"AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY, SEEN FROM A EUROPEAN VIEWPOINT"*)

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Sociology has been called the "American science", and if one were to count the number of courses taught in sociology at American colleges and universities and the publications on this topic, there is certainly at least a formal and quantitative foundation for this assertion. The reasons why sociology occupies such an important place in American intellectual life is a more complex problem to which no general answer can easily be given.

It has been stressed that the high rate of social change, the heterogeneity of the American population, its rapid urbanization, etc. are all factors which make a social science dealing with these topics almost imperative. But why so much of these tasks fell to sociology rather than to social psychology, social philosophy, applied economics, social history, etc. is a matter which leads us to the intellectual roots of sociology and which raises the question whether in its development it has been or become a specifically American science in that sense that it cannot be fully applied to other culture areas.

Sociology had its origins in Europe, partly as an attempt to create a non-metaphysical, empirical social science, partly as an effort to link the theory of evolution with the social sciences. In the United States, the reaction against social philosophy as a supposedly non-empirical discipline was from the beginning less pronounced than the links to evolutionary thinking. Sumner, although not a rigid evolutionist, was nevertheless a moderate adherent of the idea of progressive development which he attempted to develop out of his astute observations on primitive societies and his psychologistic presuppositions which he assumed to be

self-evident. Morgan as well as Ward were definitely adherents of the evolutionary school which had little interest for the type of social philosophy that prevailed in continental Europe in that period.

From the beginning, American sociology was faced with the problem of developing a general theory of society in which the specific problems of the American scene, like racial and ethnic groups, social problems, immigration, rural and urban communities, industrialization, etc. could be fitted. There was, on the one hand, the prevailing philosophy of progress and individual initiative, cushioned by a reserved realm of individual rights while, on the other hand, the thinking of the dominant Protestant groups, largely of Northern and North-Western European descent and origin, was to some extent dogmatic and inflexible.

In other words, while there was a large realm of free individual activity, there was also a metaphysical way of thinking which had the function of giving cohesion and control to social groups that had as yet no definite social structure. In the realm of free individual activity, the importance of the exact sciences was strongly stressed but, apart from law and history, and, at a later stage, economics, there was no strong need for a general theory of society as this seemed to be given by the religious tenets of the dominant social groups. There was perhaps a feeling that in an already so dynamic society, there was a need more for a static philosophy than for a dynamic one as also a dynamic society must needs find its curbs and limitations somewhere.

Thus, American sociology remained satisfied for a while with a rather eclectic attitude and with rather general psychologistic and behavioristic theories that were not developed in all their philosophical and epistomological implications. It hesitated, however, to accept fully the dominant view of the basic equality of Man and the philosophy of the almost automatic increase in the rationality of the individual.

This may have been partly due to the fact that sociology did not develop only out of rationalism and evolutionary thinking but also as a reaction against the one-sided views of economic theory of which the inadequacy had already become visible. Sociology was too much concerned with the negative sides of modern society to accept its underlying philosophy at face value but it also saw no reason to evolve a philosophy that meant the negation of these principles. Thus, it strove for neutral ground which, for a period, it found in the hypothesis that, while human nature was basically equal, it was shaped by its adaptation to the natural and social environment, and it was this process which was to explain society and its apparent contradictions and inequalities. Yet, there was a lurking
danger also in this argument: If the individual A is determined by his natural environment N and his social environment S, while it is also submitted that the social environment S accounts for more change than the natural environment, then A becomes a function of S. Consequently, it was assumed that the individual A is changed through his interaction with other individuals S, and the danger of circular reasoning is apparent. To assume that all social change could be explained by the natural environment is not supported by the facts of social history as totally different cultures find themselves in the same environment.

Thus, the compromise which American sociology had sought between the philosophy of self-determination of the individual and a rigid social determinism had not been successful but succour loomed on the horizon from the side of anthropology.

It must be mentioned that, in the meantime, the science of society had split into a largely psychologically oriented sociology (Cooley, Small, Ross, Ogburn, Znaniecki, Bogardus and many others) and the beginnings of a social anthropology that was striving to leave the uncertain foundations of evolutionary theory in order to develop a theory of its own.

The investigations of numerous pre-literate societies had led to the conclusion that, although the mental attitudes towards — and the ideological expression of — the basic social institutions change, they themselves show an amazing permanence so that kinship and sex groups, economic institutions, some form of government and a set of more or less institutionalized beliefs are found in all societies. These observations led to what came to be called the "functional view of society", according to which the basic social institutions are the reflection of basic human needs. As society changes, this implies that Man also changes, and sociology and social anthropology had finally broken through the barrier of having a presupposition which was not consistent with its ultimate findings although it is not intended to imply that this conclusion has been generally drawn or worked out in all its implications.

But, at any rate, the realization emerged that it is in Man himself that we must look for the explanation of society rather than in a deterministic environment. This view found expression in the desire to create a "science of human relations" which is neither wholly sociological nor anthropological but combines features of both disciplines.

It would seem that the realization that in Man himself the cause of social change must lie, would lead to a renewal of evolutionary rather than in functional thinking but this conclusion in such a simplified form is not wholly warranted. The theory of evolution was predominantly
concerned with physiological change via the process of adaptation but it definitely understated the possibility of minute but significant mental changes, not of a physiological but of a functional nature in the form of a certain predisposition towards mental patterns which become activated by the social and natural environment. It must be admitted that this conclusion is of a speculative nature and that to an empirical social science the only ascertainable data are quantitative increase of social groups and increasing complexity of needs as the mechanism of social change and social integration.

It may be justified to restate briefly the inherited and acquired characteristics of American sociology as they emerge from the preceding observations: the rejection of rationalism in its nineteenth century European form, the acceptance of environmental adaptation as an important but not solely decisive factor in the formation of social groups; the realization that it is the structured small social group which stands at the beginning of social life and is to be regarded as its cell rather than a purely abstractly conceived individual who "interacts" with equally abstract individuals; the stress upon numerical increase and growing complexity of needs as observable and ascertainable data on which empirical social theories can be built although these observations are by no means exclusive to American sociology and may be more justly ascribed to the Durkheim school which, however, used them in a completely different and more deterministic type of theory. It is also clear that, if the small group, be it a kinship group or another one, is regarded as the "atom" of social science, this science does not deal with A or B but with the interrelationship between them which is determined by the relative importance of B to A's need-structure and vice versa. In other words, a social group is a relational field that has only reality insofar as the life-goals of the participants are interrelated and whose intensity is determined by the degree of this interrelationship. The isolated individual could exist but, realistically speaking, does not, except as the result of derived withdrawal in complex societies.

In terms of the preceding a number of trends can be distinguished in American sociology: A. *The early evolutionary school* (Morgan, Ward); B. *the psychologistic and behavioristic schools* (Sumner, Small, Cooley, Ross, Bogardus, Ogburn, Znaniecki, Bernard, Kimball Young, etc.); C. *the eclectic school* (most textbooks on social institutions, marriage and family, social problems, social pathology, rural and urban sociology, etc.); D. *the social-anthropology school* (Boas, Linton, Coon, Warner, Lowie, Goldenweiser, etc.);
E. The "pure theory" school (consisting of the "logico-rational" branch of Parsons, Merton, Abel, and the mathematical branch: Dodd, Lundberg);
F. the culture-theory and historical school (Sorokin, Barnes, Becker, etc.).

If one investigates the leading American sociological magazines, it can be observed that factual and statistical studies are on the increase while the more purely theoretical articles are relatively few in number. It also would seem although this has not been tested statistically that there is a greater spreading of authors and that it is becoming more difficult to consider authors as belonging to one of the above-mentioned schools. There is perhaps the underlying conviction that general theories or purely logical deductions are of no great value, with the exception of those conclusions that are arrived at by statistical and mathematical means. In regard to the latter, there is some implication that the statistical-mathematical method yields more reliable results than other ones although it would be difficult to cite instances of the epistemological proof of this opinion, except in the case of the mathematical school.

Although many other points of consideration will present themselves later, there is a salient point in terms of European social thinking that can already be mentioned. While European social thinking is generally thinking about society in its entirety, we find that American sociology is less concerned with general philosophies about society than it is with scientific analysis of existing society.

This is generally assumed as being the indication of a more truly scientific attitude but this view can be challenged because it is based upon the assumption that only the methods of the exact sciences are truly "scientific" while, for instance, a teleological approach is rejected as speculative.

However, the overwhelming influence which the exact sciences exert in the U.S. on the social sciences is a fact which, from the European viewpoint, asks for much more of a critical attitude. Every textbook on sociology repeats the same views on methodology, namely that the true scientist starts with collecting data and facts, then when he is struck by a correlation, he formulates a hypothesis which then is empirically tested and considered to be "valid theory" when applicable in the majority of cases. Thus, sociological theory is given a quantitative basis, and there would be no objection to this, were it not for the implication that the most frequent means the normal and hence the desirable.

This oversimplified version of the theorizing which occurs in many cases means that there is a static trend in American sociology: while the
society itself stresses equality, equal opportunity, etc., American sociology points to structure, racial and ethnic divisions, economic stratification. In other words, it fulfills the function of holding up a mirror to American society but in this image, the weight of facts, in other words: the present is rather high in relation to the past as well as the future.

If a sociologist analyzes a given community A at a given moment T, the resulting presentation may easily understate the trends which did bring community A to its present condition while the factor of possible future change only emerges in regard to data that can be ascertained statistically. Thus, if the European approach to the same study were more historical and philosophical, it is not possible to conclude without further analysis that it is therefore less scientific or less accurate.

Of course, this brings us to the crux of the matter, namely the "goal of the social sciences".

If the social sciences imitate the exact ones, it is not only because of the prestige of the exact sciences which the social disciplines lack but also because the exact sciences have "shown results".

However, it could be asked whether the methods of the exact sciences could ever show the same results in regard to human society, even if they are applied most rigorously and most conscientiously. It is not only the method but also the field of observation which determines the results of scientific investigation, and there is no reason to deny that the field of study of the exact sciences shows greater regularity and stability than that of the social sciences. In addition, in nature we can observe many processes which are — for the purpose of the science in question — entities within themselves while in society we deal with a process that is only partially completed and even that part is only accessible to the human mind in a fragmentary fashion.

Thus, scientific observation of social data leads to a sort of rationalization post hoc of a very limited segment of human experience, and the more "scientific" we aim to be, the narrower this segment becomes although refinement of scientific tools works in the other direction.

The ideal of a democratic science in addition causes that this process and technique of research must be done in such a fashion that it is readily communicable to the co-workers so that there is no danger of a slow-up in the scientific assembly-line.

Again, a faint doubt might be registered: science and art have owed their progress to those minds to whom things seemed different. The obvious to them was no longer obvious, knowledge no longer true, belief no longer reassuring but if we aim for a standardized and readily com-
municable science, we may be undervaluing the element of the unusual, of doubt, of excessive individualism and even "crankiness". The genius is the one who says no to the present in order to shape the future but he is not necessarily the person "with a high participation rate in panel discussions of team workers".

The virtues that society needs are not those needed by social science.

What, on the other hand, is the weakness of the speculative method, of the philosophical approach in contrast to the "scientific method" if we deal with social phenomena. Of course, it is not being argued that the European method is "philosophic", the American method "scientific" but there is some greater preponderance of the first type of thinking among European social scientists.

The philosophic approach acknowledges that we ourselves are a part of the stream of social life, and that it is a greater concern to look whither we are going than whence we came. The assumption, inspired by the exact sciences, that we deal with repeating processes has no foundation in history so that we gain but limited knowledge by looking at what is already behind us but of which some, but only some aspects may re-occur. Thus, reflection, feeling, sensitivity and the power of logical reasoning via analogies may give us insights, closer related perhaps to our hopes and anxieties but therefore not necessarily to be labelled as non-scientific. Reflection about what we ought to do or can believe, speculations about a perfect society, utopias, analyses in the field of cultural philosophy or cultural history have all their place in the world of social thinking, and we make our intellectual life not particularly richer if we label Plato as a speculative philosopher or if we say that our social thought has now progressed from "lore to science".

It is also worth some reflection that it is the novel which has a real influence in modern life, more than the sociological treatise. We turn to Balzac, Mann, James, Proust, Faulkner, Eliot and others if we want to know what people are really like and how they move through a bewildering world. There the individual does not appear under a microscope that narrows instead of enlarging but he appears as something shrouded by the mystery and uncertainty of life itself and approached with the reverence to which he is entitled.

However, it is not only the imitation of the exact sciences which has narrowed the vision of the social disciplines but also their departmentalization. Specialization has the advantage of greater accuracy and of a more detailed knowledge, and, if it were left only to a purely scientific division of labor, there would be hardly any argument about it except
scientific ones. But a sociologist can hardly overlook the fact that the development of modern science is intimately connected with the organization of higher education. Modern science reflects the modern university, and, in the case of the United States, the sharp division of undergraduate and graduate schools is exerting a strong influence which is absent in Continental Europe.

The European university is a graduate school that is geared to the requirements of its major departments. Economics sociology were and are frequently topics taught in law schools as secondary topics, and only recently do we find departments or entire schools devoted to economics or sociology. Those departments are only instituted if they lead to a professional degree that is of some value to the society in question.

In the United States, undergraduate study has the aim of general education, and the size and ambitions of one department are mainly curbed by that of another — and by budgetary considerations. Consequently, there is a strong tendency on the part of some, not sharply defined social sciences to expand and to develop not only their own methodology and their own epistemology but to include all realms of society, instead of seeking a more narrow delimitation. We find psychology expanding into social psychology, anthropology branching out into social and cultural anthropology, sociology dealing with political systems, economic institutions, art, etc.

The result is a number of overlapping disciplines, between which the difference is minute. If a student follows courses in social psychology, cultural anthropology and sociology, he receives the same material in slightly different versions. The result may be that the student learns a certain type of oral response from pure repetition but in regard to real intellectual interest, the effect is much less satisfactory.

The excessive and artificial creation of a scientific vocabulary is another by-product of over-specialization, and, at times, one feels tempted to ask what remains if the terminology is translated back into normal language. However, even the topic of terminology has found a new science, although traditionally it was the privilege of philosophy to quarrel about the exact meaning of scientific terms.

As the statistical method is considered important, different statistics are taught to economists, sociologists and psychologists, resulting in efforts for quantification where quantification frequently becomes arbitrary or artificial. Nobody will quarrel with the statement that everything can be measured but some things can definitely be measured more accurately than others.
In spite of these criticisms which are frequently heard in Europe, there is no doubt that American social science is exercising an increasing influence in Europe, perhaps because it reflects a type of society toward which Western Europe has increasingly oriented itself since Worldwar I and, to a much larger extent, since the end of the second Worldwar. As Europe is striving for greater stability, it is becoming increasingly concerned with a science that does not occupy itself over and over again with the ultimate roots of human existence but which — upon a set of acceptable presuppositions — concentrates on analyzing the functioning of this society within the limits of these stated goals. In Europe, the struggle between metaphysical, rational and vitalistic attitudes has been so violent that it never succeeded to create a common basis upon which the social sciences could be built. This is not surprising, because each of those attitudes had a powerful social group behind it which regarded its ideological demands as far more important than the creation of a neutral and objective science. This latter postulate was the outcome of a liberal philosophy that remained too closely related to rationalism to provide a really objective science, in spite of its acknowledgement of the desirability of this.

Metaphysical thinking in Europe is always strengthened anew not only by the churches but by the political parties which have a religious foundation and which strive for a sociology that is Protestant or Catholic, either openly or in terms of philosophies that are woven around metaphysical presuppositions. The upper middle and professional class is oriented toward rational economic thinking, flavored with an admixture of humanism, or, in other cases, with modern psychological doctrines, few of which are free, however, from overstressing certain principles as they have grown out of a protest against metaphysical and transcendental motives. On the other end of the scale, we find the wholly materialistic and deterministic doctrines of the left which have reversed the balance in favor of economic or other drives which are considered as the causative factor in regard to social change.

Thus, European thinking, in spite of its erudite presentation and its philosophosophical ramifications, is to a large extent "class-thinking" which consequently has not succeeded in creating a philosophy for Western society as a whole although each of the dominant ideological groups assumes that it is its own philosophy which represents not only European civilization but civilization as a whole.

As class-conflict and social stratification in the United States has been much less pronounced than in Europe, its social science has developed
in a freer climate so that — although it may lack the logical and methodological precision of sharply competing ideologics — it also lacks its limitations. As a result, American sociology is less given to one-motive theories but it has arrived at the much more satisfactory conclusion that it is interaction which is at the root of social change. The absolute statements about either a metaphysical principle, a rational decision, or a "drive" as to be regarded as the cause of social action is not tenable because the efficacy of these factors depends upon the degree of development of the individual and, ultimately, upon his organic condition. It can only be determined in a specific case whether motivation was predominantly in terms of a symbolic principle, a rational decision or directly emotional-vital. Theories that proclaim either the one or the other motive as the "sole cause" are frequently oversimplifications, influenced by class ideologics.

It is, however, exactly the overcoming of these ideologies and the resulting class barriers which are most essential to Europe and a re-align­ment of its society along functional lines and upon the principle of individual achievement.

The reaction to American social thinking of the European is frequently determined by this very fact: if he regards the existing social stratification as favorable, he will reject American social theory as "materialistic or "not logical or systematic" while, if he is eager for greater social mobility, it will be characterized as "progressive", "advanced", "possessing new techniques", etc.

This, of course, views social science not so much as an academic discipline but in its actual social significance. If seen in this fashion, it is clear that the horizontal and vertical aspects of social structure have been more fully understood in the United States than in Europe. If sociology, social psychology and social anthropology are viewed as academic discipli­nes, the distinction is less striking because each science in its own realm is internationalized to a considerable degree, so that sociology in Europe or the United States shows a great number of comparable shadings. But seen in its functional aspects the distinction becomes more salient: public opinion analysis, field studies of social structure, community analyses, attitude-measurements, social distance tests, small group interactional patterns, laboratory studies of social behavior are largely due to the more pragmatic American philosophy, and there is no doubt that they are of great importance to Europe because they investigate the attributes of social stratification in a more objective way than was possible in Europe.
under a more rigid system of stratification that was either hotly defended or hotly denied.

The realization in American sociology that little of scientific value about the behavior of the individual or the group can be said unless we take into account: A. the psycho-organic condition of the individual or the structure of the group; B. the influence exerted by other individuals or other groups; C. the natural environmental conditions, is undoubtedly not novel to Europe but it exercises less influence in research and it has led to few efforts to break down interdepartmental barriers.

If a real science of Man depends upon the collaboration between the exact and the social sciences, one would be inclined to think that the present intellectual climate of the United States with its zeal for applied science and experimentation may be more favorable to such efforts than that of Europe where the weight of philosophic and rational thinking has remained greater.

On the other hand, it must be stressed again that American social science operates more strongly within a definite set of presuppositions, thereby imposing certain limitations upon itself so that it might profit from placing more emphasis upon overall cultural philosophy or cultural sociology. Within the given society, however, the greater freedom of the individual works in the direction of a wider field of observation in regard to different social attitudes and the conditions under which they emerge. It is also perhaps worthwhile to note that the theory that psychological or social equilibrium can only be reached upon the foundation of given organic or socio-economic conditions is more fully applied in regard to inter-American problems than it is in regard to areas which have remained more in the realm of conscious or sub-conscious value-judgment or which are seen as not possessing the prerequisites, within which modern social science can be effectively applied. It might be of importance, however, to investigate how the validity of a social science is related to its presuppositions as the ultimate goal should undoubtedly be a social science which is applicable to the entire world rather than to Western society only. This does not mean to say, however, that the creation of a social science which is a reflection of Western society and can be applied to it is not of the greatest significance because it seems overoptimistic to assert that such a science is already in existence.

On the contrary, we can hope for its emergence from inter-Western culture contacts but it would not be a constructive approach to ignore that at present national culture-biases are still a potent force within Western society. On the other hand, they contribute to cultural diversity, and
culture contact does not have to imply the desirability of cultural unification.

In the case of sociology, for instance, it does not follow that out of the various European and American trends, one deserves to become predominant. But it could be argued that the flow of culture should be as much as possible a two-sided affair, and that, while the impact of American sociology on European social thought, has become considerable, the reserve is true to a much lesser extent. This is perhaps so because American sociology pays attention mostly to what appears in Europe under that same name but ignores the large segment that is hidden in social and general philosophy:

While interaction between the exact and social sciences might have a more favorable "terrain" in America, the same cannot be said about the impact of philosophy on the social sciences which is considerably higher in Europe and which frequently creates an intellectual depth that cannot but benefit the social sciences.

This point is one, on which European criticism of American sociology seems partially justified. While the first reaction of the European who begins to acquaint himself with American sociological literature is one of a refreshing quality, this attribute pales if one begins to be aware of the relatively small intellectual range, due to an extreme limitation to what is called "empirical science". Before this limitation gains such general validity, it deserves a closer scrutiny rather than being equated with science as such.

Ultimately, a social science is part of the total cultural pattern of a nation which can never be uniform but shows the interplay of attitudes so that an empirical social science is a compromise rather than an acceptance of the culture-pattern as a whole. In this regard, it is, for instance, puzzling that Catholic sociology receives little or no attention in general sociological textbooks although its different presuppositions would make it interesting from a philosophical point of view, while it is also worthy of note that the history of sociological doctrines which, in the case of a changing social science amounts to the science itself, receives relatively scant attention in the United States.

This, apparently is due to the idea that an older theory is no longer "valid" if there are newer ones although this is again a totally unwarranted extension of the concept of an empirical science. If social science were empirical, this viewpoint might be justified but since this is certainly not too easily tenable, it means a "narrowing of the horizon" which a historically oriented sociological theory would avoid.
This attitude reaches its culmination in the viewpoint of some American sociologists that now, for the first time, a "scientific" theory of society is being developed while it is assumed that, if it emerges, it will last. This would finally be the creation of a new scientific ritualism, designed to meet the demands of a more static society, and it would not only run contrary to pragmatism, but also to the requirements of a real social science which can never seek ritualistic petrification.

There is no doubt in the mind of the present writer that this type of theory will be counteracted by other trends and by a sober re-examination of the epistemological foundation of social thinking.

True, our world seeks greater permanence, and this urge reflects itself in the social sciences. But is it not exactly the goal of science to go beyond being an image of existing society, and to ponder about possible other situations; about factors which cause variety and to be itself one of those factors? From this viewpoint, the theories of Plato and Aristotle, of Comte or Spencer, of Fichte or Turgot still deserve the greatest attention, but how often does one find in American sociological magazines that their theories are weighed and tested with loving care?

In this respect there is certainly room for a constructive influence of European social thought and philosophy in American sociology.

This does not mean, of course, that there should be no empirical investigation of those aspects of society which are open to that type of analyses. Also Plato would not have quarreled with that argument. But beyond that part, there are the sectors of society which are more fully alive.

Let it be attempted to visualize what a sort of integrated European-American social science would look like. The idea of the underlying structure of society is common to certain trends of both European social philosophy and American social anthropology. In order to arrive at its empirical understanding, we need a cross-section of existing societies, but this skeleton needs to be brought to life again by giving full emphasis to the factor of social change. If social change is logically reduced to change of basic social groups, and, ultimately, of the individual, it becomes the great problem whether the exact sciences can offer any support for this type of explanation. If they can, a unified empirical social science within specified limits might become possible but if no such aid is in sight, it remains for philosophy to suggest and evaluate alternative social theories and to indicate the means by which an empirical approach can be completed.

It might also be well to remove the somewhat mysterious notions
about what a more exact social science could do as it could probably do no more than give a more valid reliable foundation to what has been known already for a long time. The ideas of psycho-organic and social equilibrium can be found in abundance in the ancient philosophers, and it might be justified to state that the social sciences will not in practice improve society unless nature leads a helping hand in creating at least the beginnings of an equilibrium.

Social thinkers tend to a "chip-on-shoulder" attitude, implying that if they were only left to perform their magic, all would be well with the world. Since statesmen and rulers have all had to benefit of becoming acquainted with social theories, it must be assumed that the distance between "diagnosis and cure" is rather more complex in the social world, and that our social evils resemble the common cold which can be readily diagnosed by either layman or professional, but has not been effectively cured by either party. The other possibility, more encouraging for the social sciences, would be that diagnoses and cures both need considerable more refinement, and that, in this process, neither the tools of statistics or mathematical theory, nor those of intuition and philosophical insight, of history, and of the visual approach should be omitted.

But it can never be the goal of science to photograph reality: in the first place, these photographs give us a limited and false reality; secondly, the ultimate aim must remain a theory which explains and is applicable to society in the widest sense of the word. It may seem subtle and modest to state that we can now only develop "partial theories" because our tools are as yet imperfect but we would have little confidence in the physician who had only studied muscles because his equipment was not refined enough for heart or lungs.

Also this atomization is a by-product of the exact sciences, and in studying society, we are studying something that is whole and alive and that will not yield its secrets in any piecemeal fashion. Perhaps sociology and social philosophy have grown so far apart that the empirical and the speculative have become mutually exclusive instead of being complementary, and, in this respect, American and European sociology may well be in a position to implement one another.

In other words, it is in the field of methodology that the greatest divergence between American and European sociology occurs, and it needs to be asked whether this dichotomy is necessarily related to the structure of the societies in question.

The United States has not gone through two social forms which have left their mark on European society, namely medieval universalism and
feudalism. Both these forms showed a predilection for absolute values, mental as well as social, while the U.S. was given from the beginning to a more dynamic attitude which found its most adequate expression in pragmatism. But social and numerical density in Western Europe still operate in the direction of absolute values as it can needs show less social mobility than a society with a totally different Man-natural resources ratio. In American society, there, however, strong forces operating in the direction of a more static structure but these forces much less readily find ideological expression as the intellectual climate is very intensely permeated with the more dynamic forms of thinking while Europe has a reserve of many types of philosophy which alternate with changes in the social-economic structure. Thus, Europe has the danger of diversity without enough underlying unity while the U.S. shows at times a trend toward a ritualistic philosophy, ritualistic because it does not respond subtly to actual social change but continues to stress symbolic values that tend to be regarded as "permanent". There is no sociological theory which can tell us what the exact relationship between "ideology" and "reality" should be but the difference is noteworthy because it expresses a most significant social trend.

If the divergence between the two types of thinking would increase, it would become much more difficult to bring them both to a common cultural denominator while — if the ideological realm influences the other social institutions — there is even a practical problem of some magnitude. In the theoretical realm, there is undoubtedly a significant task for those who are willing to acknowledge the existence of the problem: namely, the examination of the roots of social science in the United States and Europe in the respective societies themselves, and the reconstruction of a methodological approach which does justice not to some of those roots but to all of them.

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