

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY.¹

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I WISH to discuss the relations between Psychology and Sociology. I will try to give reasons for the belief that to-day they are practically important as well as theoretically interesting.

“Subjects”, Professor Ralph Linton has observed, “have a way of getting themselves embalmed in university syllabuses”. Sociology is no exception, yet it is relevant to mention that it can be found in few British University syllabuses, but many American ones. This contrast does not necessarily imply that a negligible amount of sociological research is going on in this country, for there are serious differences of opinion concerning the definition and scope of sociology. Part of my task to-day is to discuss them.

While reading the literature on this subject it is important to bear in mind that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a subject and a vested interest, and that non-academic persons often have a clearer view about a subject's definition and limitations than has the specialist who ‘professes’ it. Furthermore, a definition of a subject, accepted a generation ago, may later have widened so much that it becomes unwieldy. Consequently the subject may divide by fission, either because of the growing force inside it, or through structural weakness. Or other more highly integrated subjects may surround and press in upon it until it is splintered, like a ship between ice-floes. This may be happening to sociology, as the term is understood here, yet work by people who would be called sociologists by some, and social psychologists by others, is not inconsiderable.

Instead of seeking formal definitions at this point let us ask

¹ An amplification of the lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 10th of March, 1948.

“What are sociologists and psychologists doing, and what speculations seem reasonable concerning their future activities?”

In an article, “Psychology and Sociology”, written nearly twelve years ago, Professor Morris Ginsberg succinctly outlines the position at that time. Yet in the last twelve years much has happened, and in 1936 the world was calmer than it is now. So it seems that if a sociologist has discussed the relation between psychology and sociology, beginning from his end, it might be useful for a psychologist to begin from the other (as, indeed, Professor Godfrey H. Thomson did, in the symposium which contained Professor Ginsberg’s paper) and try to build a bridge. Professor Thomson said, “I do not think that sociological applications are often mentioned in the psychology class.” Perhaps that is less true now.

One view of the social psychologist’s proper approach to a sociological theme is that he first observes how it affects his own experience and behaviour; then notices how accounts by other human beings differ from his own. So I hope it will not be tedious for you if I proceed outward from my own centre, describing and commenting upon relevant events in my lifetime.

I was instructed in general psychology at three different Universities. The courses given by different types of teacher (this fact is of psychological interest) were correspondingly varied.¹ The first was at King’s College, London, by Professor C. S. Myers and Dr. William Brown; the second at University College, London, by Professor C. E. Spearman; the third at Würzburg, by Professors Oswald Külpe and Karl Bühler. So far as I remember, in none of these courses did I hear anything about social psychology in the sense in which the word is now used.

In a course on “Comparative Psychology”, by Professor Carveth Read, I learnt facts about people from far away, “primitives” and “savages”, and heard speculations about how their minds worked. Behaviourism had hardly begun, nor had the *Gestalt* psychology, at least under that name. There were witty references to our own society, especially to the more obvious disorders of behaviour when under the stress of emotion—this was

¹ A fuller account is given in the writer’s “Industrial Psychology as I Have Seen It”, *Occupational Psychology*, July 1948.

a slightly embarrassing subject—or when congregating in crowds. Gustav Le Bon's *The Crowd*¹ still held sway, so crowds were usually assumed to be collections of people who should normally be dispersed with grape-shot, or ordered to move on.

My teachers, all very sociable men, seldom spoke of society ; they were concerned with establishing general Laws of Mind, the focus of their speculations and research was nomothetic. Every now and then, as when Alfred Binet's comparison of the mental imagery of his two daughters was cited, one realised the importance of individual differences, yet about the psychological problems of society I heard nothing.

For me, as for so many students of psychology, a great event was the appearance of Professor William McDougall's *Introduction to Social Psychology*,² I read it entranced, and returned to it again and again. For years afterwards, many taught "social psychology" almost exclusively from this book, ignoring its author's warning that it was but an elaborate packing for a journey which was never taken. In my opinion the later writings of Dewey, Ross and others in America never achieved McDougall's eloquent persuasiveness.

Much later, I saw how at that time McDougall took for granted many facts which to-day offer us fascinating problems. Of these, two were his own social stratum, and his nationality.³ Then in a summer holiday I read an article by Dr. Hadley Cantril, "The Social Psychology of Everyday Life".⁴ I have never been the same man since. It analysed and compared the treatments of sociology and social psychology by contemporary writers in English. He made a striking point ; one might have expected expositions by social psychologists to be rich in concrete examples, since presumably they were working outward from themselves. Sociologists, looking for laws of social behaviour, with relative disregard of the individual, might have been assumed to lean towards general treatment. Yet in the books he cited, the opposite tendency was obvious. At that time American sociologists

¹ 1903, London.

² London, Methuen.

³ T. H. Pear, "The Social Status of the Psychologist and Its Effect Upon His Work", *Sociological Review*, 1942, Vol. 34.

⁴ *Psychological Bulletin*, 1934, pp. 297-330.

seemed to offer more concrete examples of hypotheses, concepts or theories.

Cantril pointed out that the social psychology of everyday life was almost neglected. Subjects like gossip and rumour were regarded as hardly suitable for academic interest. His article convinced me that little could be said in defence of this neglect of the social phenomena of everyday life. Not all psychologists took this view, and in 1940 I read a paper, "The Trivial and Popular in Psychology", before the British Psychological Society.¹ Its reception was ambivalent. The discussion which followed it showed a confusion between "pure science", the purity of a scientist's motives, and the desire for the esteem of colleagues in related University departments. In those days it was supposed or tacitly agreed that "pure" scientists were harmless. Yet the events at Hiroshima were only five years away. Interest and controversy about social psychology are guaranteed, now that attitude measurement, public opinion polls, participant observers and mass observation are so widely discussed.

Between 1935 and 1938 a team of English sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists tried to plug some gaps in the record of our knowledge of methods and problems by producing *The Study of Society*.² The early reviews of it (it appeared just before World War II) criticized it chiefly for sins of omission. Yet because each writer contributed something about some subject which appeared to have been relatively neglected in England, the book inevitably has little outline, and no streamline. My own contribution was a commentary upon what seemed important problems of social psychology in 1937. It is not uninteresting to compare the contents of this book with those of more recent ones like Murphy, Murphy and Newcomb's *Experimental Social Psychology*, Hadley Cantril's *The Psychology of Social Movements* and Kimball Young's *Handbook of Social Psychology*.³

To-day there is no need to emphasize the importance of the social psychology of everyday life, yet for some psychologists social

¹ *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 31, 1940, pp. 115-128.

² Edited by F. C. Bartlett and others, London, 1939, Kegan Paul.

³ London, 1946, Kegan Paul.

psychology is merely a small branch of psychology. Their views contract with another one, that since man as a solitary animal is never found naturally, all human psychology is social psychology, and individual psychology considers the person by abstracting him (often illegitimately) from his social environment. For such thinkers, even 'individual' matters like colour-vision, smell or taste are viewed from the social standpoint. The first is viewed as important in selection tests for occupations; the second and third are considered in a social and occasionally in a commercial setting.

Though nowadays this point of view is common, it is relatively novel. To early experimenters on memory, the individual result seemed significant chiefly in so far as it could be ground up with all the others to furnish a Law of Forgetting. Then came interest in the person as a rememberer. F. C. Bartlett's research on serial reproduction¹ demonstrated the social factors in recall, and the recent book on the *Psychology of Rumour*, by G. W. Allport and L. Postman,² deals extensively with them.

The re-introduction of the ego into psychology^{3,4} stresses its social setting. The introduction of the concepts of level of aspiration⁵ and of ego-involvement⁶ suggests that all psychology eventually may be regarded as social psychology.

Social psychology may be defined as the positive science of experience and behaviour so far as these are affected by social relationships.

Professor Leslie A. White of Michigan University has recently written⁷ that professional psychologists were slow to appreciate the significance of super-individual determinants of human behaviour. Consequently science organized its forces under

¹ *Remembering*, Cambridge University Press.

² 1947, New York, Henry Holt.

³ Gordon W. Allport, "The Ego in Contemporary Psychology", 1943, *Psychological Review*, Vol. 50, pp. 451-478.

⁴ Hadley Cantril, "The Place of Personality in Social Psychology", from *Journal of Psychology*, 1947, 24, 19-56.

⁵ *Personality and the Behaviour Disorders*, edited by J. Mc. V. Hunt, 1944, New York, Ronald Press Co., Vol. 1, pp. 333-378.

⁶ M. Sherif and Hadley Cantril, *The Psychology of Ego-Involvements*.

⁷ "The Expansion of the Scope of Science", *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 37, No. 6, 15th June, 1947, pp. 181-210.

another banner to undertake this necessary task. This new movement was sociology. Because the current of thought ran too exclusively to analysis and explanation in terms of the single human being, sociology arose as a discipline for the study of the collective life of man. In the early years, it was considered as properly beginning at the point where psychology left off. The superindividual determinants of behaviour were social in nature, consequently sociology became the science of society.

Psychology bestirred itself meanwhile, and gradually expanded its scope to include the superindividual determinants. William James displayed a fine appreciation of social factors in behaviour in the chapter, "The Consciousness of Self" in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890). J. M. Baldwin predicted that "the psychology of the future will be social to the core". In 1908 William McDougall published his *Social Psychology*¹ . . . the first work bearing this title written by a psychologist. E. A. Ross's *Social Psychology*, the first work bearing this title by a sociologist, was published in the same year.

White shows that psychology still remained anchored to the individual as the object for its studies. He quotes G. F. Stout and C. A. Mace,² Floyd H. Allport and Margaret F. Washburn, who all take this point of view, one of them so late as 1924.

Accordingly, White says, psychology was unable to envisage a psychological system composed of many individuals instead of only one, a social as well as a biological organism, and this field was left pretty much to the sociologists.

All the same, it seems doubtful if Professor White's "system composed of many individuals instead of only one" is psychical in nature. An example of a system is a platoon of soldiers marching. The better their training in movement, the freer are they to think their own thoughts, which will differ even if they all fixate the 'marker'. And in a football team, the different terms for the positions occupied by individuals remind us that the full-back, the scrum-half and the forward have different experiences. Unity of action and identity of experience are not synonymous.

¹ It is important to note that the actual title is *An Introduction to Social Psychology*.

² Article, "Psychology", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th edition.

An illegitimate parallel is made when a social organism is likened to a bodily one. One's body is governed in a great part by the laws of physiology ; one's social club is not. Yet a well-run club is a perfect example of a social organism.

White continues :—

“Sociology was to deal with the group aspect (of behaviour). Give sociology time to mature, many thought, and the science of human behaviour would be complete, for with the individual and collective behaviour taken care of what else was there ? To many sociologists of the 1890's and early 1900's it had appeared, as it had to Comte many decades earlier, that at last the ' hierarchy ' of the science was complete, that sociology was to be the crown or capstone of the great edifice that was science. But these hopes and aspirations have not been realized. Sociology has not become the head of an impressive hierarchy of the sciences. On the contrary, many scholars, both within sociology and outside, raise the question ' Is sociology a science at all ? ' Whatever accomplishments sociology does have to its credit, it certainly has failed to fulfil the hopes and expectations of Comte and subsequent generations of sociologists.”

He thinks that sociology merely rounded off the science of psychology by making it a study of “ collective aspects of behaviour as well as of individual aspects ”.

Here there seems an ambiguity. Is “ the individual aspect of behaviour ” its subjective aspect ? The goal-keeper, catching and kicking a ball into safety, can describe his experience. But if the collective aspect means the collective consciousness or awareness of the whole team, I can give this phrase no introspective meaning. Few experienced and psychologically-trained administrators regard the phrase, used for public consumption ; “ The committee was of one mind ”, as literally true. They have often seen last-minute pressure upon dissidents turn ‘ *nem con* ’ into ‘ unanimous ’. It is highly improbable that any decision arrived at after hours of active discussion could be experienced identically by all voters.

Here I turn back nostalgically to the late Dr. W. H. R. Rivers' suggestion made in 1916.¹ Paraphrased slightly, it is that sociology should deal with social behaviour, with what is being done, and psychology with the experiences of persons behaving socially.

Sociologists did not accept this suggestion, for varied reasons. Of these one is hardly cogent, that this division would deprive sociology of all interest. This would seem to be the opinion

¹ “ Psychology and Sociology ”, *Sociological Review*, 1916.

of a sociologist who wants (naturally enough) to do psychological work.

Perhaps another reason was that if working in these limitations sociology might become social 'behaviourism'. Yet this would have been very useful, as Rivers showed in his examination of Professor Westermarck's views concerning the blood-feud, and marriage. Moreover, in working out culture-pattern problems, one must distinguish between a sanctioned and behavioural pattern, between explicit and implicit culture, even between 'pattern' and 'configuration'¹ and if more observers would record social behaviour as such, apart from any imputed motive, many culture-pattern studies would be valuably illuminated.

Professor Ginsberg has discussed different views concerning the proper relations between psychology and sociology. They may be summarized thus :

1. Sociology and psychology are, and for long must remain, distinct disciplines with distinct methods and aims.
2. Sociology, which is concerned with the behaviour of men in society, is nothing but applied psychology. This is Freud's view.
3. Human nature is socially and historically conditioned, therefore not psychological but social factors determine whether a particular idea will gain adherents. This is the view of Marx.

Ginsberg summarizes reasons which have been given for assigning a relatively minor role, in social studies, to psychology. One is the alleged immaturity of those parts of psychology which may be useful in dealing with social phenomena. Rivers took this view thirty-two years ago, but those who have followed the growth of social psychology since then may reasonably wish to ask anyone who repeats this doubt a few questions to test his detailed knowledge. It is worth mentioning that the Clapham "Report of the Committee on the Provision for Social and Economic Research" (Cmd. 6868, H.M. Stationery Office, London, 1946), was drawn up by a body of men which included distin-

¹ T. H. Pear, "Psychological Implications of the Culture-Pattern Theory" and "Personality in its Cultural Context," BULLETIN OF THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY, 1945-1946, Vols. 29 and 30.

guished economists and social philosophers but no sociologist or psychologist.

Again, it has been urged that we are more likely to obtain insight into the nature of mental forms by directly studying social facts than by studying the individual mind. But this argument, says Ginsberg, scarcely bears on a more concrete social psychology, which refuses to accept the implied sharp contrast between inborn constant elements in human nature and those which are affected by social environment.

The exclusion of psychology may be incidental to the use of the 'abstract' method in social science, e.g. economics. To state this is to criticize the use of the abstract method. The authors of *The Social Sciences*¹ write

"... The study of economics in Britain has in the past suffered from an over emphasis on the deductive method. The significance of a theory, or of a piece of research, has usually been judged in relation to its former elegance rather than to its correspondence with reality. It has even been asserted that the findings of economic theory depend not upon the facts of the real world but are 'implicit in our definition of the subject matter of economic science as a whole'. The concealed social premises of a priori economics have seldom been considered important enough to warrant investigation. This tradition in economics is probably much to blame for the present dearth of applied economic studies in Britain. It has commonly been regarded as more important to analyse the working of some imaginary economic system, bearing little relation to reality than to show how the economic system operates in the real world. The result of this divorce of theory from practice has been that graduates in economics have left the universities equipped with a much less practical understanding of economic reality than they are entitled to expect after three or four years' study. If they enter government service or industry in positions in which economics is of direct value to them, they probably find that whilst they may have a certain technical facility in using economic conceptions, many of their existing ideas have too little relevance to the realities with which they are confronted.

Recently there have been brilliant exceptions to this generalisation, and it is in virtue of these that British economics enjoys a high reputation. But many further changes are needed. In particular, since most of the more important conclusions of economics cannot be reached without the use of economic statistics, there is a strong case for making elementary statistical methods at least a more general part of the standard equipment of economics. In conclusion, it is not enough to train more economists and economic research workers. Further progress must be made in bringing the academic study of economics into the closest touch with reality. . . ."

¹ Cf. *The Social Sciences, A Case for their Greater Use*, 1948. Association of Scientific Workers, 15 Half Moon Street, London, W.1; T. H. Marshall, *Sociology at the Cross Roads*, 1947, Longmans Green, London.

Further criticism comes from Professor Robert S. Lynd in his paper, "The Implications of Economic Planning for Sociology."¹

A further possible reason for the relative exclusion of psychology from the social sciences may be the natural desire to draw clear lines of division between them. Yet this makes it possible for anyone who does not want to be bothered in his work by sociological implications to say that the word has meant so many things that it is now practically meaningless. He does not deny the existence of the study, but, by defining it as a nonentity, suggests its unimportance. And such a thinker is unlikely to make trouble for himself by trying to mark off sociology from psychology.

A natural reason for soft-peddalling the importance of psychological factors in attempting to explain any complicated social phenomena such as warfare, is the fear that extra-psychological factors may be neglected. It should be clear that no psychologist can expect to obtain a hearing if, when discussing war, he neglects the extra-psychological, especially the economic factors.² But there is a sense in which all factors which cause any single person to engage, or refuse to engage, in warfare, are ultimately psychological. Food shortage causes hunger, atrocity stories arouse hatred, the need for *Lebensraum* acts psychologically upon anyone who believes in it. Economic depression may cause desperate people to behave extravagantly. In all these instances it is the psychological factor which ultimately causes the anti-social behaviour. Totalitarian war cannot exist without mass-communications. Even so recently as the beginning of this century many 'educated' people in England had the vaguest notions about the Boer War, and took little interest in it except when the besieged towns were relieved.

Professor Ginsberg mentions some directions in which social psychologists might link psychology with the social sciences :

To discover elements in the human mind which specifically affect man's social relations and the respective parts played in

¹ *American Sociological Review*, 1944, pp. 14-20.

² T. H. Pear, "Peace, War and Culture-Patterns", *BULLETIN OF THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY*, 1947, Vol. 31.

collective life by inborn and unconscious drives, and the extent to which these are modified by intelligent guidance.

To find out the psychological peculiarities of racial, national or professional groups or social classes, and the conditions which govern these peculiar group mentalities.

To describe the role of individual differences in intelligence or character, in determining the nature of social groups and social change.

To provide a fuller classification of social groups and strata and to develop a technique for observation and recording.

He says :

“ Social psychology appears to have concentrated unduly on the search for the constant and invariable elements in human nature, which it has tended to identify with the innate or genetically determined. This has had the psychological effect of leaving the variations to be interpreted in non-psychological terms, or else making them appear utterly arbitrary and thus encouraging a relativistic and subjectivist view of human affairs. To counter this mood, we need not only an ethics but also a deeper psychological study of human motivation in varying concrete situations. Encouraging beginnings have been made in this direction in the study of the social life of children, in clinical psychology and in criminology, and the methods developed may prove useful in other social fields. The material that is now being collected in different countries and under different social situations may eventually facilitate comparative studies and render possible a more accurate determination of the role of mind in society.”

An example may illustrate several relations between psychology and sociology. An attempt to throw light upon English professional groups and social classes is in progress in the department of Psychology of Manchester University, where Mrs. Nancy E. Robertson and Dr. J. A. Waites are investigating with me the social and educational background of the rulers of England.¹

Our first aim was to discover social facts from which psychological data can be obtained, and to contribute to individual social psychology.

Answers were received to 67 per cent. of questionnaires sent in 1946 to Members of Parliament. Many gave additional unsolicited information which will be valuable for psychological purposes.

¹ “ The Present House of Commons ; its Educational and Social Background ”, *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 37, 1947. pp. 96-108.

To the English judges were sent the same questionnaire, and 69 per cent. answered. This is psychologically interesting, as it suggests that our judges, though mysterious, are not secretive. Here again the use of information from volunteered supplementary letters will be psychological.

In England there has been an incomplete separation of sociology from psychology. This has been commented upon in various ways. In an article "The Future of Sociology",¹ Mr. Tom Harrisson asserts that in the philosophical approach to sociology "great laws of human behaviour are produced without observation", as in Le Bon's alleged classic, *The Crowd*. This still exercises a high-level influence on University curricula and research training. A weakness, in his opinion, is the sociologist's absorption in quantitative methods, which attempt maximum impersonality, to satisfy purely mathematical criteria. This 'objective' sociology is set over against what he calls 'subjective' sociology, which, in the absence of a definition, I take means the conjuring-up in the consciousness of a single thinker, of alleged social laws.

Harrisson defines sociology as "the study of human relations and institutions and of social behaviour under the 'natural' conditions of human society". By inference, sociology is primarily concerned with the 'civilised' peoples, anthropology is its equivalent among the so-called 'primitive' peoples.

The subjects may have grown up in this way, yet if this distinction be insisted upon, sociology and anthropology in future are liable to have their boundaries smudged. It is evidence for Harrisson's view that not many years ago at a Cambridge meeting an anthropologist caused excitement by suggesting that instead of training students to investigate strange people in distant lands it would be valuable for some of them to study the complicated relations existing between 'Town' and 'Gown'.

"Social psychology", says Harrisson, "involves an understanding penetration of normal situations and environments." One might subscribe to this, demurring that "understanding penetration of normal situations" is not enough. Many ab-

¹ "The Future of Sociology", *Pilot Papers*, II, No 1, March 1947, pp. 10-25.

normal situations need the studies of a social psychologist, who will approach them in a way different from that of the psychiatrist. There is too a strong case for training psychiatric social workers in the methods of social psychology. He considers that industrial psychology should largely be industrial sociology (a view not shared by all industrial psychologists) and cites Lord Keynes's prophecy that the day is not far off when the Economic Problem will take a back seat where it belongs, and the arena of the heart and the head will be occupied by our real problems, problems of life and human relations, of creation and behaviour and religion.

In America, in the last decade, the amount of sociological work has been immense. Since it has been impossible for an Englishman to keep up with it, in order to bring some proportion into my general picture I borrow with grateful acknowledgements from Dr. Edward A. Shils' article "The Present Situation in American Sociology."¹ He asserts that discussions of the nature of sociology and its proper methodology have contributed little to the development of research in American sociology. This, for some decades, has "aroused the admiration and uncomfortable repugnance" in European colleagues as a result of its enthusiastically detailed description of social life in the contemporary U.S.A.

As we have seen, in striking contrast with Europe, American sociology is immersed in first-hand experience of concrete situations.

The men of learning and synthetic disposition of the first generation of American sociologists, of whom Lester F. Ward was perhaps the greatest, have passed without a trace; his works are practically never referred to in any piece of research. The same is true of Franklin H. Giddings, the versatile and erudite incumbent of the Chair of Sociology at Columbia University. The generation which came just after them, Robert E. Park, W. I. Thomas, C. H. Cooley, and Edward Ross, stood midway between the sociology of the library and learned meditation on the one hand, and the increasingly circumspect research techniques of the present day on the other. They have had a profound

¹ *Pilot Papers*, Spring 1947.

influence both in their establishment of a precedent which requires sociologists to describe and explain the modern world, through their heritage of numerous, penetrating, though usually only implicit, hypotheses and the delineation of objects and categories of investigation.

For local reasons, e.g. the geographical position of the University of Chicago and of Columbia University in New York City, the problems of metropolitan and small-town life have been in the focus of American research. These studies have not usually been motivated by a central scientific problem or by any clearly defined hypothesis—they represent simply an attempt “to see the life of the community as a whole” in all its concreteness. They culminated in Robert and Helen Lynd’s classic *Middletown*.¹ More recent are *Small Town Stuff*, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, *A Chinese Village* and *Plainville, U.S.A.* The latter three investigations represent deviation from the traditional type of sociological community study, introducing new techniques of description and new categories of subject matter, e.g. child training and weaning.

Later, for Robert E. Park, the loosening and disruption of communal bonds and the increase in personal freedom were the main facts of modern society, and Chicago monographs described this. Their titles, *The Gang*, *The Ghetto*, *The Gold Coast and the Slum*, *Vice and Organised Crime in Chicago*, *Taxi Dance Hall*, are self-explanatory.

These are disconnected investigations, for the contemplations of wholes has never taken root in the U.S.A. as a fundamental scientific attitude.

Community study has undergone a reorganization, attention being particularly focused on specific problems. *Middletown in Transition*,² appearing eight years after the original *Middletown*, revealed this trend sharply. The class structure of Muncie, Indiana (the real name of Middletown) came far more prominently into the foreground. Dominance of the X family unified the work.

‘We Americans’, a study of Burlington, Vermont, describes

¹ 1929, New York.

² 1937, New York.

the pattern of relations among ethnic groups. 'Yankee City' series (a comprehensive study of Newburyport, Rhode Island) became primarily the study of differences in social status and how they relate to associational membership and ethnic origin.

So from this original stream of activity, there has been precipitated out an increasingly clear awareness of the necessity of approaching reality with specific hypotheses concerning the relation amongst various classes of events. In some instances, specific and concrete hypotheses are being subsumed under more general series as in the works of Childe, Dollard, Merton, Kluckhohn, MacGregor.

The view that all particular instances of behaviour must be interpreted against the structural field of which they are a part (developed from another angle by the late Kurt Lewin) leads to a new mutual fructification of 'social psychological' and 'sociological' studies.

The growing sympathy of American anthropologists like Benedict, Kluckhohn, Hallowell and Linton with one form or another of psychoanalysis is helpful because it introduces general hypothesis about human behaviour and counteracts the renewed tendency towards inventory-making.

Social stratification has become an increasingly frequent object of investigation in the past decade. An important achievement of American sociology is the invention of new techniques for the study of deference-aspects of this much talked about but hitherto seldom systematically studied subject matter. Prior to the great depression, American sociologists had not been much concerned with the class structure of society, with differences in the status of occupation and income groups, or with the distribution of opportunities for movement amongst the various social strata. Nor was it any more interested in the power relations among the classes.

The principal urban sociological technique, the study of the correlation between median rental levels or small urban sub-districts and the social characteristics of the persons inhabiting the area, offered a great convenience in the study of class differences, but the opportunity was not exploited. The influence of class-position on family structure was not explored or the inverse

relationship considered to any notable degree. The role of the family in the inculcation of standards appropriate to a given status, a crucial phenomenon in the reproduction of a social system, was not treated prior to the studies of the Warner group in Chicago. Studies of juvenile delinquency took for granted class position and the relations between status demands on the one hand and income-determined opportunity on the other. The social class of parents of members of legislative bodies in the U.S.A. has not been analysed even for a single generation of legislators.

Theory in American sociology has in the past meant either a preoccupation with definitions and classifications, with methodological reflections on the nature of sociology, general uncontrolled observations unsullied by statistics or concrete data, or scholarly preoccupation with authors, who, in their own time, had produced works containing general uncontrolled observations. Sociology cannot advance beyond its present state in America unless 'the theory of x' or 'the sociology of y' cease to be the presentation of untested hypotheses, disdainful of research because it cannot explain every individual case or because research is presumed to deal only with the trivial and the unique.

In a recent broadcast¹ Professor Morris Ginsberg asked "What can the Social Sciences do for us?" Summarized, his answers were these:

If there is to be a war of ideologies, and we are bidden to take sides, we ought at least to be quite clear what it is we are to fight about. Here is the first task for sociological analysis.

We need to know far more than we do of the technique of power in large societies—above all how to prevent its abuse. This means that we need fuller knowledge of the power and limits of mass-suggestion in modern societies. We must study further the importance of infancy and early childhood for the formation of character.

More direct training is needed in the handling of social facts and in the methods which can be used to interpret and evaluate them.

A very recent contributor to this question—I saw his article

¹ *The Listener*, Vol. 39, No. 1008, 20th May, 1948, pp. 822-823.

after this lecture was drafted—is Professor G. D. H. Cole, who discusses “Sociology and Politics in the Twentieth Century.”¹

He writes :

“ . . . Sociology grew up almost as an outlaw—at best, as an inferior branch of study, of which the role was held to be confined to analysis and comparison of the curious barbaric habits of primitive peoples, and to have no relevance to Politics or Economics, as studied in relation to the problems of the more advanced societies. Gradually, no doubt, this attitude is being discredited ; but it still persists, because there now stands behind it both a powerful vested interest in the perpetuation of economic and political studies in the shapes which have become traditional in University examinations and teaching, and a strong doctrinal reluctance to face the need for a form of social analysis which, applied to large and complex societies, will inevitably be itself highly complex and destructive of explanations based on giving primary importance to any single factor in the social situation as a whole.

Great Britain, hitherto, has been the most resistant of all the leading countries to the acceptance of Sociology in any form. . . .

. . . Sociology will not fit in with either Politics or Economics, as long as these two are conceived of as essentially separate and independent studies, each with its own laws. Yet so to conceive of them has been, for more than a century, an essential part of the British academic tradition—and indeed of the predominant British habit of thought in a far wider sense.

. . . The Sociological method is, of course, largely statistical. It studies social phenomena largely by counting instances, observing correlations, and thus building up a body of knowledge about social behaviour where numbers are involved. It discovers neither how a particular individual behaves—save incidentally, in the process of collecting its material—nor why men, in a preponderant number of instances, behave in a peculiar way. It may succeed in predicting how most people, or enough people to determine the main course of events, will behave in a particular situation ; but it cannot tell how any single individual will behave. That is not its job. It is, however, the job of the social psychologist, if not to predict the behaviour of particular individuals, at all events to try to find out why individuals behave as they do, when they are acting socially—in the sense of acting as members of social groups or communities, or as reacting to what is expected of them in relation to social institutions, with which they are associated in one way or another. The fields of Sociology and Social Psychology overlap ; they have to study many of the same phenomena but from different points of view. The sociologist proper stops at the fact, without establishing the motive, even if it can be established ; the social psychologist studies the fact in order to throw light upon the motive that lies behind it. The sociologist is concerned with the social consequences which follow from the behaviour of numbers of individuals who are, in some respect, similarly placed ; the social psychologist has to do rather with the causes that lead to the observed statistical regularities in social behaviour—or of course to irregularities, where they appear. . . .

. . . Social psychology involves even more, the study of committees and associations of every sort and kind, of the behaviour of officials acting in their official

2 0 ¹ *Politics and Letters*, Winter-Spring, 1947, Vols. 2 and 3, pp. 84-92.

capacities, of fathers or of housewives acting as representatives of families or of households, of Members of Parliaments, Town Councils, Soviets, Churches, Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies, and of the informal associations which arise among neighbours, among fellow-nationals, or on a still wider scale in international groupings. All these fields, despite some pioneering work (Graham Wallas, Robert Michels, Tonnies, Miss Follett, for example) remain mainly unexplored, and constitute the true sphere of Social Psychology as a study closely cognate to Sociology, but distinct from it because the centre of attention is in the sources of individuals' behaviour rather than in the mass results which ensue. . . ."

Up to this point, we have considered matters concerning people in all countries. Professor Cole discloses to British readers important facts about instruction and research in their own universities. He records chiefly sins of omission; not of commission. Yet it is fair to ask why Great Britain is resistant to the acceptance of Sociology; whether politics and economics can long continue to exist as separate and independent studies, each with its own laws, and whether it would not be wise to make certain changes, if we are to take the new Science of Man seriously, and not lag behind our American colleagues.

There should be much more co-operation between anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, economists and psychologists; sectionalism has already gone too far. The functions of different university departments and sub-departments might benefit by serious consideration of their usefulness in 1948.