



未名社科·媒介与社会丛书（影印版）

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The Discovery of Society (Seventh Edition)

# 发现社会

第7版  
(删节版)

[美] 兰德尔·柯林斯 (Randall Collins)  
迈克尔·马科夫斯基 (Michael Makowsky)



北京大学出版社  
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Randall Collins, Michael Makowsky

**The Discovery of Society. seventh edition**

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ISBN:0-07-250736-5

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### 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

发现社会(第七版)(删节版):英文/(美)柯林斯(Collins,R.), (美)马科夫斯基(Makowsky,M.)著. —影印本. 北京:北京大学出版社,2008.12

(未名社科·媒介与社会丛书)

ISBN 978-7-301-14645-3

I. 发… II. ①柯…②马… III. 社会学—思想史—西方国家—英文 IV. C91-095

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2008)第 185896 号

书 名:发现社会(第七版)(删节版)

著作责任者:[美]兰德尔·柯林斯(Randall Collins)

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责任编辑:倪宇洁

封面设计:张虹

标准书号:ISBN 978-7-301-14645-3/C·0510

出版发行:北京大学出版社

地 址:北京市海淀区成府路 205 号 100871

网 址: <http://www.pup.cn> 电子信箱: [ss@pup.pku.edu.cn](mailto:ss@pup.pku.edu.cn)

电 话:邮购部 62752015 发行部 62750672 出版部 62754962 编辑部 62753121/62765016

印 刷 者:世界知识印刷厂

经 销 者:新华书店

787 毫米×980 毫米 16 开本 17.75 印张 356 千字

2008 年 12 月第 1 版 2008 年 12 月第 1 次印刷

定 价:35.00 元

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举报电话:010-62752024 电子信箱: [fd@pup.pku.edu.cn](mailto:fd@pup.pku.edu.cn)

## 总 序

媒介是神奇的，社会也是神奇的，媒介与社会的耦合生产出无限的神奇。从涂尔干《宗教生活的基本形式》关于“社会”与唤起社会意识的符号与仪式共生的理论来看，媒介使社会显得神奇的过程也造就了自身的神奇。

人类在现代大众传播成为现实之前对于“神奇”的感知是经由巫师及其巫术的转化来实现的。澳洲土著在图腾舞蹈的狂热中感受到超个人的社会力量的存在。满身披挂的萨满用舞蹈和神歌请灵降神，让已经消逝的显露原形，让凡人通常不可见的显现真身，让千山万水之遥的即刻大驾光临。借助巫术，时间和空间的障碍可以暂时克服，过去的、未来的都可以在现实中出现，墓室中的、仙山上的都可以召唤到面前。

这些神奇经验在现当代越来越彻底地被大众媒介所造就，电视、网络等图像传输技术在其中发挥着关键作用。大人物像变戏法一样总跑到百姓居室内高谈阔论，历史的亡灵在荧屏上招之即来，挥之即去。媒介使常人具有千里眼、顺风耳，看见那原本遥不可见的，听清那从前根本就听不到的。媒介是神奇的，它在社会中的运行有如巫术。几百年的现代化对世界“祛魅”，结果我们看到人类社会所集聚的全部的“魅”都汇聚于媒介，并被媒介无限放大。

长期耳濡目染，媒介的神奇人们已经习以为常了，就像前现代的人对巫术习以为常一样。但是，这个过程一直都是知识界探讨的课题。现代大众媒介的各种新形式从一开始出现的时候就会被知识界作为新事物加以关注。从较早的照相、无线电广播到电影、电视，再到近年的新媒介传播，关于大众传媒研究、文化研究、虚拟社会研究的知识生产就一直紧随媒介发展的步伐。媒介研究在发达国家已经形成庞大的群体和细密的分工，这个群体既能够追逐传播领域的新事物，也能够通过专业的眼光让人们习以为常的许多方面显出怪异来，从而引发众人的注意和分析的兴趣。我们国内的媒介研究在这两个方向上都需要培育自己的能力。

依靠现代大众媒介运行的社会是一种机制极其不同的社会，中国社会正在越来越深地涉入其中。

高科技媒介的威力以不断增强的方式发挥出来，世界虽然还成为不了地球村，但是人与人之间的联系方式、人与各种层次的共同体的联结机制都

发生着变化。

社会因媒介成为可能,因新媒介而成为新的可能。社会是个人之间相互挂念、相互意识到而成为可能的。在短暂的一天和有限的一生里,个人在多大范围里意识到多少他人的存在、记挂多大范围的他人,这是靠媒介运作的结果。基于集体意识和共同想象而形成内在联系的社会,是存在于媒介(运作)中的。在中国境外的许多城市,华人移民在本地新闻中看到唐人街的春节表演而确证自己与华人群体的认同,全世界的中国人因为春节文化的展演而想象自己属于一个十多亿人口的共同体。网络新媒介创造了新的人际联系方式,虚拟社区借助新媒介产生出来,人们之间隔空互动,与传统真实意义上的面对面交流的主要差别只是不能“臭味相投”而已。

媒介见证社会实体的存在。人类共同体因为联合国的新闻、国际救灾行动的画面而被呈现;国家共同体因为制造媒介事件的奇观(spectacle)而被世人记住;地方共同体因为地方风物、特产或节庆被传播而知名;行业罢工、同性恋群体因为游行的极端表演而受注意。优势的存在是在媒介中具有正面形象的实体。

媒介见证社会力量的博弈。各种社会力量要竞争,最好的方式是围绕媒介、借助媒介展开能见度高的竞争,展开正面形象的竞争。国际政治的软实力、国内政治的亲民形象、商业竞争的名牌效应、文体明星的商业价值……都是靠媒介的舞台定位的。社会力量竞争的王牌是通过媒介制造“奇观”,造成举世瞩目的效果。制造“9·11”事件的组织选择纽约世贸大厦为目标,是因为他们不仅要使行动成为媒介事件,而且还要使媒介事件具有奇观效应(spectacularity);美国占领伊拉克,对媒介画面进行筛选,突出精确打击的画面,限制伊拉克平民死伤的画面,既在避免负面效果,也在凸现战争奇观。强势的社会力量是媒介中的主动力量。

媒介毕竟是社会的媒介。媒介为社会中的人所运用。人具有神性和魔性。社会既是温情的港湾,也是邪恶的渊藪;社会既以公正相标榜,也以不平等为现实。运行于社会中的媒介也兼具人性和社会的两副面孔。媒介制造人间奇迹:新闻报道能够让尼克松总统下台,能够让孙志刚事件改变弊端连连的城市收容制度,能够让绝望中的重症患者借助社会力量得到救治……媒介也产生遗憾和问题,媒介暴力、媒介色情、媒介偏见一直层出不穷。

媒介是社会的舞台、社会的缩影,媒介本身就是社会。媒介被政党看作一个特殊的战线,一个意识形态斗争的领域。主导的力量会设法控制公共舆论的导向和社会议题的设置,其他的社会力量或附和、追随,或批评、抵制。弱者有弱者的媒介武器和媒介阐释策略。沉默或参与,是一次选择。

参与而主动解码,借题发挥,进而用反讽来消遣权势,则潜藏着无数持续的选择。大众媒介在社会的运行中产生着层出不穷的问题。

媒介不仅是信息、思想、政治,也是经济。从事媒介行业的人也是经济动物,媒介也是经济利益的集散地。媒介造就百万富翁、亿万富翁,造就中产阶级,造就报童、报摊,当然也造就自己的消费者群体。这是一个不断膨胀的产业。新媒介成为新的产业,往往使原有的一切产业具备新的形式和运作机制。媒介产业是其他产业发展的助推器。世界是人的天地,也是产品的库房。产品世界的秩序是由媒介按照品牌进行编码和排列的,从而形成“物的体系”,以此支撑着人的世界成为一个多样而有序的“消费社会”。

媒介是一种信息产业,是一个经济领域的范畴。媒介又是现代文化,因此媒介作为经济就应该更加准确地被称为文化经济(文化工业)。媒介卷入的是共同体集体利益和共同体内部的利益、地位、声望的分配问题,因此媒介涉及的问题是政治经济学的问题。这些问题在社会博弈过程中消长,媒介成为社会进步的助力,有时也为社会制造解决问题的障碍。媒介与社会,纠缠着人类伟大的成就和太多的问题。凡此种种,我们就让有心人、术业有专攻的人去一一论说其中的究竟吧。

是为序。

高丙中 杨伯淑  
2007年8月,北京大学

# Preface

As we move into the twenty-first century, we are confronted by new forms of turmoil in the social world. The global world of today poses new challenges to members of society and to the sociologists who study them; so does the domestic world, as close as our own doorsteps or, for that matter, our own bedrooms. Terrorism and ethnic strife around the globe; violence in the streets and schools; cultural clashes over sexuality—these are not only headlines, but sociological topics.

But sociology has been built on challenges. This has been so since the beginnings of sociology some 200 years ago, when sociologists first tried to make sense out of the upheavals of the French Revolution. And it has been true for every period in between. In the nineteenth century, Karl Marx (and subsequently his followers) tried to make sense of life in the capitalist economy. The great classic thinkers like Max Weber and Emile Durkheim tried to make sense of the bureaucratic and nationalist world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. W.E.B. Du Bois and many others have tried to understand the forces behind racism. One generation of sociologists took up the challenge of getting to the bottom of the fascist movements and the two World Wars; for another generation the challenge was to understand the basis of gender inequality.

Sociology meets its challenges in a distinctive way: by *understanding* them. This is not to say that sociologists are not concerned with action, with attempting to do something to solve social problems. But our aim is to do this intelligently, by digging beneath the surface. After all, everyone in society has their own way of dealing with challenges, whether by striking back, moving away, or engaging in political rhetoric. Sociology has endeavored to reach beyond labeling and name-calling in an effort to understand how to respond in ways that do not just perpetuate social problems or create new problems in their place.

Sociology is above all a community of researchers who theorize about their research. That means drawing connections between one person's research and another's, and drawing connections backward to the theories that

came before, building on them to understand what will come in the future. The narrative of this book is the story of that community. We can be confident that sociologists will meet the challenges of the twenty-first century as they have the past. The new understandings gained by each generation are what make up the history of sociology.

### New to the Seventh Edition

We have made two major changes in the seventh edition. We have reconceptualized Chapter 14, and we have written an all-new Chapter 15.

- **Chapter 14. “Cultural Capital, Revolution, and the World-System: The Theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Theda Skocpol, and Immanuel Wallerstein”** In this chapter we have reorganized material from the last two chapters of the sixth edition into a new chapter that examines the contributions of some of the most famous social theorists in the area of social inequality and social change.
- **Chapter 15. “From the Code of the Street to the Social Structure of Right and Wrong: The Sociology of Elijah Anderson and Donald Black”** In this all-new chapter we discuss some of the most exciting developments in sociological thinking about race, conflict, and crime. Elijah Anderson takes us inside the code of the street, where we find that the postures of violence in the most dangerous part of the black poverty ghetto do not mean quite what they seem to an outsider. Donald Black gives us a wide, comparative view of all the ways in which people deal with conflict, and he shows us that these are organized around social structures that produce different kinds of feelings about right and wrong.

There are other exciting new sociologists we could have featured, but these two have a special appropriateness for a book emphasizing the long growth and evolution of sociological understanding. In many ways, Anderson is like a black Erving Goffman, developing an analysis of the presentation of self in situations of violent threat, while Black is a descendant of Emile Durkheim, showing us once again that we are all socially constituted, even in our very deep senses of what we consider to be morally right.

### Other Changes

Elsewhere in the book, we have streamlined and reorganized materials. Quite frankly, the book has been growing long and unwieldy over many editions, and we have chosen to keep most of the focus on the long view of where sociology has been coming from. This has meant that we have chosen to illustrate only a few of the things that sociologists are doing today. We have tried to lure you into sociology; once you are in, you will find plenty more to discover.



The main thrust of *The Discovery of Society* remains the development of the great classical tradition. There has been a great intellectual adventure going on, and we continue to be part of it. If the reader captures from this book some sense of this drama, where this flow of ideas and discoveries is coming from and where it may be going, the book will have accomplished its purpose. The discoverers of society were—and are—real human beings living in social and intellectual settings analogous to our own. We hope some readers, seeing this, will join in creating for themselves the next chapter in the discovery of society.

### **Text Website**

The seventh edition of *The Discovery of Society* is supplemented by a website, providing annotated web links and web-based exercises.

### **Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank the panel of reviewers commissioned by McGraw-Hill who provided us with their thoughtful comments and suggestions:

Stephen Adair  
*Central Connecticut State University*

Harry G. Lefever  
*Spelman College*

Kenneth Allan  
*University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

Victoria Pitts  
*Queens College*

Douglas Degher  
*Northern Arizona University*

Susanne Bleiberg Seperson  
*Dowling College*

Susan B. Garfin  
*Sonoma State University*

Eve Spangler  
*Boston College*

Richard A. Garnett  
*Marshall University*

Elizabeth Watts-Warren  
*University of Georgia*

Lynne Haney  
*New York University*

*Randall Collins*

*Michael Makowsky*

# Brief Contents

|   |      |
|---|------|
| PREFACE   | xiii |
| INTRODUCTION SOCIETY AND ILLUSION   | 1    |
| Chapter 1 The Prophets of Paris: Saint-Simon and Comte                                      | 15   |
| Chapter 2 The Last Gentleman: Alexis de Tocqueville   | 26   |
| Chapter 3 Nietzsche's Madness   | 39   |
| Chapter 4 Do-Gooders, Evolutionists, and Racists  | 54   |
| Chapter 5 Dreyfus's Empire: Emile Durkheim  | 71   |
| Chapter 6 Max Weber: The Disenchantment of the World  | 85   |
| Chapter 7 Sigmund Freud: Conquistador of the Irrational                                     | 107  |
| Chapter 8 The Discovery of the Invisible World: Simmel, Cooley, and Mead                    | 126  |
| Chapter 9 The Discovery of the Ordinary World: Thomas, Park, and the Chicago School         | 144  |
| Chapter 10 The Emergence of African-American Sociology: Du Bois, Frazier, Drake, and Cayton | 153  |
| Chapter 11 The Construction of the Social System: Pareto and Parsons                        | 169  |

|                   |  |     |
|-------------------|--|-----|
| <i>Chapter 12</i> | Hitler's Shadow: Michels, Mannheim, and Mills  | 184 |
| <i>Chapter 13</i> | Erving Goffman and the Theater of Social Encounters  | 204 |
| <i>Chapter 14</i> | Cultural Capital, Revolution, and the World-System:<br>The Theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Theda Skocpol, and<br>Immanuel Wallerstein | 217 |
| <i>Chapter 15</i> | From the Code of the Street to the Social Structure<br>of Right and Wrong: The Sociology of Elijah Anderson<br>and Donald Black    | 237 |

# Contents

|  |      |    |
|--|------|----|
| PREFACE  | xiii |    |
| INTRODUCTION: SOCIETY AND ILLUSION                                   | 1    |    |
| <i>The Sources of Illusion</i>                                       | 2    |    |
| <i>The Contributions of Sociology</i>                                | 10   |    |
| <i>The Boundaries of Sociology</i>                                   | 12   |    |
| Chapter 1 The Prophets of Paris: Saint-Simon and Comte               |      | 15 |
| <i>Henri De Saint-Simon (1760–1825)</i>                              | 17   |    |
| <i>Auguste Comte (1798–1857)</i>                                     | 21   |    |
| Chapter 2 The Last Gentleman: Alexis de Tocqueville                  |      | 26 |
| <i>Equality in America</i>   | 28   |    |
| Government Structure   | 31   |    |
| Geographical and Historical Accidents                                | 33   |    |
| American Culture   | 34   |    |
| Chapter 3 Nietzsche's Madness  |      | 39 |
| <i>Nietzsche's Life</i>  | 39   |    |
| <i>The Birth of Anthropology and the Discovery of the Irrational</i> | 42   |    |
| <i>The Attack on Christianity</i>                                    | 44   |    |
| <i>The Dynamics of the Will</i>                                      | 46   |    |
| <i>The Reevaluation of All Values</i>                                | 47   |    |
| <i>Nietzsche's Madness</i>   | 49   |    |
| <i>An Assessment</i>   | 51   |    |
| Chapter 4 Do-Gooders, Evolutionists, and Racists                     |      | 54 |
| <i>The Moral Philosophy of Ferguson and Smith</i>                    | 55   |    |
| <i>Liberalism and Social Reform: Bentham, Malthus, and Mill</i>      | 55   |    |

|  |   |            |
|--|---|------------|
| <i>Social Evolutionism: Darwin and Spencer</i> | 58  |            |
| <i>Liberalism in America</i>                   | 61  |            |
| <i>The Limits of Science</i>                   | 65  |            |
| <i>The Sociobiology Revival</i>                | 67  |            |
| <i>Darwin's Consequences</i>                   | 70  |            |
| <br>   |   |            |
| <b>Chapter 5</b>                               | <b>Dreyfus's Empire: Emile Durkheim</b>                               | <b>71</b>  |
|  | <i>Durkheim: The Division of Labor in Society</i>                     | 72         |
|  | Deviance and Social Solidarity  | 78         |
|  | Religion and Reality  | 80         |
| <br>   |   |            |
| <b>Chapter 6</b>                               | <b>Max Weber: The Disenchantment of the World</b>                     | <b>85</b>  |
|  | <i>Weber's Sociology: Stratification, Organizations, and Politics</i> | 88         |
|  | Stratification: Class, Power, and Status                              | 88         |
|  | Organizations: Patrimonialism and Bureaucracy                         | 94         |
|  | Politics: Traditional, Charismatic, and Rational-Legal Legitimacy     | 96         |
|  | <i>Weber's Theory of History: The Rationalization of the World</i>    | 99         |
| <br>   |   |            |
| <b>Chapter 7</b>                               | <b>Sigmund Freud: Conquistador of the Irrational</b>                  | <b>107</b> |
|  | <i>Early Life and Work</i>  | 108        |
|  | The Interpretation of Dreams  | 111        |
|  | Repression  | 112        |
|  | <i>Freud's Explanatory Systems</i>                                    | 113        |
|  | Primary and Secondary Process   | 113        |
|  | The Stages of Sexual Development                                      | 114        |
|  | The Theory of Libido  | 115        |
|  | Ego, Id, and Superego   | 116        |
|  | Eros versus the Death Instinct  | 117        |
|  | <i>Later Career</i>   | 119        |
|  | <i>Freud's Last Testament</i>   | 119        |
|  | <i>Criticism and Advances</i>   | 121        |
|  | <i>Was Freud A Sexist?</i>  | 122        |
| <br>   |   |            |
| <b>Chapter 8</b>                               | <b>The Discovery of the Invisible World: Simmel, Cooley, and Mead</b> | <b>126</b> |
|  | <i>Simmel</i>   | 126        |
|  | <i>The Life and Work of Cooley</i>                                    | 130        |
|  | <i>Cooley's System</i>  | 131        |
|  | The Looking-Glass Self and the Primary Group                          | 133        |
|  | <i>Criticism of Cooley</i>  | 135        |
|  | <i>The Life and Work of Mead</i>                                      | 136        |
|  | <i>Mead's System</i>  | 136        |

|  |   |            |
|--|---|------------|
| The Social Self                                      | 138   |            |
| The Generalized Other                                | 141   |            |
| <i>Criticisms and Assessments of Mead</i>            | 142   |            |
| <br>   |   |            |
| <b>Chapter 9</b>                                     | <b>The Discovery of the Ordinary World: Thomas, Park, and the Chicago School</b>        | <b>144</b> |
| <i>Thomas's Life and Works</i>                       | 144   |            |
| <i>Park and the Chicago School</i>                   | 146   |            |
| The Discovery of Social Class                        | 148   |            |
| <i>The Sociology of Organizations</i>                | 150   |            |
| <br>   |   |            |
| <b>Chapter 10</b>                                    | <b>The Emergence of African-American Sociology: Du Bois, Frazier, Drake, and Cayton</b> | <b>153</b> |
| <i>W.E.B. Du Bois and African-American Sociology</i> | 154   |            |
| From Great Barrington to Harvard and Berlin          | 154   |            |
| The Founding of African-American Sociology           | 156   |            |
| Theoretical Influences                               | 157   |            |
| The Social Evolution of African-American Leadership  | 157   |            |
| The NAACP and <i>The Crisis</i>                      | 160   |            |
| Du Bois's Empirical and Theoretical Work             | 160   |            |
| Du Bois's Role as Elder Statesman                    | 161   |            |
| <i>The Investigation of Social Class</i>             | 162   |            |
| Social Stratification in Black Metropolis            | 164   |            |
| <i>Future Prospects for Race Relations</i>           | 167   |            |
| <br>   |   |            |
| <b>Chapter 11</b>                                    | <b>The Construction of the Social System: Pareto and Parsons</b>                        | <b>169</b> |
| <i>Pareto's Life and Works</i>                       | 170   |            |
| <i>Pareto's System</i>                               | 171   |            |
| <i>Criticisms of Pareto</i>                          | 172   |            |
| <i>Parsons's Life and Works</i>                      | 174   |            |
| <i>Parsons's Theory of Society</i>                   | 175   |            |
| Society as a System                                  | 176   |            |
| Functionalism  | 176   |            |
| Social Integration                                   | 178   |            |
| Social Change  | 179   |            |
| <i>Parsons's Religious Sociology</i>                 | 180   |            |
| <i>Parsons's Contributions</i>                       | 182   |            |
| <br>   |   |            |
| <b>Chapter 12</b>                                    | <b>Hitler's Shadow: Michels, Mannheim, and Mills</b>                                    | <b>184</b> |
| <i>Mannheim's Theory of Social Relativism</i>        | 187   |            |
| <i>Mannheim's Politics for Modern Society</i>        | 190   |            |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <i>C. Wright Mills and the Modern Application of Mannheim's Theories</i>   | 194        |
| <b>Chapter 13 Erving Goffman and the Theater of Social Encounters</b>  | <b>204</b> |
| <i>Labeling Theory</i>   | 205        |
| <i>Goffman's Theatrical Model of Social Life</i>   | 207        |
| <i>The Ethnomethodologists</i>   | 211        |
| <i>Goffman's Concept of Functional Necessity</i>   | 213        |
| <i>The Imperialism of Philosophy</i>   | 214        |
| <i>The Influence of Microsociology</i>   | 215        |
| <b>Chapter 14 Cultural Capital, Revolution, and the World-System:<br/>The Theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Theda Skocpol, and<br/>Immanuel Wallerstein</b> | <b>217</b> |
| <i>Pierre Bourdieu: Symbolic Violence and Cultural Capital</i>   | 218        |
| <i>A Revolutionary Theory of Revolutions: Theda Skocpol</i>  | 225        |
| <i>Immanuel Wallerstein and the World-System</i>   | 231        |
| <b>Chapter 15 From the Code of the Street to the Social Structure<br/>of Right and Wrong: The Sociology of Elijah Anderson<br/>and Donald Black</b>    | <b>237</b> |
| <i>Elijah Anderson and the Code of the Street</i>  | 238        |
| Gang Fights  | 242        |
| Individual Fights over Respect   | 243        |
| Fights as Entertainment  | 246        |
| Drug Business Violence   | 247        |
| Stickups   | 247        |
| <i>Donald Black and the General Forms of Conflict Management</i>   | 248        |
| <i>Putting it All Together</i>   | 256        |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUGGESTIONS</b>   | <b>257</b> |

## INTRODUCTION

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# *Society and Illusion*

We all conceive of ourselves as experts on society. In fact, however, the social world is a mystery—a mystery deepened by our lack of awareness of it. Society is our immediate, everyday reality, yet we understand no more of it merely by virtue of living it than we understand of physiology by virtue of our inescapable presence as living bodies. The history of sociology has been a long and arduous effort to become aware of things hidden or taken for granted: things we did not know existed—other societies in distant places and times, whose ways of life make us wonder about the naturalness of our own; things we know of only distortedly—the experiences of social classes and cultures other than our own; the realities of remote sectors of our own social structure, from inside the police patrol car to behind the closed doors of the politician and the priest; things right around us unreflectingly accepted—the network of invisible rules and institutions that govern our behavior and populate our thought, seemingly as immutable as the physical landscape but in reality as flimsy as a children’s pantomime. Most obscure of all, our own feelings, actions, thoughts, and self-images—the tacit bargains that we make and remake with friends, lovers, acquaintances, and strangers and the paths we steer amid emotions, habits, and beliefs. All these things are beneath the usual threshold of our awareness.

We think of ourselves as rational, choice-making masters of our actions if not of our destinies; in reality, we know little about the reasons for either. And if the social world is shrouded from us today, it becomes even more illusory the further back we go into our history. We need go only a few hundred years back in European history to an era when authority of kings and aristocracies was legitimized by divine right, when unexpected behavior from our fellows was attributed to witchcraft and seizures of the devil, and foreign lands were populated not merely by bloodthirsty Communists or the terrible Turk but by werewolves and Cyclopes. “History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake!” James Joyce declared. Sociology has been part of that very slow awakening.

The social world as we know it and have known it is mostly illusion. Yet, if we were all completely deluded, there would be no point in trying to investigate



and explain, and this writing as well as any other would be worthless. The existence of illusions is not incompatible with the existence of facts and of the principles of logic. But facts and logic are inextricably mixed with concepts and theories, and in the study of society the concepts and theories involved are ones that we daily act upon as well as use to explain how things are and why.

Sociology is not an impossible science, but it is a very difficult one. It has progressed by disengaging the web of everyday belief, not all at once but little by little, as one taken-for-granted assumption after another has been questioned and replaced. As was once said of philosophy, sociology is like rebuilding a boat, plank by plank, while floating on it in the middle of the ocean. The history of sociology is a progression of worldviews, each an advance on some other in that it asks some previously unasked question, avoids some previous confusion, or incorporates some previously unobserved fact. Each worldview, including our own, has its illusions; waving the banner of science is no more absolute a guarantee of truth than any other. Nevertheless, there has been a series of major breakthroughs in understanding, including some quite recent ones, and we can be confident now that we are on the right path.

## THE SOURCES OF ILLUSION

At the center of the web that clouds our vision is the realization that our knowledge is both subjective and objective. "Facts" are things that independent observers can agree upon; but we must look for facts in order to see them, and what we look for depends on our concepts and theories. What questions we can answer depends on what questions we ask. But the form of the question cannot be the only determinant of the answer, or else our knowledge would never go beyond the subjective point of view of the particular questioner. Any completely subjective viewpoint undermines its own validity, since there is no reason for anyone else to accept it. If there are no objective standards, then the person who claims that there are no such standards can never prove that claim to be true.

There is a realm of objectivity, then, based on shared observations and the exigencies of logical communications. We do not know, however, whether any particular theory or even any particular belief about the facts is true. The problem of separating illusions from reality has been an especially difficult one for sociology, since it begins in the midst of the social world of everyday ideas and ideologies. Until we begin to notice phenomena and ask questions about them, we cannot start to check our theories against the facts or even to check our assumed facts against careful observations. It took many centuries of controversy about ideological and practical issues before some people realized that their ordinary ideas might not be accurate and hence were in need of logical ordering and empirical testing. Even after there arose a community of individuals dedicated to this purpose, much of the raw material of human illusion remained mixed in with the more solid part of sociological knowledge. Progress has come not because sociologists were convinced that a particular theory was right, but because the scholarly community generated a cutting edge of objectivity out of