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Robert K. Merton

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has been chiefly concerned. It is too early yet to pass judgment or even to convert possibilities into probabilities, for a really adequate investigation might still unearth facts which would point to the conclusion that newspaper content cannot be profitably analyzed in detail. What has been done so far, however, has been

in general favorable rather than otherwise to future prospects. Tenney's twenty-year old prediction²³ that we would one day forecast the "social weather" by analyzing newspapers has today a better rather than a worse chance of coming true.

²³ A. A. Tenney, "The Scientific Analysis of the Press," *Independent*, 73: 895-898.

RECENT FRENCH SOCIOLOGY*

ROBERT K. MERTON

Harvard University

IN NO other nation, probably, do sociologists so clearly divide into several distinct "schools" as in France; in no other country is sociologic interest so definitely focussed on discernibly few problems. This paper, then, will be primarily

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The works of Daniel Essertier—of which free use has been made in this paper—provide the most systematic survey of recent French sociology. Cf. *Psychologie et Sociologie*, Paris: Félix Alcan, 1927; *La Sociologie*, Paris: Alcan, 1930. For brief sketches, see: René König, "Die neuesten Strömungen in der gegenwärtigen französischen Soziologie," *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Soziologie* [later, *Sociologus*], 1931: vii: 485-505; 1932: viii: 210-224. Gaston Richard, "Nouvelles tendances sociologiques en France et en Allemagne," *Revue internationale de sociologie*, 1928: xxxvi: 647-669; 1929: xxxvii: 173-188. Henri Lévy-Bruhl, "The Social Sciences as Disciplines: France," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 1930: i: 248-258. André Joussain, "Les deux tendances de la sociologie française," *Revue internationale de sociologie*, 1931: xlix: 266-270. G. L. Duprat, "La Psycho-sociologie en France," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie und Soziologie*, 1925: xxx: 133-160. Daniel Parodi, "La philosophie française de 1918 à 1925," *Revue philosophique*, 1925: xcix: 359-383. Georges Davy, *Sociologues d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, Paris: Alcan, 1931, Introduction. Célestin Bouglé, "The Present Tendency of the Social Sciences in France," in *The New Social Science*, (L. D. White, ed.), University of Chicago Press, 1930, 64-83. Paul Fauconnet, "The Durkheim School in France," *The Sociological Review*, 1927: xix: 15-20.

concerned with these two aspects of French sociology abstracted, for the sake of concision, as far as expedient from their historical groundings. Grouping sociologists into "schools" does not imply, of course, their complete identity of viewpoint nor their utter conformity to canons of unquestioned jurisdiction, but serves rather to resume conceptually what such a class of sociologists have in common.

Constituting the pivot on which controversy chiefly turns is the general—methodologic, epistemologic, sociologic—schema of Émile Durkheim. His followers, variously denominated as the Durkheim school, the French school of sociology, the genetic sociologists, the ethnographic sociologists and the group of *L'Année sociologique*, include such eminent figures as MM. L. Lévy-Bruhl, Bouglé, Fauconnet, Hubert, Mauss, Halbwachs, and Davy. At the other pole stand those who—proounding their anti-Durkheimian polemics in the *Revue internationale de sociologie*—derive from R. Worms and Tarde, foremost amongst whom are MM. Gaston Richard, G. L. Duprat, Allier, and Déat. Of much lesser importance if we may judge by their recent contributions are those comprising *L'École de la Science Sociale*,—in traceable liation from Le Play through Demoullins and de Tourville—with Paul Bureau as the

outstanding representative. Finally, incidental mention may be made of the "Catholic School" which, in the persons of MM. Deploige, Belliot, Legrand, and Maritain, has delighted in constant impugment of the conceptions of Durkheim and has sought to re-introduce the sociologic ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas.

In passable accord with the facts, it may be said that the major notions with which French sociologists have been chiefly concerned in the last decade are "primitive mentality," its nature and its relation to "civilized mentality," and the relationships of psychology and sociology in the study of mental phenomena. A summary account of recent developments may best be provided, therefore, by referring to the general discussions of these problems by members of the different schools.

Of the Durkheim group, Professor Lucien Lévy-Bruhl has most industriously devoted his energies to a study of "primitive mentality."¹ He adopts the principle of social types: to societies of different structure appropriately correspond different types of mentality. In consequence, the primitive mind is radically distinct from the civilized, is completely mystical, derives no appreciable benefit from experience, is not cognizant of the logical principle of contradiction, is made up of mystical "participations" and "exclusions,"—in short, is "pre-logical." This irreducible difference of mentalities makes the comprehension of the primitive mind by an investigator from a civilized culture extremely difficult if not impossible. In maintaining that the primitive mentality is completely dominated by the *representations collectives*, M. Lévy-Bruhl holds fast

to the Durkheimian conception, but in asserting a radical break in the evolution of the human mind he manifestly deviates from Durkheim who repeatedly averred that modern scientific thought—genetically considered—arises from primitive religious thought.²

Avoiding any suspicion of heterodoxy is Professor Marcel Mauss who, as director of the revived *L'Année sociologique*, continues the general Durkheimian tradition. His election to the presidency of the *Société de Psychologie* in 1924 is perhaps the best indication of the gradual rapprochement of sociologists and psychologists in the last decade, an incipient collaboration which Essertier appropriately calls "neo-sociologism." In M. Mauss' schematization, sociology is divided into social morphology (which corresponds roughly to social organization) and social physiology (which, in so far as it considers individuals acting as parts of the social unit, may be styled social psychology).³ He accepts the notion of the "creative society" and attempts the sociologistic explanation of the sentiments in much the same fashion as his master had held the social origin of the conceptual categories.⁴ He maintains, *in toto*, the sociologistic view that since social facts "are exterior to the individual, and are endowed with a coercive power by means of which they are imposed upon him," the psychologists may very well benefit by the findings of the sociologists, but that, in the complementary consideration, the latter need not be very much concerned with psychologic data.

² Émile Durkheim, *Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, Paris: Alcan, 1912, 336-342.

³ "Divisions et proportions des divisions de la sociologie," *L'Année sociologique*, 1924-25: ii [n.s.]; "Les rapports réels et pratiques de la psychologie et de la sociologie," *Journal de psychologie*, 1924: xxi: 892-922.

⁴ "L'expression obligatoire des sentiments," *Journal de psychologie*, 1921: xviii: 425-434.

¹ *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*, Paris: Alcan, 1923; *La mentalité primitive*, Paris: Alcan, 1925; *L'âme primitive*, Paris: Alcan, 1927; *Le surnaturel et la nature dans la mentalité primitive*, Paris: Alcan, 1931.

This conception of the specificity of social phenomena which, though psychic, are far from psychologic, is still the keystone of the "French school of sociology."

It is in this same vein that Professor Paul Fauconnet, Durkheim's successor at the Sorbonne, represents the repression of crime as an eminently collective phenomenon, since it is merely the reaction of the group against any action which offends the "collective consciousness."⁵ In similar fashion, it is society which is variously held to be the origin of the sentiments, will, personality, intellectual functions, and memory by MM. Davy, Paulhan, Blondel and Halbwachs.⁶

On the other hand, Professor Célestin Bouglé, though a former collaborator of Durkheim, does not grant the complete validity of such theories, denies that sociology can do without the assistance of psychology and claims that the autonomy of sociology is sufficiently assured if, following Simmel, it studies social forms.⁷ Professor Bouglé's conception that sociology can furnish a base for the course of social action providing the ends-in-view are given is somewhat akin to Pareto's concept of "virtual movements" and to Dr. Woodard's idea of "inductive evaluations of functional appropriateness," though it bears more of an ethical orientation than either of these notions.⁸

⁵ *La Responsabilité*, Paris: Alcan, 1920.

⁶ G. Davy, *La foi jurée*, Paris: Alcan, 1922; F. Paulhan, *Les transformations sociales des sentiments*, Paris: Flammarion, 1920; Charles Blondel, "La Personnalité," *Traité de Psychologie* (G. Dumas, ed.), Paris: Alcan, 1924, ii, 569 ff; M. Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, Paris: Alcan, 1925.

⁷ *Leçons de sociologie sur l'évolution des valeurs*, Paris: Colin, 1922.

⁸ C. Bouglé, *De la sociologie à l'action sociale*, Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1923. Cf. V. Pareto, *Traité de sociologie générale*, Lausanne; Payot, 1917-19; J. W. Woodard, "Critical Notes on the Nature of Sociology as a Science," *Social Forces*, 1932: xi: 28-43.

M. Maurice Halbwachs, professor of sociology at Strasbourg, is perhaps the only statistically-minded sociologist of prominence in France. In *Les Causes du Suicide* [Paris: Alcan, 1930], he reworks the data of Durkheim, von Mayr and Morrelli, to arrive at new and fruitful results. It is M. Halbwachs also who has somewhat remedied the manifest lacuna in Durkheim's system by a preliminary study of social classes, in the same work where he declares that individual memory is a function of society since it is the collectivity which provides the social frame of reference for specific memories.⁹

At the extreme left of the *L'Année sociologique* group in many respects is M. Georges Davy. Society being at once "real and creative" is the "principle of explanation of the individual." Even for the higher faculties, sociology furnishes to psychology "the only principle able to explain rationally their presence in the individual."¹⁰ In his historico-ethnographic studies, M. Davy claims to have demonstrated that the institution of potlatch contains the very matrix of the contractual relation, for it induces a reciprocity of rights and of duties between individuals and between groups.¹¹

This necessarily sketchy résumé of recent contributions of the more noteworthy members of *L'École française de sociologie* will suffice, it is hoped, to indicate broad lines of agreement and individual divergences among these investigators. There is general acceptance of the postulate that social phenomena are *sui generis*, explicable in terms of "social facts" rather than in

⁹ *Les cadres . . .*, ch. vii. See also his earlier work, *Classe ouvrière et le niveaux de vie*, Paris: Alcan, 1913.

¹⁰ "La sociologie," *Traité de psychologie* (G. Dumas, ed.), Paris: Alcan, 1924, ii, 768-810.

¹¹ *La foi jurée*, Paris: Alcan, 1922; (with A. Moret) *Des clans aux empires*, Paris: Alcan, 1924.

terms of individual behavior. It is held that sociologic explanation involves the discovery of the simplest social forms, the elements of present-day institutions and associations, and for this it is necessary to turn to a study of the primitive mentality, beliefs, and practices. Here lies the basis for the great emphasis placed upon anthropological research by the followers of Durkheim.

Though Tarde can scarcely be said to have founded a "school," his unsympathetic attitude toward the foregoing conceptions has more or less influenced a large group of French sociologists. René Worms, who until his death in 1926, was commonly regarded as director of this group, constantly impugned the strong ethnographic bent of many of the Durkheimian disciples. Sociology, as the synthesis of the social sciences, should confine itself to the direct and historic observation of Western society and should not turn to the dim uncertainties of anthropologic data for basic material. Furthermore, the individual, as the "ultimate human element" is not simply a social unit, and his infra-social aspects must be studied psychologically.¹²

The present editor of the *Revue internationale de sociologie*, M. Gaston Richard, early turned from collaborator to adversary of Durkheim. He denies the antithesis of individual and society, asserts the sterility of seeking in the primitive mentality the explanation of the higher social processes, and asks that sociology use the comparative method to determine the functional correlations obtaining in social phenomena. He attacks the "sociologic imperialism" which encroaches on the domain of psychology and claims that the two sciences are coördinate.¹³

¹² *La sociologie, sa nature, son contenu, ses attaches*, Paris: Giard, 1921.

¹³ *L'arbitrisme dogmatique en sociologie religieuse*, Stras-

From this same anti-Durkheim camp come several works which purport to pursue the "socio-ethnographic romance" of M. Lévy-Bruhl to its last stronghold, and to reduce his entire conception of the "pre-logical" to ill-advised verbalism. M. Raoul Allier, in three heavily-documented volumes, denies the existence of an impassable chasm between the uncivilized and civilized mentality. Moreover, even in the lower societies, the individual plays a much more significant rôle than is commonly admitted.¹⁴ In like manner, M. Olivier Leroy seeks to expose the contestable assumptions on which the theses expounded by M. Lévy-Bruhl are based. In sum, he claims that the notion of the "pre-logical" is in contradiction to the most thoroughly demonstrated anthropological "principles."¹⁵

The antinomy between the full-fledged sociologic school and the group which maintains the place of psychology as a science complementary, and essential, to sociology, is most strikingly brought to light in the discussions of M. G. L. Duprat. In contradistinction to the Durkheimian group, he holds that no objective existence can be attributed to society, nor may individual consciousness be conceived as a product of the collective consciousness. Social psychology must take psycho-biologic behavior as the point of departure and must study the results of psychic and social interaction.¹⁶

Bridging the gap between the systems of Tarde and Durkheim is M. René Maunier. He uses the concept of "imitation" when

bourg: Istra, 1923; *L'évolution des mœurs*, Paris: Doin, 1924.

¹⁴ *La psychologie de la conversion chez les peuples non-civilisés*, Paris: Payot, 1925, 2 vol; *Le non-civilisé et nous*, Paris: Payot, 1928.

¹⁵ *La raison primitive*, Paris: Alcan, 1927.

¹⁶ *L'orientation actuelle de la sociologie en France*, Paris: Giard, 1922; *Introduction à la sociologie*, Geneva: 1930; *Psychologie sociale*, Paris: Doin, 1931.

he defines social acts as repeated or general acts, and the notion of "constraint" by indicating the power of social pressures, customs, fashions, *etc.*, to effect conformity of the individual.¹⁷ Into this category of reconcilization also falls Daniel Essertier, whose death in 1930 undoubtedly inhibited the growing movement toward "neo-sociologism," toward an *entente cordiale* between psychologists and sociologists. He constantly advocated the pursuance of definite factual studies and deplored the tendency in France to pose meaningless questions concerning the "true psychic unit" or the theoretic priority of either of the two disciplines.

Chiefly identified with *L'École de la Science Sociale*, M. Paul Bureau attempts to synthesize the monographic method of Le Play, Tarde's psychologic interpretation of historic and statistical data, and Durkheim's view of emergence. He would use his revision of de Tourville's Nomenclature as a guide for further research.¹⁸

A thorough-going discussion of contemporary French sociology can scarcely ignore the many historians, jurists, economists, philologists, geographers, and psychologists who have adopted a sociologic approach to their respective fields. The exigencies of time, however, permit me to make but passing mention of such scholars as MM. Seignobos, Lacombe, Berr, Granet; of Hauriou, E. Lévy, Duguit, Huvelin; of Gide, Leroy, Picard, Bourgin, Simiand; of Vendryes, Brunot, Meillet; of Cholley, Brunhes, Vallaux, Febvre; of Blondel, G. Dumas, and Piaget.

Specific reference to the works of the prominent figures in current French sociology has led to this paper becoming perilously like a thing of shreds and patches.

¹⁷ *Introduction à la sociologie*, Paris: Alcan, 1929; *Essais sur les groupements sociaux*, Paris: Alcan, 1929.

¹⁸ *Introduction à la méthode sociologique*, Paris: Blond & Gay, 1923.

A recapitulation of the general traits and trends of these works may serve to tuck in the loose ends and to provide an approximate description of the entire set-up. As previously observed, the "battle of the schools" is a most striking characteristic: antagonism of method, concept, and interest pervades most sociologic discussion. To the Durkheimian thesis of the specific, emergent character of social phenomena is opposed the doctrine that these phenomena do not differ in nature from those which have the individual consciousness for a substratum; against ethnographic research is raised the study of contemporary Western society; in contrast to the conception of sociology as an autonomous science is the view of it as a synthesis of the social sciences. This emphasis on differences, however, should not blind us to resemblances of rather recent origin. The monumental *Traité de Psychologie*, edited by George Dumas, involved the collaboration of members of the two major sociologic schools and evidenced a gradual rapprochement of the separate factions in the common recognition that psychic phenomena, facts of consciousness, can be studied fruitfully from the standpoints of both psychophysiology and sociology. Further, both groups, with but a few individual exceptions, eschew the statistical approach with an almost studied deliberation. Theoretic discussions claim the foreground and concentrated inductive investigations of contemporary society are relatively few in number. Studies of this nature that are made,—for example, those of the *Institut d'urbanisme*, which uses ecologic principles for the purposes of city planning—tend to pass over into the field of applied science and become involved in problems of practical policy.¹⁹

¹⁹ *L'Institut international de sociologie* will discuss "practical ecology" and "urbanism" as part of its programme at the 1933 congress. See G. L. Duprat,

The second part of this paper, which enters the disquieting realm of theoretic criticism, will nevertheless permit a further exposition of the general nature of contemporary French sociology.

II

To the "great epidemical conspiracy for the destruction of paper"—which the voluble Samuel Johnson deplorably noted in his own day—French sociologists have contributed more than their due share. They have sheered over into the metaphysical domain with persistent inquiries concerning the "proper field" of sociology and the nature of the "social fact,"—as if inter-scientific frontiers were transcendently marked No-Trespassing. Yet even a cursory glance at the history of science reveals that such preoccupations have never forwarded the attainment of scientific knowledge. In all relatively advanced fields of inquiry the course which has proved most effective has been quite different. One starts from the facts, seeks the uniformities between them, frames an hypothesis which seems an adequate description of these uniformities, and then returns to the facts for verification.²⁰ Theories, explanations and theses are tentatively retained insofar as they correspond to the facts and are discarded or altered as they differ. This simple method of successive approximation, this fruitful circle of fact-theory-fact,²¹—was it not faintly

adumbrated in the Socratic dialogue?—enables science to be flexible and cumulative. Yet, by and large, French sociologists seem sublimely unaware of this fundamental, effective device for furthering sociologic knowledge.

To the extent that the disciples of the Durkheim school use the concept of the "reality" of society and collective representations as an heuristic device, they may arrive at an approximative description of social phenomena, as did M. Halbwachs, for example, in his study of suicide. If by the specificity of social facts, they mean a "novelty of behavior arising from the specific interaction or organization of a number of elements . . . which thereby constitute a whole, as distinguished from their mere sum or 'resultant,'" ²² then here too they are dealing with phenomena which are directly observable and with a conception which is verifiable. But when they treat the collective representations as hypostatized entities, ready to fasten onto individuals who come within their realm, they turn to sterile, meaningless psittacism.

The fecund germ of validity which exists in the general sociologic approach

"Memoire introductif à l'ecologie et à urbanisme," *Revue internationale de sociologie*, 1932: xl: 7-20.

²⁰ "The true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation, it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization, and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation."—Alfred North Whitehead.

²¹ This is not meant to imply radical empiricism. Fruitful apprehension of facts—as they are presented in naïve sensuous immediacy—is enhanced, of course, by an initial hypothesis, on the basis of which mean-

ingful predication is possible. As Ernst Cassirer indicates: "While the empiristic doctrine regards the 'similarity' of certain contents of presentation as a self-evident psychological fact which it applies in explaining the formation of concepts, it is justly pointed out in opposition that the similarity of certain elements can only be spoken of significantly when a certain 'point of view' has been established from which the elements can be designated as like or unlike." *Substance and Function and Einstein's Theory of Relativity*, Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1923, 25.

²² William Morton Wheeler, *Emergent Evolution and the Development of Societies*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1928, 14-15. Even so moderate a view of "emergence" as this has its critics. See, for example, Lancelot Hogben, *The Nature of Living Matter*, London: Kegan Paul, 1930, 97; Sir P. C. Mitchell, *Materialism and Vitalism in Biology*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930, 28-29.

lies in the fact, which Claude Bernard, among others, had long since perceived, that since phenomena merely express the relations of bodies, then by dissociating the parts of a whole, we must make these phenomena cease if only because we destroy the relations.²³ Thus, on avowedly epistemologic grounds, there is a presumption that the whole of social phenomena may not be explicable in terms of the behavior of individuals. The error of the Durkheimian school lies in exaggerating this presumption into an omnipotent "truth" which is to be the touchstone for the investigation of all mental phenomena. May it not be that the adherents of sociology are somewhat affected by the "illusion of centrality" in believing that Society is the center to which all factors of life must be referred for explanation?

Another type of fallacy—that of one-sided illustration—is to be found when M. Lévy-Bruhl seeks to establish a radical difference between the "primitive" and "civilized" mentality. In his insistence on the pre-logicality and utter lack of rationality of the primitive, he ignores the fact, which Rivers, Malinowski, and Goldenweiser have so well demonstrated, that "every primitive community is in possession of a considerable store of knowledge, based on experience and fashioned by reason."²⁴ Further, when he includes in his

category of the "primitive" peoples of such diverse cultural character as the Andaman Islanders, Chinese, Japanese, Australian aborigines, and Polynesians, one may well remark the convenient vagueness of his classification. Nor has M. Lévy-Bruhl troubled himself to investigate the degree of currency of the "pre-logical" in "civilized" cultures,—certainly superstition has not softly and suddenly vanished away even before the enlightened Boojum of Positivism.²⁵

M. Lévy-Bruhl represents but a particular instance of the general ethnographic bent of the Durkheim school. This interest is in part based on the Cartesian principle of going from the simple to the complex, *from the better known to the less known*. It is in this latter precept that the joker lies, for though in general it is the *simple* which is *better known*, such is not always the case. Are primitive societies, admittedly simpler though they be, more intelligible to modern investigators than complex, civilized societies? M. Lévy-Bruhl's own theory holds that they are most certainly not.

Many of the genetic sociologists in the Durkheimian tradition assume an indefinite social continuity: present-day primitives are virtually held to be our "contemporaneous ancestors;" in their rites, ceremonies, and beliefs are to be found the origins of the elements of our society. Is this not a dangerous form of theoretic tenuousness on which to base a significant part of a sociologic system? At any rate, no reality-contacted theory would claim this to be axiomatic.

²³ Claude Bernard, *Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale*, Paris: J. B. Baillière, 1865, 157. "... les phénomènes ne sont que l'expression des relations des corps, d'où il résulte qu'en dissociant les parties d'un tout, on doit faire cesser des phénomènes par cela seul qu'on détruit des relations."

²⁴ B. Malinowski, "Magic, Science and Religion," in *Science, Religion and Reality*, (Joseph Needham, ed.), New York: Macmillan and Company, 1925, 28. See also W. H. R. Rivers, *Medicine, Magic and Religion*, London: Kegan Paul, 1924; *Psychology and Ethnology*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1926; A. A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization*, New York: A. A. Knopf, 1922.

²⁵ Does not M. Lévy-Bruhl's method suggest the critical pertinency of the anecdote related by Diogenes Laertius concerning Diogenes the Cynic who, when shown the votive tablets suspended by those who had escaped shipwreck "because they had made their vows," inquired "Where are the portraits of those who perished in spite of their vows?"

Turning to the group of sociologists centered about the *Revue internationale de sociologie* it will be seen that these fallacies are, on the whole, avoided. But for a singular reason: members of this school are so busy attacking the Durkheimian conceptions that they appear to have no time for their own factual investigations. It is just this which seems characteristic, to a greater or less degree, of French sociology in general: attacks and counter-attacks are present in great variety, considerations of the "oughts" and "shoulds" of sociologic investigations abound, but there is a surprising dearth of well-grounded, specific studies. The admonition of Fustel de Coulanges that "pour un jour de synthèse il faut des années d'analyse" seems generally forgotten. Such monographs as do appear, for example, Gaston Bouthoul's study of invention,²⁶ possess the delightfully literary, but hardly scientific, quality of happy generalization based on a variety of dubious principles, adduced for the occasion.

French social psychologists are fond of criticizing the sociologicistic approach on the ground that the latter can only describe, never "explain." This objection, it seems to me, is sheer nonsense. Even the "older" expositions of scientific method held that when a certain phenomenon is susceptible of being described as an example of a general principle applicable to other phenomena, this phenomenon may be said to be explained.²⁷ Or, from the operational point of view, "the essence of an explanation consists in reducing a situation to elements with which we are so familiar that we accept them as a matter of course, so that our curiosity rests."²⁸

²⁶ *L'Invention*, Paris; Giard, 1930.

²⁷ Cf. for example, James Clerk Maxwell, *Scientific Papers* (edited by W. D. Niven), Cambridge University Press, 1890, ii, 418.

²⁸ P. W. Bridgman, *The Logic of Modern Physics*,

This does not imply that the "elements" in question are larger or smaller scale things than the phenomenon being explained. If this view of the nature of explanation be accepted, it follows that explanation is not absolute but varies with the particular configuration of experience of the individual making—or accepting—it. Here, perhaps, lies the answer to the perennial wrangling' twixt psychologist and sociologist over this problem. The "typical psychologist"—if, paradoxically, such a blunt grouping may be permitted for expository convenience—is more familiar with data pertaining to the individual; the sociologist, with those pertaining to the group. Thus, when a situation is described in terms of *social* processes or patterns, the sociologist, being familiar with such "elements" accepts the description as an "explanation," while the psychologist is apt to deny any explanatory value to it; when the situation is described in terms of *individual* behavior, the attitudes of the two scientists are apt to be inverted.²⁹ The mutual fallacy is the endowment of "explanation" with an absoluteness which is contradictory to its essentially relativistic nature.³⁰

But all this represents something of a digression, and there remain a few concluding remarks. French sociology in the

New York: Macmillan and Company, 1927, 37 and ff. See also J. H. Woodger, *Biological Principles*, London: Kegan Paul, 1929, 273 and ff.

²⁹ "... intelligibility is relative to the amount or variety of the experience of the person to whom the information is conveyed."—J. H. Woodger, *op. cit.*, 279.

³⁰ This conception of the relativity of explanation—at such a far remove from the notion of explanatory "levels" based on arbitrary classificatory distinctions between the sciences—seems to be, at least in part, an epistemologic repercussion of the "new Physics." Cf. E. Cassirer, *op. cit.*, 140; Louis Rougier, *La matière et l'énergie selon la théorie de la relativité et la théorie des quanta*, Paris: Gauthier-Villars et Cie, 1921, 102-103.

last decade represents an extension of the tendencies present from a much earlier period, the two main movements being typified by the systems of Durkheim and Tarde. In the last few years there has been a trend toward a collaboration of the psychologicistic and sociologicistic approaches, but union is not yet. Theoretic discussions of general methodologic and

conceptual problems are being constantly multiplied; sociologic monographs are much fewer in number while statistically-oriented analyses verge on non-existence. One cannot help but feel that more attention to facts of common experience and less to the elegancies of rarified theory would do much to increase the fecundity of French sociologic research.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK

The program for the sixty-first annual meeting of the NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK centers around Social Work and the New Deal with special emphasis on emergency relief, reconstruction for the future, the new leisure, the changing community program. *The Conference Bulletin* for April, 1934, calls attention to the meeting as follows:

Plans are going steadily forward for the sixty-first annual meeting of the National Conference of Social Work and its Associate Groups to be held in Kansas City, Missouri, May 20-26. Full details of the program, as far as they are now available, are published in Section 2 together with all necessary information regarding Headquarters, hotels, and so on.

The program at Kansas City marks a departure from the custom of a number of years. The Program Committee of the Conference has assumed full responsibility for a series of more or less related meetings to be held at nine o'clock each morning of Conference week. These programs have been organized under the general title of "Social Work in the New Deal." Printed copies of Mr. Bookman's address at the opening session on "The Federal Emergency Relief Administration" will be printed in advance of the Conference and available on Monday morning as background material for the nine o'clock meetings on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Conference week.

The General Sessions of the Conference have been planned with particular care this year. The Conference Dinner is being arranged to give honor and recognition to social workers who have gone into government service or have been in government service during the past few years and have done such outstanding work. Mr. Harry L. Hopkins, the Federal Relief Administrator, well known to social workers throughout the country, will be the speaker. Other special features are being planned. No one attending the meeting in Kansas City will want to miss the Conference Dinner. The President's reception will follow the Conference Dinner in the same building. This is a great social occasion of Conference week.

Mr. Hopkins, the Federal Relief Administrator, and his Assistant, Mr. Aubrey Williams, are planning two meetings during the week of the Conference particularly for Federal Emergency Relief Administration staff members. Taken all together the program promises to be one of the strongest in recent years.

For further information write or wire Howard R. Knight, General Secretary, National Conference of Social Work, 82 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio.