

evolution—which were the intellectual currency of the time. He suggested the idea that mentality had evolved to the point that men could consciously guide further evolution. But his position was philosophically vague and internally contradictory.⁸ These contradictions have gone into reformist thought, for explanations have continued to be made in terms of social forces; whereas, reformers have exhorted their followers to conscious reformist efforts. Ward was the fount of this confusion.

Society was real to Ward, as it was to John Dewey, and as it has been to a host of other reformers. They speak of society as if it had a distinct being and use the word “social” as derived from it in this sense. The following usages by Ward, taken from the second volume of *Dynamic Sociology*, will illustrate the point. He refers to “social forces” (p. 161), “social progress” (p. 161), “social advancement” (p. 163), “the life of a society” (p. 163), “state of society” (p. 165), “protection of

⁸ Note his embroilment in the contradictions. “Although every act must in strict science be recognized as the resultant of all the forces, internal and external, acting upon the agent, still it remains true that achievement is the work of individuals thus acting. . . .” (Ward, *Pure Sociology*, p. 41.) With about as much sense, one may say: The spokes only turn when the wheel turns; still it is the spokes turning.

society” (p. 214), “social growth” (p. 224), “will of society” (p. 230), “servant of society” (p. 242), “Society, possessed for the first time of a completely integrated consciousness” (p. 249), “agencies of society” (p. 250), “duty of society” (p. 251), “duties of society toward itself” (p. 467), “how to bring society to consciousness” (p. 467), “members of society” (p. 544), “superficiality of society” (p. 552), “the exclusive work of society” (p. 571), “the welfare of society” (p. 583), “responsible solely to society” (p. 589), “better for society” (p. 591) “society” as having “burden on its shoulders” (p. 595), and a “sphere prescribed by society” (p. 617). If phraseology be accepted as a good indication of underlying assumptions, and it should be, there should be no doubt that Lester Frank Ward believed in the reality of society.

John Dewey followed a similar pattern in his language. The following instances are taken from his *Problems of Men*.⁹ He refers to “socially necessary” (p. 32), “social control” (p. 35), “members of our society” (p. 37), “socially helpful” (p. 49), “social forces” (p. 52), “society” as “deprived of what they might contribute” (p. 61), “the interests and activities of a society” (p. 62),

⁹ New York: Philosophical Library, 1946.

“social enterprise” (p. 76), “social pressure” (p. 85), “social breakdown” (p. 90), “social authority” (p. 94), “socially justified” (p. 101), “benefit to society” (p. 102), “social vacuum” (p. 104), “society . . . itself” (p. 131), “social power” (p. 132), “social knowledge” (p. 179), “social materials” (p. 180) “society” as “suffering” (p. 182), and “socially authorized” (p. 185). These are, of course, metaphysic-like usages. Such usage derives most of its meaning from the conception of society as an organism, which became common after the presentation of Darwinian evolution.

The Emphasis on Feelings

The third ingredient in the “new reality” was the psyche. More specifically, it was psychic phenomena thingified, made into positive active forces. Lester Frank Ward referred constantly to social forces. One may well wonder where these forces come from. They are operative in society, according to him, but they do not come from society. Instead, they arise from within men. Ward put it this way: “The motive of all action is feeling. All great movements in history are preceded and accompanied by strong feelings.”¹⁰ Again, “Feeling alone can drive on the social train, whether

for weal or woe.”¹¹ Moreover, “Egoism is the feeling which demands for self an increase of enjoyment and diminution of discomfort. Altruism is . . . a kind of feeling which results from the contemplation of suffering in others”¹²

Ward indicates in the following that feeling is his fundamental conception:

The root-idea to which I will here confine myself is the true supremacy which must be accorded in any just system of philosophy to the *feelings* as the real *end* toward which all efforts designed to secure the advancement of society must be directed. Although it is upon the intellect that we can alone rely to secure such a control of the social forces as shall successfully harmonize them with human advantage, it is feeling that must be alone consulted in determining what constitutes such advantage. Every true system must regard intellect as the means and feeling as the end of all its operations. . . .

The practical work which sociology demands is, when reduced to its lowest terms, *the organization of feeling*. The human body is a reservoir of feeling which, when wholly unobstructed, is all pleasurable.¹³

The concentration upon the psychological has led in many directions in the twentieth century.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁰ Ward, *Dynamic Sociology*, I, 11.