

SPECIAL ISSUE CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY OF
L'ANNÉE SOCIOLOGIQUE

INTRODUCTION

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THIS collection of papers celebrates the centenary of *L'Année Sociologique*, one of the most influential journals in the social sciences, which was founded by Émile Durkheim in 1898 as a vehicle for the development of his own approach and for his criticism of others.

Of the four papers presented here, three were given as talks to a workshop held on 16 May 1998 at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Oxford, in conjunction with the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies (the fourth paper, by Knut Myhre, was written subsequently, especially for this issue). The idea of the workshop was to attract students to say something about how they responded to Durkheim's insights a century and more after his most active period, and whether they felt that these insights could be developed in any way. In the event, this often emerged as a matter of comparison between Durkheim or one of his followers and other figures not a part of that tradition in the formal, intellectual, or chronological sense. Thus in the papers as published here, Michael McGovern seeks to compare social ontology in the work of Durkheim and Heidegger; Knut Myhre sees precedents for Mauss's approach to action in the work of Aristotle; and Dominique Lussier traces the ramifications of Durkheim's notion of respect in the master's own work and in those of two sympathetic critics of the later British school, Evans-Pritchard and Godfrey Lienhardt. My own contribution, very much bringing up the rear both in the order of papers and in terms of intellectual penetration, focuses on how the leading characteristics of *L'Année Sociologique* as a journal appear to have been captured by a later endeavour, equally influential in

its own field, launched by Louis Dumont, a leading scion of the Durkheimian tendency.

The original idea was that the workshop should be organized jointly by myself and Professor Wendy James. In the event, we found ourselves resorting to a very organic and Durkheimian division of labour, she doing the organizing, while I concentrated on editing the results for publication. In addition to thanking her, I would also like to express my gratitude to those students and others present who contributed to the discussion at the workshop, as well as to the authors of the papers presented here. Bill Pickering, secretary and founding member of the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies, contributed greatly by his presence and his unparalleled ability to guide the discussion of any Durkheimian subject in fruitful directions.

In celebrating the centenary of *L'Année Sociologique*, I believe all those present felt that they were honouring not only a journal, but also an intellectual tendency of continuing interest to anthropology, and one which has always, perhaps, found greater resonance at ISCA and its institutional predecessors than in many other departments, right from the days of Radcliffe-Brown. While the reception of Durkheim at Oxford has certainly not been uncritical, his influence has been remarkably persistent, supported not only by writing but also by translation (in this latter respect, Oxford can be seen as a major contributor over the years). The Institute now houses the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies, founded at the initiative of Bill Pickering, and close links have also developed with the *Maison Française*, which hosted an important recent conference on Marcel Mauss and provided support in other ways. It was therefore felt appropriate to mark this important centenary at the Institute with both the original workshop and this special section of *JASO*. It is hoped that the contributions presented here will carry the critical engagement with Durkheim forward as well as celebrating its past achievements.