Nina Ridenour papers

Section 43, Pages 1261 - 1290

Nina Ridenour's papers consist of correspondence; press releases and other publicity materials; book reviews (both those for her own books and reviews written by her); manuscripts and draft versions, sometimes with annotations and corrections; comments and critiques; biographical data; bibliographies; reading and research notes; reference materials; a grant application; outlines and lecture notes; invitations; newspaper clippings; scripts; books, pamphlets, and other publications; and other related materials. Some correspondents include Menninger family members and Menninger Clinic staff, Aldous Huxley, Clara Beers (Clifford Beers' widow), and Abraham and Bertha Maslow, among others.

Topics in these materials include publications and publishing (especially Ridenour's books Mental Health in the United States--a 50-Year History, Mental Health Education: Principles in the Effective Use of Materials, and Health Supervision for Young Children); mental health education; the play "My Name is Legion" (based off Clifford Beers' autobiography and co-written by Ridenour and Nora B. Stirling); the American Theatre Wing's community plays, for which Ridenour wrote numerous discussion guides; children's mental health; term papers Ridenour wrote while in school; professional organizations and professional positions with which Ridenour was associated, especially the Ittelson Family Foundation; consciousness; extra sensory perception (ESP)/parapsychology; and other related topics.

The materials span Ridenour's career, though the bulk come from the 1950s and 1960s and provide an excellent overview of her work and professional interests and concerns.

Creator: Ridenour, Nina

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MIDYEAR EXAMINATION FOR SOCIOLOGY 9.

January 29,1930.

Nina Allen Ridenour.

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#1.

Social Philosophy and Social Science.

Social philosophy and social science are both concerned with the same problems, and deal with the same subject matter, namely,-- "how men have sought to explain the phenomena of human society." Social philosophy, partly because it preceded social science chronologically, is somewhat more narrow, but essentially the two are interested in the same thing, social interpretations. The difference, then, is one of method.

Social philosophy, as the name implies, uses the method of philosophy, which is to assume certain premises and reason logically to conclusions; it is deductive. Its success depends on the soundness of its original premises.

Social science, on the other hand, of course attempts to use the method of science, which is to build a system on the basis of facts which have been tested critically; the method is primarily inductive.

Aristotle and Plato were the first and chief social philosophers. They called their subject "Politics," and in fact the social philosophy of their time and for a long time afterwards was a political philosophy. The chief interests centered around the problem of government and the state. Beginning with Montesquieu, who "converted social philosophy into descriptive socia science," the problem for social interpretation began to broaden out and include the study of all phases of social life. According to Lichtenberger, all the early "sociologists" up to Montesquieu except Aristotle and Bodin would be classed social philosophers.

Lichtenberger says, "the study of social philosophy is of great value as an introduction to a genuine social science," because it

formulates problems and stimulates interest in the development of correct methods.

It seems to the writer that there is some ambiguity of expression here. If he means that the study of social philosophy is of value to those who are studying it from an historical point of view, with a purely academic interest, in an effort to understand the early philosophers or sociologists, he may be right. But if he means that the study of social philosophy was of value to those early scholars who spent their lives at it, or in other words that social philosophy is of value in and for itself, this might be questioned. I believe it is possible that social philosophy did a great deal of harm in delaying the development of social science, and that social science today may be handicapped by the vestigial remains of social philosophy. Much that claims to be social science today is only glorified social philosophy. Is it not possible that if social philosophy had never been worked up into an elaborate method and system, that social sicence might be more free to develop as a new and independent field with original methods of research, unhampered by traditional methods, inexact, unfruitful, and meaningless? But then again, since social science could not even begin to develop until science itself had made some headway, perhaps it would be even farther behind if it had not had social philosophy as a basis. Can this point be answered?

A

#2.

Plato and Aristotle and the Scientific Method.

Although Plato, in his last work, "The Laws," showed some increasing glimmer of the scientific method, and although the work of Aristotle was plentifully sprinkled with examples of the philosophical dialectic method, Aristotle, from the first announcement of his

intentions, had the true scientific feeling. Says Aristotle, "We must therefore look at the elements of which a state is composed." (Lichtenberger p. 36, from Politics I,1:1) And again, "...it would be better perhaps for us to examine it (legislation) ourselves, and in fact the whole subject of politics in order that the philosophy of human nature may, as far as in our power, be completed." (L. p. 36, fr. Ethics X 9.) Here we have the inductive method, working from observed detail to general laws; analysis. Then says Plato, "Suppose we imagine the State in the process of creation,..." (L.p. 13, fr. Rep.) Here is pure deduction, working down from generalizations to particulars, the frank use of unexamined hypotheses, imagination, logic.

In their explanations of the origin of society, Aristotle was more scientific. After pointing out the natural union "of those who cannot exist without each other," and the natural growth of the family and simple forms of society, he concludes, "and if therefore the early forms of society are natural, so is the state.....Hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature and that man is by nature a political animal." (L. p.37, fr. Pol.) The origin of society is explained by physical and biological causes. But Plato argues that the state "arises out of the needs of mankind; no one is self-sufficing but all of us have many wants. Can any other origin of the state be imagined?" (L. p.13, fr. Rep.) Plato thus jumps over any simpler physical explanation to a complex psychic explanation of social origins; again, an untested, unanalyzed hypothesis based on the argument, "Can any other be imagined?" Is Aristotle's based any more on analysis or testing?

In various points, Aristotle's arguments, even if not altogether sound, are at least based on observation, one of the first requisites of the scientific method. For instance, his opposition of Plato's theory of communism and the upholding of private property are based on fairly keen observation of human nature. Again, in education, while

many of their ideas are similar, Aristotle outlines a program which is considerably less dogmatic and more flexible than Plato's, and therefore more sound and more in keeping with the scientific spirit.

In criticizing these two men, there is some danger of the modern's being too harsh with Plato, and too lenient with Aristotle, because his conclusions on many subjects agree more closely with ours today than do Plato's. If the opposite had been true, perhaps we should be looking for justification of Plato's method as "scientific" and maligning Aristotle for lack of observation. A

#3

Classification into Schools.

It seems to the writer that the only valid classification of a group of men such as those studied in this course is on the basis of interests. It is impossible to classify them on a basis of beliefs because they were not all concerned with the same problems or type of problems. On the basis of interests, they seem to fall more or less naturally into two main groups: Academic, or passive, those with more scholarly interests; and Dynamic, or active, those who are interested in seeing things accomplished.

The Academic Interest group includes the introverts among sociologists, those who wish to work out new theories, to analyze and explain, rather than synthesize or reorganize; they are the idealists, the theorists. They might be subdivided into two more groups, the philosophical and the scientific. The Philosophical group comprises those whose interest is in method more than in result. They are fascinated by logic, by mental gymnastics, more eager to prove themselves or their method right than to arrive at sound conclusions. The Scientific group includes those whose interest, while still primarily theoretical, is interested in the results and the facts more than the method. They have the scientific spirit. They are

the semi-extraverts of this introvert group, the less passive of a group still classed as passive.

The Dynamic Interest group is represented by the extraverts, those whose interest centers in reform, those offering a new or better way of life; the doers. Their interest is so little in method that they could not be called scientific or philosophical, but are better called ethical and political. The Ethical group is composed of those who are interested in the individual; they offer a philosophy of life or a religion, are concerned with morals and happiness and the general welfare of the individual. They are the uplifters. The Political group includes those who also have the reformer's urge, but who are concerned with generalizations--the state, society, mankind. They are busy with political reorganization, education, economic and industrial reform.

If we classify the thinkers studied in this way, they fall more or less as follows, with perhaps a few who should be placed in each of two groups:

ACADEMIC INTEREST GROUP.
- Philosophical
  - Plato
  - Cicero
  - Seneca
  - Philo
- Scientific
  - Aristotle
  - Polybius
  - Aquinas
  - Dante
  - Bodin
  - Vico
  - Montesquieu
  - Condorcet
  - Comte

DYNAMIC INTEREST GROUP
- Ethical
  - Stoics
  - Epicureans
  - St. Paul
  - Jesus
  - Luther
  - Calvin
- Political
  - Hobbes
  - Locke
  - Rousseau
  - St. Simon

Machiavelli

By letting the imagination wander a little freely we can carry these concepts over into modern times and place a few names under each heading. The Academic-philosophical group might be represented by a few armchair psychologists and philosophers as Wm. McDougall, L. L. Bernard, Carl Spearman, John Dewey. The Academic-scientific group

might include a few anthropologists, theoretical economists, and statisticians, such as Taussig, Boas, Irving Fisher.

In the Dynamic-ethical school we have some uplifters like Harry Emerson Fosdick, William Healy, Grace Abbott, Bernard Glueck. In the Dynamic-political group we have our really outstanding citizens in politics, education, industry, and what have you--Herbert Hoover, Owen Young, Dwight Morrow and son-in-law, Harry Elmer Barnes, E. L. Thorndike, Lewis Terman, Mary P. Follett, ad infinitum.

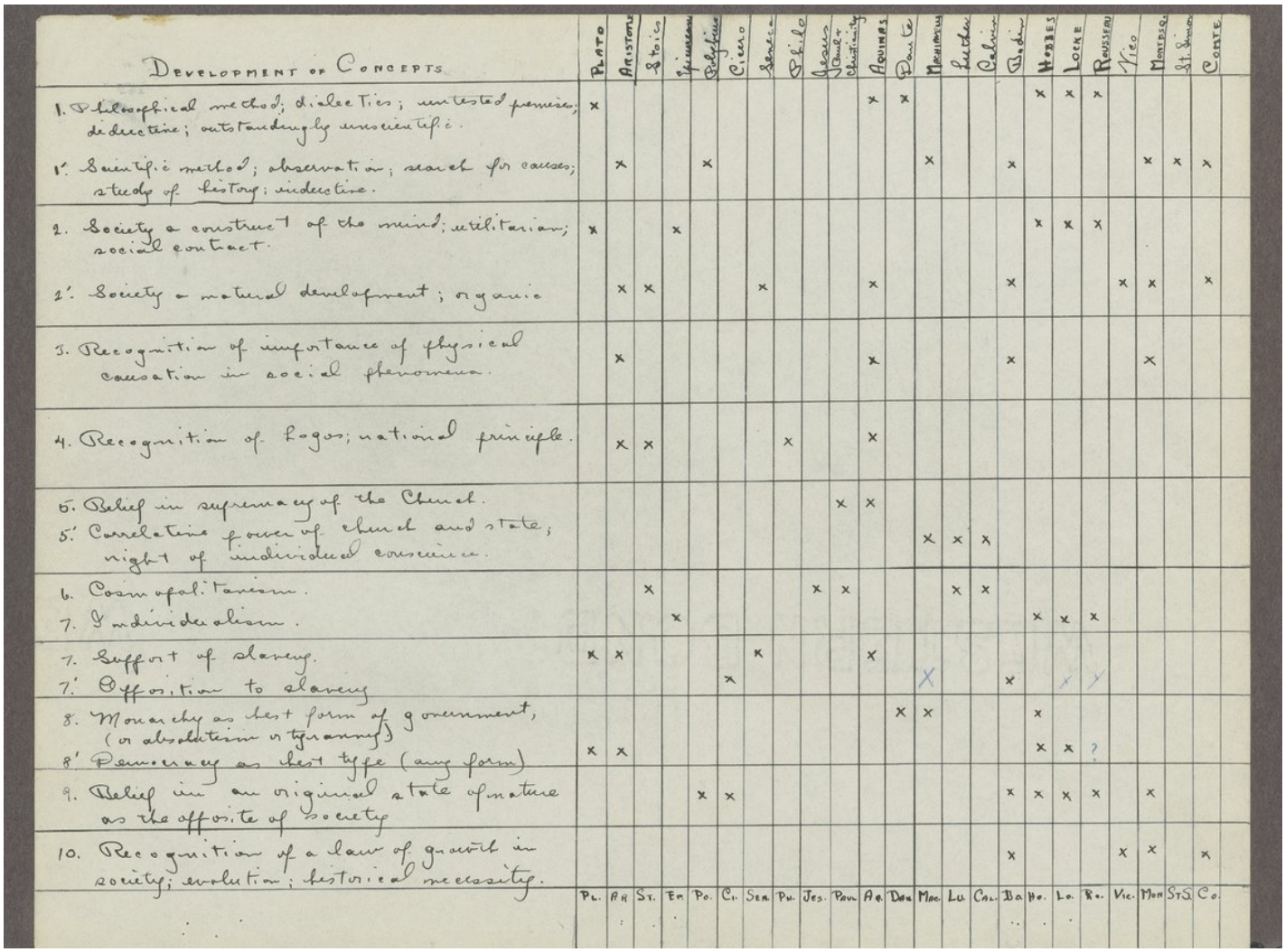
(For chart of development of concepts of authors see next page.) At

#4.

Development of idea of geographic influence.

The early thinkers who were among the first to consider the influence of geographic factors in human social life were Aristotle, Aquinas, Bodin, and Montesquieu. Aquinas offered little that had not already been suggested by Aristotle. (L. p.111.) The other three all agree on three particular points concerning the geographical influence: (1) that the men of the North are more vigorous, more energetic, more courageous; (2) those of the South are less able physically but more alert mentally; (3) those in between are a combination of the characteristics of the other two. Aristotle goes little farther than this, except to account for the virtues of the Hellenics by saying that since they are situated in between the North and the South, they have the high spirit of the North Europeans, combined with the intelligence of the Asiatics, and therefore are capable of ruling the world.

Bodin carries these concepts further, describing more fully the characteristics of races in each of the three locations, north, middle, and south, and indicating how their characters would affect their interests, type of government, and general culture. He notes other character determinants such as winds, fertility of soil, mountains and



Development of Concepts	Plato	Aristotle	Stoics	Epicurus	Polybius	Cicero	Seneca	Philo	Jesus & Christianity	Aquinas	Dante	Machiavelli	Luther	Calvin	Bodin	Hobbes	Locke	Rousseau	Vico	Montesq.	St. Simon	Comte
1. Philosophical method; dialectics; untested premises; deductive; outstandingly unscientific.	x									x	x					x	x	x				
1'. Scientific method; observation; search for causes; study of history; inductive.		x			x							x			x					x	x	x
2. Society a construct of the mind; utilitarian; social contract.	x			x												x	x	x				
2'. Society a natural development; organic		x	x				x			x					x				x	x		x
3. Recognition of importance of physical causation in social phenomena.		x								x					x					x		
4. Recognition of Logos; national principle.		x	x					x		x												
5. Belief in supremacy of the Church.									x	x												
5'. Correlative power of church and state; right of individual conscience.												x	x	x								
6. Cosmopolitanism.			x						x	x			x	x								
7. Individualism.				x												x	x	x				
7. Support of slavery.	x	x					x			x		X			x		x	x				
7'. Opposition to slavery						x																
8. Monarchy as best form of government, (or absolutism or tyranny)											x	x				x						
8'. Democracy as best type (any form)	x	x														x	x	?				
9. Belief in an original state of nature as the opposite of society					x	x									x	x	x	x		x		
10. Recognition of a law of growth in society; evolution; historical necessity.															x				x	x		x
	Pl.	Ar	St.	Ep.	Po.	Ci.	Sen.	Ph.	Jes.	Paul	Aq.	Dan	Mac.	Lu.	Cal.	Bo.	Ho.	Lo.	Ro.	Vic.	Mon	St S.	Co.

valleys, latitude and longitude, and draws many generalizations.

Montesquieu continues with this method of observation, also attempting to explain causes of the effects. He agrees in the main with Bodin, and continues with even greater generalizations. He considers in detail the effect of climate on drinking, slavery, the position of women, political liberty, and religion.

None of these ideas can be said to be truly scientific, but all are approached in the scientific spirit, and contain the essence of the scientific method. Their chief virtue is that they are the result of observation; their chief fault is that sweeping generalizations are made on thebasis of inadequate, untested data. Much credit is due to these men for the observations they did make, however, because it would require a great deal more information than they commanded before any reliable deductions could be drawn about the effect of climate.

In fact, that subject will always remain one of the most difficult to study scientifically, because controlled conditions are almost impossible, and because it is difficult to avoid misinterpretations because of the complex nature of the variables affecting culture, race characteristics and the other facts which are to be studied. B

5.

Social Philosophy of the Medieval Period.

Scholasticism, the typical social philosophy of the medieval period, was a natural outgrowth of the period. The Church, being practically supreme, could dictate every detail of the mode of living of her subjects, even down to their thinking. Because the Church possessed all Truth, no further search for it was permissible, and hence was "inaugurated the millenium in which reason was destroyed, thought enchained, and knowledge made no progress." The Church would have liked to destroy also all intellectual desire and force, but since

this was too large an order, even for her omnipotence, the only solution was to turn this force into a harmless channel, and this channel was found in Scholasticism.

Scholasticism, then, accepts Truth as prescribed by the Church, and sets itself the task of proving logically that this truth is consistent with reason. There is no attempt to branch out into new fields or seek new facts, nor are the original truths or first premises ever questioned. The problem at hand is to rationalize the doctrines already laid down by the Church. The mental gymnastics thus required were often puerile, but also often sufficiently ingenious to command our respect down to this day.

The most outstanding of the scholastics was St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas accepted as infallible, Aristotle, the Church, and the scriptures. One of his most important contributions was proof that faith, being a more ultimate principle, transcends reason. The two premises with which scholastics could prove practically anything were "Nature is never wanting in necessaries," and "Art imitates Nature."

The doctrine of four laws which is the basis for much of St. Thomas's work is typical of his method. Here the aim is to systematize existing facts, and at the same time reconcile them with church dogma. This system served the multiple purpose of outlining a social order, giving to religious dogma an apparently rational basis, and proving any miscellaneous disputed points such as the relation of Church and State.

St. Thomas used excessively the typical scholastic method of proof by analysis. For instance, in proving that a monarchy is the best type of government, he notes that one king bee rules the hive of bees, then since art imitates nature, there should be one political ruler. Again, the heart rules the other organs, so for the same reason there should be one king. Similarly God rules in what he has created, so one man should rule a government. B

#6 Influence of Renaissance and Reformation on Social Thought.

The tremendous social changes called the Renaissance and Reformation are comparable to those which our own century is seeing. Not only can the Renaissance be said to have influenced social thought, but one of its chief characteristics lay in the immediate field of social thought. As a rebirth of classicism, it was a rebirth of thinking, and particularly of social thinking. During the medieval period there had been no social thought worthy of the name; Aristotle, translated, expurgated, and annotated by the Church was the sole representative. With the return to classicism, scholars began to discover for themselves the real nature and breadth of earlier social thought, the real nature of earlier culture, and thus stimulated, they began to question the fallibility of the Church.

Two conditions particularly increased this inquiring attitude. One was the loss of dignity which the Church suffered during the Great Schism. Neither was the demoralization within the Church a great secret at this time, incidentally. Reformers had long been busy, and while earlier unsuccessful, had no doubt managed to disseminate some information as to the state of affairs within the Church. Thinking minds could not help but feel more independent. A second encouragement to independent thinking followed along with the new development of science. The early thinkers must have been impressed just as we are to-day with the irrefutable nature of facts, and they must have turned to the new science to find explanation for the points which religious dogma failed to satisfy.

The changes in material culture which came with the Renaissance also profoundly influenced all types of thinking. Invention, discovery, industry, increased wealth, transportation, art, writing, all played their part in the freeing of the intellect. Values shifted, reaction set in, a new era of moral contradictions was inaugurated. Not

asceticism but pomp and display was the new ideal; not meek acceptance of convention, but soaring imagination, spontaneity, seen for instance in the new art; life, joy, activity, confidence, freedom, these were the guiding principles of tha age. People were becoming individuals once more, instead of puppets of the church; they dared to do and think.

They were discovering also, among other things, that government, politics, culture, in general need not be static. Political monarchy instead of ecclesiastical imperialism became the ideal, and allegiance to a national state or a city was the order. Towns grew, accumulated power, were guided in their development by individuals who were respected for themselves and their power, and who worked with other ends in mind besides those of the church.

The Reformation, logical companion of the Renaissance, was also a natural outgrowth of the period. The same forces were at work--general social unrest, growing scepticism influenced by the new science, lack of respect for the church, increased confidence in individuals outside the church, broadening knowledge, new concepts of thedynamic nature of the social order. People dared to think, dared to criticize, dared to demand reform.

Of these Luther stands out as the most successful, perhaps due to a very large extent to the fact that the time was ripe for his reforms. Other reformers before him, Huss, Wycliffe, Savonarola, had done their part in preparing the way.

Machiavelli stands out as a personification of the Renaissance spirit. His courage, his worldly attitude, his penetrating grasp of reality, and his absolute freedom from the scholastic method mark him as a thinker of the new era.

B

#7 Influence of Authors.

The chances are that most of the authors studied have exercised some influence on the course of historical events. Most of this influence, however, has been by way of modification of the attitudes which form the basis of historical events. It is easier to see how individuals influence "history" in this general sense than "historical events" in the more specific. There is probably only one man in the list of whom it can be said definitely--had he not lived, history would have been different. This was Jesus. It is beside the point here to do more than comment on the difference in history had Christianity arisen at a different time, in a different place, or taken on a different form. One of the persons most responsible for the form was St. Paul; he too may be said to have influenced history, for had the early dogma been different, the whole history of Christianity would have been different, along with other details of social development, such as the position of women.

Both Plato and Aristotle influenced the nature of all thinking to such a great extent that history must have been affected too, because as suggested above, much of history depends on social attitudes. Plato, in developing the dialectic method is thought by some to have delayed the advance of science many decades; he also laid the basis for the method of argument lated used by the scholastics. Since science and scholasticism both modified and were themselves historical events, Plato may in this way be said to have influenced history. Aristotle's influence was still more definite, because of the part he played in circumscribing the field of knowledge which was accepted by the church during the middle ages. Also, as the first proponent of the scientific method, he probably influenced history, insofar as it is valid to consider the development of science as part of history (which is the point of view taken in this paper.) These two men probably did not influence history,

however, to the extent that we can say definitely that had they not lived, the course of events would have been vastly different, as we can say of a number of people like Charles Martel, Charlemagne, Charles V, Henry VIII and others.

St. Thomas Aquinas and the scholastics may be said to have influenced history because they strengthened the power of the church, itself moulder of history. In the same sense, Dante, in his support of monarchies, may have had an influence in shaping history. The same with Machiavelli, whose influence was more direct, because we know that The Prince was used as a handbook by some of the political powers of the time, as the Medici in Italy, Catherine de Medici in France, etc.

Luther, Calvin, and all the church reformers had a definite and undisputed influence, their work being responsible for religious denominations, which in turn affected political divisions, international relationships, and hence wars, treaties, division of territory, and other events of historical importance.

With Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, the connection with history is less direct. The social philosophy of Hobbes may have sponsored absolutism in government, that of Locke the commonwealth type, and Rousseau's the method of the French Revolution, but these events and developments would probably have taken place in the same way if none of these men had ever lived. Their chief efforts were devoted to interpreting, not to modifying social order. All of them did influence attitudes, however. With their emphasis on social control existing in the will of the people, their philosophy acted as a stimulant to thought and probably gave to many a sense of responsibility which had been lacking earlier.

Probably their effect on science is the chief claim to having influenced history which can be allowed to Montesquieu and Comte. We

know that there are few developments in science which regardless of the extent to which they appear to be the work of one man, would not have occurred anyway sooner or later. Nevertheless, credit is due to the individual whose ingenuity and insight have been responsible for new concepts in some field, or whose thinking has stimulated the interest of others. In this class are Montesquieu and Comte, two more workers in the long line of scientists. Montesquieu had the added distinction of having expounded sound economic theory before the time was ripe for its acceptance, and while this might have influenced history had it come later, it probably did not, since its value was not recognized at the time.

#8.
Comte.

August Comte, brilliant, rebellious, sincere, dissatisfied with the social theories of his forerunners and colleagues, was the first to devise the system of social philosophy which is today considered thoroughly modern in tone and adequate in method, if not in detail.

Aim.

He was "not so much an original thinker as a system builder," and his Positive Philosophy "may not inaptly be termed a prolegomenon to sociology." (Bristol.) Feeling that all the other phenomena, physical and material, were making some advance toward becoming true sciences, he set out to construct social phenomena into a science, or rather to show how this could be done theoretically. This he called Social Physics, later Sociology, and it was the aim of the Positive method to establish a valid science of social physics. A secondary aim was to make a composite picture showing that all sciences are closely related, merely different approaches to the same large problem, the understanding of phenomena which is necessary for progress.

Law of the Three Stages.

In renouncing interest in ultimate causes which had occupied so much of the energy of earlier thinkers, Comte turned his entire attention to the study of the laws of phenomena which he felt were the only necessary facts. In doing this he analyzed the ways in which man has attempted to explain phenomena throughout the ages.

In the earliest stage, called theological, man attributes activities of things to a will residing within the thing itself. The earliest form of this is seen in fetichism. This advances through polytheism, where the gods are thought to act through materials without residing in them, to monotheism, where causes are attributed to one abstract will.

The next step beyond this is the metaphysical stage, wherein abstract concepts of force and power are substituted for gods, but the phenomena are no more explained than they were before. The third or positive stage is the highest, occupying itself solely with the facts of experience and the laws thus revealed. Social Physics will apply these laws for the betterment of society.

Heirarchy of Sciences.

Comte could take his place among the Purists today on the basis of his belief in the pursuit of science for its own sake. He believed that science should concern itself with the speculative, general, abstract, as opposed to the practical, utilitarian, concrete.

He classified the sciences in theorder of their complexity, passing from mathematics through astronomy, physics, chemistry, to biology, and thence to sociology, each science making use of the results of the science beneath. Outlined, his classification was as follows:

Physics
Inorganic physics.
1. Terrestrial physics --astronomy.
2. Molar " --physics.
3. Molecular " --chemistry.
Organic physics.
1. Individual " --physiology (incl. biology.)
2. Social " --sociology.

Scientific methods of observation, experiment, and comparison are advocated. Hypotheses which cannot be verified are to be repudiated. Facts or laws once established are to be used in an effort at social adaptation.

Need for Sociology.

Comte followed his master St. Simon in maintaining that an entire new approach was needed in the solution of social problems. He had little sympathy with the social theories prevalent at the time. Divine right he thought represented the theological stage of knowledge, the social contract the metaphysical stage; the return to nature of the day seemed to him a denial of social evolution. The time was ripe for political theory to advance to the third stage, the positive.

"It is not to be expected that this new science can be at once raised to a level with even the most imperfect of those which we have been reviewing. All that can be rationally proposed in our day is to recognize the character of positivity in social as in all other science, and to ascertain the chief bases on which it is founded; but this is enough, as I hope to show, to satisfy our most urgent intellectual necessities, and even the most imperative needs of our immediate social practise." (Lichtenberger p. 253.)

Concepts of Order and Progress.

The science of sociology as proposed involves first a philosophy of history, based on observed facts, and second an analysis of existing conditions of social life. The former constitutes social statics, corresponding to the concept of Order. Social

statics has been worked out fairly satisfactorily by numerous philosophers from Aristotle down.

Social statics is inadequate as a social science, for it deals only with the absolute, the laws of coexistence. But "Progress is the development of Order." In order to predict and control we must have a social dynamics, corresponding to the concept of Progress. "No real order can be established, and still less can it last, if it is not fully compatible with progress; and no great progress can be accomplished if it does not tend to the consolidation of order. Therefore, in positive social science, the chief feature must be the union of these two conditions, which will be two aspects, constant and inseparable, of the same principle." (Lichtenberger p. 253.) Bristol calls the statics a sort of social anatomy, the dynamics a sort of social physiology.

Social Control.

Although Comte was concerned more with society than with the state, an elaboratation of his dynamics led him into generalizations on political theory. "The disposition to seek in political institutions ths solutions of all difficulties whatever is a disastrous tendency of our time." (Bristol p. 24.) He deplored the union of spiritual and temporal powers, and feared that unless the two were kept separate, the more insistent practical needs would prevail over more important but less obvious needs. In other words, the social order would be controlled by the man of action, the less thoughtful doer, rather than by the thinker, the scientist, the seer.

In the separation of spiritual and temporal authority, "the spiritual authority will be supreme in matters of education, but consultative in what concerns action, while the temporal authority will be supreme in matters of action with consultative power in matters of education." Comte continually looked back with admiration to the

Middle Ages as the one period in history in which these powers were separated, the priesthood having supremacy in guidance and advice, while matters of action were controlled by a secular power.

His theories on education were very modern. "The direct effect of a universal education is to place everyone in the situation best adapted to his abilities, whatever his birth may have been." He recognized the value of education in the larger sense, as a tool of social adjustment and adaptation.His citizens are to be educated up to a concern for the good of their fellow man, his legislators educated up to an understanding of the problems of their period and how to cope with them.

Evaluation.

Does Comte merit his reputation as one of the greatest sociologists and father of the science? He invented and defined the term, outlined the field, determined the method and material, introduced a practical terminology, and propounded many of the problems of foremost interest today. His solution for the needs of social theory followed from his grasp of the status of the positive sciences, and he was the first correctly to analyze either of these situations. The general lines which he sketched out as the outlines of the science of sociology have been little changed to this day. Any crudeness lay in his data, and not in his method, which has remained the method to be followed with more highly perfected tools of investigation.

For all these reasons, Comte is deserving of whatever credit he may receive as the father of sociology. In another way, however, he, as a person, does not deserve all this credit. His contributions to an even greated extent than most contributions to science, were the offspring of their time. Had he lived a hundred years sooner he could not have evolved this comprehensive theory of the heirarchy of the

sciences, because the physical sciences had not advanced far enough for this relationship to be clear. Had he lived a hundred years later, some one else would have evloved a similar theory before him, because scientific developments had reached a stage which was highly suggestive of such a theory.

Despite this, Comte is nonetheless a great sociologist. The only point in which he is perhaps not deserving of the credit he receives is in the part he played in furthering the science of sociology. The chances are that sociology would be exactly where it is today had Comte never lived.

A

Sources:

Lichtenberger - Development of Social Theory.
Dunning - Political Theories from Rousseau to Spencer.
Bristol - Social Adaptation.
Rogers - Student's History of Philosophy.

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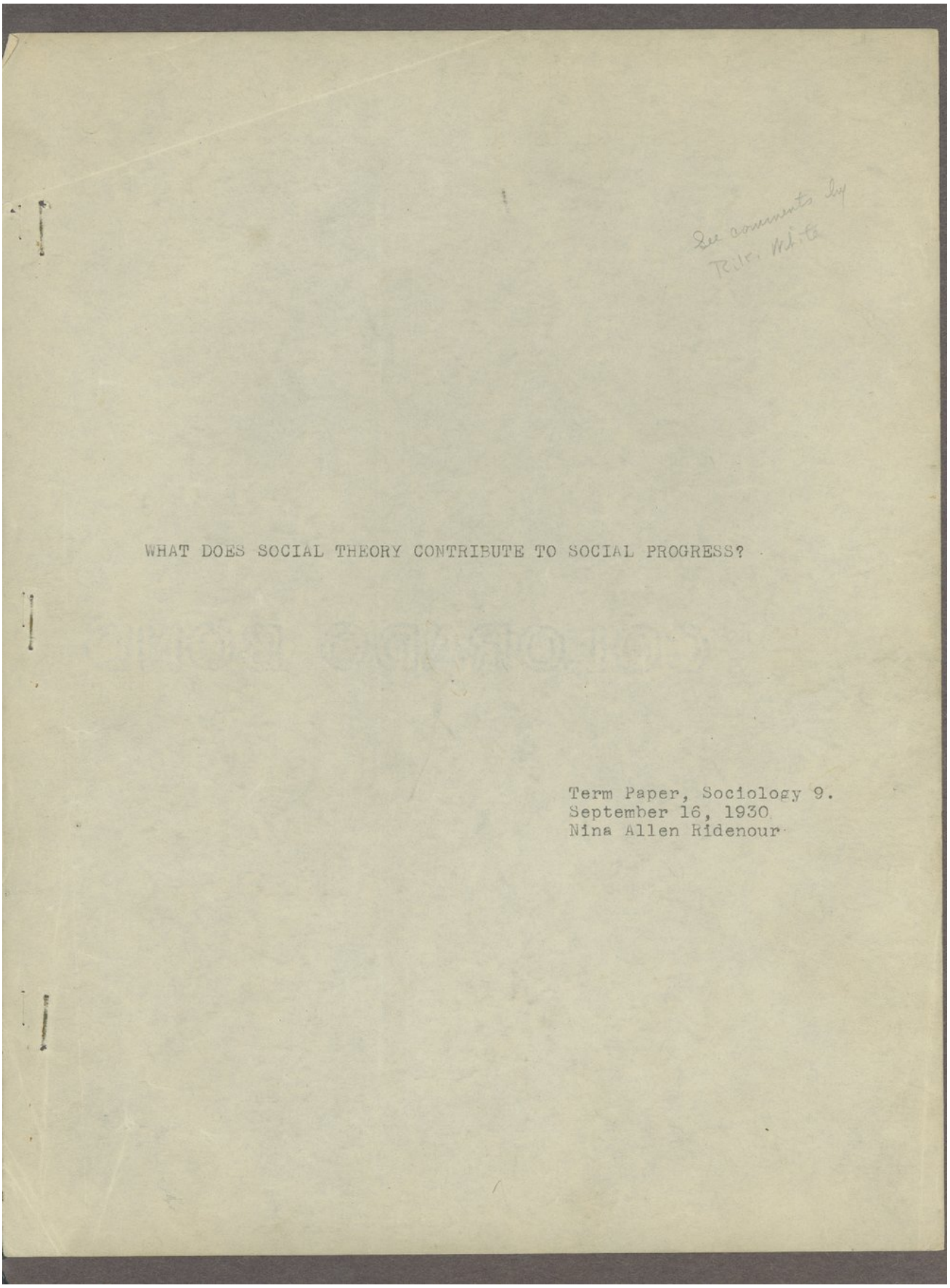


See comments by Tyler White

WHAT DOES SOCIAL THEORY CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL PROGRESS?

Term Paper, Sociology 9.
September 16, 1930
Nina Allen Ridenour

Criticisms by Ralph White of paper on Social Theory 10/7/31.

Effect of theory on action in the past.

Marx
Lenin } Lag of 60 yrs

Rousseau, thru Robespierre etc. – Lag of 40 years?

Locke etc thru Lafayette, Madison, Hamilton – 50 yrs?

Smith, Mill etc thru Peel, ~~to~~, Cleveland etc. – 100 or more?

19th cent economists thru Wilson: Federal reserve – 40 yrs?

Root, Taft, Wilson, Cecil etc on League of Nations. – 20 yrs?

Direct primary, city manager system, coordinated charities, Interstate Commerce Commission, inheritance taxes

Themistocles, Pericles etc. (not Plato & Aristotle.)

Galton thru sterilization laws, some responsibility among the fit etc.

Illustrations of theory which has tried itself out with action.

WHAT DOES SOCIAL THEORY CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL PROGRESS?

Purpose of Paper

This paper is following out the "felt difficulty" concerning the actual value of social theory. All persons working with abstract theory such as that found in sociology and philosophy are beset at times with a feeling of the futility of theory in general. Inasmuch as any person whose interests turn to the social field is likely to devote much energy to problems of theory, it is well for such a person to arrive at a satisfactory evaluation of the importance of theory.

Accordingly this paper is an attempt at clarifying the ideas of the writer. It is not advanced as any new contribution to the problem.

Delimitation of Terms.

Social theory here covers all principles, formulas, schemes, or analyses offered in explanation of, or suggested for the improvement of society. Social progress is taken to mean only and simply control of environment, emphasizing those phases of environment concerned with human relationships. For convenience all controversy is disregarded as to the true nature and meaning of progress, and whether finally such a thing as progress exists.

Argument

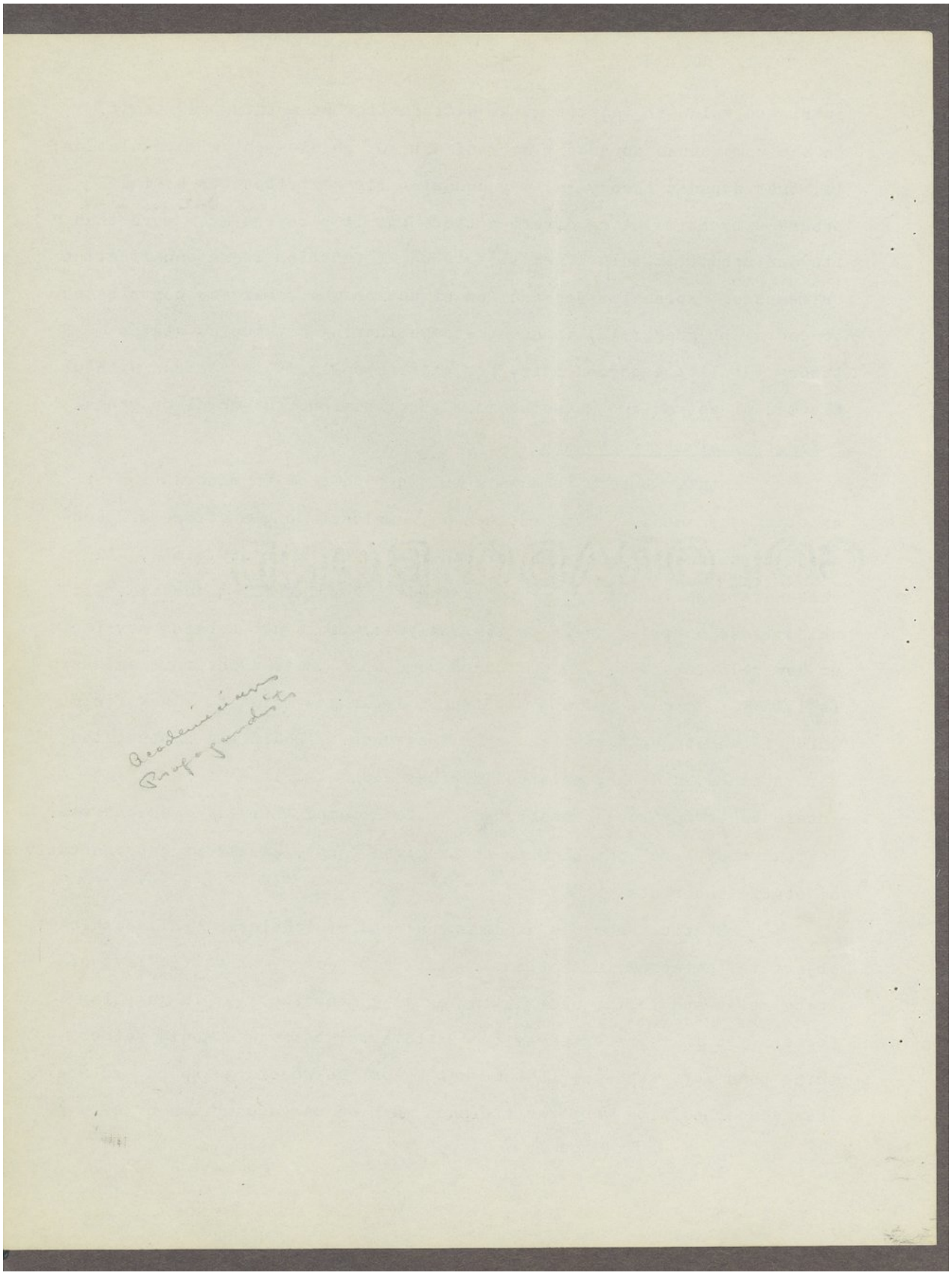
The following thesis is to be defended: (1) that social theory is divisible into two types of thinking which are so diverse as scarcely to justify the name of theory for both; these are to be called static and dynamic theory, resembling roughly the ideas expressed by the terms statics and dynamics, earlier applied to divisions of sociology; (2) that static theory (a) contributes to social progress only indirectly by stimulating general thought and observation, but (b) has

intrinsic value in that it gives satisfaction as a thing in itself, in the same sense as does a work of art, or philosophical speculation; (3) that dynamic theory (a) may occasionally contribute to social progress by stimulating direct action, but it receives much more than its due credit in this line; (b) its chief function is rationalization or means of expression for the men of action who really do contribute to social progress; (c) it has the same intrinsic value as static theory but little beyond this, for extrinsically it is useless without the men of action who make the real contributions to social progress.

Definition of Static Theory.

Static theory is always in the nature of an elucidation of existing phenomena. Systems, schema, analyses, explanations of phenomena by triads, dichotomies, or other rule of thumb divisions, all these are passive theory. Static theory is primarily deductive. It seldom goes outside itself in its analyses, it is not seeking new facts or new relationships. When it does come upon these a shift in emphasis is likely to occur, and a new point of departure leads to a new field which is no longer social theory but science. Bodin and Montesquieu for instance, had they advanced further along the line of their interests in physical causation might have found themselves scientists. Instead they were content with their given facts, excellent representatives of static theorists.

Static theory is academic in nature, scholarly, philosophical, objective, detached, unemotional. It is based on curiosity, love of speculation and logic, delight in mental gymnastics, joy in juggling facts. It is represented by the introverts, those who would rather think than act, who want to see what makes the wheels go round and are less concerned with what the finished machine can accomplish or with



possible improvements in a new machine. These are the believers in art for art's sake, the purists, idealists. They are inclined to look with scorn on the more excited practical people, characterizing their work as superficial, their theories as unsound.

Contemp. Illus.

Definition of Dynamic Theory.

Similarly the people interested in dynamic theory dub the intricacies of static theory useless quibbling, impractical. These people are out of sympathy with armchair judgement, they seek action, movement, reform. They see no value in any part of any theory which cannot be shown to be practical, to lead to improvement in the existing order. Although these people may be called extroverts because they are the doers as opposed to the thinkers above, still they must have a distinct introvertive tendency thus to feel the weight of the world on their shoulders, the reformer's urge.

In dynamic theory, the theory is not complete as a thing in itself as is static theory, but is a means to an end. The end is modification, reform, improvement of the existing order. Dynamic theorists are eager to offer a new way of life to the individual, a new or new organization to the state or society.

But here is a point which must not be confused. Just as both the dynamic and static theorists have a certain amount of introversion in common as shown by their interest in social phenomena rather than physical or any other, so also are they both primarily theorists, as opposed to men of action. The dynamic theorists are interested in action, they are concerned about doing, but they are not themselves the actors or doers. They are not to be confused with the men of action to be mentioned here frequently.

Cont. Illus.

Hobbs, Locke Marx, Henry George.

Contribution of Static Theory.

The controversy over the origin of the state is an excellent example of static theory. Plato said that it arose from the needs of mankind, Aristotle that it went back to the instinctive nature of man, the Social Contract Theorists that our early fathers put their heads together and organized a social order from fear or necessity. Although these same people were perhaps concerned with reform along other lines, their interest in the origin of the state was primarily interest in elucidation, analysis. (Those parts of the theories of these people, especially of the Social Contract Theorists which was later used by political factions will be considered under dynamic theory.)

Another related controversy was that over the original state of nature. Christianity described it as a glorious Golden Age from which man fell; Hobbes thought it was an intolerable state of war, Locke a bearable but imperfect condition, Rousseau the ideal of freedom and self-expression to be sought. Except in the case of Rousseau, who applied this to education (classifiable under dynamic theory) these controversies resembled those of the early scholastics, and were equally fruitful.

Much energy has gone into trying to squeeze facts into explanatory moulds -- St. Thomas with his doctrine of laws, Vico with his triads, and especially the works of the great systematizers, Comte, Spencer, and Ward. The works of these latter, to as great a degree as any theoretical works, represent clear thinking, wide range of information, broad grasp of principle, but there is in them not one idea likely to shift the course of progress one jot or tittle. Others have been more concerned with some one phase of social phenomena. Malthus presents his principles of population. Suppose he is

proved to be correct beyond a shadow of a doubt -- is it likely that one child less will be born in the world? Fiske harps on the prolongation of infancy. Well, what of it? Bagehot goes into the group making factor. Are groups going to be formed more or less effectively? Kidd tries to frighten us with his paradox of progress. Will our self- preservation urge stop to weigh this in a crisis? Tarde explains the universe by imitation. Is it one particle more controllable for this? Present day controversy rages over instincts and pre-potent reflexes, the group mind, free will, and humanism. Are we as individuals any more efficient because of our particular stand on these questions?

No, there is little in these theories to modify social progress. They may incline author and student to more intensive thinking, more keen observation than is otherwise the custom. They may predispose the student to habits of analysis and abstraction instead of to the memorizing of facts. They may rouse the latent energy of the able but lethargic mind, and urge the scholar to new, perhaps to more satisfactory fields of investigation, but their relation to progress is no closer than this.

Their chief charm lies in the amusement they may afford the scholar. Just as an artist derives satisfaction from his painting or statue, so the social theorist is pleased with the theory he has constructed. It need not lead to practical results, to action or controversy, it is complete as a thing in itself. This should be sufficient justification for theory to author and reader alike.

Contribution of Dynamic Theory

Dynamic theory, it has been granted, may occasionally make some immediate contribution to social progress. It would do this by stimulating the men of action directly to action in line

with the theory advanced. But this is less likely to happen than that the men of action, having already received their stimulus from the situation, see in the theory advanced a justification of their own ideas, perhaps heretofore unexpressed.

It is said that the theories of Hobbes were used by Absolutism, those of Locke by the Commonwealth, and Rousseau's by the French and American revolutions. It is hard to believe that these theories actually stirred men to action. Is it not simpler to think that people in the French revolution, for instance, being already stirred, were seeking rationalization for their actions? Theories were their mouthpieces. The same events would probably have occurred in the same way had the theories never existed. The men of action would merely have had a little more difficulty in getting across their ideas and enthusiasms, for being men of action, they are less able in the field of expression.

Stoicism, Epicureanism, Christianity, all philosophies or religions which advance a particular way of living depend for their success upon their emotional appeal -- this is a truism. Were they to depend on logic only, then adherents would be few in number. For instance, a philosophy (social theory) appeals to some deepseated, probably unconscious urge or desire in the individual. Feeling this urge, the individual proceeds to act in line with the philosophy which rationalizes the urge, thinking that it is that which has stimulated him to action. Actually, the deeper urge or desire is the fundamental stimulus which finds expression in the given theory.

Social theory abounds in illustrations of this. St.Thomas Aquinas advanced the theory of the two-fold function of the state. This was not a new inspiration to the Church, but a tool for rationalizing their already existing desires. Dante, in pleading for