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Paul Parin

## **Is Psychoanalysis a Social Science?**

With discussion by Robert A. LeVine and Lawrence Friedman

From its very beginnings, psychoanalytic theory has been applied to the phenomena of human society and cultural life. One of its basic discoveries, the Oedipus complex, used Sophocles' drama as an allegory to be subjected to psychological interpretation as work of art and myth at the same time. With the exploration of the unconscious, the relation of the examined object to "other individuals" appeared in a specific way: "In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well" (Freud, 1921, p. 69). The application of psychoanalysis to all areas of society proved so fruitful that Freud (1933) could write: "Strictly speaking there are only two sciences: psychology, pure and applied, and natural science" (p. 179).

The answers found by applied psychoanalysis are psychological explanations. This is more than a result of its method; the underlying assumption is that all social behavior derives from the conscious and unconscious mental life of the human beings who form society. Thus, the study of society is an applied psychology.

Of course, we do not deny that psychology is applicable to the study of social groups or that every past, present, and future society is made up of

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individuals. But we shall try to show that psychoanalysis is not merely applicable to the study of society but is a social science in its own right .

In this paper we take social science to be not the purely functional systems of modern sociology that have partly absorbed psychological explanations for social behavior but those theories that form part of a general anthropology and contribute to a diachronic theory of the evolution of mankind. Our model like that of LeVine (1973),”differs from the functionalist framework in putting less emphasis on the need to maintain equilibrium and more on the variety of stable and

unstable adaptations that exist at one point in time.” (p. 138). In our view society, as studied by social science, is not the sum total of individuals but the expression of the sum total of the relations and correlations of these individuals with each other (Marx, 1857-1858). These “relations and correlations” cannot be submitted to psychoanalytic investigation. As LeVine (1973) puts it: “Individuals, and only individuals, can be psychoanalyzed. Customs, institutions and organizations cannot be, and any attempt to do so involves dispensing with those elements in the clinical method that give psychoanalytic assessments their validity” (p. 209).

According to our model, therefore, psychoanalysis no longer leads to causal explanations of social conditions. Emphatically, it remains a psychology. However, it makes for a broader understanding of those “relations and correlations” that cannot be explained by the action of psychical energies but are caused by other forces studied by history, anthropology, etc. In comparison with Freud’s (1930) views as expressed in *Civilization and its Discontent*, causality is inverted. The historical process is put in motion by ecological factors, technical innovations, and economic urges.

Psychoanalysis explains how the historical process is shaped under given conditions, why it takes a specific course and way and timing. There can be no doubt that social processes “are influenced” by their carriers. It is the mode of action and the impact of such influence that needs discussion. In every known society a child is specifically socialized after the dissolution of the oedipal conflict. Within the framework of the material potential and the biologic *Anlage*, society has produced lasting psychic structures that exercise effective functions. LeVine speaks of intrapsychic dispositions and a network of dispositions stressing the social function of acquired psychic structures. The members of a people, a tribe, a class, a caste, are never what one might call a blank. The differences among them are so great that some have compared them with the differences among the species in the animal kingdom and have said that mankind is subdivided into numerous pseudospecies (cf. Erikson

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1968, p. 487). On the basis of this, the theory of “natural man” as opposed to society must be abandoned. We cannot give a description of natural man because he does not exist. Or, as the anthropologist Walter Goldschmidt (1966) says: “There is no nature versus nurture, no biology versus culture, there is only the hyphenated man-in-society” (p. 4).

Psychoanalysis, as well as social science, has to do with man's second nature, which is dynamically effective and specifically social, and which may be traced back to psychic development. The theory of history is not invalidated by taking psychoanalysis as a social science. Men make history without knowing it. Psychoanalysis has to accept that this is so; it cannot explain why, and from its results alone one cannot make any forecast as to the future course or set

any guidelines. On the other hand, it can explain how history is translated into social behavior, how men of a society go about making history.

For the last three decades, a renewed confrontation with biology has initiated a shift in psychoanalytical conceptualization and has surprisingly, changed the course of psychoanalysis, leading it away from natural science. The question "inborn or acquired?," as put in clinical examinations, and the second, related, question of how far man's natural *Anlage* and his adjustment to civilization determine his mental life have lost their heuristic value. The "complemental series" (Freud, 1905) of constitutional (or inborn) and accidental factors (acquired in the course of life and by interaction with the environment) is no longer of help in explaining the social activities of men. The observations of infants made by René A. Spitz, the tracing of a child's development, the observation of identical twins in their earliest infancy have brought about new notions. Even in a one-year-old, the respective share of either component is impossible to determine. The *Anlage* as a variable with possibly known limits is integrated into the complemental series; its effect has long acquired a novel quality by the time it is examined. The *Anlage* cannot be determined or assessed even by means of the most profound analysis of an individual, and it cannot serve to explain man's behavior in society or in any group. The more we learn about the effect of the elements discernible from the viewpoint of natural science, the more we understand the relevancy of psychosocial processes and the more clearly we see that man's development as a social being shaped by his environment obeys its own laws.

The development of ego psychology has long proven that the human ego, equipped with instinctual energies, among others, has the function that instinctual behavior performs in animals. Man's instinctual equipment, his genetic inheritance, acquired in phylogenesis, is biologically

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determined. It covers a large vector of adaptability. The psychical apparatus, with the capacity to adapt to reality that develops out of it, must be ascribed to the influence of man's environment, to that of the developmental process studied in analytic therapy, and, lastly, to the influence of socialization. The biological extension of psychoanalytic theory has thus led to better understanding of the autonomy of psychosocial processes and to the realization that there is little to learn about behavior patterns from the theory of instincts.

Ever since Freud (1887-1902) was forced to *recognize* that his patients could not distinguish between fantasy and reality, that "there is no 'indication of reality' in the unconscious" (p. 216), psychoanalysis has understood that "psychical reality requires to be taken into account alongside practical reality" (Freud, 1914, pp. 17-18). To investigate psychical reality is the major interest of

analytical practice, which "is based on a love of truth-that is, on a recognition of reality-and that it precludes any kind of sham or deceit" (Freud, 1937, p. 248). Practical or objective reality, as Freud usually termed it in later years, was meant to play a different role. By adapting to its demands, the individual develops his ego. Objective reality is perceived in a more or less distorted way. Within the process of socialization, however, the individual has to adapt to a social reality that can be perceived in a distorted way, but is not changed in its objective impact. In adaptation the laws governing social forces, as well as those studied by psychology are effective.

Psychoanalytic concepts relate to the process and to the result of adaptation. Whenever these facts have not found due consideration, psychoanalytic theory has focused on "reality testing," not only as an important tool, but as the origin and reason for adaptation. Rapaport (1959), assessing Freud's position in 1915, concludes that reality in psychoanalytic theory designates the external source of stimuli, including the subject's body, but excepting the somatic sources of drives and affects. Had practical reality remained nothing but a "source of stimuli" for psychoanalysis, one could hardly speak of social science.

In 1950 Hartmann wrote: "In contrast to some other schools of psychology, psychoanalysis includes within its scope of interest the structure of reality [especially] the structure of society" (pp. 92-93).

Does it really? We would say that to date this is only rudimentarily so, that Freud's conception of objective reality was basically phenomenological and that Hartmann's ego psychology too, has remained so; at least, his "average expectable stimulations" and the degree of adaptiveness with reference to environmental situations (average expectable - i.e., typical-situations, or on the average not expectable - i.e.,

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a-typical-situations) (Hartmann, 1950) are based on a phenomenological concept. Freud (1927) examined the function of various institutions of civilization, religion in particular. However, his convincing interpretations come to a dead end wherever psychological explanation alone will not do. The "struggle between the individual and society" (Freud, 1930, p. 141) cannot be fully understood as long as "creating a unity out of the individual human beings" (Freud, 1930, p. 140) is viewed as the aim of the process of civilization. It probably is not the *aim*, but one *aspect* of every process of civilization.

By the end of the fifties, analysts became far more aware of the psychological limits of the perception of reality. They have come to understand that "The criteria chiefly used by Freud [for objective reality] are those of science, or more correctly, those that find their clearest expression in science" (Hartmann, 1956, p. 257). Perception of objective reality is not only hampered by

magical thinking. "The child learns his approach to reality in constant relation to the adult's approach to it. It adjusts to a world which is not only to a considerable extent man-made, but also man-thought. As a consequence, two different criteria of reality develop, and in the world of every individual both play a role" (p. 257). Even "The scientific conception of knowledge of reality" is to a great extent "of the socially accepted kind" (p. 258). This knowledge is not only a content of our mind but in many respects serves as the basis for our actions and, just like the capacity to perceive objective reality, is part of the ego's adjustment to its environment. "At any rate," Hartmann states, the psychoanalyst "can, strictly speaking, be an analyst only in so far as he is able, in the thinking and acting which constitute his work, to detach himself from the socialized knowledge of man and to move on the level of what Freud calls reality" (p. 259). We would add: in order to see our way in social reality, we must study, not only society in its historic evolution, but also the forces acting in it, especially the "correlations and relations" that may be part of a general science of man. Actually, in the course of the past fifteen years, numerous papers have appeared that try to confront unmodified psychoanalysis with objective social reality; of course, due consideration must be given to the legitimate autonomy of both.

Ethnopsychanalysis tries to apply psychoanalytic investigation to members of cultures other than the one where psychoanalysis originated. The advantages of this procedure are obvious. The analyst is forced constantly to re-examine and reconsider all social factors from the technical and economic foundations of the society to the patterns of child rearing. In so doing, he is less biased by his attitudes and sentiments than

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when working within his own culture, where he more or less shares with his patient his own experiences with the environment. A twofold result may be expected: psychological knowledge about human beings who have grown up differently, and an extension of psychoanalytic theory.

Our own experience in this field was gained in former French West Africa, where, owing to the existence of primary schools even in areas remote from the centers of Western political and economic influence, the people speak French. The first main research was done with the Dogon, a people of millet planters living in an arid savannah mountain in the Mali Republic. Their extended families follow a patrilinear descent and live in close-knit village communities (Parin et al., 1963). The second investigation was made with the Agni in the fertile rainwoods of the Republic of Ivory Coast. This people, cousins of the famous Ashanti, has a matrilinear kin-organization and developed from a hunter-and-gatherers subsistence to proud guerriers and slave traders who finally became coffee planters (Parin et al., 1971). Basing our work on the study of a rich anthropological literature further elucidated by some sociological investigations, Rorschach test

series, etc., we tried to focus on a psychoanalytic approach. Reconstructions were facilitated by the intensive direct observation of infancy and child-rearing practices. The principal part of our procedure consisted of a series of daily one-hour sessions with normal adult people (more men than women).

In our work with the Dogon and the Agni who volunteered for the psychoanalytically oriented interviews, we proceeded by using psychoanalytic theory, primarily with as little modification as possible, to explain the psychological phenomena observed. Since the beginning of our investigations seventeen years ago, we have modified our technique to adapt it more and more to the usual technique of psychoanalytic exploration and treatment. Thus, we arrived at a "cultural-specific psychoanalytic model." In other words, we had to modify or even extend the analytic theory to fit with the specific development of each social (cultural) group (people, class, etc.). By such broadening of the observational bases, we gained more leeway in modifying analytic theory to accommodate the culture-specific psychoanalytic models we had developed. Obviously, it is essential to assess, as far as possible, all social factors and processes in terms of their underlying nonpsychological forces before examining the relevance of psychological principles for them.

Our procedure for such a re-examination of theory can be outlined by using the example of the Oedipus complex. We must admit, however, that we are not able to contribute very much to finding an answer regarding the universality of the Oedipus complex, since we examined

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thoroughly only three cultures, including European patients in whom general occurrence of the Oedipus complex had not been disputed.

The first modification we had to make was to speak of the oedipal *conflict* (instead of *complex*). For our theory, this more general term implies that we could find neither the same tendency to repression nor the same coherence of its components in the unconscious as with European patients. For boys and girls of all three cultures, we found that, during the unavoidable phallic phase of development of the libido and of the ego, the libidinal wishes center entirely on the person who cared for the child up until then. In this phase, any person or group of persons who lays claim on the "mother" is considered to be an intruder. While the child's wishes are sexual, other than sexual claims on the fostering person may also be felt as an intrusion by the child. This conflict generates strong affects. Even in cases where rivalry with the intruder is seen, the wish to eliminate the intruder and the fear of being castrated or killed by the "father" in retaliation are not always called forth. Fears of mutilation, however, always appear with boys and girls alike, but they are relatively independent of the intruding object. Dogon boys, who are often nursed up to

the phallic phase, frequently fear as a result of this conflict that they will be deserted by their mother. The focusing of aggression in the form of anal-sadistic strivings and the expectancy of retaliation seem to depend on that course of the anal phase which is typical for our environment. However, with the Dogon and the Agni -not only during the oedipal conflict, but even in a later stage -libidinal cathexis and aggression may be directed simultaneously toward the same persons without necessitating repression of one of the two ambivalent strivings. The ambivalence may be strong; yet the ambivalence *tension* remains low. Ultimately, the affects force the child to acquiesce in some way in a triad or, in other words, to abandon the object-related libidinal interests in favor of its narcissistic ones. With this resignation, the forceful development of the instinctual drives during infancy and early childhood is temporarily suspended in the latency phase. Thus, an important and often decisive step toward socialization is accomplished. This step may be made without a determining introjection in the final phase of the oedipal conflict. Since, in both cultures, formation of the superego is not characterized by a major, singular introjective process, development of the superego appears to be far more loosely connected with the oedipal conflict than with us.

In any case, the child's choice of the love object at the beginning of the phallic phase is potentially incestuous. However, the child's environment, usually structured as a family, is the place where collective interests take

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precedence over individual instinctual interest. The society on which the child depends gives its "egotistical" wishes a direction that allows for the physical and emotional survival of the individual *and* of the group. It accepts the oedipal conflict as inevitable and among other regulations contributes rules of exogamy and taboos on incest to its outcome. We do not consider the later emotional impact of these rules to be genuine horror of incest; it is merely a *consequence* of the inevitable psychosocial conflict in the oedipal stage.

The most important point is that the Oedipus conflict takes place between the individual and society and not between the various psychological structures of the individual psyche. Therefore, in the oedipal conflict, narcissistic interests of the child conflict with the social interests (of its environment), the outcome being that the development of the ego and of the superego of necessity leads to a permanent remolding of the psychic structure. In the course of reconstruction in psychoanalytic therapy, it might appear as if the Oedipus complex emerged independently of the social context, because any human environment requires a certain amount of internalized adaptation to reality (ego formation). Only when such internalization is attained should we speak

of the Oedipus complex. Now, only the wishes from the id and the defenses erected against them in the ego are provided with instinctual energy .

To confront persons molded by hitherto unfamiliar social factors with analysis necessitates no change in the principles of metapsychological thought. The closer we have applied psychoanalytic theory, the better we have been able to understand psychological findings with people of those exotic cultures.

For instance, we can confirm that the developmental phases of the libido follow exactly the course established so far. Different practices of child rearing have their greatest influence on the vicissitudes of the drives and on ego-formation, rather than on the maturation of the instinctual drives. Nor is any change in the genetic viewpoint necessary.

Our studies of the Dogon and the Agni point to some typical features of the superego and the ego that shed light on the question of whether psychoanalysis is a social science. Differentiated from the ego, a superego was found in each culture to be the successor to earlier object relations and the carrier of idealized representations. However, it seems to originate out of very diversified phases and developmental steps, and in its functions it appears to be far more dependent on the actual environment than heretofore believed. This form of superego we call "clan conscience." In characterizing the ego of normal persons in these cultures, we speak of "group ego" This is our term for a special molding

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of the ego. The adult ego is largely dependent on the typical psychological makeup of the individuals in the environment and on specific behavior patterns in the social setting that warrant ego autonomy, as Rapaport conceived of this term. What seems to be a close dependence of the individual on figures and institutions within the social network enriches the ego with mechanisms contributing to its proper functioning. These results of the ethnoanalytic confrontation suggest that we should review some psychoanalytical concepts established in our culture in the light of social factors. Above all, we should study the extent to which the impact of macrosocial environment sets limits to the autonomy and to the functioning of even a mature psychic structure, a well-established super ego, and an ego oriented to the reality principle.

In his recent book, LeVine (1973) takes great care to convince the reader that human psychology follows its own laws, that social actions are not exclusively the result of social pressures. He warns against confounding in observable social behavior the sequels "of enduring disposition and response to environmental pressure" (p. 286). In psychoanalytic theory, this central problem found only a moderate elaboration. It was expected that the mature ego oriented to the reality principle would warrant adaptation and would deal with social pressures in a rational way. An



exception was made with war neurosis and similar conditions, which were explained by the pressure of environment (called "traumatic situation") upon acquired psychic structure.

However, in analytic therapy the immediate perception of objective reality to be attained by the patient through establishment of the reality principle is not enough to deal in a rational way with social pressures. The reality principle implies that the instinctual strivings of the id are adequately adjusted to the requirements of the immediate environment. We think that the analyst should perceive the *extended* social environment "beyond the reality principle." The power and production situations, with all the institutions, regulations, and value systems they involve, call for investigation comparable to the psychoanalytic exploration of the unconscious. For society affects the psyche of the adult without his having to be conscious of it. One can say of a mature ego, fully oriented to the reality principle that, the greater its flexibility in adapting to its immediate tasks, the less inclined it is to perceive the transforming influence of the extended environment.

Psychoanalytic research has given due consideration to the social environment during early childhood, but we know far less about the social phenomena constituting the content of the parent's and educator's *ego* ideal. In practice, the extended society - the people, the class or cast to

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which the patient belongs and his participation in social groups-may have been sufficiently taken into account. In psychoanalytic theory, however, such factors have only recently been accepted for investigation with adolescents. Yet, in every analysis one can see that social performance-professional activity, for instance-may deeply affect the psyche of the person in action that it causes internal conflicts or helps to overcome them, and that it has an essential influence on the cathexis of the self, and of the objects, and on the relation of the superego to the ego. Such observations, however, will lead to success only if one takes into consideration that a good official not only fulfills useful organizational I functions but also exerts his power by pressure on his fellow men; that an \ entrepreneur not only has an interesting profession requiring initiative but also is an exploiter; that a factory worker not only has a tedious manual job but thereby serves interests that are opposed to his own.

Establishment of the reality principle presupposes reality testing. This is an indispensable function of the ego, whether the principle is wholly established or not. Only where this function is still more or less intact can the ego retain its relative autonomy.

From experience with hospitalized mental cases, we know that even severely confused patients with an exceptionally troubled and reduced self-perception are able to test outer reality to a certain degree. One will hardly find a mental patient who does not react with protest against his

internment, however kindly and considerately he may be treated. It is all the more astonishing that normal, intelligent persons do not react to the influence of a society which leads to a lasting or transitory adjustment of the ego and superego -such influence seems to be beyond their perception.

Structurally, this situation is easy to explain. The modified ego is no longer able easily to perceive the social factors to which it has adjusted its structure. Only potential consequences such as dwindling satisfactions, the decline of self-esteem (perceived as a depressive feeling), and sometimes the recollection of earlier conditions or of no longer effective but not fully invalidated demands of the ego ideal, are consciously felt.

In analytic investigation, these adjustive processes are suggested primarily by the quality of the relation to the object. In place of object-related transference one finds wishes of narcissistic gratification. The more alienated the social situation, the less a libidinal response is expected or accepted. The object representations are cathected mainly with narcissistic energy. The patient no longer expects response from the analyst, but hopes for repair of his functions. However, the achievement of narcissistic gratifications offers but temporary recovery of self-esteem.

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The originally cathected object-related aims cannot be abandoned. They take effect out of repression: in other words, they cause frustrations, which in the narcissistic realm are compensated by outward success, by gratification of aggressive claims for power and other aggressive strivings, and which contribute to the enhancement of the libidinal cathexis of the self only to the point at which frustration again takes the upper hand.

The empathic analyst who works from the psychic reality of his patients, as well as the socially conscious one who has investigated the structure and underlying conflicts and forces of social reality, treat the same patient and, in the ideal case, will call forth the same analytic process. The situation of the socially conscious analyst is comparable to the case in which an analyst has to work with patients who have remained in a pathological dependence on the narcissistic wishes of their parents, described (by Richter, 1960, p. 62) as "narcissistic projections of the parents upon the child." From childhood, such persons have had to adjust to an unusual degree. For them, interpretations do not become acceptable until they have learned to distinguish their own ego interests from those of their parents. First of all, mechanisms of projective identification and of participative projection with attitudes and claims of the parents must be made conscious and must be corrected so that the patient can perceive the reality of his parents. This could not be achieved if the analyst were no more able to perceive the reality

of the parent's pathological behavior than is his patient. In the same way, we believe that the analyst must see clearly the influence that the macrosociety (culture) of a people, a class, a social stratum has on his patient. Then only can the analysis tackle those portions of the ego that have been formed or deformed by the adjustment.

Typical processes and mechanisms that facilitate practical analytic work have been established. We know about the narcissistic gratification in aggressive or masochistic acting out of the status or class interest, and about the distorted heterosexual relations that follow from the social debasement of women, conforming to the standards of bourgeois society. The superego can unconsciously undergo major modification in its content and mode of action. Studies made during the war showed that soldiers in training, by identification with the aggressor, arrive, not only at a new content of their ego ideal, but also at very different demands of [the superego on the ego. Identification with the leader or with ideal systems, fractioning of the superego, and revival of long-relinquished, preautonomous nuclei of the superego were used to explain pathological behavior in unusual social situations. Similar processes seem to have a

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major, as yet unexplored, importance in everyday life as well. Establishment of an identity in the final stage of adolescence, as described by Erikson, is probably but one of many very different processes where the outside world effects cathexis of the self and the interrelation of the psychic structures. Although this is not effected independently of earlier development, the potential result is largely modified.

One mechanism that has proved very useful in practical work is that of identification with a social role. Such identifications can be permanent, yet sometimes they appear only temporarily or as emergency mechanisms. Identification with a social role can affect the superego like a manic mechanism, insofar as the ego dispenses with otherwise valid demands of the superego. At the same time, intrastructural conflicts in the ego can be bridged. The mechanism serves as orientation to the outside world and, therefore, sometimes functions like a defense mechanism against demands of the id, and against affects. When compared with a complex defense mechanism -retrenchment of the ego, for instance -the major difference lies in the immediate libidinal and often aggressive gratification of the instinctual drives, which gives the mechanism somewhat the character of a labile symptom formation. Contrary to a symptom, identification with a social role usually goes hand in hand with narcissistic gratification, which is, however, often only temporary .

In analytic technique we have a special tool for making conflicts visible. The psychoanalytic situation, of necessity, involves the revival of conflicts experienced earlier and subsequently internalized. They yearn to be acted out with the person of the analyst. This is the phenomenon we call "transference."

Anna Freud (1969) suggested that as analysts we transfer our predilection for the observation of conflict and contradiction from the individual patient to our relation with our environment. Should we do so, we will certainly be in good company. Freud himself was of the early opinion that neuroses are the consequence of conflicts that society has failed to settle for its members. Modern anthropology on which ethnopsychanalysis is founded, as well as Marxist doctrine, are based on the contradictions existent in society and that lead to conflicts between groups of people and classes. One can well view the life of human societies and their development as a sequence of conflicts, respective solutions, and subsequent new conflicts.

Conflicts in the social structure and internal conflicts in the acquired psychic structure of its members are interrelated. This interrelation however, is not of such a simple nature that all conflicts apparent in society must be borne out by the individual. Inner conflicts and social

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conflicts do not abide by the same laws. With inner conflicts, biological forces assume the quality of social effectiveness. The mutual influence of both systems, society and inner life, may be described as a process that does not come to an end with the years of psychic development. The culture-specific, socialized man of whom we have a metapsychological conceptualization has an actual social environment that influences him. Thus, man appears as a social being shaped by a society rich in conflicts the influences of which determine his development, his social situation, as well as his mental life. Social science, however, must understand that, psychoanalysis, when exploring the conscious and unconscious life of the psyche, engages in the study of an agent that, by its own laws and with its own conflict-born forces, shapes the course of history and takes an active part in cultural and social processes. The more comprehensive and well founded the results of psychoanalysis are, the more important is its role as social science.

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Discussion

Professor LeVINE:

Dr. Parin and his colleague Dr. Morgenthaler impose monumental challenges on themselves when they leave their clinical practice in Switzerland to undertake psychoanalytic research in West

Africa. The complications involved in attempting psychoanalytic work under such unusual conditions are enough to deter most clinicians from it; but Drs. Parin and Morgenthaler apparently experience these complications as fascinating aspects of the frontier they came to explore, rather than irritating barriers to their standard work. We need more such psychoanalytic pioneers on this anthropological frontier.

Dr. Parin's paper raises many issues worthy of discussion, but I can choose only two for these brief comments. On the whole, I agree with him that psychoanalysis *is* a social science and that it has far from realized its potential development within the social sciences. I also agree with his conclusion, if I understand him correctly, that the major cross-cultural differences are to be found less in the *content* of underlying conflicts than in the choice of defenses and their symbolic elaboration.

But I shall address myself to other issues of a more preliminary and pressing importance.

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First, I should like to offer my own interpretation of Dr. Parin's emphasis on understanding the social and cultural context of the individual in itself before proceeding to the intrapsychic level of analysis. This requirement can be seen in terms of the empathy the psychoanalyst uses as his tool of investigation. As Kohut (1959) has made it clear in his well-known paper on the subject, empathy has its cultural basis in the patterns of experience shared by patient and analyst. In a drastically different culture, however, the psychoanalytic investigator cannot presume that these similarities exist. He does not know the African pattern of experience and how closely it matches his own. While at home he may take shared experience for granted; in the field it is not only questioned, but must become an object of inquiry in and of itself. Thus does the psychoanalyst in another culture necessarily become an anthropologist, learning the indigenous points of view in detail before he can legitimately delve into the depths of intrapsychic structure. Cultural phenomenology must precede personal phenomenology in his field work.

My own current research, for example, is on embarrassment in certain African groups. To study this phenomenon empathically, I must be able to put myself in the place of an African who becomes embarrassed when a taboo is likely to be breached. In order to do this, I must know the entire system of taboos as he knows it, and that means understanding the social structure in which he operates. I am in a still more favorable position if my understanding of the social structure goes beyond his views to include the social pressures acting upon him of which he is unaware. I must, in short, do an anthropological study before raising the psychoanalytic questions that motivate my research. Similarly, the psychohistorian must do extensive historical research to provide the

cultural basis for his own empathy with historical figures. Having investigated an exotic social and cultural environment as never before, the psychoanalyst is likely to come away with an increased appreciation of the impact of social environment on individual behavior. I gather from Dr. Parin's paper that this was the case with him. This suggests that *doing* ethnopsychanalysis can affect one's theoretical views, in the way that Freud's clinical experience affected the development of psychoanalysis. I believe

that significant contributions from psychoanalytic anthropology and psychohistory similarly require the active and prolonged involvement of psychoanalysts whose theoretical views are evolving in response to the data they collect.

The second point in Dr. Parin's paper to which I shall call attention is his description of ego group and clan conscience among Africans. While

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I have always been uneasy with these concepts, I have become convinced that the phenomenon they refer to is not only real one but very widespread among preindustrial peoples and that has important implications for psychoanalytic ego psychology. My conviction is based not only on my own research among Africans but on that of colleagues working in other parts of the world. For example, two of our most sophisticated investigators in the field of psychoanalytically oriented anthropology, Dorothy Eggan, whose dream research among the Hopi Indians is well known, and William Caudill, who conducted extensive investigations of child development and psychiatric disorders in Japan - found it necessary to emphasize the positive value set on emotional and moral interdependence in the cultures in which they were working and the way in which it contrasts with Western values of autonomy. In their work and in that of Dr. Parin it seems clear that these values have their intrapsychic counterparts, in less internalization and the greater involvement of social structure for aspects of personal functioning regarded as purely individual in our culture. If this is true, psychoanalytic anthropology gives us access to persons of less moral and emotional autonomy, less sharp boundaries between self and other, less individuated self-representations who are nevertheless well adapted to their cultural environments. Such persons should be able to teach us a great deal about the diversity possible in relations between psychic structure and social structure. The comparative study of the self, building on the work of Kohut, would represent one promising way of approaching this still largely unknown territory in research. If we become able to listen as well as clearly to these people in foreign cultures - and in other historical epochs - as psychoanalysts listen to their patients, advances in psychoanalytic knowledge and social science knowledge will follow.

DR. FRIEDMAN:

Dr. Parin's purpose is to make the human sciences continuous with each other-to go beyond formal relationships and *ad hoc* efforts at cooperation to achieve a real, substantive integration. To call psychoanalysis a social science merely because it deals with families which are units of society does not suit Dr. Parin's rigorous approach. His question is: *How* does psychoanalysis deal with the individual in society? Does it see him as a piece of nature coming up against a man-made environment? If so, psychoanalysis is no more a social science than plant physiology is a landscaping science, or metallurgy an architectural science. In such a view natural science and social

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science would be separate, interdigitating fields, drawing on each other in the random fashion that we see in psychohistory, psychobiography, psychoesthetics, etc .

Dr. Parin's answer is that current psychoanalysis does *not* regard man as a piece of raw nature. It regards him as a biological creature, yes, but one who is always and inevitably shaped by society. We can never outline man's natural nucleus; any given behavior is a socially conditioned derivative .

Dr Parin's own research adds compelling force to his argument. The metapsychology so "natural" to us at home is not the metapsychology of all humanity. Dr. Parin shakes us out of our provincial complacency. Why, indeed, should we ever have expected these patterns to be immutable? There is no reason to suppose that anything in the mind (or in the body) is immune from development, modification, evolution. Certainly, Freud believed in the evolution of psychic structure.

Assuming that culture is the agent of change, we must conclude that *mental structures are reflections of social structures*. We may argue about which structures are more quickly influenced and which lag behind, how subtle or direct the influencing is, and which times in a person's life cycle he is most influenced. But, overall, Dr. Parin shows that, in a manner of speaking, variable, historically specific social forces become frozen into the mind as psychic structure. Does *that* make psychoanalysis a social science? True to his purpose, Dr. Parin will not accept even that accommodation. Even if psychoanalysis and the social sciences are merely describing the same social forces from diverse view points the disciplines themselves might be disparate.

It is this strictness that makes Dr. Parin's project so valuable for pinpointing the issue. We will not have integrated the sciences of man until the *laws and descriptions* of the historical sciences are themselves a part of the laws and descriptions that relate to the individual (or vice versa, as others have proposed).

Once social forces have left their imprint on psychic structure, they can be-and have been-dealt with in purely psychological terms. But Dr. Parin suggests that the perception of reality is also a function of the mind: if reality includes the laws and forces of social history, psychoanalysis will inevitably have incorporated social science into its own *descriptions*. Theoretically, it would be as impossible to make an accurate psychoanalytic description without referring to *social forces* as it would be to omit reference to a mothering figure.

This is the crux of the argument. But a difficulty arises from the very

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problems of describing reality. Any kind of reality, intrapsychic or social, even ultimately physical, allows an infinite variety of descriptions. When we describe something, we are choosing from many possible abstractions. Some of these abstractions or scientific laws may be true or false. In that sense, they are objective. But the *type* of abstraction we choose is not true or false: it is chosen because it answers our needs. In that sense, most of our descriptions are arbitrary .

For instance, there are many ways to conceptualize the mind: we can take an esthetic approach, the philosophical view of the existentialists, the point of view of ethical analysis, or a social-science approach such as that suggested by Dr. Parin.

What, then, is *special* about psychoanalysis as a description of the mind? The psychoanalytic view of the mind results from a treatment situation. Though its *purpose* is understanding and its *uses* are manifold, psychoanalysis is a type of description designed to describe what happens in treatment. (The origin and development of psychoanalytic concepts amply demonstrate this.) That does not make psychoanalysis more pragmatic than any other theory. It simply specifies the perspective from which the mind is discussed; it establishes the categories of dissection that the theory will employ .

Consequently, in order to understand what kind of description psychoanalysis is, we have to know what kind of treatment psychoanalysis is. I think it is not inaccurate to say that fundamentally psychoanalytic treatment is the clarification of opportunities. The reality that a patient is confronted with is one that is relevant to his purposes. The reality that an analyst confronts is one relevant to the fate of a variety of purposes belonging to a variety of patients.

Psychoanalysis is a drive theory. Even when it speaks of conflict-free and neutralized areas, its mission is to be aware of the relation of perceptions to drives. Psychoanalysis always asks: What imprint do wishes place on reality? By looking at the way the *patient* organizes reality, the psychoanalyst is provided with two principles for organizing his *own* concepts: (1) the patient's wish structure itself, including conflict and the wish to be free of conflict and pain; (2) an image,



presumably shared by the patient, of an optimum, over-all gratification permitted and fostered by the culture-an image of maturity (Hartmann, 1939).

The evaluation of reality-the affective coloring, the highlighting, the discriminating, the selecting is the *patient's*. That is why Freud confined himself to what Dr. Parin calls phenomenology, leaving the evaluation and meaning of experience to the patient (Hartmann, 1956, p. 265).

In other words, psychoanalysis is a system of descriptions relevant to

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the *individual's* principles of abstraction, whatever they may be. In this respect psychoanalysis is unique. Its approach is unlike the approach of any other discipline: the social sciences, the philosophy of history, or aesthetics. The laws that Dr. Parin sees and the abstractions he makes concerning the alienation of the worker from his product, the exploitation of one class by another, the bureaucratization of life roles, the debasement of women, the loss of craft satisfactions are all relevant to particular kinds of questions only. We could choose to look at the same matters quite differently. The notion of ego distortion illustrates the differences between the conventional psychoanalytic approach and Dr. Parin's.

In psychoanalysis, "a distorted ego" does not mean an ego that rejects some particular, authoritative formulation of events. It is shorthand for a patient's rigid way of wishing, which rules out perspectives that require a different approach. The analyst's freedom from social reality is not an X-ray ability to strip events of their conventional significance and see through to the skeleton; events don't have a skeleton. The analyst's clear ego represents his flexibility in surveying the interplay of human desires with events.

But I think Dr. Parin takes a very different position when he suggests that the patient's ego has been deformed by the general structure of society and should be repaired. He is not simply maintaining a degree of flexibility that is greater than the patients; he is introducing what, from the patient's standpoint, is an arbitrary analysis.

By arbitrary I do not mean untrue or irrelevant. I am not saying that there can be no social science. If the patient were concerned about the laws of society, if he were also an anthropologist or a historian, Dr. Parin's interpretation of social reality *would* reply to a corresponding set of questions. But for a patient *qua* patient, Dr. Parin's social critique would probably answer only questions about what attitudes Dr. Parin himself endorses.

What would distinguish this from suggestion? Psychoanalysis tries to minimize suggestion by dealing exclusively with the patients *own* analyses, so to speak, plus a view of maturity or optimal growth-which has little suggestion in it, but presumably also has roots within the patient. (Without

such roots, as in the case of a classic psychopath, or someone from another culture, we would have to speak of conversion or indoctrination.)

By adhering to its own terms, psychoanalysis is protected from being an arbitrary way of categorizing the world, since its principles are, in

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effect, those of whomever it is dealing with. Any *other* system would be organized around the particular interests of the investigator.

Even the small objective social reality that the psychoanalyst cannot escape -his relationship with the patient -is already hard to define neutrally. Even the analyst's disciplined purposes, tied though they are to the patient's interests, still manage to color his perspectives. Surely one of the revelations of Dr. Kohut's work is, by contrast, the awareness of how close to sin the concept of narcissism had previously crept, and partly because it seemed to be a frustrating limit in treatment. Similar coloring of other concepts, defense and resistance, for example, have often been described. These shadings are arbitrary perspectives because they arise from the *analyst's* purposes, not the patient's.

But these arbitrary perspectives are as nothing compared with what we must accept as we approach the sciences of history. Not only are we always involved in history as we are not in a patient's life, but we are also immensely handicapped by never having the opportunity to see its fruition.

I like Dr. Parin's description of human societies as "a sequence of conflicts, respective solutions, and subsequent new conflicts." In that respect we must grant that the life of societies is like the life of individuals. But individuals are mortal: they mature and decay. There is a final outcome. Their opportunities are limited-so limited that those opportunities can define a science like psychoanalysis. The individual himself, with his circumscribed interests and finite potential, can show us what his conflicts are and what constitute solutions. Therefore, psychoanalysis can objectively reveal his problems. History, on the other hand, knows no maturity or conclusions. Only the next phase of history can *objectively* define historical problems and solutions out of the welter of today's happenings. Whatever historic truths we discover in the present will include an arbitrary perspective.

Mixing a science having substantive values with another that requires that we attach our own holds great danger for both sides. To be objective in the historical sciences is to be always aware that we filter complex events through the grid of what is important to us. No temptation should blur our recognition that moral considerations are never far from our thoughts nor easily disentangled from our terms. If the sciences were joined, the natural self-selection of problems

that psychoanalysis provides and which leads to categories of health and maturity, could camouflage our historical bias. We might award psychological credits and debits to social phenomena that we like and dislike. We might speak about

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objective forces that deform the ego when we should be talking of patterns in which people are imbedded in which we judge to be bad. As Hartmann (1939) reminds us, a term like *narcissism* could disguise judgments like *alienation* or *anti-progressivism*. As a being who can be "distorted" by society, "natural man" would re-emerge to do battle with-or be defeated by-bad societies. The door Dr. Parin had sealed would open again, admitting psychoanalytic romanticism -the myth of an uninhibited human nature and its political counterpart, psychoanalytic Utopianism.

Psychoanalysis would also suffer. We would take a theory that is justified by its bearing on *anyone's* needs, and tether it to views arising from the choice of particular theorists. (What is oppression to one man is complementarity or coordination to another.)

With these dangers in mind, I raise the following question: Must psychoanalysis relinquish all special privileges outside of its own domain in order to safeguard its privileged perspective - its descriptive paramountcy-in matters of motives and valuation? If the answer is yes, then psychoanalysis can offer the subject of society only what every other human science does: one more arbitrary slice of the world, one more thread in the fabric, one more set of variables, one more collection of structures and forces, a useful and necessary service to the overall product. I do not find that a happy conclusion. If we *could* connect the human sciences, either by introducing social science into psychoanalysis, or the reverse, our knowledge of society and our power to deal with the awful problems before us would expand immeasurably. For psychoanalysis sharply illuminates how individuals form and organize their values. And the evaluation of the individual that psychoanalysis undertakes feeds off of the meanings, forms, and structures that social science studies.

The trouble is that we have no way of knowing these surrounding structures, which are composed of social and ecological forces, save by observing what people make of them. It is as though we could tell the grain of the wood only by the sculptor's respect for it. Or as though we could watch the decision-making process, but could only guess the issues presented to it.

Even a technological innovation, which seems to be such a plainly evident opportunity, is actually an unknown matrix of possibilities and irrelevancies, unless seen through the eyes of a given people. Dr. Eissler (1965) reminds us of this in his statements on the Roman attitude toward

inventions. A modern axe to the Tasaday, a new agriculture in India, movable type or gunpowder to the ancient Chinese - the invention itself

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is a cipher, or more accurately, the invention is our own technologically biased nominee for the role of Important Factor. If that is true of so discrete a factor as an invention, less tangible forces must be enigmatic indeed.

In such a morass, perhaps our best hope is to accumulate as many different kinds of patterns as possible. Perhaps we should interweave as many specialized, heterogeneous sciences as we can. (I think of Erikson's approach.) Perhaps the wish we all have to conquer everything with a connected chain of theories is a snare, distracting us from the clumsier but surer course of piling theory upon theory, of countering perspective with perspective, of interdisciplinary borrowing and lending, of conversation between untranslatable languages. It is, after all, a very dense reality that we are trying to understand.

I don't know what the answer is. But I am grateful to Dr. Parin for bringing it closer by focusing the issue so sharply.

DR. PARIN:

Dr. Friedman raises many questions that really require a broad discussion of our diverse views on the theory of science as well as the exposition of clinical material. Instead of this, I shall briefly discuss two points, the most critical ones he has made.

First, he thinks that my analysis of society would necessarily be an arbitrary one, that in analytic theory this would lead to suggestion, or to the conversion or indoctrination of the patient. Second, he says that after having sealed the door to the utopia of good, old natural man, I would open it again for psychoanalytic utopianism, a notion of ideal society, or at least to the possibility of assessing the laws of history.

I do *not* believe that he raised these two major objections only because my view is very close to Marxist thought, or more exactly to the method of dialectic materialism. (I think it is-though many Marxist scholars would not admit it.)

The first objection may rest upon a kind of agnosticism about "objective reality." Dr. Friedman thinks that objective social reality is even "hard to define neutrally" in psychoanalytic therapy. The observation of transference, of resistance, of change in transference, of the transference neurosis to mention only the most familiar items -enables the analyst to assess the objective social reality in psychoanalytic therapy. The evaluation of these processes allows for a far better

understanding of the analytic process than "a view of maturity or optimal growth," which is static, not congruent with psychic life, which is characterized by conflicting forces and the interaction of structures.

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I think, furthermore, that history is not more and not less arbitrary than any science of man, though it includes theories about the present period that will be checked by the future. I have chosen, of course, a theory of culture very close to that which underlies psychoanalysis: I speak of conflicts, solutions or results, and new conflicts. About 40 years ago Otto Fenichel proved, that this view is the common denominator of dialectic materialism and psychoanalytic theory. But I think that one cannot say that this and other existent descriptions of social reality are abstractions taken from an infinite variety of descriptions chosen at random.

Certainly, social and historical events have no skeleton. But they do have a physiology and a genetic growth. Evolution is an accumulative and selective process; the forces acting in it are abstractions that are put under scrutiny in the light of their tangible effects. The notion of ecological, economic, and similar forces is not less or more arbitrary than the notion of instinctual drives. Both notions are abstractions corresponding to a network of facts which lend probability to them and enable them to be close descriptions of real forces. Both are understandable by human logic and underly the process of scientific investigation. They may be modified or changed whenever new facts or better explanations arise. I do not think that they are any more difficult for our patients to understand, accept, or reject, or of any less interest to them, than the interpretations we used to give of unconscious wishes. The second critical point of a utopian view would be easy to discard: the model of a conflict-born psychological apparatus in a conflict-born and conflict-producing society should eliminate any thought of a simplistic optimism. I have no other utopia than that of all people studying human affairs: to come closer to the laws and principles governing complex processes, which underlie a continual change and in which we are involved ourselves.

I accept Dr. Friedman 's warnings that one could easily be biased in this matter. But I do not agree with his warning that we should rather pile theory upon theory. I think we should try to organize our work and thoughts as far as possible. But this is a problem leading too far off the mark into the theory of science.

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