

Preface

AT BOTTOM, this book argues for a closer connection between social science and the humanities, especially philosophy and history. My thesis is that social science is largely value-centered: economics, political science, social psychology, and sociology are preoccupied with ideals of rationality, legitimacy, self-government, personal development, and social cohesion. These disciplines call for close observation and dispassionate analysis of contexts and outcomes. Among the humanities, philosophy clarifies values and meanings while history identifies master trends, such as urbanization and industrialization, that affect values. Philosophy and history give direction to social science, but at the same time they are subject to criticism and revision in light of social science findings.

I have used these ideas regarding the play of values and ideals in social inquiry in several of my earlier works. In *TVA and the Grass Roots* I showed how an ideal of responsiveness was frustrated by local interests and ideologies. *Leadership in Administration* examined the value-centered work of institutional leaders in defining and protecting the character and direction of their organizations. In *Law, Society, and Industrial Justice* I studied how authority is limited by collective bargaining and workplace realities. *The Moral Commonwealth* sought to make clear the moral character of persons, institutions, and communities. In *The Communitarian Persuasion* I explored the meaning of community, with emphasis on diversity as well as cohesion.

This way of thinking owes much to my early study of pragmatist philosophy as presented in the writings of John Dewey. Dewey regarded

the separation of fact and value as a “pernicious dualism.” Values arise from factual conditions, he argued, and whether they are realized or not is also a factual matter. Dewey focused on consummations and frustrations, that is, on qualitative aspects of experience rather than content alone. The wants and needs of human beings cannot be attributed to a generic human nature; they are determined by specific settings. A link is thereby forged between the scientific demand for close observation and the values realized in social life.

I have called this book *A Humanist Science* in part to make clear the interdependence of fact and value. Facts are the conditions affecting human achievements; values are ideals realized or undermined by those conditions. A discipline that brings out this interdependence is a humanist science. My focus on the social sciences shows how ideals emerge from economic activity, the quest for justice, and the challenge of living a common life.

I begin in Part 1, “The Humanist Imagination,” with a discussion of major strands of humanist thought, looking back to ancient Greece and the Renaissance. I note the centrality of ideals in nature and in human life. Part 2, “Realms of Value,” argues that rationality, legitimacy, self-government, social cohesion, and authenticity are chief concerns of political science, economics, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Part 3, “Philosophy and Social Science,” explores the bearing of the preceding discussion on naturalism in ethics and a pluralist vision of society. I conclude with some thoughts on social knowledge as the clarification and limits of ideals.

I WISH TO THANK MY WIFE, Doris R. Fine, for much emotional, practical, and intellectual support; also Martin Krygier, Michael J. Lacey, and Kenneth Winston for valuable comments and suggestions. I am also grateful for the able assistance of Ning Yu and Christie Lim.

P.S.