

writings were already occupied with setting forth to what extent this analogy holds good, and how it may be used to understand the structure and the growth of the social organism. He also pointed to the essential difference which exists between the higher organisms and social organisations—the former having a centre of consciousness, whereas the consciousness of the latter resides only in the individual members of which it is composed. But it has been pointed out that in the sequel Spencer is by far more interested in elaborating those resemblances than in recognising this essential difference; and that he, in the end, entangles himself in a contradiction which becomes more evident as he introduces the principle of natural selection. This, according to Darwin, reigns supreme in the world of living things, which are subject to a much greater multiplication than the means

representative of this line of thought, misses or only very inadequately appreciates one important aspect which runs through the whole of Comte's biological and sociological philosophy; the insistence on proceeding from the whole to the parts, or what he terms the *vue d'ensemble*, the necessarily synoptic spirit which must always guide these sciences. It appears that in spite of the great prominence given by Spencer to organic or super-organic evolution, he never really breaks with the underlying conviction, fixed probably in his mind through his engineering education, that purely mechanical principles are sufficient to explain not only changes but also progress in nature, mind, and society. Comte was aware of the impossibility of this deduction from the beginning, and does not

pretend that sociology is merely a sequel to biology, and his personal quarrels with some of the prominent geometers of his time seem to have strengthened his early conviction that the purely analytical and synthetical methods of the abstract sciences are not sufficient for the comprehension of the actual phenomena of nature. There are many points in Spencer's 'First Principles' which might have suggested a similar scepticism. And quite independent of all this, we must note that Lotze already, during the fourth and fifth decades of the century, had very fully expounded the capabilities as well as the shortcomings of a purely mechanical construction, which he defined much more clearly than Spencer did, who remained entangled in the old-fashioned conception of "Force."