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For a Science of Social Man

CONVERGENCES IN ANTHROPOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND SOCIOLOGY

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CHAPTER 4

Psychology and Sociology

TALCOTT PARSONS

THIS PAPER WILL BE concerned with the relations between psychology and sociology as theoretical disciplines, but from a very specific point of view which should be made clear and explicit at the outset. It is written by a sociologist in an attempt not only or even mainly to answer the question of what have been the contributions of psychology to sociology, but rather to attempt to state clearly a framework in which the question of the future fruitfulness of the relations between the two disciplines from the sociological point of view can be worked out. The central question then, is what are the conditions of an optimum "fit" between two theoretical schemes which can make the one as fruitful as possible for the other. The sociological perspective in which these questions are discussed will inevitably entail some criticism of past and partly of present trends of psychology, but rather less of sociology. If it were written by a psychologist about sociology the reverse would be expected. Hence the reader should keep clearly in mind that the purpose of the paper is not a general evaluation of psychological theory, but rather an evaluation of different trends for this specific purpose. How important this function of psychology relative to others may be is a question which cannot be dealt with here.

I

When one speaks of "psychology" and "sociology" there is a certain abstraction involved. Both are rapidly developing disciplines with diverse trends of thought to be found within them. No one

writer can speak for his whole profession. But the "personal" element might enter in different ways of which I would like to distinguish two. One might, in such a paper, attempt a critical discussion of the major trends of sociological theorizing going on, and then attempt to relate the problem of the place of psychology to each. On the other hand, one might take one position which, whatever the question of its typicality, is at least by contrast with psychology, clearly sociological, and discuss the whole problem from that vantage point. Because of considerations of space, and because of my greater familiarity with the problems of the particular type of sociological theory with which I have personally been working, I have chosen the latter course in this paper.[1] The reader should hence be aware that a sociologist who thinks in different terms might well see some of the problems of his relation to psychology somewhat differently. The title of the paper is thus elliptical; the full form would be something like "Some problems of the relation of psychology and sociology from the point of view of *one kind* of sociological theory."

However its boundaries may be defined in other respects, sociology is clearly concerned with the observation and analysis of human social behavior, that is, the interaction of pluralities of human beings, the forms their relationships take, and a variety of the conditions and determinants of these forms and of changes in them. The psychologist is traditionally concerned with the behavior of "the individual" though a very large part of the behavior of individuals occurs in relationships with other individuals. Sometimes there is of course even more overlap as when "social psychologists" concern themselves with the behavior of crowds, the formation of public opinion, and the like. Here quite clearly a distinction, if it can be made, must be stated, not in terms of the different concrete phenomena studied, but of a basic abstraction from, or mode of analysis of, data concerning these phenomena.[2]

From the present point of view the focus of sociological theory is held to be on certain aspects of the structure of and processes in

[1] Cf. Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, eds., *Toward a General Theory of Action*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951; Parsons, *The Social System*, Glencoe: Free Press, 1951; and Parsons, Bales, and Shils, *Working Papers in the Theory of Action*, Free Press, 1953.

[2] Thus to say in the concrete sense that public opinion was a subject-matter for psychology but not for sociology would be essentially to say that sociology ought not to study social interaction which in turn would be tantamount to saying it ought not to exist as a distinct discipline.

social systems. A social system in turn I define as the system constituted by the interaction of a plurality of human beings, directly or indirectly, with each other. Psychology, on the other hand, I hold to be concerned first with certain elementary processes of behavior, like learning and cognition, which, however much they may be concretely involved in social interaction, can be isolated from its processes for special study, and secondly with the organization of the components of behavior to constitute the personality of the individual as a system, the system of behavior of a single specific living organism.[3]

This way of defining the relations of the two theoretical disciplines has certain implications which should be made explicit. Their common reference is behavior.[4] But it is behavior studied and analyzed in terms of a common frame of reference which some of us have called that of "action." It focuses attention upon and categorizes the behavior of the organism, and not its internal structure and processes. Behavior or action in this sense is a mode of relation between an "actor," i.e., an organism or a socially organized collectivity, and a situation, which may be conceived as a system of objects, of which the most important are "social objects," i.e., other actors. The action frame of reference thus leads very directly to the conception of social interaction. It is the relations between the organization of the components of action-interaction around the individual organism as actor on the one hand, the system constituted by the interaction of a plurality of actors on the other, which is the center of the problems of the present paper. The fundamental postulate from which the analysis proceeds is that these are independent and not mutually "reducible" system-references. Put a little differently, the common sense of the psychologist tends to hold that, if action is accepted as a frame of reference at all, it concerns the action of individuals (organisms); interaction is then a resultant which should be accounted for by extrapolation of our knowledge of the action of individuals. The common sense of some sociologists, on the other hand, tends to

[3] This definition is formulated with reference to the problem of locating the *theoretical* center of gravity of psychology within the family of sciences of action. In no way does it pretend to describe the total field of interest of members of the psychological profession. In particular it does not locate "social psychology." The latter I conceive as best defined as an "interstitial" discipline *between* psychology and sociology, thus analogous to biochemistry as between chemistry and physiology. Cf. my *Social System*, Ch. XII, for a fuller discussion of these problems.

[4] By far the most important case for us is human behavior but neither need be confined to the human case.

suggest that interaction as such constitutes a system which is over and above and may even have priority over the action of individuals. The contention of the present discussion is that both are right in that both constitute authentically important and independent systems, but neither has priority over the other, *neither provides the premises from which the major characteristics of the other or of action in general can be derived.* Or, it may be put, each provides some of the premises of a general theory of action.

Part of the historic difficulty of reconciling these two points of view has rested on the tendency for both sides of the controversy to set the individual over against society and to identify the concept society with that of social system. This can be very misleading indeed in that it obscures the fact that *any* process of interaction of human beings may constitute a social system. A committee, a work group, or even a family clearly do not constitute, in the usual sense, societies. But equally clearly they are, for the purposes of sociological theory, social systems. A society, then is not only "a" social system, which of course it is, but is also a very complex network of interlocking and interdependent subsystems, each of which is equally authentically a social system. This is the perspective in which I wish to treat the problem of the relations between personality and social system.[5]

One implication of this perspective emerges immediately. If the problem is that of individual as over against society, it is very easy to think that the "unit" of the society is the individual. If, however, one is concerned with the subsystem, with what is sometimes treated as "the group," then the concrete total individual cannot be the unit, because of the simple fact of multiple participations or memberships. It is the role or status-role of an individual which becomes the unit of group, i.e., of social system structure. Simple and obvious as this consideration seems to be, taking systematic account of it alters the traditional perspective on the personality-social system problem quite fundamentally. To draw the most important inferences from this starting point will be one of the central tasks of this paper.

One further aspect of the general action frame of reference needs, however, to be briefly discussed before proceeding farther. Action, it has been stated above, is a mode of relation between a living

[5] The psychological analogue of social system therefore should be "motivational system" or some such concept rather than "personality" which is analogous to "society."

organism and a set of objects in its environment or situation. From this, we may say that, within the frame of reference, it follows that the primary significance of objects in action lies in what comes to be their meaning to an actor. There are many shadings and aspects of meaning in this connection. But primary concern here is with the symbolic levels of meaning. This may be taken to imply that meanings are not "particularized" to the utmost, but come to be organized in systems. Then a given specific object in the situation of action is significant, i.e., "has meaning," because of the way in which it fits into the organized patterning of the meaning-system, rather than simply because of its immediate and isolated impact. This is what we are saying when we refer to its meaning as "symbolic." Further, by virtue of such relations, objects can be connected with each other in complexes of meaning, so that one object in a complex can come to "stand for" others or for the complex as a whole, that is, to symbolize other objects.

The patterned and reciprocal organization of the meanings of objects is what is distinctive about the structure of systems of action; it is this by virtue of which "orientation" to objects becomes determinately stabilized. This is what we mean by saying that action is "culturally" organized, that in a personality considered as a system there is an *internalized* culture, while in a social system the counterpart of internalization in the personality is *institutionalization.* Culture is thus in certain respects analytically independent of its "embodiment" in systems of action, first in that it may be abstracted analytically from actual behavior and treated as a complex of pattern-systems, and secondly in that it can be transmitted from one system of action to another, between personalities by learning, between social systems by diffusion. It is therefore necessary to add the cultural aspect or "dimension" to those of social system and personality in order to complete the frame of reference for analysis of interactive behavior in action terms.

On the basis of these assumptions it is now possible to say something about the nature of the articulation between personalities as systems and social systems, which can serve as a guide to analysis of the theoretical relationships of the two disciplines of psychological and sociological theory. The two types of system are here conceived, not only as interdependent, but as *interpenetrating* in a specific sense. Every social system, i.e., system of interaction of a plurality of individuals, involves a sector of the behavior and thus of the personality

of each of the component actors. For purposes of conceptualizing the social system, this is conceived as a role which, within the range of situations defined by his membership in the group or interactive system over a sufficiently long period of time, is from one point of view a series of expected or patterned behaviors, not of just one type, but a pattern of types varying according to the development of the interactive situation. These will include phases in which the individual is not actively participating in the activities of this particular group, as when, at home and away from his job, a man does not interact with his colleagues. Nevertheless, his membership in the work group has not ceased to be important to or part of his personality. This we would call the phase of "latency" of his job role.

This participation is organized and structured, it is not random activity. As part of the personality system it has to be motivated in the sense that the pattern of activity is both regularized or stabilized so that it is not interfered with by other elements and it must be responsive to the interactive situation as it develops, especially that is to the acts of other members of the interactive system. Ego's "performances" then are interdependent with alter's "sanctions" and this interdependence is what we mean by the process of the interactive system.

At the same time, each of the other members of the interactive system or group is an object to ego, as indeed he, in this role (as in others), is to himself. Each has qualities of which status in the group is one of the most important aspects. In this aspect, each object in the group has meaning to ego, it is a symbol or a complex of symbols. The mutuality or complementarity of orientations then means that the interactive system as a system must, as a condition of any relatively stable state, have a determinate patterning of complementary meanings of objects and orientations. This relatively stable patterning of meanings is what we mean by the "common culture" of the interactive system.

The necessity and importance of a common culture for an interactive system does not imply that it is "static," that "nothing happens" or that change of state is precluded. It means only that the particularities of each act and each changing situation are not ultimately determinant of process but rather that the process is *organized* relative to these particularities and that, within the action frame of reference, the relevant meaning of the concept organization involves the patterning of symbol-meaning relationships. At the same time the interactive system as a system cannot be solely determined by these meaning-patterns, since it is subject to adaptive and integrative exigencies, i.e., to conditions of the nature of the situations and of the actor-units of which it is composed. As a resultant then of its cultural patternings and of the situational and integrative exigencies of the system and, finally, of the motivational forces involved, the interaction system at any given time has a determinate structure. It has parts—the role-units—which stand in relatively determinate relations to each other as objects of orientation, as performing entities, and as sources of sanctions.

Now it has been noted above that social interaction system and personality system interpenetrate. On the more microscopic level where the relevant units are roles of individual actors rather than of collectivities, the role-unit of the interaction system is in fact a sector of the personality as a system. Because of this interpenetration of the two systems, their interdependence must have certain special features, must, that is, be subject to certain constraints. Because of the fact that as different systems they are subject to different sets of adaptive and integrative exigencies, we may say that the focus of these constraints rests on the presence of the common culture. The patterns of symbol-meaning, that is to say, which are constitutive of the structure of an interaction system, must in a stable state also be constitutive of the personality systems which interpenetrate with it. The common culture must extend *into* the personalities constituent of the interaction system, not merely come "up to their boundaries." This is the meaning of Durkheim's aphorism "society exists only in the minds of individuals."

The nature of the independence of the personality system relative to social systems may now be more clearly seen. For each individual the living organism is unique and individual in two respects. In the first place it is the source of the motivational energy of his action which as such cannot be shared with any other. Then secondly his body as an object is a unique facility and set of reward-objects. It has qualities and performance-capacities with reference to which he holds a natural monopoly. In part these features of his body serve to categorize him with others, as by sex or age or intelligence, but also very much to differentiate him from others. In this connection it should not be forgotten that the physical location of a person's body imposes very specific conditions on his action; e.g., he can, if resident in Boston, attend a conference in New York only

if he is physically transported from one location to the other. In both these fundamental respects each personality is unique, i.e., as a system independent of any other, because each organism is a distinct, boundary-maintaining system.

But there is still a third fundamental source of the independence of the personality as a system. This derives simply from the fact of role-participations in social systems. In any given system of social interaction in the nature of the case no two participants can be in exactly the same role, precisely because such systems are differentiated systems. This means that categorization by one member of himself as an object in relation to other objects must be differentiated from that of the other participants. Their relations to each other can be identical only in the limiting case of a perfectly symmetrical system. A second aspect of participation is an inference from the fact that a society is a complex web of subsystems of social interraction, namely, that a given individual in some sense participates in a unique combination of such subsystems. Thus while in our society both husband and wife participate in the family of procreation, though in differentiated roles, the wife does not ordinarily participate, except in a peripheral role, in the occupational interaction system of the husband. Conversely, each of the husband's male occupational associates participates in a different family system. The structure of such role-participations will vary from one society to another, but the basic fact of differential participation is a fundamental of social structure with profound implications for the theory of personality. Finally, the above two sources of differentiation of personalities, relative to participation in social systems, are compounded by a third, namely the fact that there is differentiation, social-participation-wise, by life-history. Some patterns of succession by stages of the life cycle are highly standardized. But others allow for much variation so that the cumulative results of previous role-participations serve to differentiate individuals rather than to assimilate them to standard types.

II

The above considerations should be sufficient to counteract the common misunderstanding that emphasis on sociological factors is a threat to the analytical independence of the personality level of analysis, or to the ideas of either the "uniqueness" or the "autonomy"

of the individual personality. On the contrary it can be argued with considerable force that such considerations help a great deal to give a firm foundation to our intuitively perceived insights and to psychologically established knowledge in this field.

This is true and extremely important. But it is secondary to the basic problem of this paper which is, from the sociological point of view, to state some of the most essential requirements of a psychological theory which is maximally useful to the sociologist. We may now, on the background of the general considerations which have been reviewed, attempt to make this problem somewhat more explicit and specific by sketching two important problem-areas in which the two disciplines meet, where, that is to say, important sociological problems are involved, but considerable use must also be made of psychology.

The first of these which I would like to consider is the problem of "social control" in those cases where the "vicious circles" of motivation to deviant behavior have become firmly established using the case of illness in relation to therapy for illustration. In so far as states of illness can be considered as motivated, either etiologically or with reference to resistance to recuperative processes, or both, and the motivation is unconscious in the sense that getting or staying sick cannot simply be treated as malingering, we may speak of it as deviant behavior since in a broad way, to be in good health, physical and/or mental, so far as it is possible, is expected in terms of the values of our society. The treatment of illness as deviant behavior has proved illuminating partly because it has been possible to establish a broad continuity between it and other types of deviance, such as delinquency.

Leaving aside the problems of the manner of genesis of motivated illness in the processes of social interaction and in the personality of the individual, we may raise a few of the problems posed by the process of therapy. Whether the difficulty be "psychosomatic" or "mental" there seems to be very widespread agreement among the relevant professional groups that it is usually very difficult if not impossible for the individual to "cure himself," and also that interaction in his ordinary social relationships, in family and job, will usually not automatically "cure" him. For the sociologist this is to say that effective therapy is, among other things, dependent on the establishment of a special type of social relationship. From "being sick" the

individual comes to be a "patient"; he comes to play a particular type of role in a particular type of system of social interaction.

From the sociological point of view, the "sick role," the role of therapist—in the most important type of case a physician—and the role of patient of a therapist, are all integral parts of the structure of the social system, and each of these roles and the interaction between them have distinctive sociological characteristics. Thus illness as a social role, as distinct from merely a "condition," involves first an exemption from normal social obligations, and second a claim to be "helped" in "getting well," both of which have to be socially legitimized. Not just everyone who says he is unable to work because he "feels bad," for instance, is treated as sick. Secondly this legitimation is partial and conditional. By being categorized in the society as sickness, the state is evaluated as in itself undesirable, and an obligation is imposed to try to get well as expeditiously as possible. Seeking therapeutic help is then virtually an obligation, and once a therapeutic relationship has been established, the patient assumes the obligation to cooperate to the best of his ability with his therapist.

Matters are similar on the other side. The role of therapist is partly defined by specific technical competence, validated by formal training. But this fits in a sociologically distinctive framework, in our society typically in that of the "professional" role, which imposes a pattern of behavior on the therapist which cannot be simply deduced from the content of his technical competence; for example, his obligation to "help" his patient and be concerned for his welfare as distinguished from the typical business or commercial pattern of regarding him as fair game for financial exploitation.[6]

Another set of considerations about the therapeutic role has recently emerged as highly important. If illness be conceived as a form of deviant behavior, then the therapist stands in an interesting "interstitial" position. In his permissiveness and supportiveness, and in the confidential intimacy of his relation to the patient, he partially and conditionally participates in the world of the sick. He "understands" how his patient feels, and to a point legitimizes the latter's orientation; he permits its expression without punishment and does not withdraw support because of the deviant character of the sick person's ideas and wishes. But this is only a conditional acceptance.

[6] The relevant features of the role of illness and of the therapist have been described and analyzed elsewhere. Cf. Parsons, *The Social System*, Ch. VII and X.

The therapist also, and progressively more so as therapy proceeds, represents the society of the healthy. Particularly in analysis of transference reactions he shows his patient how deviant his reactions are, and on occasion rewards him by approval for his insight into his own motivations. The deviance is accepted only provisionally and in order to help the patient overcome it. The latter would, it seems, not be possible if the therapist participated only in the world of the sick, if, that is, he were not himself defined as well, and did not accept the normative standards of the healthy world, not only for himself, but eventually for his patient.

These basic features of the social roles of the sick and of the therapist, and of the nature of their interaction are, as I said, parts of the social system. They cannot be explained in psychological terms in the sense which would involve ignoring the fact that they are institutionalized as parts of the social system except as the "fact" to be explained. Furthermore they are clearly of first rate empirical importance in explaining in part how and why psychotherapy works as well as it does in modern Western society.

But the sociologist who lets it go at that, who simply by-passes the problems of the mechanisms of personality process by which, under the conditions of institutionalized (not in the hospital sense necessarily) therapy of a person socially categorized as "sick," a certain order of effects come about, is leaving a vital aspect of the empirical problem areas hanging in the air. With empirical validation from statistical sources he may, with due qualification for imperfections of available evidence, be able to establish that and even how well it works, but at best in a very limited sense how it works. To get farther he must have knowledge of the operation of the personality as a system, of why the various relevant features of the therapeutic interaction system are important as conditions of operation of certain psychological mechanisms, including what the psychological effects would be if the conditions were altered in specific ways.

But for this to work out most advantageously from the psychosociological point of view, it is necessary that treatment of psychological mechanisms in the personality system should, so far as possible, be articulated with the categories of the social role-system in which the interaction takes place. Thus in the current case the problem for the personality of the patient is socially posed in terms of the categories "sickness" and "health." The psychological tendency has been to take these for granted as obvious to common sense. But

this is a dangerous assumption. Above all, illness in the aspects important to the present argument is not simply a disturbance in the organism which biological criteria suffice to specify and interpret, but is a form of behavior relevant to the system of social interaction. Above all, it must be understood in terms of the common values of a system of social interaction as a central point of reference. This common value system is in turn conceived to be internalized in the personality; one can only speak of sickness in this sense if the deviance is "unconscious"—otherwise it would be malingering—and hence involves personality conflicts organized about the conformity-deviance axis.

That this basic point of reference has in fact entered into personality psychology is above all evident in the emergence of the concept of the superego in Freud's work, and its connection with guilt and shame as motivational categories of personality psychology. It is from starting points such as these that the articulation of personality psychology and sociological theory must work. The conception of either "mental" or "psychosomatic" illness as a "condition" independent of social interaction does not do justice either to the significance of the state of the personality as such or to the problem of analyzing the processes by which effective therapy may be possible. At the same time, taking account of the social system aspects, far from eliminating the relevance of psychological analysis, highlights its importance by giving it a particularly sharp focus.

A second example concerns certain aspects of the problems of the socialization of the child with which I personally have been working.[7] The problem is that of how to predict from certain features of the role structure of the family in which a child—in this case a boy—is socialized, what level and what qualitative type of adult occupational role he is likely to attain. The ground for attributing substantial significance to aspects of personality internalized in the family has been cleared by showing that, when broad family socio-economic status and ability (measured by I.Q.) have been taken into account there is a substantial residual variance and, secondly, by showing that the differences between those boys, for instance, of relatively high ability but low family status who do and do not go to college, cannot adequately be accounted for simply on grounds of access or lack of it to economic resources. The problem, then, is by

[7] In connection with a study of social mobility in collaboration with Samuel A. Stouffer and Florence R. Kluckhohn.

analysis of socialization as a process, to predict from (or conversely explain in terms of) the structure of his particular family as a social system, the outcome of a selective process in the allocation of social roles, by showing what are the kinds of personality which, on the one hand are produced in the socialization process, on the other are "predisposed" to assume certain types of occupational roles.

Consideration of the problem has made clear that one cannot get very far by what might be called a simple "correlational" approach to it. One might take available "census-type" classifications of occupational roles, and current psychological categorizations of personality types, such as introverted vs. extroverted, impunitive, intropunitive, extrapunitive, etc. and attempt to correlate them. On the other hand one might take sociologically common sense classifications of family type, with reference to number of children, birth order, father- or mother-dominated, "authoritarian" vs. "democratic," etc. Though some of these are undoubtedly significant, particularly birth order, it seems this as such is not a really fundamental attack on the problem.

The procedure being followed is different. First we have attempted to work out a classification of occupational roles as a reference system in terms which go substantially beyond those yet current in sociology. Above all an effort has been made to derive this as far as possible from considerations of general theory so as to maximize the chances of its connecting up with other analyses. This has necessitated extensive analysis, particularly into the structure of social stratification.[8]

The next task has been to work out an analysis of family structures which could treat variations in terms directly comparable with those used to delineate the range of variability of occupational roles. Both these tasks, it will be noted, are essentially tasks of the sociological level of analysis of the structure of social systems. Basic orientation on these levels is, we believe, essential even to statement of the problems of central concern on the psychological levels, if that is to say, psychological theory is to be useful in solving the original prob-

[8] Two very preliminary statements of results of this work have been published, first a brief discussion of the occupational reference system as Ch. V, sec. viii of Parsons, Bales, and Shils, *Working Papers in the Theory of Action*, and second the paper "A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification" in Bendix and Lipset, eds., *Reader in Social Stratification*, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1953. Empirical research involving these categories is not yet ready for publication.

lems of why some boys elect one type of occupational role (and qualify for it) while others go another way.

In the course of this work, however, analysis of the structure of the family has led almost immediately into analysis of the process of socialization. The key to our approach here has been the recognition, first worked out in detail in the occupational field, that a social system is a complex network of subsystems interlocking with each other. This proved to be true even of so "simple" a unit as the American urban family. In particular it has been important to treat the mother-child relationship (in the preoedipal stage) as a distinct subsystem. The child, then, may be conceived as coming to be progressively integrated in a series of successively wider and more complex systems of social interaction, first the mother-child system, secondly the family as a system, and third the community outside the family—which of course also needs in turn to be further broken down.

This conception of socialization as involving integration in a series of systems of social interaction, the structure of each of which has been analyzed in technical sociological terms, has made it possible to treat the process of internalization of cultural patterns in an orderly, and we think, psychologically acceptable fashion, and in a way which analyzes the motivational systems and subsystems of personality in terms directly cognate with the analysis of role-expectations in the relevant social systems, including the future occupational system.

With respect to the structure of the interaction systems, to the nature of the learning process and, finally, to the structure of personality, certain relatively clear patterns have already emerged. Let us review each of these in turn.

First, with respect to the systems of social interaction in which the child becomes involved, we can think of a process of successive differentiation. The simplest state sociologically is that often called by psychoanalysts and other child psychologists "oral dependency," in which the child is, in Freud's original sense "identified" with the mother, in that he has not yet differentiated his own "ego" from the "mother-child identity." A second stage of differentiation is reached when the child develops an "autonomous" need to love as well as be loved by the mother, and with this develops a conception of self as "loving and being loved" and not merely as dependent. From the sociological point of view this is a more complex system, though it still involves only two "natural persons," mother and child.

The conjugal or nuclear family as a system represents a further stage of structural differentiation. The number of roles in it is naturally a function of the number of persons. But the structural ordering of the roles, on a broad basis, must be dominated by two major axes of differentiation, which in common-sense sociological terms are generation—parents vs. children—and sex. On this basis there are four and only four generically basic types of role in the nuclear family, parent of each sex and child of each sex. The child by ascriptive inevitability has, on this basis, the "choice" of only two roles since only over a long period of time can he hope to become a parent or a member of the older and hence superordinate generation.

We therefore conceive of sex-categorization as the decisive aspect of emerging from relatively exclusive relationship to the mother into full membership in the family. Then the father becomes significant as differentiated from the mother and the sibling of opposite sex becomes significant as differentiated from ego.

The conjugal family in this sense is, we have reason to believe, a prototype of a social system in that it incorporates what we believe to be the two most elementary axes of differentiation of social structure, namely, "power" or "prestige"—whichever way one wishes to look at it—and primacy of "instrumental" function for the system and of "expressive" function. The child who has come to be a full-fledged member of a nuclear family may thus be regarded as oriented to some of the fundamental facts of life. He must recognize that there are these basic types of role and that, at any given time, he must locate himself in the system composed of them in the sense that he must recognize his own role as part of the system and hence as differentiated from but also related to those of the other members.

But the series cannot stop at the boundaries of the conjugal family. This in turn is a subsystem of the wider community structure in which the family is embedded. I shall not take space to carry the analysis farther here, but only say that in addition to, not in place of, his (changing) role in the family a boy acquires roles in school and peer group, so that in "latency" and adolescence he has three main interdependent foci of his life (in our society of course). Only after that does he marry and by establishing a new conjugal family greatly attenuate his ties to the old. In terms of social structure the systems in which he participates are, at each stage, as a total set, progressively more complex.

This is the sociological setting in which the psychological prob-

lems concerning the processes of personality development and the nature of the resulting structures of personality have to be raised. But even here our treatment has been guided by sociological considerations. Recent work has strongly suggested, if not established, a relationship between the succession of phases found in the processes of interaction in small groups, and the order of the therapeutic process and hence more generally of operation of mechanisms of social control. This is that the order of phases of the therapeutic process is the reverse of that found in ordinary "task-oriented" groups.[9] Then it appeared that the Freudian paradigm of the main stages of the psycho-sexual development of the child could be fitted into the same reverse order of phase succession.

To spell out the above suggestion briefly, let us look at the four stages of development and then the four stages of therapy to show how, in a sense, they do reverse the order of normal task-oriented group process. In development, the four stages we recognize are these: (1) maternal care is focused on the gratification of organic needs; the mother is permissive with respect to all organic tensions; (2) there is the establishment of an active love-attachment between mother and child; (3) there is a stage when disciplines become more prominent—the child is denied reciprocity for both dependency and aggressive impulses, and his positive achievements are selectively rewarded; (4) finally the child achieves emancipation from primary integration in his family of orientation, becoming primarily sensitive to rewards and punishments outside leading up to the establishment of his own family of procreation, and, if male, of his occupational role. In therapy we have roughly the same sequence of stages: (1) there is a stage of permissiveness to relieve the patient's fear; (2) there is a stage of transference during which in response to the therapist's supportive attitudes an attachment of patient to therapist is built up; (3) the therapist, by "interpretations" begins to manipulate rewards making them conditional upon the patient's adaptive responses to therapy; (4) the patient is weaned away from therapy and sent back to face the adaptive exigencies of the world.

In normal task-oriented groups, on the other hand, an almost exact reversal of this order has been observed by Bales: (1) at the outset the group is concerned with the adaptive exigencies surrounding its problem, the search is for information as to the nature of the problem and the nature of the environment; (2) next there is a stage

[9] These considerations are discussed in *Working Papers*, Ch. V, sec. vii.

when instrumental action is undertaken conditioned on the best guess as to what overt actions will lead to reward; (3) after the group's concrete problem has been solved, there is a stage when the solidarities disrupted by concrete action are resolidified; (4) after disintegrative tendencies have been relieved in such a fashion, the group structure becomes latent and there is an interval of permissiveness to relieve other motives that have been held in check.

It is, of course, a commonplace that socialization is a complex of processes of learning. We are applying this knowledge with the addition of two very important considerations which serve to organize and codify, for our purposes, the immense body of available knowledge of learning processes. We treat learning as a response to changing features of the situation in which the child is placed, most strictly, changes in the child-social situation system as a system, which include biological maturation but also other factors, above all the responses of other people to that maturation. Within this framework we think of that process as involving shifting balances between a plurality of factors, and secondly as involving certain elements of discontinuity, so that it is not a linear process, but one which goes through a kind of a spiral of phase-cycles.

On the level closest to the kind of social interaction involved in therapy, we think of the four aspects, previously analyzed, of permissiveness, support, denial of reciprocity, and manipulation of rewards, as all involved at any time, but as having relative predominance in that order for each main phase cycle. This may be illustrated by one main cycle, that involving the surmounting of the oedipal crisis. The relatively stable starting point, we may say, is the child's love-attachment to the mother. In the security of this attachment he is, even after the "pressure" begins, given a certain permissiveness, this time for expression of his dependency needs in this relation. He is further supported by the steadiness and relative unconditionality of the mother's love for him. However, in gratifying his needs for dependency and security he is emboldened to attempt unacceptable overtures to mother and father, many of which, above all those involving aggression and various aspects of dependency, are rebuffed. Certain performances, however, which are judged to be in accord with the requisite levels of maturity, are rewarded, above all with attitudes of approval, and tend to be learned while the unacceptable impulses tend either to be extinguished or to be repressed.

We cannot take space to spell out these processes in full, even

so far as this now seems possible. Suffice it to say that knowledge of classical and instrumental conditioning processes, and conditions of cognitive learning such as discrimination and generalization can be effectively built into such an analysis and help to build the bridges between the various stages. In other words, a great deal of the learning theory which has developed in connection with experimental animal psychology has proved usable in this connection.

Secondly a great deal of psychoanalytic theory has also been found to fit in. The stages of psychosexual development have already been mentioned. But equally gratifying is the use which can be made of the psychoanalytic mechanisms, including those of learning and of defense and adjustment. The most important to mention here is that of identification. Freud's original usage has already been mentioned as associated with the "mother-child identity." But further it has been used in relation to what we call the process of internalization of social objects, by which the superego, for instance, is formed.

This brings us to the third set of considerations mentioned above, those concerned with the structure of personality. The most important thing here is a fundamental theoretical guiding idea or insight—rather than a specific hypothesis—which can be regarded as an inference from the view of the interpenetration of personalities and social systems as systems which was stated above. This is that the patterns of organization of personality as a system, as distinguished from the more elementary components of process, motivation, cognition, etc., which go into the organization, are derived from the structure of the successive systems of social interaction into which the individual in question has become integrated—more or less completely, of course. This means that the structure of the personality is a kind of "mirror-image" of the structure of the social object-system. It consists, we may say, of internalized social objects, in the sense that it is a patterned system of the meaning of these objects to the actor.

We should be very careful in the interpretation of these statements. They clearly do not mean that a personality as a system is simply a reflection of the social situation at the time. This would be a negation of the postulate of the independence of the personality system. Or, put a little differently, it would negate the cultural character of the organization of systems of action in the sense in which this involves the transcending of the specific particularity of current situations. The original specific social objects are the "points

of reference" or "foci of crystallization" of personality structure. They are generalized from, and past objects are superseded by later ones, e.g., by "substitution." There is hence both generalization involving in a certain sense abstraction and a temporal depth aspect of the structure of the personality. But these considerations do not negate the original propositions, but rather reinforce them, since they are in accord with equally fundamental elements of the general theory of action.

It is this set of propositions which enables us to link the structure of the personality specifically and technically with that of social systems. Put in psychologically relevant terms the main point is that the basis of the link is that the "stimulus-conditions," which have been strategically crucial to the development of personality as a system, are organized as a structure of socially interactive relationships, varying over time, so that learning processes are shaped to conformity with the conditions imposed by the total set of interactive participations of the individual. His lack of fit in one may be balanced by better fit in another of the subsystems. But the basic fact is the dependence of human personality on the experience of social interaction.

There is one further aspect of the patterning of the socialization process which has become progressively clarified in the course of this work. The development of personality should, we feel, in its major structural outline, be treated as a process of the differentiation of an initially simple system into a more complex one. We have been able to advance the idea that the principle by which this differentiation takes place is that of "binary fission" of objects and hence motives in a series of 1–2–4–8–16 etc. What has been called the "mother-child identity" is the starting point of the series, which progresses through the "love-dependency," the "full-family" stage, etc.

To render this more concrete (while not being accurate in all details), we may say that the first world of the child which has no sharply defined regions (the mother-child identity) gradually separates into two regions, one where the parent is present and the other where the parent is absent. The former becomes gradually focused as the child's concept or idea of the parent, the latter becomes the child's idea of the self. Then, cross-cutting this division, a new bifurcation develops between expressive and instrumental regions (of both parent and self). This instrumental-expressive distinction forms

the basis, we believe, for later sex categorization: thus the idea of the parent separates into the idea of the mother and the idea of the father; and the idea of the self separates into boy-child and girl-child. Later a further distinction transcending all of these is introduced, dividing each of the four paradigmatic objects (mother, father, brother, sister) again into a particularistic (co-family) and a universalistic (outside-the-family) pair of subtypes. Still further differentiations of course occur but these will suffice for illustration of the principle we have in mind.

This is not the place even to attempt to explain the raison-d'être of such a scheme. Suffice it to say that when the sixteen "cell" or part level is reached, it is possible in terms of structural categories to match the differentiation of "need-dispositions" of the personality with the basic role-structure of a complete society, not merely a specially simple interaction system. This includes the reference system of occupational roles to which attention was given above. We feel, therefore, that the basic theoretical problem of closing the gap, on a sociological level of the analysis of structure, between family as a special subsystem of the society, and occupational system, as another, much more highly differentiated subsystem, has been solved, and that this has been done in such a way as to integrate the sociological analysis very directly with that of the development of personality on a psychological level.

III

In the light of the above discussion I would now like to review very briefly some aspects of four main movements of psychological theory[10] which play an important part in current sociological thought and its background. The four are: the early social psychology associated with the name of McDougall; the "behaviorist" movement, especially in relation to "learning theory"; the Gestalt psychology and the variant of it represented by Kurt Lewin; and finally the psychoanalytic movement. These four trends are not by any means representative of all psychology but they will serve to illustrate the central problems of this analysis of the relations of psychology to sociological theory.

[10] I am grateful to Dr. James Olds for helping me, in discussion, to clarify my understanding of the conceptual structure of several of these psychological theories.

McDougall's instinct theory serves as a convenient starting point because it played a prominent part in the general intellectual situation in the sciences of action in this country a generation ago out of which the problems of this paper have grown. It is perhaps fair to say that it constituted one of the most serious attempts up to that time to formulate a general theory of social behavior.

In the first place it may be said to have been fully aware of the limitations of the rationalistic ideas which had stemmed most directly from the utilitarian tradition and from the dominance in the social sciences of economic theory. McDougall did not of course deny that rational action occurred, but correctly saw that it must be understood in terms of a matrix of non-rational factors. The key concepts of his analysis of the non-rational elements are sentiment and instinct.

McDougall's analysis of the sentiments is the part of his theory which is closest to modern sociological needs. Because of the ways in which components from various instincts are shown to be organized about interests in different objects, this analysis contains many elements of the kind of psychological analysis which is needed now, and has in fact been neglected by other movements in psychology. At the same time, for understandable reasons, McDougall used the concept of instinct as the main organizing focus of his general theory. Essentially, that is to say, he resorted to biological theory for his major frame of reference. In view of the immense prestige of the biological sciences at the time, and of the relatively unsatisfactory state of the sciences of action, this was understandable.

It is also probable that with more recent developments of biology the subject of instinct is likely to have considerable more attention paid to it again than in the recent past. Nevertheless McDougall's emphasis was unfortunate for the general development of psychology since it diverted attention from analysis of the elements of structure in the situation of action by placing the main elements of structure so far as it was relevant to the analysis of social action, in the genetic constitution of the organism. In so doing it ran directly counter to the increasing emphasis on cultural relativity which was beginning to be prominent in anthropology and sociology at just about the time he wrote. This was also very much in line with the failure to see the possibilities of independent analysis of social systems as systems, which was already available in the work of Durkheim and Weber at the time, and also beginning in this country with Mead, Cooley, and

a little later, W. I. Thomas. A persistent note in McDougall's writing is reference to psychology as furnishing the foundations of any scientific study of behavior, meaning that a "theory of human nature" underlay any study of how human beings behaved in interaction with each other and development of this was the principal task of psychology.[11]

There is a good deal of discussion of the differences between animal and human behavior, and hence of course concession to the importance of learned elements in human behavior. But the crucial point is not the estimate of this balance, but the source from which the main points of reference for the analysis of the structure of action as system were drawn. In this respect culture and social system quite clearly occupied the second place. The main road to theoretical advance was laid out as that of better knowledge of constitutional factors, and thus the road which has since proved to be the main one of interest to social science was not only not followed up, but clearly given the secondary position. From McDougall's point of view, of course, sociology, where it became relevant at all, would be conceived essentially as social psychology since an autonomous theory of social systems had no place in his scheme.

The behaviorist reaction against instinct theory of this type represented both an advance and a retrogression. It was an advance in the sense that it cleared away positive theoretical views which were in conflict with the needs of integration with sociology and anthropology, and also in that it produced an enormous volume of careful study of elementary processes of behavior. But it was a retrogression in that interest in the problems of the organization of behavior in systems almost dropped out of the picture for a generation. This "elementarism," amounting to the positive dogma that the conditioned reflex or the stimulus-response sequence, was an atom so fundamental that only knowledge of it as such could get us ahead in any field of action, seems to be the focus of emphasis in the move-

[11] McDougall did attempt to face these problems, particularly in *The Group Mind* (1920). Much of this book is surprisingly modern and relevant. It is clear however (1) that he identified "mind" as the subject-matter of psychology with what here we have called "action." (2) Lacking any concept sufficiently close to that of role, he had great difficulties with both the relations of "society" and its subsystems and social systems and personalities. In other words he saw, but did not solve, the crucial problem of the relevance of those aspects of the *structure of the situation* which in social system terms are crucial to the link between the theories of personality and of social system with which this paper is so very largely concerned.

ment. Thorough knowledge of the element was to precede any knowledge of integrated process.

The playing down of the genetically given elements in the structure of behavior, which undoubtedly went too far, had the virtue of focusing attention on the processes of learning, and in proportion to attribution of importance to it, on the possibilities of variability of behavior. This brought psychology distinctly closer to the developing social sciences. Furthermore, as noted above, the elementarism of the new behaviorism happened to coincide with a movement in anthropology, the replacement of the older evolutionary theories (which had affiliations with instinct theory through biology), by a radical "trait atomism" which regarded a culture as a chance collection of randomly assorted traits, the coexistence of which was explicable only in terms of historical accident.

I have emphasized above that the theory of action has proved to be applicable, in both personality and social system aspects, over an indefinite microscopic-macroscopic range. What the behavioristic movement did was to reify a particular sector in this range, that of the S-R unit, and maintain quite illegitimately that only the phenomena as studied on this level had fundamental significance for the theory of action. Logically this is strictly equivalent to saying in mechanics that only processes of terrestrial falling bodies were fundamental, that celestial mechanics was only a "field of application" of the "real" theory of mechanics, which was a theory of the behavior of bodies within a certain range of mass and velocity, over certain specific time spans. This of course is sheer nonsense, the data of personality organization and of social system process are just as authentically fundamental as any other data of human action, and theory relative to them is just as much "basic science" theory as that of elementary animal learning.[12]

This view of the microscopic-macroscopic range of applicability of the theory of action as a conceptual scheme implies that whatever is isolated for study as a system should in principle be regarded as part of—thus a subsystem of—a larger system. This in turn means

[12] If anything, psychologists of the elementarist learning theory persuasion have tended to ignore rather than tackle these issues. Though perhaps considered now out of date, the book of F. H. Allport, *Institutional Behavior*, is a good example of the logic of the position which has been implicit throughout. According to Allport, the sociologist who deals with systems of social interaction as independent systems, is guilty of the "institutional fallacy," which only confining theorizing to behavior-element levels can remedy.

that only in a limiting case can the environment or situation of the processes which occur in the isolated system be treated as random relative to the structure and processes of the system of reference. The elementaristic dogma systematically cuts the psychologist off from recognition of this problem. This is, in my opinion, a serious matter for the theory of animal behavior, but on the human cultural level it is no less than fatal. For the organization of behavior comes to be structured, so far as action is cultural and learned, in terms of the meanings of situational objects. But in turn such meanings cannot be simply a random collection of units unrelated to each other; they must be conceived as constituting to some degree a coherent system of meanings. The element of system in meanings comes, however, from the organization of the stimulus situation which, on the socio-cultural levels is a social organization. Only then, by treating the stimulus situation as organized in social system and cultural terms can an adequate theory of the more complex levels of organization of behavior be built up.

The same problem arises on another level, namely, with reference to time. The classical behavioristic experiments produce a well-recognized "drive," e.g., by starving the animal for a considerable period, and then study the behavior under experimentally controlled conditions, leading to the "reduction" of the drive. Even in this case, S-R behaviorism is prone to treat the drive as either another internal stimulus element pushing the animal on to behaviors, or as an activator of responses lowering thresholds generally, but not selecting responses with any present concern for their consequences. Completely ignored by S-R reinforcement psychologists is the function of drives involved in changing the phase or the cathectic significance of internalized objects which are integrated by former learning into some sort of a temporally ordered system (the associated chain).[13] Thus, these psychologists ignore the basic internal organization of the food cycle itself. Even more important from the present point of view the cycle of food-getting activity *in relation* to other motiva-

[13] There seems to be an important parallelism between S-R reinforcement theory's neglect of the "up front" motivation, and the neglect of the principle of "inertia" prior to classical mechanics. Both oversights forced theorists to account for activity entirely in terms of the "push" from behind. As soon as we get an internalized object motivating from up front as a part of the personality system itself, we have something of an "inertia," a natural direction in action, and cues only determine the path to be taken, not the general direction of action. On the possibility of using a parallel concept of inertia for the analysis of action cf. Parsons, *Social System*, Ch. IV, and Parsons, Bales, and Shils, *Working Papers*, Chaps. III and V.

tional systems is not studied.[14] A central part of this problem is what is going on in the periods between the reduction of the drive and its reactivation. In the case of genetically given "primary" drives this may be referred to the physiological processes of the organism; but what of the case of "learned" drives, e.g., to complete writing a scientific paper? It is seldom that the task is completed at one sitting. Under what circumstances do other motives intervene, and what is the nature of processes occurring during the "latency" of this particular drive?

In this whole context, it seems to me, another aspect of the structuring of the situation of action is crucial, namely its structuring over time in phases. On the socio-cultural levels this means the relation of any given actor's action to the temporal order of the activities of other actors; it is the *expectation* aspect of social interaction. The problem of the behavior of one individual or one organism can here be treated in one of two ways. One is that he may be conceived as adapting to a situation which is treated as given, but this situation is an organized or structured one in which not only are the objects related to each other but their behavior undergoes more or less orderly processes of change over time, and gearing into this development of the situation over time is an essential aspect of the organization of his behavior. The second way to deal with it is to take two or more individuals in interaction over time. In this latter case one at least of the relevant systems of action becomes a social system. But if we once grant that the situation of behavior is structured over time, and that organisms are mutually sensitive to each other's behavior, then the analysis of behavior cannot dispense with the concept of the social system. In the light of these considerations the effect of elementarism is, by what is really no more than a logical trick, to make it seem plausible that the "fundamentals" of behavior can be worked out with reference to the behavior of the individual organism alone. Then, it is alleged it is possible to introduce the additional conditions given by the possible presence of other organisms, and thereby deduce what will happen in the more complex systems. The fallacy of this procedure should be clear. If what is purported to exist is not simply a theory of artificially isolated S-R sequences, but of the organization of behavior systems and their functioning as systems, then the reasoning is circular. Unless, as in instinct theory with

[14] Attempts by reinforcement theorists to cope with the Tolman latent learning problem have been concerned with the interrelations of drives, but in *ad hoc* fashion.

which the behaviorists will have nothing to do, organization is put into the genes, *it must be found in the structure of the situation*, both at a given cross-sectional moment and over time. But this structure is an aspect of the system of interaction in which the individual has participated in the course of his learning experience. It is clearly not legitimate to explain this system in terms of itself. In general we may say that behaviorist social psychology has never transcended this dilemma. On the psychological level, to do so requires fulfillment of two conditions. The first is the development of a coherent theory of the behavior of an organism as a system, not merely of the elementary S-R unit of behavior. The second is the explicit theoretical categorization of the structure of the "stimulus-situation" as independent of the "mechanisms" of the learning process. But on socio-cultural levels, this categorization is an aspect of the theory of the social system. The behaviorist attempt to derive the theory of social systems from the elementary theory of behavior rests on nothing more than concealed circularity of reasoning.

Several developments following the advent of Gestalt psychology point at different fruitful beginnings of study of psychological systems; but there is in each of these developments a tendency to press the emphasis on particular dimensions of systematization while never quite reaching the point of systematic integration of the various different dimensions. The foci of systematization which we find within the work of the Gestalt and related schools are these: the perceptual object, the perceptual field, the memory trace, the sign-gestalt.

The perceptual object is the original system-concept of the Gestalt school; their position in a nutshell is that the perceptual object (which is elicited and maintained by many particular stimulus energies playing upon peripheral receptors) is no mere aggregate of stimuli; instead it is a system, a reconstructed inner object resulting from the systematic interactions of the various inputs. Two points may be mentioned in passing: (1) Our first impression from reading Gestalt psychology is that the perceptual object is an ephemeral thing that comes and goes depending on its stimulus supports in the environment; thus, although it may be a momentary system, it does not seem to be a relatively permanent internal system outlasting the exigencies of the environment (I will speak of Koffka's memory trace in a moment). (2) No learning seems to be involved: the perceptual object seems determined almost entirely by two factors: (i) the hereditary structure of the receptors and the brain field, (ii) the stimulus

inputs which maintain the object at the moment; thus it is not a learned perceptual object, nor an "internalized" perceptual object. When particular stimulus energies are effective through particular receptors on a particular type of brain field, this is the type of organization that results.

We turn next to the perceptual field. This concept is best known from the works of Lewin. It represents, to the casual observer, a first order expansion of the perceptual object of the original Gestaltists; it treats the whole moment of experience as a single system.[15] In one sense, the perceptual field is a time-slice of experience treated as a system; it seems not to have a temporal dimension. In another sense, this cannot be entirely true, for the dynamics of the Lewin field must certainly take place in time. But these dynamics are all very short-run dynamics. They all seem to occur within a given psychological field; unless the person leaves the field. What Lewin does is to move from the object systems of classical Gestalt theory up one system level to a more inclusive system which includes perceptual objects as subsystems. There is no doubt that Lewin was moving toward the type of psychology we would like but there are certain limitations to his analyses. One senses a certain discontinuity of his perceptual fields as we move from one moment of experience to the next. When one "leaves the field" it is not quite clear what happens to the field. We would say that the subject cannot genuinely leave the field, for the field is inside of experience, not outside in the environment. So one does not really leave the field; instead, in our terms, the field goes into a latent phase. But Lewin does not conceive a particular field as organized into a temporal system of successive phases, and thus he ignores not the temporal dimension but rather the organization of experience along the temporal dimension. This, I would guess, derives from his failure to recognize clearly the distinction between structure and process. The field is a process, and the only structure taken into account is the momentary structure of that process. On a metaphysical plane, this may be a fine position; but for a detailed analysis of the personality as a system, one must take seriously the distinction between a structure which lasts, and different kinds of process that occur within the structure. From a superficial reading of Lewin, this distinction seems to be overlooked. We would suggest that a par-

[15] Lewin's life space is not just perceptual or a matter of experience. The fact that it is an inferential construct distinguishes him methodologically from the phenomenologists.

ticular field can, and regularly does, pass through several phases: it can be merely a latent structure, or at another time it may be the seat of a thought process, or at still another time, the seat of a perceptual process, and so forth.

Koffka in his discussion of memory traces begins to take seriously this problem of the distinction between structure and process. Taking his point of departure directly from the perceptual object of the original Gestalt movement, Koffka suggests that each momentary perceptual object leaves some relatively lasting structural trace. A new process (a new momentary perceptual object) can later recur in this old trace. With the trace, Koffka would like to overcome both the ephemeral character of the perceptual object, and the insensitivity of early Gestalt theory to problems of learning. The trouble here seems to be that Koffka fails to realize what a lively and active thing a "trace" can be, particularly when it is what we would call an "internalized social object." We tend to imagine Koffka's trace as the residuum of a stimulus input, but it seems difficult to fit into this category the rewarding and punishing internal surrogate for an absent rewarding and punishing human being. What is missing, I do not quite know; certainly Koffka's trace is dynamic in a certain sense of that term. Changes occur during its "latent phase." But what are these changes? Chiefly progress toward stability, symmetry, praegnance. But also it is affected by other processes, and these may cause different changes. But the changes are all the type of thing that would occur to an oil spot on water. In the absence of constraint, it takes on ever better symmetry. Given constraints, it forms the best form it can in spite of them. But it does not "fight back." It does not have internal sources of motive force, distributed differentially among its parts. Somehow, psychology has to find a way for getting motivation not only into the personality of the actor being analyzed, but also of getting different and autonomous motives into the internalized objects of that actor. The child has a concept of mother. This concept persists over time. It can be latent, or conceived, or perceived. But in any of these states, it is a concept of a loving, punishing, rewarding, wanting, mother. The internalized mother is not at the mercy of the rest of ego's wants. Rather, the internalized mother can fight back, even though the real mother is not present (even though the internalized mother is in a state of thought or latency rather than perception). The dynamics of Koffka's traces are not sufficiently dynamic for us; they are pretty sleepy dynamics. But

certainly the memory trace is another step in the right direction, for it represents an attempt to give persistence over time to the psychological subsystems which we have called the "internalized objects."

On the other hand, both Koffka and Lewin have ignored a very important basis of systematization. This is the antecedent-successor relation. It may obtain between internalized stimuli, or internalized objects, or internalized fields. It is crucial with respect to the organization of objects or stimuli into motivational subsystems.

Both classical Gestalt and Lewin theory tend to emphasize what might be called spatial or perceptual relations, and also relations of similarity: chiefly the type of relations that can be described by topology or by drawings on a sheet of paper. Barriers stand between the self and an object. Two objects may have a relation of proximity, and they may form a good or bad Gestalt. Similar stimuli may be grouped to form a single Gestalt, and so forth. But the most important organizations of stimuli for the pursuit of goals, for the instrumental use of means objects, are organizations based on the antecedent-successor relation between stimuli or objects. Internal objects are organized into cause-effect chains along precisely this antecedent successor dimension; and this dimension finds no genuine acceptance in either classical or Lewin Gestalt theory. But certainly the memory trace is another step in the right direction, for it gives persistence over time to the object-system.

Tolman, however, with his sign-gestalts makes this relation the dominant principle of organization. Thus, Tolman provides the basis for the integration of stimuli into a different and cross-cutting type of subsystem. Classical Gestalt provides for the integration of stimuli which appear together into some sort of object system. Lewin provides the basis for the integration of objects into higher order field-systems. Tolman, however, provides for a different dimension of organization. Stimuli, or objects or fields may, by Tolman's theory be integrated into sign-significance systems. We may think of them as cause-effect systems; or means-end systems. A means-end system is a structural organization of internalized objects or stimuli or fields into what Tolman calls sign-gestalts, or sign-significates. One internalized object is the sign of the relation; another is the significate of the relation. The two are related by what Tolman calls a direction-distance. We may think of the one internalized object as the cause, the other as the effect, and the direction-distance is the operation which must be performed on the cause to produce the effect. Or we

may say the one is the means, the other the end, and the direction-distance is that which you have to do with the means to get the end. It is important to note that this type of sequential organization transcends the organization of stimuli into objects or fields; for a given sequential organization (a given sign-gestalt) may bind together some one aspect of a given object with some other aspect of the same object, or it may bind together one object with another object, or one field with another field, or it may relate one aspect of one object with one aspect of a different object. In a sense, then, this sequential organization which Tolman takes account of, is a different mode of organizing into systems the same elements which by different principles or dimensions of organization are organized into different kinds of systems, e.g., objects or fields.

From the present point of view, Tolman thus makes a distinct advance beyond the position of the more "orthodox" behaviorist school centering on the name of Hull. Essentially, as I see it, this consists in treating a given action or behavior sequence as a system which is organized over time. This is what is meant by, or at last implied in the purposive character of behavior. It means essentially that each minimal time-sector of the process is no longer treated as immediately and directly dependent on a process, externally (stimulus) or internally (drive) operating from "outside" the action system "pushing" it through a series of changes of state, but provision is made for an internal boundary-maintaining integration of the system so that energy invested in the goal may "flow back" through a feed-back process to the instrumental acts necessary to attain the goal.

In summary of these various systematic advances made after Gestalt psychology, we may say the following. First, the original Gestalt contention that the object of perception is no mere mosaic of its component stimuli but is rather a systematic integration of them was a decisive first step in the direction we would like to see. Second, the analysis of the psychological field as a super-ordinate system including objects as subsystems was an important step in the direction of understanding what is here called the macroscopic-microscopic dimension; it is an explicit recognition that action phenomena are always made up of systems within systems. Third, Koffka's production of the memory trace was an explicit attempt to resolve the problem of getting a relatively lasting internalized object; and this, we believe, is absolutely essential to progress. Finally, Tolman's sign-gestalt brought the antecedent-successor relation between internalized objects explicitly into the study of psychological systems as a means for organizing internalized objects or stimuli along a motivation-gratification dimension.

Last, but not least, I should like to discuss a few considerations about psychoanalytic theory. Here for the first time in modern psychology, I think it is fair to say, there has appeared at least an approach to a theory of the human personality as a system, in both its cross-sectional and its temporal aspects of extension, with both cognitive and motivational emphases and couched in terms of the action frame of reference.

The last assertion may seem questionable to many readers. Doubts about it may stem from two main sources. In the first place Freud himself never fully resolved the question of the relations of his conceptual scheme to biological theory. In line with the intellectual climate of his day, particularly in the medical world, he held the view that psychology would ultimately prove reducible to biological or even biochemical terms. But the most important single fact about Freud, perhaps, was his refusal to attempt to solve psychological problems by extrapolating the biological knowledge of his time; his insistence on the direct clinical study of the human personality. In so doing he evolved a conception of "instinct" (really a mistranslation of the German word *Trieb*) which was altogether different from that of McDougall.

The second reason for the difficulty lies in the circumstances of the reception of Freud into the English-speaking world. This came, on a large scale, just as the behaviorist reaction against the McDougall type of instinct theory was setting in, and Freud was very generally identified with this "old-fashioned" type of theory.[16] There was just enough plausibility in this interpretation to help prevent any serious examination of it. It was further reinforced in behaviorist circles by their dogmatic refusal to consider the treatment of "subjective" data as scientifically admissible, and of course by the elementaristic bias which has been discussed above.

Freud's empirical concern with phenomena of psychopathology seems for two reasons to have had an important influence in direct-

[16] This was the interpretation of Freud which I—first encountering him in the early twenties—took for granted for a long time, and did not succeed in overcoming for more than a decade after my own sociological thinking had become much farther developed.

ing him "on the track," from the present point of view. First was the fact that clinical responsibility forced concern with the personality as a whole in a sense in which, for instance, neither the experimental psychologist in animal behavior, or in perception, nor the specialist in "testing" would have such an interest. Secondly he came immediately to a conception of intrapersonal conflict which forced his attention to problems of the organization of personality, precisely the field of problems most systematically avoided by the behaviorists.

Again, particularly to behaviorists, one of Freud's most controversial concepts was that of the unconscious. Quite apart from question of its relation to the older "introspective" psychology, which seems relatively remote today, the great importance of this conception lay in its relevance to the idea of system, in that it explicitly allowed for an "iceberg" view of the personality, including the ideas both that some parts are relatively dissociated from the more visible ones, and that there are phases in the development of motivational processes, and hence a possibility of "latency" without dissolution of the motivational unit. Without some such conception it would have been impossible for Freud to develop a theory of the growth of personality as a system.

With regard to "instinct" in the Freudian sense, the important point is its extreme non-specificity. Here again we have been led astray by our tendency to interpret Freud in terms of our own psychological common sense, and partly by his own unclarity. But the association with "sex" as we have tended to understand it has been an endless source of difficulty. The fact that Freud ended up with a duality of instinctual forces is far less important—although it involves serious difficulties—than the fact that he directly and definitely abandoned the attempt to derive the main foci of the structure of personality from specific instinctive, i.e., biologically hereditary foci.

It is here, perhaps, that the most important contribution of psychoanalytic theory from the present point of view is to be found. For, dominated mainly by the genetic point of view, Freud set out to construct a positive theory of the role of object-relations in the organization of personality as a system. This was an enormous step with the implications of which most of academic psychology has not yet caught up.

Freud saw very clearly the enormous importance of early experience in the family for the personality development of the child, and

has given us classic formulations of various aspects of the child's relations to the parents. He also, with the concept of the superego, gained the fundamental insight that value-patterns of the culture come to be internalized in the personality, and that this occurs through relations to social objects, first in the family. This, by striking contrast with all the other movements reviewed, was a psychology which connected directly with the main theoretical interests of sociology (the phenomenon of internalization had also been understood a little earlier and independently by the sociologist Durkheim).

This of course is by no means to say that the integration of psychoanalytic theory and sociological theory does not present difficulties, some of them very formidable.[17] The sociology available in Freud's time was itself only a beginning and for understandable reasons he was not in touch with most of what there was. He never adequately analyzed the object system, of the child or the adult, as a system which, we have seen, is tantamount to saying that it is a social system. For his theory of development he did not have a technical analysis of the family as a system, or of its articulation with other subsystems of the society. He furthermore did not have an adequate conception of the balance between constant elements in all kinship systems and those aspects which are variant from one system to another.

On the level of the still more macroscopic analysis of social systems, as in his studies of group psychology, of religion, and the like, Freud, and many of his followers, have tended to develop a kind of "projective" sociology in which the psychoanalytic theory of personality is made to serve double duty as both a personality theory and a social system theory. But with better sociological theory available, with great accumulation of empirical knowledge, and with competence *on both sides* in a few of the same people, these difficulties are proving soluble. The difficulties which remain are secondary as compared with the fundamental significance for sociology of the reorientation which psychoanalytic theory has given to psychology. In its essential features this reorientation is not completely confined to psychoanalysis, or even movements strongly influenced by it, but its influence in this direction is so much the most prominent, that it has seemed fair to concentrate on it for present purposes.

[17] The "psychological" movements laying greatest stress on social interaction as such are of course those associated with the names of Harry Stack Sullivan and J. L. Moreno. We cannot take space to go into them here.

IV

Only a few brief words need to be said in conclusion. This paper has concentrated on a few aspects of the larger picture of the relations of sociological and psychological theory, particularly those directly relevant to the systematic character of the two conceptual schemes in relation to each other. This concentration of interest has introduced a certain selectivity of emphasis, in the sense that it fails to do justice to the possibilities of collaboration between psychology and sociology where the type of theory on one side or both fails to meet the specifications which have been laid down here. I have in no way meant to imply that nothing from the work of instinct theorists, of behaviorists, or of Gestaltists, is of any use to sociologists. On the contrary, much of it has proved to be extremely useful. Nor does it imply that everything in psychoanalytic theory is sound and useful to the sociologist. But this fact does not dispose of the problem on the systematic levels on which they have been considered in this paper.

Perhaps the most crucial problem is that of the macroscopic-microscopic range and its implications. Our contention here is that the subject matter of the sciences of action is human behavior (with some interest in the subhuman of course), and that empirically this is subject to study on *any* level on which it is found. Possible cyclical patterns in the history of great civilizations each lasting for centuries are, subject to the availability of empirical evidence and of techniques of getting and validating it, just as legitimate objects of scientific study of behavior as are the cycles of wakefulness and sleep of a single individual, or the maze behavior of a rat.

Beyond this, we have now accumulated ample evidence for the view that the same basic conceptual scheme is applicable through an indefinite range in this respect. Of course many different "adjustments" have to be made in the use of theory at different levels, but these are of the same order as those used in physical science; they involve different empirical operations, and different formulations, but not a fundamentally different theoretical framework. There is, to be sure, one fundamental "break" which occurs in the "asymmetry" between social system and personality, but it has been a crucial thesis of this paper that this does not involve a fundamentally different frame of reference or set of categories, though many of the generalizations about systems will of course be different.

It follows further, that no one "level" in this range, including the "shift" between social interaction and personality system, has any claim to ontological priority. The "theory of behavior" in the Hullian sense has no priority, except that claimed on grounds of better study and greater precision, over the "theory of history" in a sense of analysis of social processes taking thousands of years. Data from both are equally valid as contributing to a general theory of action.

This is the focus of the crucial problem for the relations of sociology and psychology. As we have learned from Whitehead (the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness") and from Morris Cohen (the fallacy of "reification") this tendency to illegitimate reification is an endemic "disease" of our Western intellectual culture. The movements in psychology just reviewed have tended to be guilty of this on three different levels: (1) reifying the organism, which by virtue of its genetic constitution is alleged to provide the "real" basis for the structure of behavior systems; (2) reifying the "real unit of behavior" which may be either the S-R sequence of the behaviorists, or say the momentary perceptual "gestalt." This then is regarded as the one key to the understanding of all behavior or; finally, (3) reifying the individual, the personality in a more or less clearly defined "action" sense. On knowledge of him, independently of his social relationships, current or previous, is alleged to depend any genuine understanding of how individuals, when put together in societies, will behave.

I submit that *any one* of these reifications or *any combination* of them constitutes a barrier to the progress of social science. All of them—and the corresponding reification of "society"—are barriers to the recognition of the *relativity* of perspective on systems which, in the physical sciences as in our own field, has proved to be the most important principle of theoretical advance in science. It is only when sociological and psychological theory—and the various system-reference levels within each—have come to regard themselves and each other as the formulators of very important *special cases* relative to a more general theory, that a higher level of theoretical maturity in our fields will have been reached. The contention that any one of these fields or "levels" provides the "foundations" on which all the others *must* build or be consigned to the hell of perpetual scientific impotence, is only a symptom of the growing pains of a very young family of scientific disciplines.