A PROSPECTUS OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

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NOTE.—In recent years the writer has introduced graduate students to general sociology by a course in the Autumn Quarter on the evolution of sociological method since 1800. This course has been followed in the Winter Quarter by an outline of general sociology. The present paper is made up of three introductions to this latter course. They were written in 1920, 1915, and 1916 respectively. Although in some respects they overlap and duplicate one another, they place the emphasis at slightly different points, and together they form a consistent exhibit. They are presented here in the order indicated.

Whether introductions ever really introduce; whether such general views as every synthetic thinker wants to present ever take shape in the minds of beginners, in advance of detailed instruction about rudiments, is a question which I find myself each year a little less inclined to answer with a confident affirmative. Nevertheless I cannot shake off the ingrained sense of duty to perform a ritual of introduction. I try to assure myself with the reflection that if it does not mean anything at the point where academic custom prescribes it, after it has itself been introduced by the course to which in form it was the preface, it may have acquired meaning. I therefore recommend that it be read in advance with zeal even if perforce without knowledge, and then that it be reread as a review at the end of the course, and with such piety as may be consistent with further acquaintance.

Teachers of general sociology will ask no apology from one of their number for printing such an extract from the notes which he has actually used in the classroom. Whether other teachers follow a method like or unlike his, they will have uses for this transcript from actual experience. For reasons which I have indicated in the "First Introduction," I hope that other readers of the *Journal* will find this informal pedagogical talk not wholly unprofitable.

I. INTRODUCTION OF 1920

There are two quite distinct points of view from which to pass judgment, first, upon what sociology actually is, and second, upon what it is worth. Those are the viewpoints, first, of those who intend to pursue sociology as a profession, second, of those who do not. In the world at large, and even in a graduate class in

sociology, those who look from the professional viewpoint are and should be the minority. Yet, for a number of reasons, every graduate course in sociology must be adapted primarily to the needs of this minority. The time is so short compared with the scope of the subject that it must be devoted chiefly to those aspects of the subject which are most fundamental, so that those who intend to make it the whole or a part of their profession may have the necessary basis on which their further specialization may have sufficient support. But those same aspects of human affairs are equally fundamental to intelligent life in any vocation. There is a practical use for systematic introduction to them, whatever be one's subsequent calling.

I have never been able to convince myself, therefore, that if I could offer a single major in sociology to graduate students who had made up their minds not to be professional sociologists, I could shape up a course that would be more valuable for them in the long run than this course which is the best I know how to offer to future professional sociologists.

In this course, and especially in the first half of it, I spend most of the time explaining a few of the most important general ideas which are the most ordinary tools of sociological thinking. These ideas are to further sociological thinking what such ideas as "point," "line," "straight line," "curved line," "angle," "right angle," "acute angle," "obtuse angle," "triangle," "quadrilateral," "polygon," "circle," "two dimensions," "three dimensions," etc., are to further thinking in geometry. Only a few of us ever in our lives teach a class in geometry. Still fewer of us ever in our lives conduct a piece of original geometrical research. On the other hand every one of us has to live his whole life in space. All our experience has to be within the setting of space relations. Even in the instinctive impulse to "cut across lots" on the way to school, and to avoid square pegs to plug round holes, we are unconsciously adapting ourselves to space relations for which geometry furnishes names and explanations and rules. To keep cobwebs out of our minds about these ordinary everyday space relations, or to remove cobwebs that are already in our minds, these elementary geometrical notions must be acquired somehow

or other. It would probably be a saving of time in the long run, it would probably make life more comfortable and happy for each man and woman in the world, if it were possible for all to go through the same elementary training in geometry which would be the wisest sort of training at the start for the few who are destined to spend their lives teaching geometry.

The analogy in this one respect between geometry and sociology is very close. It makes no difference whether we are professional social scientists of some sort, or whether we are butchers or bakers or candlestick-makers. We spend our lives in many kinds of contact and commerce with other human beings. Whether we will or no, give and take of influence with other human beings form the setting for the career of each of us. If we are to live in clear consciousness of what is happening to us, and of what we are doing to the world, instead of sleepwalking through life, we have to get wise somehow or other to those elementary types of human relationship for which sociology, to the extent of its means, supplies names and explanations and rules. Accordingly it is an asset to anybody who has to live in this world to acquire a working acquaintance with those generalizations of the recurrent types of human relationships which are carried in these sociological names and explanations and rules. If I knew, therefore, that each student had decided to be a professional chemist, or philologist, or astronomer, a surgeon, a newspaper editor, a banker, a farmer, a licensed accountant, or a civil engineer, I should vary this course only in the choice of the incidental illustrations I should use. I should say to myself, "These people have decided to give sociology a chance at them four hours a week for three months. It may be this is the only formal hearing they will ever give to sociology. The main work of their lives will be something quite different from sociology. In what way can sociology speak for itself in that brief time, so as to be as important a factor as possible in the future functioning of these people, who are not to be sociologists, nor even social scientists of any sort?"

As I said, my answer to that question would be this course, substantially as I have organized it as a first course for graduate students who propose to specialize in sociology. There cannot

be one geometry for ministers, another for lawyers, another for teachers, or one chemistry for Catholics, another for Baptists, another for Christian Scientists. The variations in geometry or chemistry to accommodate different vocations are simply in differences of time which may wisely be devoted to the subject, in proportion to the other desirable knowledge, and they are differences in subject-matter worth studying in detail after the elements are acquired. A minister might never have use for more geometry than he learned in high school. An architect, a land surveyor, a mechanical engineer, would deal with certain distinctive applications of geometry all his life.

In a similar way, there cannot be one sociology for settlement workers, another for salesmen, another for capitalists, another for college professors. There will be peculiarly appropriate elaborations and applications, but the underlying principles must be identical. Human relations are what they are, no matter who looks at them. Sociology is an attempt to set in order the most typical human relations in such a way that their bearings upon one another, in their ordinary forms, will be evident to anyone of sufficient mental grasp to understand them.

I am still speaking particularly to the state of mind of those who do not intend to specialize in sociology. Especially in the first part of the course, and perhaps in all of it, I shall seem to be dealing with ideas so abstract that they have no possible application to any interests not professionally sociological. The question would be natural whether I am so naïve as to suppose that anyone not solemnly dedicated to sociology will take these abstractions to heart as daily companions, and subjects of conversation; whether I suppose that before doing any sort of thinking, students who have taken this course will call up these sociological ideas, and ask them what they have to say about the subject.

My answer is that I no more expect this than I expect the average man to keep his mind constantly dwelling on the definitions and rules of arithmetic that he learned in the grades. For most of them he may never in his life have a conscious use. On the other hand, he may have frequent occasion to use some of them which in school seemed to him most meaningless. I cannot recall that

since I taught my last district school, while I was a college undergraduate, I have ever had occasion to find a least common multiple, or a greatest common divisor, or to extract a cube root. Yet I should hate to be ignorant of what either is, or to be unable to refresh my memory so as to compute either if occasion required. On the other hand, both for theoretical and practical purposes I have all my life had frequent occasion to reckon percentages, and the rules for handling decimals have been as real to me as they are to a teacher of arithmetic or to a book-keeper. Sociological technicalities have a precisely analogous part in the life of anyone who is not a professional sociologist. They have a certain desirability as a mental background, just as arithmetic has, as a stimulator of general consciousness of quantity values, whether one has occasion very often to calculate precise quantities or not. Then these sociological technicalities, like certain rules of arithmetic, have value as mental tools for dealing with specific social relations which actually arise in ordinary experience, just as the non-mathematician may have occasion to reckon interest on loans due from him or to him.

So much for the relation of non-professional people to sociology. I will say nothing now especially for those who do plan to specialize in sociology. That comes in other places.

There is something further, however, which very much needs to be said to specialists and non-specialists alike, and the need for saying it has grown in recent years.

Ten or fifteen years ago the superstition was at its height that psychology was a magic key to all the problems of education, and consequently to all the problems of society. Thousands of teachers flocked into psychological lecture-rooms in the expectation of getting tabloid psychological prescriptions that would make the practice of teaching as easy and precise as simple sums in arithmetic. Psychological quacks encouraged these expectations, and all the responsible psychologists were unable to undo their mischief.

If that delusion may not be said to have run its course, it has apparently spent a great deal of its force. It is not as much in evidence as it was a few years ago. The same kinds of people who followed the psychological delusion a little earlier seem now to be

turning with similar fatuity to sociology. The very marked increase of interest in sociology of late, especially in normal schools, is by no means altogether a healthy symptom. In many cases its impulse is quite as unintelligent, quite as certain to be disappointed as the earlier hopes that psychology would prove to be the revealer of an infallible pedagogy.

I have often confessed that American sociologists have not been without fault for the existence of this attitude. Twenty-five years ago they were themselves harboring over-sanguine ideas of what their specialty might accomplish. There are many reasons why we should now be very explicit and very emphatic in our disclaimers of any such exaggeration.

This is our present belief and our present claim. The most important study for man is mankind. All men are studying mankind in one way or another. Every man whose mind is normal uses the opportunities which his occupation affords for collecting observations about mankind in both collective and individual specimens. Some of us try to do this scientifically. That is, we do it not merely in the casual way which any vocation whatever permits, but we do it as a vocation in itself. We study from the standpoint of one of the social sciences. Whether our study of mankind is merely occasional and incidental to other employments, or a profession itself, we do not get as wise as it is possible to become about human nature from all the different angles in which it presents itself. In general we have to get acquainted with mankind *first* as a continual play of many motives, or psychologically; *second*, as the continuance of influences which had their beginnings long ago, or historically; *third*, as engaged in a constant wrestling with nature for the physical means of existence, or economically; *fourth*, as impelled by universal egotism into strife for precedence in controlling the opportunities of life, or politically; *fifth*, (and in a certain sense *including all the others*) as instinctively and later methodically acting in groups for promotion of each and all of the various human purposes, or sociologically.

Now the sociological claim is not that sociology is a magic which reaches superior wisdom about mankind by means of which it has a monopoly. The claim is that sociology has elaborated

certain processes of analysis by means of which each and all of the four other principal ways of approach to knowledge of mankind may become more instructive than either or all of them could be without this sociological co-operation. There is no mystery in the vulgar sense, no occultism in this claim. It means that sociology has found out how to pry into certain aspects of human experience which had not attracted much attention till less than a half-century ago, and that these neglected aspects of human experience are not only instructive in themselves but they throw much light upon those other aspects which had been longer observed.

This amounts to the statement that sociologists no longer claim, as they did a generation ago, that they are dealing with a detached sphere of knowledge—as indeed historians, and economists, and political scientists, and psychologists also claimed for their several specialties a generation ago. All thoroughly enlightened students of mankind today speak of their specialties each as one among many techniques for searching into the one comprehensive reality of human experience.

We instinctively ask innumerable questions about human experience. These questions range all the way from the queries of idle curiosity about our next-door neighbor's whims, and habits, and character, to the kinds of questions we ask when we are trying to compose a philosophy of history. What passes for social psychology, and history, and economics, and political science, and sociology is cluttered up with masses of more or less authentic fact, and more or less valid reasoning about aspects of human experience which are trivial in comparison with the sort of knowledge which we need in order to indicate the most dependable wisdom in planning our individual or social lives. Much that passes for history would be merely the negligible gossip of the local newspaper, if its date were yesterday instead of a century or two ago. Much that passes for political economy would be more precise and more valuable if it dropped its form of generality and added accuracy by getting itself transformed into the shop knowledge of any skilled laborer. Much that passes for sociology is merely rule-of-thumb conclusions about how to conduct friendly

visiting, or how to make out a questionnaire. Each of these things has its place, but human experience has its proportions and its perspectives and its gradations of importance. Because this is so, procedure which qualifies as scientific study of human experience must ultimately exhibit corresponding proportions, and perspectives and gradations of importance. Each of these divisions of social science is concerned in its way with finding out what aspects of human experience we need to understand first, in order that we may understand all the other aspects better. From the very beginning the sociologists have asserted that the older divisions of social science have allowed this interest in proportions and harmonies between real and possible subjects of knowledge to lag, and that they had allowed absorption in fragments to take its place. The sociologists became spokesmen for this necessary correlation of knowledge, not because it belonged to them more properly than to psychologists, historians, political scientists and economists, but because everybody else was ignoring it. From the sociological point of view it is necessary to get a clear vision, first of all, of the different ways in which human beings associate; of the underlying reasons why they associate; of the forms in which they associate; of the effects, for weal or for woe, of the different forms of human association upon the purposes which instinctively or methodically seek expression through association; of the devices by means of which human associations are controlled; of the aims which emerge in the course of association as the approved objects of human endeavor; of standards of measure for these conventional objects of endeavor; whether they justify themselves as permanent human desirabilities, or whether they have merely provisional and transitory value.

These, and such as these are the big questions which have stimulated the development of sociology as it is understood in the United States. As the sociologists see it, all social science has dignity in the degree of its devotion to the ultimate solution of these universal problems. The sociologists have ceased to imagine that sociology has the exclusive mandate to formulate and solve these problems. They are becoming aware, as they were not at first, that these are larger questions than any single type of men can

answer. They realize that the answers must come, in so far as they come at all, from co-operative co-ordination of all science and all life. The sociologists still feel that, until other scholars relieve them of the burden, they have a sense of relation which amounts to a mandate that they shall do their best to keep these big problems in sight, and to stimulate all other scholars to direct their studies toward contributions to the solutions.

In brief, one of the ideas that will be kept prominent throughout this course is that *there is no magic key to the secrets of society*. There is no key of any sort in the strict sense. There are various techniques by means of which different factors and aspects of the social reality may be partially understood by those who are able and willing to use these techniques for all they are worth. If we are able and willing to use each and all of these techniques as they supplement one another we may gain progressively sane and balanced and penetrating insight into social workings.¹

II. INTRODUCTION OF 1915

In recent years it has become increasingly clear to me that sociology is what it is, in the practice of the most reliable sociologists, much more than it is what is formulated as definitive or descriptive of it by the same, not to mention less significant sociologists.

Accordingly, the most timely report may be compressed into the formula: sociology is a technique in the making. This form of expression is deliberately preferred to the version "sociology is a *science* in the making." Throughout the course that follows, history, economics, sociology, etc. are treated as primarily *techniques*, rather than "sciences." Of course, every technique at once upon application begins to be also a tradition. A body of knowledge accumulates through use of the technique. This fact lends plausibility to the claim that the technique is a "science." In so far as the technique, and the lore which it accumulates, facilitate control of any body of experience, whether in the sense of understanding, or in the more complete sense of subjecting to the will of those who operate the technique, the attributes of "science" are given. Neither severally nor collectively do the disciplines to

¹ Vide Small, title "Sociology," in *Encyclopaedia Americana*.

which for convenience we assign the group title "social science" in a very high degree satisfy the requirements of "science." Hence the preference for the less pretentious term "technique."

Sociology is described in so many ways that few men outside the ranks of the sociologists themselves are convinced that it has a real vocation. The apparent contradictions in the accounts that various sociologists give of their technique are to be explained, however, less as real divergences of opinion about the scope and method of their department of knowledge, than as variations in perspective resulting from attempts to survey the whole sociological procedure from many points of view. Scarcely two sociologists subscribe without qualification to a single description of their specialty. At the same time, the disagreements are very largely matters of classification, or emphasis, or of mere terms, while careful inspection of the work carried on by a large number of men who call themselves sociologists discovers that there is underlying unity in their conceptions. To do justice to the subject, we must not only make its past interpret its present and predict its future, but we must hazard the very dangerous process of allowing its indicated future to interpret its past. That is, the scientific factors which have brought sociology to its present stage of development, a stage which is marked by many apparently incoherent types of sociological inquiry rather than by a homogeneous system of doctrine, cannot be understood unless we take account not only of their history on the one hand, but of their tendencies on the other. To say, then, what sociology is one must be able to see some distance beyond accomplished facts to what sociology must be when the forces which have thus far worked separately will have converged into conscious co-operation. The following account of the subject is accordingly not merely a description of the visible traits of sociology, but an interpretation of these external signs, and to a certain extent a prediction of the spirit in which the science is bound to develop.

The latest definition of sociology which I have made for my own use is this: *Sociology is study of human experience with attention primarily upon forms and processes of groups.* As I see it, this definition implies several things:

1. *Human experience*, in some or all of its aspects is implicitly the common subject-matter of all study which has human beings, in any phase of their reality, as its object. This is true because human beings in their particular phases are always, in a real and large measure, functions of human experience in general. In our ignorance, we propose to ourselves the pursuit of knowledge of human facts in numberless detachments and abstractions. If we pursue knowledge with an open mind and long enough, we discover that there is no possibility of exhausting the meaning of these facts, so long as they are held in detachment and abstraction. Sooner or later they must be represented within the whole system of relationships which is their medium of existence. This is the occasion for the proposition to be reiterated throughout this course, that "social science" is necessarily *one* science, i.e., the science of the experience of human beings, and that the so-called *social sciences*, whatever the claims of their promoters, are relatively sterile until they fit themselves into a system of knowledge which correlates all the phases of human experience.

2. Restating one, rather than adding to it, sociology then is only one of an undetermined number of valid ways of studying human experience, all of which ways must be correlated in order to make study of human experience yield the most objective results possible; that is, in order to make study of human experience in the highest degree instructive.

3. Conversely, all the other valid ways of studying human experience must adjust themselves to all that is objective in the methods and results of sociology, if the results which they reach are to be in the highest degree instructive.

4. Propositions 2 and 3 are not merely verbal variations of one and the same idea. On the contrary, each depends upon the other for reasons involved in the nature of human experience. That is, since the middle of the nineteenth century we have become aware that all human experience is primarily *group* experience. Approximate qualitative, or at least formal knowledge of all the kinds of groups and behaviors of groups within the range of human observation is accordingly a stage through which intelligence must pass in grasping with all the mind's might the details presented by all

the various sorts of activities falling under human observation. In other words, if we are to reach an understanding of human experience, whether as it is presented in records of past time, or in the events of our own day, that selected portion of experience must be represented in our minds in terms of the literal reactions between the persons concerned. Otherwise it is some sort of fictitious substitute for reality. This means that we must acquire acquaintance with the typical forms and processes into which human activities arrange themselves.

Pedagogically, then, the case with human experience is thus in some degree analogous to the case with reference to knowledge of *physics*.¹ A member of the physics staff in the University of Chicago was asked lately, "How much time do you give in your introductory physics course to the elementary physical concepts?" "Practically all of it," was the immediate answer. The questioner continued: "How much is 'all of it'?" "Five hours a week for the entire Freshman year." "Do you mean you give all that time to the general ideas of physics, beginning with such elementary notions as "matter," "properties of matter," "density," "adhesion," "cohesion," "inertia," "momentum," "specific gravity," etc.?" "Yes," he said, "not using quite your list, but we begin with substantially those concepts and give the students a year of introduction to progressively more difficult physical concepts, before they are started upon physical problems." A few days later this physicist reopened the subject by saying that he had talked it over with some of his colleagues and had found that 80 per cent was their average estimate of the proportion of the first year that might be accounted for in this way.

For the purpose of illustration neither the aggregate nor the proportion of time is important. It is true in "social science," as in physics, that progress toward control of the phenomena has to be made through a large amount of attention to a large number of typical types and behaviors of groups.²

¹ *Vide* note on the Hegelian categories, Small, *General Sociology*, p. 400.

² Accordingly, my *General Sociology*, the chief reference book for this course, is not a system of sociological theory. It is an exhibit of sociological *categories*, with indications of their relations to one another, and of their uses as tools of sociological research.

It is no less true that sociology would be impossible if other ways of studying human experience did not supply material for sociological generalization. All the historical and descriptive and analytical methods of inquiry into past or present human experience furnish necessary data which sociology generalizes, together with data of its own gathering, in terms of group-form and group-process. Thereupon these generalizations become tools both for testing the credibility and the sufficiency of previous accounts of human experience, and for evaluating proposed future activities.

For instance, how do we arrive at the generalization to which we shall return presently as the fundamental sociological idea, that all human experience is group experience, not merely a matter of individual fortune? In a word, from history on the one hand, and from psychology on the other.

This answer is more sweeping in form than the precise facts justify. When we say "history," we must mean by it all that inspection of past events which comes to be known as history when its method conforms to the strict technique which the professional historians have developed. When we say "psychology," we must mean by it all that observation of cause and effect in mental action which becomes psychology when it is made systematic and critical. This means too that we use the terms "history" and "psychology" to include between them all the subdivisions of science which, on the one hand, deal with past events as such, and, on the other hand, trace the mental reactions involved in events, whether past or present, i.e., surveys of the past, and inspection of the operations of motives whether past or present. If someone did not recount past events, and if someone else did not make out the psychic connections between events, past or present, sociology would be like judgment without the assistance of memory. Sociology would have no material to work on.

We repeat then, sociology is one of the ways in which we must deal with all available knowledge of human experience if the material of knowledge is to yield up its fullest meaning.

The comprehensive problem of sociology may be formulated in this way: What processes occur in the contacts and commerce

between person and person, from the most primitive and simple associations to the most advanced and complex; how do the contacts between person and person in different types of association react upon the personality of the individuals concerned, and, on the other hand, how do the individuals in contact affect the terms under which they associate? Thus sociology rests upon the conception that human experience is a function of three principal factors: first, the physical conditions of life; second, the personal equation of individuals; third, the types of association in which the individuals influence one another. Each of these factors is recognized as a variable. Investigation of the laws of variation of the first factor does not fall within the proper scope of sociology. Those laws must be borrowed from the physical sciences as data for sociology. Assuming those data as relatively fixed terms in the social equation, sociology proper discovers a necessary function in uttering its testimony among social scientists of all sorts that the older divisions of social science will soon find themselves futile, unless progress can be made in discovering some of the more constant laws of reaction between nature on the one hand, and individuals and groups on the other. Since these reactions are the principal incidents in the evolution of types of persons and types of association, it is a betrayal of puerile mental grasp that we have thus far felt so little need of understanding them. The sociologists have accordingly volunteered as pioneers to explore these neglected relations.

On one of its frontiers the problems of sociology merge into those of anthropology and zoölogy; that is, they are questions of the influence of physical environment upon the organic development of men. Rooted in the same problems, but ramifying in another direction, are questions of the relation of environment, particularly the conditions of the food supply, to types of wants, to habits, to vocations, to distribution of population, to customs, and to institutions, domestic and economic, political or religious. Before the latter order of problem is pursued very far it runs into questions which must be treated as primarily psychological; viz., to what extent and in what ways must the state of consciousness in the individuals concerned be regarded as (*a*) the *direct* effect,

(b) the *indirect* effect of the physical conditions; and to what extent and in what ways must the state of consciousness in the individuals be regarded as the cause of the actions observed, i.e., to what extent must the individuals be regarded as exerting a distinct psychical reaction upon the physical conditions?

A parallel division of problems occurs when we are dealing with phases of association in which we must eliminate the physical factor as a constant element, and deal with the individual and associational factors as the unknown quantities to be ascertained. The social reactions are then of two ground types: *first*, those in which the impulses of the individual modify the group; *second*, those in which the impulses of the group modify the individual. Of course this form of expression is merely an accommodation to first appearances. The fact is that both types of reaction occur in a given case. The one or the other is the chief object of attention in its turn. Investigation of these problems requires intimate co-operation between psychology and sociology. Indeed, it has been said that "the division of labor between the two sciences may be fairly represented by shifting the emphasis upon two terms in the same predicate: viz., psychology is the science of social *processes*; sociology is the science of *social* processes." In other words, the strictly social reactions are psychical reactions, but to an extent which was hardly recognized until very recent years psychical reactions are social reactions. We may accordingly approach the same ultimate facts from either of two directions. We may attempt to explain the phenomena of consciousness in the mind of an individual, but the attempt will lead at last into explanation of all the psychical phenomena in the range of association in which the individual lives and moves and has his being; or otherwise expressed, every psychological problem is at last a problem of sociology. On the other hand, we may try to explain the facts of a given association, its genesis, its structure, its aims. In this case we find that the association always resolves itself into mental states as its ultimate factors; so that every sociological problem is in the last analysis a problem of psychology. Whether psychology or sociology is the senior partner in a given investigation depends upon the phase of the phenomena to be regarded as

primary, whether mental processes are to be considered as conditioned by facts of association, or whether social situations are considered as conditioning or conditioned by mental processes.

The foregoing propositions prepare the way for further definition of the province of sociology, by distinguishing it from some of the older divisions of social science. Comparatively few persons are convinced that there is room for a science or a technique to be called sociology, unless it should succeed merely in occupying ground already covered by one or more of these "sciences," and in giving vogue to a new name. If we analyze and generalize the distinctive efforts of the sociologists, we find that, with all their seeming heterogeneity, they are directed toward a common center of attention. The sociologists in common with all other social scientists are implicitly concerned with the evolution of human personality. All the processes which result in types of individuals or of associations, as incidental to that evolution, all the processes in which the individual and the associational types form a perpetually reciprocating series, in alternating relations of cause and effect, have been selected by sociologists as their peculiar subject-matter. In other words, from the sociological point of view, everything in experience is regarded as incidental to the interpretation and evaluation of people, and to the determination of programs by means of which more ample human values may be realized.

The conventionalities of the social sciences are so confused that this formal statement is by no means clear without further explanation. The contrast between the center of attention in sociology and in the older social sciences is of two sorts. In the first place, we have types of ethnology and history, for example, in which there is no visible attempt either, on the one hand, to discover the relative values of physical conditions, of people, and of the machineries and products of people; or on the other hand, to place these three factors in an order of relationship that would show which of them is to be considered as ultimate and essential, and which as more tributary and incidental, in the final interpretation of life. These types of social science accordingly amount to mere description of more or less clearly assorted phenomena,

without advancing to the rank of very highly generalized science of the causal relations contained in the phenomena.

In the second place, we have types, notably of political and economic science, which expressly define their problems, not in terms of people at all, but in terms of a *technology* or a *product* of human activities. Thus we have variations of the formulas, "Civics is the science of government," and "Economics is the science of wealth." Now mere words must not be taken too seriously, but in these cases the uses of words correspond to very essential restrictions of purpose and method. From the viewpoint of sciences so defined persons are by definition relegated to secondary consideration, while the devices, or the products of persons are made paramount. The tendency to which we are now calling attention would be arrested if these techniques operated consistently in accordance with the alternative forms of expression: "Civics is the science of people in their processes of governing themselves," "Economics is the science of people in their behaviors toward wealth."

In contrast with all the varieties of social science which either fail to face the question whether, for their purposes, people, or the gear and chattels of people are most important; and in contrast with all the varieties of social science which deliberately choose not people but the machineries or the possessions of people as their subject-matter, sociology has instinctively chosen for itself the unclaimed problem of the objective aspects of people themselves. By this form of expression we mean to distinguish the sociological from the psychological division of labor. The latter we would speak of by comparison as pertaining primarily to the subjective aspects of people. How do human personalities develop out of gregarious animal associations into conventional psychic associations, and how do types of individuals and of their groupings, either by means of or in spite of their material and spiritual *impedimenta*, pass from stage to stage in the evolution of persons and of their social combinations? While the ethnologist describes human customs, occupations, technical equipments and modes of employing them, traditions, beliefs, ceremonies, rites, social organizations, etc.; while the historian devotes himself to occurrences

in which human beings have played a part, with the utmost license of selection of classes of occurrences, and with scientific criticism aimed, especially after "critical" methodology had been developed, less at the subject-matter than at the mere technique of discovery; while the political scientist devotes himself to men's systems of government, and while the peculiar interest of the economist centers upon the processes by which men produce wealth, the sociologist studies men themselves, as they manifest their character in all the variations of contact with one another, and as they realize or register themselves in the relations which occupy the previous sciences. To sociology, then, *the evolution of persons* is the central fact, while everything else is incidental. To the other social techniques, persons are virtually incidental, and their accidents are central.

This last proposition is true not necessarily of the persons who pursue the other divisions of social science, but of the processes which compose their technique. These processes necessarily divert the center of attention from people as such to those impersonal things, institutions. For social science as a whole, an adequate corrective of this tendency is necessary. I do not claim that sociology is that corrective. I do claim that the sociological center of attention tends to converge thought upon people, as differentiated from their gear, and *impedimenta*, and machinery—in short from their institutions; and sociology thus does something to arrest the devitalizing and desiccating tendencies in social science.

III. INTRODUCTION OF 1916

In one respect this course is like the old story of the boy's jackknife. It had two new handles and five new blades, but he always insisted that it was the same knife. Multiply the numbers in the story several times over and it represents the facts about this course. Each year since it was first announced it has received a new handle and a certain number of new blades. To speak literally, I have given each year what seemed to me at the time the best introduction to general sociology I could present. Each year I have learned more than I have taught about the relations

with which sociologists must deal, and each following year I have reshaped the course accordingly. I do not have to go back many years in my lecture notes to find myself in a kind of thinking which is as different from my present tone of thought as the German and American theories about war are from each other.

Each year I resolve to try to present the sociological case in a little simpler form than I have ever used before. Each year I hope to avoid details which confuse more than they clarify. I hope by so doing to put the class on the track of an improved method of construing human relations. I believe the sociologists have certain keys to human relations which make human experience mean more than could be found in it without the sociological kind of interpretation. I shall make another attempt this year to justify this belief. Of course I do not mean that I have wiped my slate clean of all the work I have done on it before, and that I am proposing an altogether new interpretation of human society. I mean that from year to year I have developed certain details in my ways of analyzing human relations. Each year a somewhat modified treatment is necessary in order to present these methods to the best advantage. In particular I want to emphasize what seems more important and to slur over what is less important for a brief survey.

I will begin with my latest answer to the question, *What is sociology?* viz., *Sociology is that variant among the different ways of studying the common subject-matter of the social sciences which centers its attention primarily upon the forms, processes, and values of human group activities, or upon human group phenomena as such.*

At once this description implies a sharp contrast with the descriptions of sociology in vogue twenty-five years ago. Then, and for many years afterward, the usual descriptions implied and even asserted a high degree of separateness among the social sciences. Today the tendency among social scientists in all departments is to recognize and even emphatically to assert the necessary oneness of social science, while the so-called "social sciences" are merely divisions of that one social science, if they are genuinely scientific at all.

This leads me to advertise at once that if one hopes to do anything serious in the study of sociology, one must be prepared to reckon with the scientific demands of the whole body of the social sciences. The one great comprehensive problem in the realm of the social sciences is the question, *What is the meaning of human experience?* So far as its value for strict science is concerned the whole technique of the social sciences, separately and collectively, is to be appraised at last simply and solely by the test of its efficiency in helping to answer this question. Whatever may be the special curiosity or convenience of scholars or teachers who have a chance to draw an income by discovering or distributing knowledge of traditional aspects of human relations, the insistent demand of human beings as such is for understanding of the principles of cause and effect which operate wherever there are human beings. This unconscious and implicit demand by human beings as such for knowledge of the essential meaning of the human lot is simply the untutored reaction of the human mind to the whole great objective mystery which conscious beings confront. This mass of relations in which human beings act, whether they will or no, presents the system of problems which it is the task of social science to solve in order to be science at all. That is, we have obviously two great divisions of knowledge problems. Even these two main divisions can be only temporarily kept apart. They soon run into each other. For convenience, however, we must discriminate between the relations in which physical cause and effect dominate, and the relations in which psychical cause and effect dominate. These latter are the challenge to social science. Social scientists are fulfilling their duty if they are doing their utmost to accept this challenge and to satisfy the human demand for knowledge of social relations. They are doing something less than their duty if they are doing something else than answering this demand.

It would not be worth while to discuss here how generally this idea of the business of social scientists has been in the minds of social scientists themselves. Whether they have thought of their work in this light or not, the fact is that different types of social scientists have developed with very different conceptions of the

sort of key that would open the most knowledge of the meaning of human experience. Oldest by many centuries have been the philosophers and the historians. In many periods of the growth of human thought it would be difficult to draw a sharp line between these two types of thinkers. The historians were philosophers and the philosophers were historians. In a certain sense this is likely, and it is desirable, to be the case forever, at least with certain types of philosophers and historians.

On the other hand, it is true that men have started with certain clues, or in pursuit of certain types of knowledge, and have presently fallen into the habit of thinking that their way of prying into the meaning of human experience is the only way that will amount to much, and the sufficient way to solve the big problem of social science, viz., *What is the meaning of human experience?* Accordingly men starting with slightly different interests have developed such specialties as philosophy, psychology, history, political economy, political science, statistics, sociology, social psychology, anthropology, ethnology, and a myriad of minor specializations. In course of time these divisions of labor have come to be regarded by their several devotees as existing for their own separate glorification, as having a reason for existence which is in no way dependent upon the existence of the other pursuits. Moreover, the devotees of each of these specialties have been under strong and often irresistible temptation to think each that his particular way of studying human facts is the only way necessary in order to get out of them all the knowledge which the facts contain about cause and effect in human life. This impression is possible only so long as the men who have the impression can avoid an accounting with the main demand of social science; viz., that all accredited scientific activities shall show results tending to answer the central question, *What is the meaning of human experience?* To make my point as clear as possible I will use an almost grotesque analogy. I hope its very extravagance will throw a search-light on the matter I want to emphasize. Suppose the woodcrafts divided themselves in imitation of the academic social sciences. Suppose they developed "axe science," "cross-cut saw science," "splitting saw science," "cant-dog science," "plane science,"

“chisel science,” “auger science,” etc. Converting grown trees into material consumable for human purposes, is the scope of woodcraft, and tools are merely instrumental at the points at which their particular specialty is in demand. A so-called “science” of one of these tools would be meaningless apart from the whole program of converting trees into consumable forms.

It is precisely so with the different techniques known as the social sciences. Probably neither the lumberman who fells a tree nor the builder of a limousine who puts a part of that tree into its final shape for consumption could exchange jobs with good results, but neither could function to the full without the other. So the historian and the social psychologist, for instance (or any other pair), might each be a bungler at the other’s task, but neither task can be performed to the limit of its value unless it is correlated with the other.

I want to make the point as emphatic as possible, therefore, at the outset—and I shall keep referring to it—that in attending for a while to the technique called sociology one is not turning aside from the main business of social science to a curious pursuit outside the scope of history and political economy, and political science and psychology and the rest. On the contrary, the thing which I am doing in this course is actually the sharpening of mental tools which must be used in their proper time and place if the mental tools which are more peculiar to those other divisions of social science are to be used to the largest advantage. On the other hand the sociologists have no mental tools by means of which they can demonstrate the meaning of human experience in any large range unless the tools are used in co-operation with other tools in the hands of experts in these other divisions of social science.

This way of stating the case is in almost direct contradiction with the professions of sociologists twenty-five years ago. We then had more or less resolute convictions that we either had, or presently would have, means of explaining human experience which would leave the other divisions of social science either entirely without occupations or with very light occupations. That conceit must be set down to the discredit of a youthful zeal not yet chastened by much experience of its own. The substantial fact to the

credit of the earlier sociologists is that they were conscious of something lacking after the older divisions of social science had done their best, and they volunteered to supply the lack.¹ The sobered successors of those youthful enthusiasts now believe that they have already justified their earlier zeal not by establishing their premature claims in detail, but by having demonstrated that there are relationships running through human experience which the traditional divisions of social science had either ignored altogether, or had rated far below their proportional importance as factors in the human lot. The sociologists of today, therefore, tend far less than they did twenty-five years ago to follow the ideal of separateness from other kinds of social scientists. They tend far more to emphasize the fact that all social scientists have at bottom one problem, viz., *the meaning of human experience*. It follows that there are different angles from which light may be thrown on that problem. Furthermore, science of human experience, in the most responsible sense, will be developed not by keeping these different shafts of light separate, within academically divided departments, but by allowing them to merge into the pure white light of objective truth.

In a word, whatever else one may think about sociology, it is certain that one has failed to get the most authentic version of it unless it presents itself as one of the necessary operations within the whole complicated business of making human experience, in all times and places, throw all the light it can upon the problems of the living generation.

At the same time, for the benefit of those whose center of interest is in one of the other divisions of social science, I shall keep on reiterating this in every possible variation, viz.: It is equally true of each and every division of social science that it is an abortion if it fails to correlate its peculiar aspects of social relations with those aspects of social relations which are the centers of attention for each of the other divisions of social science.

One of the things on which the sociologists have put all the emphasis in their power for the last thirty years is this appeal to

¹ *Vide* Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1916.

their colleagues in the other divisions of social science: You are making the mistake of your lives in supposing you can ever build up a tenable "science" of psychology, or history, or politics, or economics, so long as you are trying to make either of these departments of knowledge sufficient unto itself, independent, a monument of splendid isolation. The phenomena in which the professors of these different departments of knowledge are specially interested are not sufficient unto themselves. They are not independent. They are not monuments of splendid isolation. Pretended sciences of them which in any degree represent them in these false characters are to that degree spurious sciences. Social scientists of all sorts must take this situation to heart, and they must find out how to get together.¹

With these generalities presupposed, I want to prepare for a certain bewilderment which the earlier part of this course, perhaps the whole of it, is bound to bring. The kind and degree of bewilderment will depend upon the extent of previous acquaintance or lack of acquaintance with general sociology. It often happens that for the first month or two, not the youngest, but some of the maturest people who take this course frankly do not know what I am talking about. If they do know what I am talking about, they are strongly of the impression that it is not worth talking about. So far as they can see, I am merely fussing about words, or about ideas that should be considered too trite for words. It seems to them a waste of time to putter with these words, when so much more important things need to be explained. On the contrary, I have the least possible interest in words for their own sake. The initial objective in general sociology is familiarity with certain cardinal relations which must be reckoned with whenever we try to explain what takes place wherever there are human beings. I am trying to show how we may approach closer to precision in understanding those relations. As the relations are not primarily mathematical, as they are not primarily chemical, we cannot represent them by mathematical nor by chemical notation. We have no other symbols for them but ordinary language. We are obliged to select out of ordinary language the best words available

¹ *Vide* Small, *Meaning of Social Science*.

for scientific purposes; we have to restrict those words to certain precisely defined meanings. In nearly every case other words might be agreed upon to do the same work. In nearly if not quite every case I should be ready without debate to join a majority of social scientists in adopting substitute terms. The mere verbal matter is utterly trivial, but it is not trivial to strive for consistency and accuracy in the content of our ideas. I am concerned about words then, in this course, merely as a traveler might be concerned about the checks for his luggage. It is a matter of supreme indifference to him what sort of checks the railroads use, provided his checks always produce his own luggage at the end of his trip. He certainly cannot afford to be careless about the checks—whatever their form—which identify his property.

I insist upon this matter because it is still a fixed idea in the minds of certain influential American scholars, even within the ranks of the social scientists, that the sociologists' entire stock in trade is merely a jumble of words. This is one of the curious surviving misunderstandings of the sociologists. It has had most unfortunate effects in retarding social science in general. I care for the particular words which I take so large a part of this course to explain, only as means of calling up in our minds the same ideas whenever the words are used.

In social science we have in fact a situation precisely parallel with certain aspects of physical science. There are certain recurrent, persistent characteristics of matter for which verbal symbols must be adopted. This use of accepted symbols for ascertained phenomena of matter is imperative both for accuracy in reporting facts already discovered, and for closeness of reasoning about interpretations of the facts. The verbal symbols themselves have no inherent sacredness. They have their authority not by inalienable right, but by agreement among scholars. If it turned out to be in the interest of exact knowledge, physicists might scrap the terms "inertia," "momentum," "specific gravity," etc., for such substitutes as "drag," "drive," "dead weight," etc. The words are merely the most convenient symbols for reality that can be selected. The like is true in every division of science. The selection of words to stand invariably for corresponding ideas

is not essentially a matter of verbal interest. It is a way of insuring the integrity of the ideas themselves. This elementary part of sociological procedure is simply one illustration which recurs in its way in every department of knowledge.

There is a certain approximate fitness to some words more than to others. This may be due to the fact that some words have long been more closely associated than others with approximately the ideas which analysis finds to be literal relationships in human affairs. In so far as this fitness is prearranged by general linguistic usage, it is economy of any science to adopt that usage into its technical idiom. In other cases, and this is true in all sciences in the degree in which they probe beyond ordinary commonplace observation, there are relationships for which everyday language has fashioned no familiar words. For instance, the words telephone, automobile, aeroplane, periscope, radiograph, etc., are illustrations from the sphere of invention parallel with words which have to be fabricated in the various fields of discovery. That which did not exist must have a name after it does exist, for the convenience of everyone who has to use it or to know about it. In the same way *relationships* which had not previously been observed, have to be named, so that everyone who has occasion to deal with them may have the means of indicating the relationships whenever record or exchange of ideas about them is in order. As in the case of the above-cited modern words for recent mechanical inventions, so in the case of scientific terms, they may be awkward and hideous. No scientist is likely to waste much effort refuting such charges. Let anyone who can suggest better words at any time. The main thing with the scientist is that the words selected to denote the relations with which he is professionally concerned shall be unequivocal, precise, constant, and that their meaning shall correspond with an actually observed aspect of the material which his science is attempting to comprehend.

In the case of sociology the most frequent vagueness arises not from use of novel terms but from our appropriation of extremely commonplace terms, which we try to restrict to very closely defined meanings. Perhaps we might get ahead faster, in the long run, by coining utterly unfamiliar terms for the relationships which

we want to throw into the spot-light. Either horn of the dilemma has its difficulties, but all these difficulties are trifling in the minds of people who assume once for all that terminology is strictly subsidiary to the real social relationships for which the words are merely the most convenient signs.

Now I hope I have prepared the way for a proposition which may have a more dubious sound than anything else that I have said, viz.: *This course attempts to explain certain categories under which all social phenomena must be thought if they are thought objectively.*

I suspect that one of the results of supposed modern improvements in education is that such an elementary proposition as the foregoing carries no meaning to the minds of any but the exceptional students who have had special training in logic. I must stop long enough, therefore, on this proposition to make sure that I have made my best effort to make it commonplace.

To express the case in the most homely form, we may say that *categories* are the pigeonholes which the mind uses in assorting its knowledge. They are the receptacles for objects of thought in which the mind finds identical distinguishing marks. Each of these receptacles holds its contents separate from those of other receptacles whose contents have other distinguishing marks.

We begin to use *categories* such as they are as soon as we begin to name objects. When the child says "man," "tree," "cow," he is using categories of an extremely elementary type. The child is beginning to construct rudimentary science when he employs these categories so accurately that he does not use the category "man," for instance, when the object to which he applies the term belongs in the category "tree" or "cow." Science at its utmost reach is in one aspect nothing more than duplication of this rudimentary mental performance, with more elusive objects of knowledge as the material assorted. Science in its most precise and comprehensive form may be characterized as the assorting of knowledge with such precision that no "tree" is called "man" and no "cow" is called "tree."

A part of the *Century Dictionary* definition of the term "category" is as follows:

(1) In *logic*, a highest notion, especially one derived from the logical analysis of the forms of proposition. The word was introduced by Aristotle, who applies it to his ten predicaments, things said, or *summa genera*, viz.: (1) substance, (2) quantity, (3) quality, (4) relation, (5) action, (6) passion, (7) where, (8) when, (9) posture or relative position of parts, (10) habit or state. These are derived from such an analysis of the proposition as could be made before the developed study of grammar. The categories or highest intellectual concepts of Kant are: (1) *categories of quantity*, (2) *categories of quality*, i.e., (a) reality, (b) negation, (c) limit between these; (3) *categories of relation*, i.e., (a) substance and accident, (b) cause and effect, (c) action and reaction; (4) *categories of modality*, i.e., (a) possibility, (b) impossibility, (c) actuality, (d) non-actuality, (e) necessity, (f) non-necessity. Modern formal logic furnishes this list: (1) qualities, or singular characters; (2) simple relations or dual characters; (3) complex relations, or plural characters. Many lists of categories have been given not founded on formal logic.

But the categories which the foregoing quotation describes are not the best illustrations of the categories of positive science. It is hard to make the difference plain, and perhaps it is impossible in a few words. The key to the matter is in the statement that the above are "logical" categories, i.e., they are forms of the mind's action in the course of its reasoning or reflection. The kinds of categories with which all sorts of positive science are primarily concerned are forms revealed to the mind in the course of its observation or perception.

I am fully aware that this distinction plunges us into deep psychological water. If any reader is a specialist in psychology, to him the qualification is due that I do not imagine reasoning or reflection, on the one hand, and observation or perception on the other, as activities which are completely separate. In what I am now saying, I mean to draw the distinction between activities on the one hand in which reasoning predominates over observation, and on the other hand activities in which observation predominates over reasoning. In the former case the mind tends to impose itself on everything external to itself. In the latter case everything external to the mind tends to impose itself upon the mind. As we shall see in a moment, it becomes a vital matter in all sorts of science to make out whether would-be scientists are actually carrying on more of the one kind of activity or of the other in building up their alleged science.

We may illustrate in this way: Suppose we are infants just beginning to get acquainted with the outward world. Suppose we have stubbed our toes and bumped our heads till we have learned to say "hard." We have unconsciously employed what philosophers call a "category." The generalization summed up in that category "hard" is simply a résumé of our experience with hard objects. We have actually come in contact with things that resist our pressure in the fashion which we refer to when we use this word "hard." Perhaps a dash of every more advanced mental activity is already involved in the activity which we perform in using the category "hard." Be that as it may, our category "hard" is essentially a summary of experiences which we have had in contact with things outside of ourselves. We have done a minimum of reasoning about those things or those contacts. We have principally given a name to the way in which they affect us when we meet them.

But suppose we have grown old enough to reflect about this experience of hard objects. Suppose we have begun to philosophize. Suppose we have asked the question: "Is this 'hard' a *thing* outside of me, or is it a *feeling* inside of me, and if so what does it have to do with the tree or the stone or the club that gives me the feeling?" As a matter of fact, most of us got the earliest answers to questions of this sort from other people, and they very likely got them in turn from a line of people who passed the answers along from the earliest persons who ventured answers. Suppose however that we worked out answers for ourselves. It is possible that after puzzling our brains a long time over these questions we might have hit upon the conceptions "thing" and "qualities of the thing," or "substance" and "attribute," or "entity" and "quality," or "noumenon" and "phenomenon." These are what I mean by categories of reasoning or reflection. They are the mind's inferences from its experience, while the categories of observation are the direct reflection of external things upon the mind.

Doubtless a logician or a psychologist would laugh at this rough and ready way of explaining those necessary tools of all responsible thinking, *categories*. Perhaps the essential matter may be put in

evidence more effectively for our purposes, however, in this amateurish way, than by more technical explanations. The mind actually makes categories as its tools. The mind thus creates for itself the problem of finding out whether the categories which it makes for itself are fits or misfits when it becomes necessary to check up the elements of experience, as the mind reconstructs them, by the elements of experience as they exist outside of the mind.

In his book on the British Constitution published more than a generation ago, Mr. Walter Bagehot remarked that the English farmer classifies the animal kingdom as "game, vermin, and stock." These, such as they are, belong in the generic group "category." They probably satisfy the demands of the English farmer. They would hardly serve the purposes of the zoölogist. The difference between the English farmer and the zoölogist in this connection is not that the one uses categories, while the other does not. The difference is that the one uses categories which correspond roughly with the facts, while the other uses categories which defer to more precise analysis of the facts.

But in order to make the proposition completely lucid, we must furnish an equally elementary explanation of two other words, viz., *subject* and *object*, with their variations.

It is literally true that neither practical nor theoretical thinking breaks down oftener nor more disastrously anywhere else than at the points where it is necessary to distinguish between the subjective and the objective. As the alphabet is to reading, and as the multiplication table to mathematics, so must variations of these terms "subjective" and "objective" and of the ideas which they symbolize be to him who would do scientific work of any sort.

Again I am deliberately avoiding technical explanations. I want to get the gist of the distinction expressed in the least technical way. As to the word *subject* and its derivatives, it is only fair to say that the meaning which has been attached to it in modern scientific idiom seems more arbitrary and forced than is the case with most scientific terms. Probably the philosophy of Kant was the strongest factor in requisitioning the word for its present scientific use. Whether we can see any natural affinity or not between this conventional use of the word and its less sophisticated

meanings, the situation is just this: *subject* means the *self*, especially the self engaged in thinking; or at least the self in the state of consciousness; the self considered as a unit of mental action standing in contemplation of anything or everything else.

All the variations of the term *subject* in their scientific use have this meaning as their pivot. "Subjective" means that which pertains to the self, that which gets its character from the self, that which is a phenomenon of the self, whether or not it has a counterpart in the world over against the self. It comes about very naturally that people interested in positive science turn the word *subjective* into a term of reproach, an epithet. They apply it to any assertion or doctrine or preconception which seems to them to have its source in the person who does the thinking more than in the reality about which he is thinking. For instance, there are some people still who do not believe the earth is round. They picture it in some other way. Responsible physical scientists condemn such pictures in short order with the verdict *subjective*, meaning made to suit the thinker himself rather than adopted by the thinker from the external facts (mystical). So of England's present interpretation of Germany, and Germany's present interpretation of England. The cool-headed philosopher at this distance refuses to accept either version without modification. He says that each version is in a high degree viciously *subjective*. It is made up too much out of the prejudices and snap-judgments of the national self in each case, and too little out of cold, literal acquaintance with the facts.

The term *subjectivity* corresponds in general with the meaning of the term "subjective" as just explained. In the idiom of different writers, however, it does not always carry the same content, as may be seen in a paper by Professor C. A. Ellwood in the November, 1916, number of the *American Journal of Sociology*.

I would not be understood as teaching that the subjective aspects of thinking are necessarily abnormal and vicious. There could be no thinking without thinkers. All human thinking is necessarily an activity of human selves. The primary concern of psychology is with this aspect of the situation. Social scientists are more immediately concerned with the tendency of human

thinking to remain too exclusively of, for, and by the peculiar selves. To use a homely analogy, critics of the methods actually employed by would-be scientists, whether physical or social, have to repeat over and over again in substance the charge that such and such pretended scientific theories are like wine put into casks saturated with something that has a strong odor or a pungent taste. When the wine is drawn it is no longer itself. It is vitiated by the smell or the taste of the cask. Our minds are apt to be to knowledge what the saturated cask is to the wine. What comes out of the mind carries modifications imparted to it by the mind which more or less falsify these mental deliverances when tested as unadulterated representations of reality. We are "subjective" in this sense whenever, for any reason, we hold to conceptions of any part of the real world which are more largely the presumption of our own minds, or of other minds from which we have borrowed them, than they are authentic copies of the reality in question.

The case with the term "object" and its derivatives is precisely the reverse of the case of the term "subject" and its variations.

The "object" is anything and everything which is not the thinking self. The "object" is all the rest of reality that presents itself to the self as something to be thought. Whether the self ever becomes conscious of this challenge in any considerable degree, there is always this real contrast between the different human "selves" or "subjects" and the total reality in which they are submerged or carried in suspension. Now if the "selves" or "subjects" or any larger or smaller number of them, are roused to inquire about what is external to themselves, veracity consists in allowing or compelling this outside reality to reveal itself not so as to confirm the prejudice of the thinkers, but just as it is, whether the thinkers like it or not. "Objectivity" accordingly means veracious representation of the object, so far as the representation goes. We are having every day in the newspapers vivid illustrations of the subjective in contrast with the desirable objective, in the different official reports of action on the different European fighting fronts.¹ With rare exceptions neither side reports the

¹ October, 1916.

occurrences of the previous day as they will be recorded after the war is over. Each side puts into its report more or less of what it wishes the facts were, or what it wants the rest of the world to believe the facts are. Objectivity would consist in a literal report of the physical facts in their precise relation to the military situation which the facts affect. This latter detail may be a more important item in objectivity than the concrete facts themselves. In other words, "truth" or "science" does not consist merely in statements of facts. It consists of facts formulated in their actual functioning relations.

We might illustrate the technical terms "subjectivity" and "objectivity," by use of two identical Associated Press "stories," on the same day in two Chicago papers. The head-line writer of the one paper gave the paragraph the caption: *Russians Again in Kaiser's Net!* In the other paper the heading was: *Russians Defy Kaiser!*

I now return to my main proposition, viz.: *This course attempts to explain certain categories under which all social phenomena must be thought if they are thought objectively.* Instead of enlarging further on that particular proposition, we may perhaps locate ourselves with reference to the precise aim of this course by adding a brief historical statement.

For a number of years I have followed the clue that the whole evolution of the social sciences since 1800 has been a drive in the direction of *objectivity*. This movement has been partly conscious, but still more unconscious. All along the line, from men who started from the ancient disputes about the "philosophy of law," and others who developed the more modern "philosophy of history," men of aggressive temper, men of critical spirit, began to be impatient with some parts of the tradition of their own academic division of labor. That is, men in each of the divisions of labor began to suspect that the methods in vogue in their respective divisions of labor did not enable the laborers to do their best conceivable work. I am unable to say how early scholars began to express this in variants of the proposition, "We are not sufficiently *objective* in our science." It makes little difference whether those words were used early or not. The same idea was

conveyed in many other phrases; e.g.: we are not accurate enough; we do not get at all the facts; we do not find out all the connections of the facts; we treat the evidence as advocates, not as judges, etc. The cumulative effect of these dissatisfactions with habits of thinking in the social sciences was a mighty stimulus to more searching methods all along the line of social science. This stimulus not merely reanimated the older social sciences, but as I keep repeating, it created new ones. To speak in more modern idiom, this stimulus to closer objectivity brought investigators of human experience face to face with new problems, and some of the most crucial of these problems appealed to types of minds that could not work at their best upon the same types of problems that occupied the older types of scholars. Hence presently the modern divisions of labor.

Repeating what I have just said: this impatience expressed itself most energetically in modifications of the methods of historians, economists, and political scientists. After 1850 similar movements resulted in the divisions of labor since known as anthropology, ethnology, psychology (as distinguished from the earlier "mental philosophy"), sociology, etc. My belief is that the most intelligent history of these developments that will ever be written will treat them as primarily parts of one and the same movement, viz., as I have expressed it, *the nineteenth century drive toward objectivity in social science*.¹

To be sure this correlating fact does not appear on the surface. After 1800, as before, scholars were starting with dogmatic definitions of their procedure which committed them from the outset to a high degree of subjectivity in the pursuit of their so-called "sciences," whether philosophy, history, political economy, political science, or whatever. But there was another side to the case. Men in each of these divisions of social science were striving to reduce the ratio of partial interpretation or erroneous interpretation of reality which was carried along in the traditions of their specialty. While they did not propose as completely intelligent methods of interpreting human experience as the combined scholarship of the present day ought to be able to outline, they did

¹ I have elaborated this proposition in *Encyclopaedia Americana*, title "Sociology."

propose improvements in methods of research which were directly or indirectly tributary to objectivity. These men were bursting the shell of encrusted academic methods, and they were opening paths toward free knowledge. In spirit, if not in literal fact, they were proclaiming, "We have found the line of least resistance in the path toward completer knowledge." Their biggest mistake was not in supposing that they had discovered a better way to get knowledge, but in supposing that their way was the only way and the sufficient way. Men in each division of the social sciences fell under this temptation. Thus their very improvements after a while became obstinate provincialisms which obstructed further improvement. Sociology, or as I prefer to speak of it, *the sociological movement*, has been a perfectly normal development of this nineteenth century reaching out after completer objectivity. While the historians reached chiefly in one direction, and the economists in another, and the political scientists in another, and the psychologists in another, there were men who started in one or another of these divisions of labor, but who became impressed first and foremost by the belief that the great guiding question of social science must be, in substance, if not in these precise words, *What is the meaning of human experience?* Then these men, after brooding long over human futilities in trying to answer this question, were further impressed to the effect that the line of least resistance in blazing out a more direct way toward objectivity in answer to the question did not lie within the range marked out for themselves by the older social scientists. These innovators felt that the line of least resistance must be in a new track of their own. In this respect the sociologists were like Columbus. That is, he made no headway in convincing the learned men of Europe that their idea of the physical world was imperfect, so long as he stayed in their world. He actually had to find some additions by which to enlarge their world, before they would consent to overhaul their theories of the world.

For more than a generation the sociologists have been diligently reporting aspects of human experience which had either wholly or in part escaped the ken of the older social scientists. Whether these older social scientists are aware of it or not, these reaches

of human experience which the sociologists and the psychologists have brought to light within recent years, have changed the perspective of all social science as decisively as the discovery of the New World changed the outlook of physical science after 1492.

It may be helpful to express this in terms of *categories*. One of the great turning-points in the history of physical science was the substitution of the category "globe" for the category "disk," in ways of thinking about our physical world. Another turning-point in the history of science is marked by the substitution of the category "satellite" for the category "center," to express the relation of our world to what we now refer to as our solar system. Another turning-point in the history of physical science is marked by the substitution of the category "gravitation" for all the mythological categories which had previously been resorted to for explanation of the visible universe. In each case science was promoted in two ways: first, by the stimulus to inquiry which resulted in additions to knowledge of concrete facts; second, by stimulus to reasoning which resulted in reconstructions of known facts, so that relations between them were more veraciously represented, (that is, to use our technical word, so that reality was more "objectively" represented).

Of course, the substitution of a more accurate for a less accurate category did not have the effect of an Aladdin's lamp, to perform miracles in the search for knowledge. Neither one nor all of these new categories gave us forthwith a finished science of astronomy or geology or physics or chemistry or biology. Each of these categories simply did something to reduce the amount of blur in men's eyes when they were prying into the facts which have meanwhile been organized into modern physical science. This is precisely what more accurate categories substituted for less accurate categories are doing in social science. They are clearing dust out of eyes focused on social phenomena, and enabling those eyes to make out more accurately what the phenomena mean.

Perhaps the most useful illustrations may be drawn not from technical science, but from analogies in popular thinking. The categories "liberty," "equality," "fraternity," were substituted for the categories "slavery," "inequality," "tyranny" in the

minds of millions of people toward the close of the eighteenth century. These categories were not merely political slogans. They were not merely revolutionary weapons. They were also theses in social interpretation. They were assertions not only of things that the people wanted to gain. They were translations of the human lot in new terms, i.e., the human lot not as it had already developed, but as those people believed it was capable of developing and intended to develop. They were translations of the human lot as it was into marching orders to conquer a better, more rational, more consistent human lot supposed to be latent in existing conditions. As such, these new categories transformed men's attitudes toward the real world. They made men act less like helpless victims and more like capable captains of their own souls and architects of their own fortunes. These new categories were assertions that the human lot is a foreordained régime of "liberty," "equality," "fraternity." They were assertions that human wickedness had thwarted the plan of nature to realize "liberty," "equality," "fraternity." They were proclamations that, if the arbitrary contrivances erected by selfish interests were once torn down, natural forces would presently realize a condition of "liberty," "equality," "fraternity" among men throughout the world.

To what extent these people were right, and to what extent they were wrong, makes no difference for the particular point here illustrated. It is the universal truth of psychology, "as a man thinketh, so is he." Adopting categories which put a new interpretation on the world started both the people who accepted the categories and those who scorned them into greatly altered activities. These changed states of mind have been factors both in the world of research and in the world of practice ever since. The same thing is true in its measure of every alteration of the categories which men use as the terms of their thinking. This is my reason for believing that there can be no more radical preparation for objective dealing with the meaning of human experience than sufficient preliminary attention to the leading categories in use by the sociologists. This is fundamental "preparedness" in social science, and it is fundamental preparedness in general sophistication about the ways in which human affairs proceed.

One more formal expression of what is involved in sociology may be added, viz.:

a) The problem of all social science is discovery of the meaning of human experience.

b) The sociologists attempt to do their part toward this discovery by contemplating human experience as a totality of *group situations*.

c) Sociological technique has developed as analysis of group situations considered, *first*, under the aspect of *status*, i.e., the group relationships viewed as relatively permanent; *second*, under the aspect of *movement*, or the group relationships viewed as processes; *third*, under the aspect of *value*, or group processes viewed with reference to the types of persons and types of interpersonal relationships which they tend to produce; *fourth*, under the aspect of *control*, or group process—situations presenting alternatives for constructive effort.

Any adequate introduction to the study of sociology will, among other things, furnish a content for such generalizations as the foregoing.