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Central Problems in Social Theory

**Action, structure and contradiction
in social analysis**

Anthony Giddens

palgrave
macmillan

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Philosophy and sociology have long lived under a segregated system which has succeeded in concealing their rivalry only by refusing them any meeting-ground, impeding their growth, making them incomprehensible to one another, and thus placing culture in a situation of permanent crisis.

Merleau-Ponty

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Preface

I have organised this book as separate papers, rather than as chapters. Each paper may be read as a self-contained entity; but they are all concerned with aspects of a limited range of issues which I take to be of essential importance for social analysis. Those who are unacquainted with the arguments I outlined in *New Rules of Sociological Method* may find it helpful to read the concluding synthetic paper, 'The Prospects for Social Theory Today', first.

I should like to thank the following people, who have been of particular help to me in writing this book: David Held, Lesley Bower, Rob Shreeve, John Thompson and Sam Hollick.

Cambridge
December 1978

A. G.