denoting that “each combination is something more than the mere sum of its component factors.” Every synthesis of nature is, like the chemical compound, a new creation. This is probably the most useful of the contributions of Ward’s pure science to his sociology. “Synergy” is defined as “the systematic and organic working together of the antithetical forces of nature.” This is one of the basic conceptions underlying the theory of the spontaneous development of society. Finally, the “law of parsimony,” which is the basic law of social mechanics, is described as the tendency of natural forces to work along the line of least resistance or greatest attraction. The identity of this with Spencer’s principle of motion along the line of least resistance is obvious.

With his characteristic daring and confidence, Ward describes the origin of life and the biological creation of the mind. Life originated through the process of “zoism,” which was a creative synthesis taking the form of the recompounding of the highest known chemical properties. The mind was also a creative product of “zoism”; it originated in the fact of “awareness”; and its irreducible element is the capacity of detecting and differentiating painful and pleasurable stimuli which come from the environment. Feeling and desire, which are of an earlier origin than

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2. Ibid., p. 79.  
3. Ibid., p. 171.  
5. Ibid., pp. 115–19.  
6. Ibid., pp. 119–35.
intellect, are the dynamic and impelling forces of mind; intellect, which is a later and higher product, is the directive faculty.1

Ward considers his distinction between social statics and social dynamics and his discussion of the nature of each of these aspects of the social process to be one of his most important theoretical contributions.2 Social statics deals with social equilibration and the establishment of a social order—the building up of social structures.3 The development of the social order is a "struggle for structure" rather than a struggle for existence. The best structures survive.4 In the growth of social structures synergy is the most important principle. It is the force which creates all structures and explains all organization.5 Through this principle of synergy there is brought about a working together of the antithetical forces of nature in the following sequence of processes: collision, conflict, antagonism, opposition, antithesis, competition, interaction, compromise, collaboration, co-operation, and organization.6 Synergy, in the development of the social order, operates mainly through the process that Ward calls "social karyokinesis." This is the social analogue of fertilization in the biological field, and is manifested in the contact, amalgamation, and assimilation of different social groups. All the processes enumerated in the foregoing sequence are exemplified in this process, which ends in the production of a homogeneous nation.7 Ward here follows the theory of Ratzenhofer and Gumplovicz regarding the "struggle of races" as the main factor in state-building.

Social dynamics deals with social progress or the changes in the structure of society.8 In social dynamics there are three fundamental principles—difference of potential, innovation, and conation. The difference of potential is manifested in the crossings of cultures which take place in social assimilation and amalgamation. Progress comes from a fusion of unlike elements.9 Innovation, which is the social analogue of the sport or mutation

1 Ibid., pp. 97, 99 ff., 124 ff., 142, 467 ff.
3 Pure Sociology, p. 184. 4 Ibid., pp. 176–84. 5 Ibid., pp. 176, 231.
6 Ibid., p. 175. This is, obviously, but an extension and elaboration of the Hegelian theory of development.
7 Ibid., pp. 205 ff. 8 Ibid., p. 221. 9 Ibid., pp. 231 ff., 237.
in the organic world, is the product of psychic exuberance. Conation, or social effort, is that application of social energy from which achievement results. This achievement takes the form of the satisfaction of desire, the preservation of life, and the modification of the environment.

Ward classifies the social forces as ontogenetic or preservative, phylogenetic or reproductive, and sociogenetic or spiritual. It is in connection with the discussion of the phylogenetic forces that Ward develops his famous theory of "gynaecocracy," according to which he holds that the female sex was the original sex in nature, and was the most important until subordinated by the social restraints imposed upon it after man discovered his relation to the child.

In his exposition of the principle of social telesis Ward lays down the fundamental proposition that energy must be controlled if evolution is to result. There are two possible methods of control: the unconscious control of nature manifested in genesis, and the conscious direction by mind, involved in telesis. The conscious method of control by mind is manifestly superior to the unconscious control of nature. Nature is wasteful in providing an immense mass of raw material and leaving it to be improved very slowly through natural selection. The tendency of mind is to economize through foresight and the adjustment of means to ends. This control of the dynamic forces of nature and society through the adjustment of means to ends is what Ward designates as "telesis." In this process of conscious or telic control of the social forces, the development of the state was the most important step ever taken by man or society. Nevertheless, though the state is the chief agent through which the conscious direction of the social process is and will be carried on, society cannot perfect this conscious control through any organ until there is developed

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2 Ibid., pp. 232, 247 ff.

3 Ibid., p. 261.


5 Ibid., p. 463.

6 Ibid., pp. 469–71.

7 Ibid., pp. 467 f.

8 Ibid., p. 551.
DOCTRINES OF SUMNER AND WARD

an adequate and sufficiently diffused knowledge of the nature and manner of the operation of the social forces. Therefore an adequate development of a system of education which will make possible the universal diffusion of this essential knowledge is the indispensable prerequisite to the proper development of collective telesis.¹

In conclusion, one may safely say that Ward’s outstanding contributions to sociology were his grasp of the relations between cosmic and social evolution, and his doctrine of the superiority of the conscious over the unconscious control of the social process. In neither of these respects has he been approached by any other sociologist.² Of these two cardinal contributions the latter is by far the more important, for the obvious reason that the former is at best but picturesque and eloquent guesswork, and must always be so until the range of human knowledge is greatly extended. The latter, however, is perhaps the most important single contribution of sociology to human thought, and Ward’s significance must rest chiefly upon the fact that his presentation of this conception has been the most powerful that sociology has yet produced. Professor Giddings has summed up this aspect of Ward’s system with characteristic clarity:

Throughout all Ward’s work there runs one dominating and organizing thought. Human society, as we who live now know it, is not the passive product of unconscious forces. It lies within the domain of cosmic law, but so does the mind of man: and this mind of man has knowingly, artfully, adapted and readapted its social environment, and with reflective intelligence has begun to shape it into an instrument wherewith to fulfil man’s will. With forecasting wisdom man will perfect it, until it shall be at once adequate and adaptable to all its uses. This he will do not by creative impulse evolving in a void, but by constructive intelligence shaping the substantial stuff of verified scientific knowledge. Wherefore, scientific knowledge must be made the possession of mankind. Education must not merely train the mind. It must also equip and store, with knowledge.

¹ Ibid., pp. 573–75; Dynamic Sociology, II, chap. xiv; Applied Sociology, passim. With this outline of Ward’s sociology based upon his Pure Sociology compare his own summary in the preface of his Dynamic Sociology.

² Cf. A. W. Small, American Journal of Sociology, XXI (1915–16), 752; F. H. Giddings, ibid., XIX (1913–14), 67–68.
This great thought Dr. Ward apprehended, expressed, explained, illuminated, drove home to the mind of all who read his pages, as no other writer, ancient or modern, has ever done. It is his enduring and cogent contribution to sociology.¹

2. SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLITICAL THEORY

A. THE RELATION OF SOCIOLOGY TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

The conception which Ward holds of the relation of sociology to political science is apparent from his view of the general relation between sociology and the special social sciences. The special social sciences furnish the data which the general social science, sociology, co-ordinates and uses as the basis of its generalizations.² But sociology is more than the mere sum of the special social sciences. It is a true creative synthesis, and like the chemical compound is a new, higher, and different product from the constituent units.³ Political science, as a special social science, furnishes the data for the generalizations which sociology offers upon political problems.

B. GENERAL DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Ward's distinctions, if they may be called such, between the terms society, state, government, and nation, are very vague and unsatisfactory. He certainly does little to clarify the terminology of political science. He does not employ any of the above

¹ F. H. Giddings, loc. cit. It is hardly necessary to point out that this is essentially a contradiction of Spencer's thesis and it constitutes the chief mark of differentiation between the social philosophy of the two men who were to sociology what Niebuhr and Ranke were to history, and Turgot and Adam Smith to economics.


³ Pure Sociology, p. 91. Cf. Gillette, op. cit., pp. 34–36. Ward thus describes the relation of sociology to the special social sciences: "It is not quite enough to say that it is a synthesis of them all. It is the new compound which their synthesis creates. It is not any of them and it is not all of them. It is that science which they spontaneously generate. It is a genetic product, the last term in the genesis of science. The special social sciences are the units of aggregation that organically combine to create sociology, but they lose their individuality as completely as do chemical units, and the resultant product is wholly unlike any of them and is of a higher order. All this is true of any of the complex sciences, but sociology, standing at the head of the entire series, is enriched by all the truths of nature and embraces all truth. It is the scientia scientiarum" (Pure Sociology, p. 91).
terms in a consistent or uniform manner, nor does he in any place define any of them in an exact sense. Society is used as the generic term for associated life and also to describe advanced human associations.¹ That he does not regard the distinction between the terms state, government, and nation as fundamental is apparent from the following passage: "If anyone objects to the use of the word government, there is no reason why the word nation or state may not be substituted. The name is not essential."² But, however careless Ward may have been regarding his use of terms to describe the fundamental political organization of society, he was not in the least equivocal in regard to its importance. He invariably insists that the state, or the government,³ is the most important social institution. He repeatedly emphasizes the value of the organic analogy which represents the state as the brain of the social organism.⁴ The following paragraph, which is almost Hegelian in tone, best summarizes Ward’s conception of the state:

We thus see that the state, though genetic in its origin, is telic in its method; that it has but one purpose, function, or mission, that of securing the welfare of society; that its mode of operation is that of preventing the anti-social action of individuals; that in doing this it increases the freedom of human action so long as it is not anti-social; that the state is therefore essentially moral or ethical; that its own acts must necessarily be ethical; that being a natural product it must in a large sense be representative; that in point of fact it is always as good as society will permit it to be; that while thus far in the history of society the state has rarely performed acts that tend to advance mankind, it has always been the condition to all achievement, making possible all the social, industrial, artistic, literary, and scientific activities that go on within the state and under its protection. There is no other institution with which the state may be compared, and yet, in view of all this, it is the most important of all human institutions.⁵

¹ Dynamic Sociology, II, 212 ff.
² Psychic Factors of Civilization, p. 297. Cf. Pure Sociology, p. 188, where in opposition to the conventional view he argues that the institution of government by society required and produced the state.
³ He uses the term government chiefly in Dynamic Sociology, and state in Pure Sociology.
⁴ Outlines of Sociology, pp. 107–9; Psychic Factors of Civilization, p. 297; Pure Sociology, p. 565.
⁵ Pure Sociology, p. 555. But Ward had no admiration for Hegel’s metaphysical method; see Glimpses of the Cosmos, V, 128–32.
Ward does not enter into any formal discussion of the problem of sovereignty. Liberty, Ward defines as "the power to act in obedience to desire." Liberty has always been deemed such a boon because happiness consists in this very freedom of acting in obedience to desire. The love of liberty thus has been instinctive and universal in mankind. In theory, government is the necessary foe of liberty. In fact, however, government, by checking license, has prevented man from losing more liberty than government has taken away. The restraint of complete liberty by government has made possible the development of man's intellectual powers, so that ultimately he may be restored to the possession of his complete original liberty, but a liberty which is not based upon ignorance. The liberty of the future will be one that is founded upon an intelligent comprehension of man's relations to society and will not require crude artificial restraint to prevent its enjoyment from threatening the disintegration of society.

Ward relates his interpretation of political parties very definitely to his theory of social mechanics. The fundamental principle underlying the sociological interpretation of the struggle between different political parties is that of "social synergy." Party antagonism, in reality, brings about a co-operation between these seemingly antithetical forces which secures their working together toward an end of which they are unconscious:

The vigorous interaction of the two forces, which looks so much like antagonism, strife, and struggle, transforms force into energy and energy into power, and builds political and social structures. And after they are constructed, the same influences transform them, and it is this that constitutes social progress. Political institutions—the laws of every country—are the product of this political synergy, the crystallized action of legislative bodies created by political parties.

In the same way, therefore, that the struggle between races and groups creates society and the state, the struggle between political parties within the state transforms the state and secures

1 Dynamic Sociology, II, 233.
2 Ibid., pp. 232–34.
3 Ibid., pp. 232–35.
political progress. Moral rather than technical questions are best adapted for political issues.\(^1\) The progressive and liberal parties, which are distinguished by their advocacy of an extension of governmental activity, are the real friends of individualism and liberty. The "coming slavery," to use Spencer's term, has already arrived, says Ward, under the form of the plutocratic, laissez faire control of society and political organization by the capitalistic conservative parties. The progressive parties, which stand for collective action, are the force which is attempting to secure emancipation from this slavery and exploitation.\(^2\)

**C. THE ORIGIN OF THE STATE AND THE STAGES OF POLITICAL EVOLUTION**

While Professor Small has remarked with accuracy that Ward modified his sociological thought but little from the publication of his *Dynamic Sociology* until his death, this is decidedly not the case with his theory of the origin of the state.

The theory which he advanced in *Dynamic Sociology* was exceedingly archaic, being virtually a combination of Hobbes's view of a presocial state of nature with Rousseau's conception of the origin of the state through an artifice of the most powerful individuals.\(^3\) In the first place, Ward differentiates four broad stages of social development. The first was the solitary or "autarchic" stage in which man lived in solitude and in as far from a social state as was in keeping with the possibility of propagating and rearing his kind. The earliest condition of man was thus both presocial and antisocial.\(^4\) The second stage in social evolution was the "anarchic," or that of the "constrained aggregate." Social groups had developed through genetic increase, but being without government, they lived in a "state of utmost liberty and utmost license." The third stage he designates as the national or "politarchic" stage, which was distinguished by the origin of

\(^3\) As expressed in Rousseau's famous second *Discourse*. For Ward's own frank admission of the archaic and erroneous nature of his earliest theory of the state, see his "Sociology and the State," *American Journal of Sociology*, March, 1910, pp. 679-80.  
a crude form of government. The wars which have taken place between these first national groups have led to the formation of larger political societies and will ultimately lead to the development of the fourth or final stage in social evolution. This ultimate stage, which he designates as the cosmopolitan or "pantarchic," will come when social integration has produced the world-state. In his specific account of the origin of the state in Dynamic Sociology, Ward starts with the utterly untenable theory of the antisocial nature of primitive man. He denies the validity of the Aristotelian tradition regarding the sociability of man. The passions of primitive man being intense and the means of satisfying them limited, the condition of life must have been one of continual conflict, and society could not have been possible until the development of political control and protection. The origin of society and government must have been coeval. But mankind did not find its way out of this state of primitive anarchy through the social contract. The people as a whole never sought government; government always originated itself. Government was always initiated by a few especially ambitious individuals who were possessed of superior sagacity and who desired social power and position. They disguised their real intentions by claiming to intervene to protect the weak and oppressed. "The plan must have consisted in speciously claiming as the real object the protection of the injured and the punishment of the injuring. This, as the sagacity of the founders of government foresaw, would secure them adherents and confirm their authority." Owing to this insidious and oppressive origin of political authority, man has since that time been continually trying to escape from the burdens which government has imposed. But all the evils that have accompanied the development of government are not the

1 Dynamic Sociology, I, 464–68.
4 Dynamic Sociology, II, 224. This tendency of the few to dominate in political control has been scientifically analyzed by Professor Giddings, who designates it as the principle of "protocracy." See his Responsible State, pp. 19 ff.
result of the application of the principle of political control; they are a consequence of the perversions of true government by mankind.¹

During the interval between the appearance of his Dynamic Sociology and the publication of Pure Sociology Ward became acquainted with the now generally accepted theory of Ferguson, Spencer, Bagehot, Gumplowicz, and Ratzenhofer, to the effect that the state, as it is defined by political science, originated through the process of group conflict, amalgamation, and assimilation. This doctrine Ward accepted with great enthusiasm. He says of it:

It furnishes the first scientific, or in the least satisfactory, theory that has been advanced as to the origin and true constitution of the state, so that, after grasping this principle in its entirety, all the old notions about the state become rubbish, and any work on the nature of the state that does not recognize and start from this standpoint is superficial and practically worthless.²

D. CLASSIFICATION OF THE FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

As the basis for a general classification of the forms of government, Ward proposes the terms: autocracies, aristocracies, and democracies.³ Within the general category of democracy Ward distinguishes three distinct variations: physiocracy, plutocracy, and sociocracy.⁴ Physiocracy is that type of government which developed in Western Europe as a result of the teachings of the Physiocrats and Adam Smith, and the individualistic writers like Humboldt and Spencer. It is that sort of laissez faire government which is based upon honest but wrong-headed individualistic

¹ Ibid., pp. 225–27.
² Ward, American Journal of Sociology, VII (1901–2), 762; cf. ibid., XV (1909–10), 679–80; Pure Sociology, pp. 204 ff. As Ward agrees entirely with Gumplowicz and Ratzenhofer upon the subject of the origin of the state, it will not be necessary to repeat his version of their doctrine. In addition to the reference to Pure Sociology, Ward's interpretation of the Gumplowicz-Ratzenhofer theory of the origin of the state is best summarized in American Journal of Sociology, II (1904–5), 643–53; Pub. Amer. Econ. Assoc., 3d series, Vol. V, No. 2, pp. 187 ff. The criticisms which can be directed against this group-struggle origin of the state are best formulated by J. Novicow in his La Critique du Darwinism social; and by E. C. Hayes, An Introduction to the Study of Sociology, pp. 538 ff.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 318–23.
political philosophy.¹ Plutocracy is the perversion of physiocracy which originated when, in the early nineteenth century, the corrupt and selfish vested interests appropriated the individualistic political philosophy for the purpose of maintaining themselves in their position. The exponents of this theory make a wide use of the individualistic appeal for governmental inactivity, and utilize the deep-seated prejudice of the masses against government, so that they may be allowed to continue their exploitation of society. This perversion of individualism, which originated a century ago, is still the current form of contemporary political theory and organization.² Sociocracy is the next logical stage in political evolution. It is in reality the ideal democracy from which the present partisanship, ignorance, hypocrisy, and stupidity have been eliminated. In short, it is administration of the government by society for its own interests, and not the present exploitation of society for the benefit of a particular party or group of interests. Sociocracy does not lay stress primarily upon the form of government but "goes to the substance, and denotes that, in whatever manner organized, it is the duty of society to act consciously and intelligently, as becomes an enlightened age, in the direction of guarding its own interests and working out its own destiny."³ Under a sociocratic form of government "society would inquire in a business way without fear, favor, or bias, into everything that concerned its welfare, and if it found obstacles it would remove them, and if it found opportunities it would improve them. In a word, society would do under the same circumstances just what an intelligent individual would do. It would further in all possible ways its own interests."⁴

¹ *Psychic Factors of Civilization*, pp. 318–19.


³ *The Psychic Factors of Civilization*, p. 311, introductory note.

E. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE

In his theories regarding the function and sphere of state activity Ward was the most vigorous and consistent opponent of Spencerian and Sumnerian laissez faire individualism among the strictly sociological writers of his time. In fact, Ward's treatment of this subject is the most satisfactory and important division of his political theories. While no writer has been more scathing in his condemnation of the defects and evils in the contemporary political systems, Ward always distinguished carefully between the institution of government and its perversions. For the latter he had unlimited contempt, but he never lost his faith in the efficacy of the former as an agent of social reform, if it could be put on a scientific basis and purged of its corruption and stupidity.

Ward enumerates four chief functions or government: the restraint, protection, accommodation, and amelioration of society. The first of these has never been a legitimate function; the second will be necessary as long as men do not refrain from injuring their fellows; the third is, and always will be, an indispensable function of government; while the fourth, which is the most important of all, has been scarcely put into action at all. The restraint of the citizens by the government is not conducted in the interests of the community, but is designed to allow the ruling classes to proceed with their exploitation. How long it will be before society divests the government of this function will depend upon the rapidity of the growth of general intelligence and enlightenment. By the protective function of government Ward means the "police" function, which is concerned with the prevention of fraud and violence. This cannot be dispensed with until the fraudulent and violent elements in society are eliminated by the general increase in enlightenment and intelligence. The function of accommodation, however, is never likely to be outgrown:

Man is neither ubiquitous, omniscient, nor omnipotent; hence he needs agents to transact business in localities where he cannot be; to acquire skill

2 Dynamic Sociology, II, 212-17, 231.
3 Ibid., pp. 236-50.
5 Ibid., pp. 239-41.
and dexterity in subjects with which everyone cannot afford time to acquaint himself; and to perform duties by means of organization which individuals, acting independently, would not possess the strength to perform. In short, society needs and must always have an organized agency to represent it.⁴

In carrying on its restraining, protecting, and accommodating functions, government has not directly aided or promoted progress. But while possessing no directly progressive element it has been the indispensable prerequisite of all progress.⁵ Government may directly improve the condition of society in a conscious telic manner if the legislators will only become social scientists. There can be no scientific government, no important development of the ameliorative function of government until the legislators have gained a knowledge of the nature and means of controlling the social forces in the same way that the applied scientist discovers the physical laws of nature and applies this knowledge in controlling them and adapting them to his needs.⁶

Ward's whole defense of government as the most effective instrument of society in promoting progress rests primarily upon his above-mentioned distinction between honest and intelligent government and its past and present perversions. As to origins, the extant governments almost universally arose in exploitation. They were established by, and have been conducted in the interest of, those who desired to govern. A rationally constituted government should be originated by, and conducted for the benefit of, those desiring to be governed.⁷ Again, whereas in our actual governments the people look up to the government as their master and the government regards the citizens in the light of subjects, in a perfect government the officers of government would be viewed in the light of public servants and would be compelled, upon the pain of removal, to perform their stipulated duties.⁸ In a model government the distance which separates the governing and the governed would be eliminated, and society would recognize that it is itself the source of authority and that the government is

⁴ Dynamic Sociology, II, 241–42. ⁵ Ibid., pp. 243–44.
⁶ Ibid., pp. 245–50; Pure Sociology, pp. 568–69; Outlines of Sociology, pp. 187–89, 268–76; Psychic Factors of Civilization, pp. 309–12. Ward, then, essentially adopted the doctrine of Plato and Comte that perfect government could only come when society and government were controlled and directed by sociologists.
merely its agent. Governments are at present analogous to large stock-companies conducted in the interest of the officers and not for the profit of the stockholders. Progress toward the perfection of government must first come "in the direction of acquainting every member of society with the special nature of the institution, and awakening him to a more vivid conception of his personal interest in its management." In his essay on "False Notions of Government," Ward points out the unfortunate results which have come about as a result of this failure to distinguish between the true principles and the actual practice of government. The deep-seated popular distrust of government was very beneficial in the earlier periods of despotism, but the modern democratization of government has removed the need for this suspicious and wrong-headed attitude toward political control and direction, and its persistence is detrimental. It keeps good men from entering public life. It perverts the notion of the true purpose of government. It intensifies party strife by emphasizing the aspect of spoil. It makes government worse than it really is by inducing the politician to live up to his unsavory reputation. Finally, it deprives government of much of its usefulness by weakening its protective function. The exploitation of society by organized wealth should require the intervention of government as much, at present, as the exploitation by individuals created a need for the origin of the protective function of government. These "false notions of government" must be removed. The people must be made to grasp the correct conception of government and take the proper steps to remove its abuses and use it for their own benefit. Accordingly, Ward severely criticizes as obstructionists those "Misarchists," of whom the most conspicuous examples among sociologists have been Herbert Spencer and Professor W. G. Sumner, for their strenuous attempts to perpetuate this "pernicious view of government."

1 Ibid., p. 228.  
2 Ibid., p. 243.  
3 1887; reprinted in Glimpses of the Cosmos, IV, 64–71.  
4 Loc. cit.  
F. THE STATE AND SOCIAL REFORM

The basic principles of Ward's sociology are nowhere better displayed than in his doctrines regarding the solution of social problems and maladjustment through the agency of governmental activity—in other words, his treatment of government as the chief instrument in collective or social telesis.

That the government must be the seat of control of the social process is evident from the fact that it alone can be viewed as the social analogue of the brain of the individual organism. The present stupidity of the personnel and activities of governments is no basis for the familiar argument that government can never give any evidence of some degree of intelligence. When the general level of social intelligence is raised, there is no reason to believe that the knowledge of those in control of the government will not be proportionately improved.¹

In his *Psychic Factors of Civilization*² Ward summarizes what he regards as the indispensable prerequisites for the successful operation of social or collective telesis through the instrumentality of government. The legislators must either be social scientists or work in co-operation with sociologists. The prevalent confusing legislative methods and procedure must be eliminated. This can best be effected by an extension of the use of the committee system, and through conferring upon the executive a large degree of power to participate in legislation.³ Finally, there must be a greater use of statistics as the data upon which all scientific law-making should be based.⁴

Like Comte, to whom Ward was so greatly indebted for many of his political theories and much of his political terminology, Ward placed his reliance chiefly upon sociology as the source of


² Pp. 309–12.

³ Cf. also *Outlines of Sociology*, pp. 278–79.

the information which is preliminary to any extensive development of scientific government. Ward’s legislators, like the priests of the Positivist régime, were to be trained sociologists. Hence a diffusion of the knowledge of fundamental sociological principles must precede the scientific development and application of governmental activity in behalf of social reform. The legislators must be thoroughly acquainted with the nature of, and method of controlling, the social forces. Unfortunately, however, sociological knowledge itself is as yet in a very imperfect and undeveloped stage. It is now [1903] in practically the same stage of development that physics and chemistry were in the fifteenth century. This indispensable sociological knowledge must be imparted by an improved system of education. No other sociologist has approximated in emphasis or thoroughness Ward’s treatment of the sociological importance of education. He takes as his point of departure the thesis that the social forces can only be directed into safe and useful channels if their nature and the manner of their control is understood. Education should thus be valued in proportion “as it gives to its possessor correct views of life, of his relations to society, and to nature.” The educational system which embraces this useful type of information should be carried on by the state and should be universal. The whole sociological problem and significance of education he sums up in the following characteristic paragraph:

It is the question whether the social system shall always be left to nature, always be genetic and spontaneous, and be allowed to drift listlessly on, intrusted to the by no means always progressive influences which have developed it and brought it to its present condition, or whether it shall be regarded as a proper subject of art, treated as other natural products have been treated


2 Pure Sociology, pp. 568–69.

3 Dynamic Sociology, II, 545.

4 Ibid., I, 70.

5 Ibid., II, 571, 593. One might legitimately ask the question as to how an unintelligent government is to organize and conduct, or be induced to organize and conduct, this system of education which is to produce its own enlightenment.
by human intelligence, and made as much superior to nature, in this only proper sense of the word, as other artificial productions are superior to natural ones.¹

When this revised and universal system of education is put into effect, government, which will be sociocratic in form, can be conducted on truly scientific principles, and it will then be in a position to promote progress by the indirect and telic method of "social invention" or "attractive legislation." True social invention "consists in making such adjustments as will induce men to act in the manner most advantageous to society." These adjustments must take the form of "attractive legislation," which will replace the wrong-headed and primitive repressive legislation of the present day.² This principle of "attractive legislation" Ward explains in the following manner. The "desires, passions, and propensities of men" are the great impelling forces of society. They have vast potentialities for both good and evil. Repressive legislation, which constitutes the vast majority of modern laws, simply curbs this energy without deriving any benefit from it. Attractive legislation would aim not to check or restrain this vital energy of society, but rather to divert it from harmful expression and direct it into useful channels of expenditure or, in terms of the new dynamic psychology, provide for a rational method of sublimating social energy. The scientific statesmanship of the future must attempt to guide and utilize social forces and energy in the same manner as the applied scientists of today control and utilize the physical energy of nature.³ Ward’s best summary of the fundamental characteristics of the political régime based upon the principles of attractive legislation and collective telesis is contained in the following paragraph, which is, at the same time, a fairly adequate summary of his whole social philosophy:

As a scientific investigator, the legislator would then set for himself the task of devising means to render harmless those forces now seen to be working evil results, and to render useful those now running to waste. Not only would


² *Pure Sociology*, pp. 569–71.

the present prohibitive legislation, which seeks to accomplish its ends by direct, or brute, method, be rapidly supplanted by attractive legislation accomplishing its purposes by the indirect, or intellectual, method, and thus fulfilling the protective functions of government at a saving of enormous loss through the friction of opposition, but the accommodative function would now be in condition to advance toward the position of a truly ameliorative one. Society, possessed for the first time of a completely integrated consciousness, could at last proceed to map out a field of independent operation for the systematic realization of its own interests, in the same manner that an intelligent and keen-witted individual pursues his life-purposes. Not only would protection and accommodation be secured without loss of liberty and at the least possible cost to society, but directly progressive measures would be adopted looking to the organization of human happiness. Fully realizing the character and mode of operation of the truly progressive agencies of society, government would not simply foster and protect these, but would increase and intensify them and their influence. No longer doubting that progress upon the whole must be in proportion to the degree and universality of intelligence, no effort or expense would be spared to impart to every citizen an equal and adequate amount of useful knowledge.1

CONCLUSION

The preceding analysis of the political theories of Sumner and Ward indicates the sociological arguments for laissez faire and state activity, as they have been set forth by the two most conspicuous American adherents to these opposing positions. Both were the product of the same political environment, and lived through the age of the greatest corruption and inefficiency in American state and national government, for which both had equal and unlimited contempt. While agreeing upon the hopelessness of intelligent and constructive policies issuing from existing governments, there was a fundamental divergence between them upon the subject of the possibility of improving the level of political intelligence. Sumner insisted that governments were always likely to remain inferior to individual initiative and enterprise, while Ward contended that with the improvement of sociological knowledge and its wide dissemination through an adequate system of

1 Dynamic Sociology, II, 249-50. Ward's prophetic vein was not entirely exhausted by this eloquent picture of the scientific legislation of the future. He even dared to predict that in the still more remote future, with the perfection of the intellect and the completeness of knowledge, the state and government may disappear (Pure Sociology, p. 135). This seems to be a denial, however, of Ward's statement mentioned above, to the effect that society would never outgrow the accommodating function of government.
education, the state would become the chief instrument in advancing group welfare and in anticipating the natural course of political and social evolution. It may reasonably be doubted whether this difference of opinion was as much due to a superior optimism on the part of Ward as it was to the basic divergence of their views upon the nature of social evolution. Sumner was convinced of the accuracy of the Spencerian notion that it was an automatic process not amenable to social control and direction. Ward was equally confident that while social evolution began as a spontaneous development it reached a point ultimately where the human mind could comprehend its trend, could control it, and could thereby artificially direct and accelerate social progress. This fundamental dividing line between natural and artificial evolution would be reached when sociology had attained to the same degree of perfection as has already been achieved by natural science and when legislators could thereby be possessed of as great knowledge of social forces and processes as is possessed by the great natural scientists of the present day concerning the forces and processes of physical nature. It will readily be perceived that precipitate and promiscuous social legislation by existing political bodies receives as little justification from the doctrines of Ward as from those of Sumner, but Ward leaves distinctly more to be hoped for from the future and leaves a program designed to lead to the ultimate attainment of this goal, which is decidedly more optimistic and dynamic than the essentially fatalistic concepts of Sumner. It scarcely needs to be pointed out that while Sumner's views were much more characteristic of the generation in which the two men lived, the majority of sociologists of the present day adhere to Ward's opinions in their general implications, and the most profound of English sociologists, Leonard T. Hobhouse, has worked out a body of social philosophy which supports Ward's leading thesis of the ultimate amenability of the processes of social evolution to the control of the human mind. In a very real sense the divergence between the conceptions of Sumner and Ward represents the progress which systematic sociological theory has achieved in regard to the problem of the relation of the state to social progress.