

Foreword

With the exception of the first, the articles that follow have appeared previously in a variety of journals. We would probably not have decided to publish them in their present form without the friendly encouragement of Giovanni Busino, Professor at the University of Lausanne.

Although they provide no more than an outline sketch of a solution, they do raise a number of general problems which in our view are important for the future of sociology. Perhaps a catalogue of these problems will prove useful.

The introductory chapter ('The Crisis in Sociology') seeks to show the implicit problematic upon which the following articles depend. The remainder of the book is divided into three sections: the sociology of sociology, epistemology and methodology. It goes without saying that the articles assembled under these headings do not pretend to exhaust the content of these disciplines. In most cases they have no aim other than to supply examples and simply specify research. One can see, however, that by their very orientation they suggest a definition of these disciplines, a definition which may be debatable but one which we believe also merits discussion.

Most of the articles brought together here were written with journals or scientific publications in mind. But we have also reproduced an article ('Sociology in the Year 2000' – chapter 2) originally written for a mass circulation monthly news magazine in a deliberately simplified and provocative style. Another ('Towards a positive epistemology' – chapter 6) was written for a journal on philosophy. Most of the chapters are reproduced in their original form, so that the reader will have no difficulty in identifying changes, repetitions and even contradictions between one article and the next. Only the titles have been altered, so as to underline the connection between each article and the implicit guiding problematic: namely, that the primary condition of sociology's progress and its very existence depend on the sociologist's critical attitude towards his own language. This is the attitude we have tried to illustrate here.

Finally, thanks are due to those editors who have kindly authorised the reproduction of the articles which follow.

