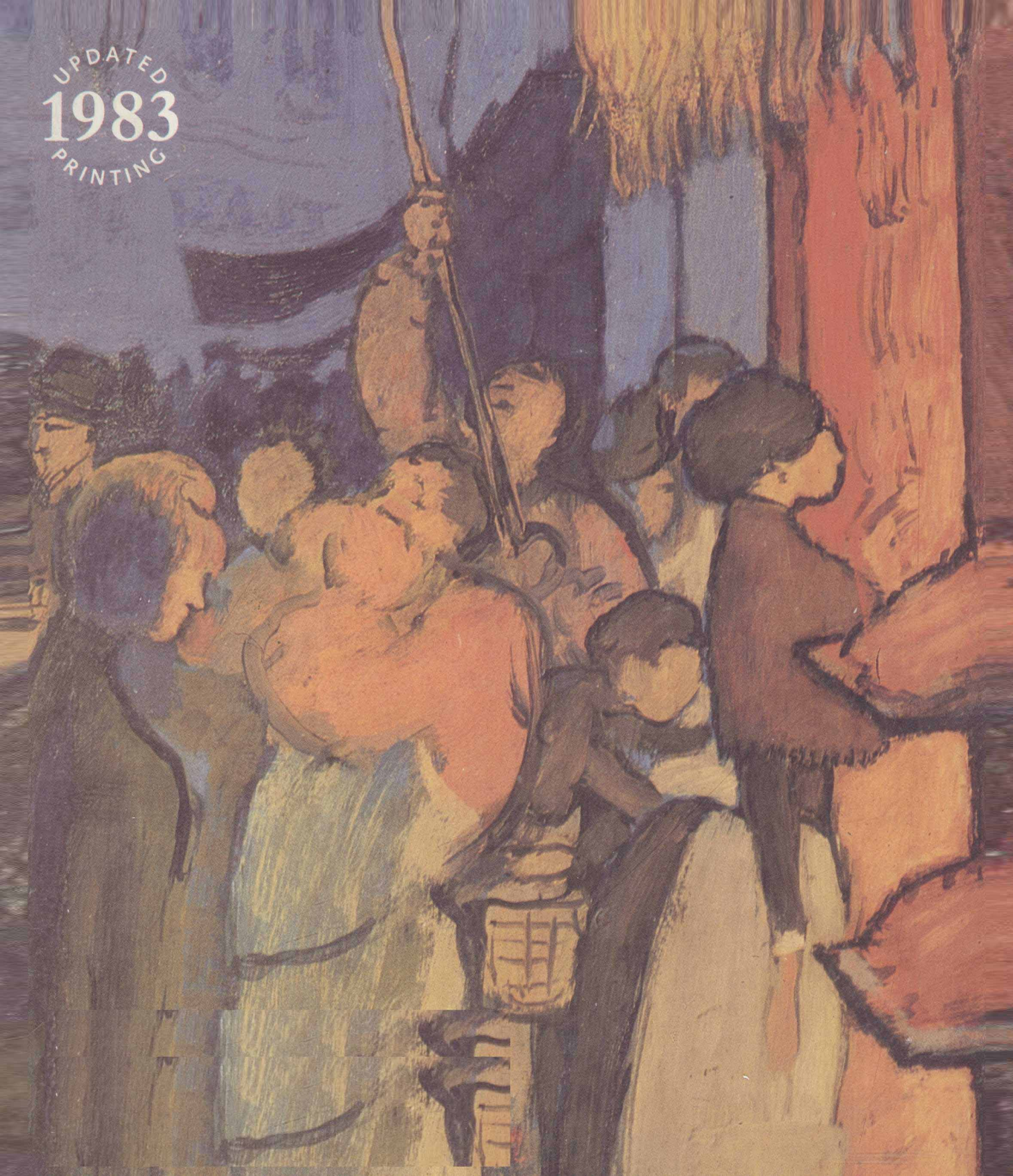
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IAN ROBERTSON

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Preface

Like its predecessor, this edition of *Sociology* rests on two basic premises. The first is that sociology is both a humanistic art and a rigorous science; in fact, much of its excitement arises from the insights offered by this unique blend of two intellectual traditions. The second premise is that sociology can be, and should be, a profoundly liberating discipline. By challenging conventional wisdoms and by dissolving the myths about social reality, the discipline provides an acute awareness of the human authorship of, and responsibility for, both the social world and much of our personal experience and identity. Sociology thus offers that crucial sense of options and choice that is essential to human freedom.

The original impetus to write this book grew out of several years' experience as a teacher and professional writer in radically different societies in North America, Europe, and Africa. I count the book successful to the extent that it conveys to the reader the fascination and sheer pleasure that I draw from sociology myself.

Changes in This Edition

The present edition of the text represents a thorough revision of its predecessor, but not a radical one; in other words, although I have made innumerable additions, modifications, updatings, and other changes throughout, the essential character of the book is unaltered.

In general, the coverage of the field reflects the same goal that I had for the first edition, when I decided at the outset not to write a slender "core" text covering a few selected topics. The problem with such an approach, of course, is that one person's core may be another's apple—or vice versa—with the result that some instructors are left without text discussion of material they consider essential. Instead, I have again tried to give a broad and thorough coverage of the main fields of the discipline, while keeping the text sufficiently flexible to be adapted to the needs of individual instructors. The book thus provides full coverage of the "traditional" material in the introductory sociology course. It seems to me important, however, that the text should do much more: it should also convey a strong sense of the "cutting edge" of the discipline, of the vital issues and trends in contemporary sociology. For this reason, I have once more included much material that is unusual or even unique in an introductory book. In particular, I have written substantial new sections on ethnomethodology and on the sociology of sport, of age stratification, and of health. I have also greatly expanded the material on several other topics, including social movements, the life cycle, dying and death, interest groups, modernization, and America's rapidly growing Hispanic population. As before, a full chapter is devoted to the sociology of science, a subject of particular interest, perhaps, to those science majors who may take only one sociology course. There is also an entire chapter on the micro order, in which various interactionist approaches are applied to the ordinary routines of everyday life. A chapter is devoted, too, to the sociology of sexual behavior, a subject of high student interest and one admirably suited to illustrate the interplay of biological, social, and cultural factors in the shaping of human behavior. I have also included new discussions of many other fields of current interest, such as rape, the Jonestown mass suicide, unemployment (especially as it affects graduates), new religious sects, school busing, "credentialism" and the declining standards in education, ecological and energy concerns, sociobiology, and alternatives to traditional marriage. In

some chapters, in fact, I have added a current-trends section that summarizes new or anticipated developments. As before, I have taken care throughout the book to avoid sexist language, with its unintended yet inevitable implication that it is only men who do, and act, and create the social world.

Organization

I have again divided the book into five units. Unit I provides an introduction to sociology and to the methods of sociological research. Unit II deals with the individual, culture, and society, and focuses on the influence of social and cultural forces on personal experience and social behavior. The chapters in this unit cover culture, society, socialization, social interaction, social groups, deviance, and sexual behavior. Unit III discusses various forms of social inequality, and emphasizes the role of ideology as well as coercion and tradition in the maintenance of inequalities. The first chapter in the unit deals with the general problem of social stratification and introduces the basic concepts that apply throughout the unit; the second deals with inequalities of social class; the third, with inequalities of race and ethnicity; and the fourth, with inequalities of gender and of age. Unit IV discusses several important social institutions: the family, education, religion, science, the economic order, and the political order. Finally, Unit V focuses on some issues of social change; it contains chapters on population and health, urbanization and urban life, collective behavior and social movements, and on the general problem of social change and modernization.

I have taken great care, however, to structure the book in such a way that instructors can, if they wish, omit some chapters and present others in a different order. Nearly all instructors will want to cover the first five chapters, in which the most important terms and concepts of the discipline are introduced. (Chapter 2, on methods, could be omitted, but devoting some lecture time to research methods would then be advisable.) The sequence of the remaining chapters can then be freely rearranged to suit the convenience of the individual instructor, and there are ample cross-references to the five basic chapters and to relevant topics in other chapters to facilitate any alternative sequence.

Features

I have included a number of distinctive features that are intended to enhance the book's effectiveness as a teaching and learning tool.

Cross-cultural material. While this book is not intended as an exercise in comparative sociology, I have started from the assumption—a surprisingly unusual one—that sociology is something more than the study of American society. Throughout the text there are occasional references to other cultures and to the historical past. This material is intended to serve two purposes. The first is to enliven the text, for the ways of life of other peoples—particularly in so-called primitive societies—are inherently fascinating. The second purpose, more serious, is to undermine ethnocentric attitudes by highlighting, through comparison, distinctive aspects of American society that might otherwise pass unnoticed or be taken for granted.

Theory. A basic sociology text should not, in my view, be a heavily theoretical one. But conversely, a sound introduction to sociological theory should be an essential feature of the introductory course, and we fail both the discipline and our students if we do not provide it. The treatment of theory in this book is shaped by two convictions. The first is that theory can be presented in a clear, concise, interesting, and understandable manner, and that its practical value can be readily appreciated by the student. The second conviction is that theory must not, as happens all too often, be briefly introduced in the first chapter and then hastily buried: this tactic can only confirm the student's worst suspicions that theory is an irrelevant luxury.

I have again taken a fairly eclectic approach to sociological theory and have utilized all three of the main perspectives in the contemporary discipline: functionalist theory (primarily for issues of social order and stability), conflict theory (primarily for issues of social tension and change), and interactionist theories (primarily for "micro" issues). Above all, I have carried these perspectives throughout the book—not by applying them mechanically to everything, but by introducing particular theoretical perspectives where they will genuinely enhance understanding of a specific problem. Where the perspectives

complement one another, as they often do, this is made clear; where they seem contradictory, the problem is discussed, and, if possible, resolved. I have drawn extensively, of course, on the ideas of contemporary sociologists; but in keeping with the continuing resurgence of interest in classical thinkers, I have given due emphasis to such writers as Marx, Durkheim, and Weber.

Readings. I have added a number of readings from original sources at appropriate places in the text. These readings have been chosen for their interest and relevance, and are designed to give the student a deeper, more first-hand experience of sociological writing and research.

Pedagogical aids. Several features of the book are designed to aid the learning process. Each chapter begins with a brief overview of its major topics and closes with a numbered, point-by-point summary of the contents. All important terms are italicized and defined where they first appear, and unfamiliar terms are illustrated by an example. These terms are also listed (with the number of the page on which they are defined) for end-of-chapter review. Throughout the book there are occasional "boxes" containing short and relevant items of interest. The illustrations in the previous edition were a particularly well-received feature of the text, and I have spent countless hours poring over photographs, cartoons, fine art, and other graphic materials in order to further enhance this aspect of the book. The present edition is more abundantly illustrated, and employs more color, than its predecessor; but, as before, I have carefully selected the illustrative material for pedagogical rather than purely decorative reasons, and have provided unusually full captions that reinforce and amplify the text discussion. Numerous tables and charts, up-to-date and easy to read, are used to aid the student's understanding of concepts and sociological data. Each chapter also contains an annotated list of suggestions for further reading.

Glossary. The book contains an extensive glossary—virtually a mini-dictionary—of over three hundred important sociological terms. The glossary can be used both for ready reference and for reviewing purposes.

Library research techniques. I have included a brief appendix on techniques of library research. This appendix is intended as a handy guide to library facilities; it offers many suggestions for tracking down sources and information and should prove useful to students working on term papers or research projects.

Supplementary Materials

A new *Study Guide* is available to help students in both their understanding and their reviewing of the course. The guide, prepared by Carla B. Howery (The University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee) and Alfred A. Clarke, Jr. (Western New England College), includes learning objectives, chapter summaries, multiple-choice questions, application exercises, and case studies.

The text is further complemented by a comprehensive *Instructor's Manual,* extensively revised by Donald P. Irish (Hamline University) and Carla B. Howery. Also available are a *Test Bank,* revised by M. Jay Crowe (University of Colorado, Denver) and consisting of nearly a thousand class-tested multiple-choice questions (many of them computer-validated), and an accompanying *Computerized Test-Generation System.* The text has also served as the basis for a series of video lectures, prepared for open-circuit broadcast and cable television by the Dallas County Community College District. (The series is supplemented by a study guide and faculty manual.)

In addition, I have prepared an anthology of readings in applied sociology, *The Social World.* Organized in the same sequence as the text, it should provide a useful accompaniment to it.

Thanks

Many people have helped in the preparation of this book, including the hundreds of users—both professors and students—whom I have talked to personally or with whom I've corresponded about the text. I am especially grateful to a number of my colleagues who evaluated various parts of the published first edition or of the manuscript for the second edition for accuracy, coverage, readability, currency, and teachability. The book owes a great deal to the many constructive criticisms and suggestions they offered. The reviewers were:

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I must record a special word of thanks to Donald Irish, who read the entire manuscript of both editions; the book has benefited enormously from his cogent criticism and humane wisdom. A number of students from different colleges and universities also critiqued the manuscript from the student viewpoint or helped with the research for the book, and I am especially grateful to Robert L. Cohen, Sunil Sen Gupta, Christopher Philips, and Kevin Williams.

Of course, I have not always agreed with the reviewers (nor have they always agreed with one another!) and the responsibility for the final manuscript is entirely my own.

Finally, I have been fortunate to continue my association with Worth Publishers, a young and vigorous company with a well-deserved reputation for its commitment to quality at every stage of the publishing process. For the effort they put into this book, my sincere thanks go to the staff of Worth, and particularly to Linda Baron Davis, editorial manager, to Peter Deane, the editor, and to George Touloumes, production manager, for their remarkable skills, talent, and dedication.

February, 1981

IAN ROBERTSON

The Author

Ian Robertson spent most of his early years in South Africa, where he obtained a B.A. degree in Political Science at the University of Natal. As president of the multiracial National Union of South African Students he organized several campaigns against that country's apartheid laws, until he was arbitrarily "banned" by Prime Minister Vorster. After leaving South Africa, he studied at Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard universities, supporting himself through scholarships and writing. During this period his articles on various social topics appeared in such publications as the *Times* and *Guardian* in England and the *New Republic* and *Nation* in the United States.

Ian Robertson trained as a teacher at Oxford, where he was awarded a Diploma in Education in English and Latin. At Cambridge he took a First-Class Honors degree and M.A. in sociology and was elected Senior Scholar in Sociology at King's College. At Harvard he was awarded both a master's degree and a doctorate in the sociology of education. Dr. Robertson has a wide teaching experience: he has taught basic curriculum to retarded children in England, high school social studies in Massachusetts, sociology of education to Harvard graduates, and sociology to Cambridge undergraduates. He is currently devoting himself to his writing and research.

In addition to various articles, Dr. Robertson has edited *Readings in Sociology: Contemporary Perspectives* (Harper & Row, 1976), *Race and Politics in South Africa* (Transaction Books, 1978), and *The Social World* (Worth, 1981). The second edition of his successful *Social Problems* text was published by Random House in 1980.

Contents

UNIT 1 *Introduction to Sociology*

Like any subject that deals with people, sociology is inherently fascinating. This introductory unit explains what sociology is, as well as what sociologists do and how they go about their work. In reading it you will discover sociology's distinctive perspective on human society and social behavior.

The first chapter offers you a general overview of the discipline, presenting sociologists as "strangers" in the familiar landscape of their own society: in other words, as people who look afresh at the world others take for granted. The chapter explains the "sociological imagination"—the vivid awareness you will gain of the close link between personal experience and wider social forces. It also discusses the scientific nature of sociology, the relationship of sociology to other social sciences, the history of the discipline, and the major theoretical approaches that sociologists use to make sense of their subject matter.

The second chapter discusses the methods sociologists use to investigate the social world. Sociological research is essentially a form of detective work, in which the sociologist tries to find out what is happening in society and why. The value of the sociologist's conclusions is obviously influenced by the accuracy and reliability of the methods that are used to collect and analyze the evidence. The chapter therefore examines the problems of tracing cause and effect in social behavior, the unique difficulties sociologists face in their research, and the methods they use to uncover the facts about social life.

CHAPTER 1 *Sociology: A New Look at a Familiar World*

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Alone among living creatures, human beings are fully self-aware—capable of inquiring and reflecting about themselves. Throughout history, our ancestors pondered human nature as it is revealed in the social life of our species. Why do human beings form families and why do they worship gods? Why is the way of life of one group so different from that of another? What makes some people break social rules while others obey them? Why are some people rich when others are poor? What makes one group go to war with another? What might a human being who had not been raised in the company of other people be like? What holds societies together, and why do all societies constantly change over time?

Until quite recently the answers to these and similar questions came from intuition, from speculation, and from the dead weight of myth, superstition, and traditional "folk wisdom" handed down from the past. Only in the course of the last century or so has a new method been applied to the study of human society and social behavior: the method of science, which provides answers drawn from facts collected by systematic research.

This new mode of inquiry has produced the lively but still-infant discipline of sociology. *Sociology is the scientific study of human society and social behavior.* Its subject matter is huge, complex, and varied, and the knowledge produced by sociological research remains imperfect in many ways. Yet, in the brief time that the discipline has been in existence, it has taught us a great deal about ourselves that we could never have learned by relying on speculation alone. We have learned to conceive of human beings and social life in an entirely new way—a way you will find sometimes disconcerting, yet often fascinating.