R.D. Laing's approach to psychotherapy a socio-psychological evaluation.

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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L’AVONS RECEUE
R.D. LAING'S APPROACH TO PSYCHOTHERAPY
A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

by

William Henry Walcott

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of
Sociology and Anthropology in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at
The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1980
ERRATA: P. 67, LINE 12. THE WORD "IN" SHOULD APPEAR AFTER THE WORD "ACTION."


P. 22, LINE 7. THE REFERENCE TO LAING SHOULD BE "LAING, 1967: P. 87."
ABSTRACT

R.D. LAING'S APPROACH TO PSYCHOTHERAPY:
A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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Ronald Laing's rejection of the view of a somatic basis to schizophrenia is accompanied by a critique of knowledge that seeks to objectify or treat persons in relation as reified entities.

This study seeks to examine Laing's approach to understanding schizophrenia. The form of inquiry it takes is library research. As such, its use of critical analysis and inference is qualitative.

Laing's approach to schizophrenia may be viewed as socio-psychological. Specifically, he seeks to make sense of schizophrenia within the context of the family, where he explicates definitions of situations, contradictions, and efforts to mystify on the part of persons in authority. Laing's task here would seem to be that of resubjectivising of persons.

Directly related to explication are language in "context," Laing's view of phenomenology, and dialectical science.

Important substantive links may also be identified between Laing and both the Iowa and Chicago schools of symbolic interactionism. Despite this, Laing methodologically, would appear to stand with the Chicago school. As
such, his work with families does have an important implication for the Iowa school.

Further, both his explication of the dialectic and elucidation of relations among persons call into question Schutz's notion of the stance of the investigator of social interaction, and how the differential perspectives of social actors may be overcome.

In so far as Laing's studies may be associated with deviance, this is appropriately done by means of links to the interactionist or labelling perspective. Analysis of this relation points to the grounding of these approaches in a view of persons as constructors of their world and their own definers of situations, as well as critiques of knowledge they offer. They may, in these respects, be seen as "underdog" approaches.

Laing's studies, unlike the perspective, though, problematises the issue of deviance by attending to compromises, dilemmas and dissensus within structures of authority. Laing would also seem to surpass the perspective in his setting up of alternative institutions, an attempt to resist domination on an everyday basis. So would his rejection of a conventional category of deviance, and its concomitant, which may point to a context for understanding self labelling.

Ultimately, Laing, like the perspective, fails to advance an adequate critique of knowledge. This failure appears to represent his astructuralism, also evidenced in
his family studies and recommendation to deal with institutions of law and order, as well as comments about drugs.

Criticism, however, of Laing's alleged inability to indicate who is a person in social relationships, and his use of causal concepts seems unjustified.

Finally, this analysis would suggest:

(i) The need to pursue the study of meaning constructed by persons rather than causation derived from formal procedures set up by investigators.

(ii) That a socio-psychologically oriented sociology pursue the issues of the macro/micro-social link and change in terms of a critique of the construction and use of knowledge, and an effort to dereify structure.

It also leaves a number of questions unanswered:

(i) Can the perspective of the subject of investigation be taken by the investigator?

(ii) How are institutions of domination and repression to be removed?

(iii) Which is in greater need of the other: a socio-psychologically oriented sociology or Marxism?
DEDICATION

To Maisie
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am immensely indebted to Mrs. Lynn Neufeld, Professors B.H. Chua, B.L. Beach and Mr. A.W. Hitsman of Trent University, Miss A.P. Cook, and Dr. D.J. Dodd (formerly of the University of Guyana), Professors Vito Signorile, Barry Adam, and Mary Lou Dietz of The University of Windsor.

I am also very appreciative of the advice, assistance and supervision provided by the members of my committee, Professors Claude Vincent, Muhammad Shuraydi, and Ray Daly.

Especially thanks, too, to Mr. Wilfred Kingston, Lancelot and Judy Walcott.

The manuscript was made possible through the diligence and patience of Kelly Trudell.
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CHAPTER I

What Does Socio-Psychological Mean

Introduction

The conventional medical view of a somatic basis to mental pathology has been rejected by the psychiatrist, Ronald Laing. His approach to understanding such pathology has a phenomenological basis which focuses on patterns of interaction in families.

In the light of such focusing, the purpose of this proposed socio-psychological examination is to seek to interpret how Laing attends to the relation between processes of social interaction and what has come to be known as "schizophrenic" behaviour.

In sociological terms, this is an interpretation of how "deviant" behaviour within an interactionist framework is examined.

It is important, too, to notice the basis of Laing's rejection of the conventional medical view: a view of man as reflective, interpretive - not devoid of subjectivity. Given such a basis, it is expected, also, to explore the question as to what implications Laing's focus might have for sociology.

The Central Relevance of Language to Social Interaction

From the outset, it seems appropriate to indicate what the term socio-psychological connotes.
Following Mead's delimitation of the task of social psychology (Mead, 1934:Pl) it is inferred that (1) investigative methods to interpret individual conduct should rest on action revealed by individuals themselves; (2) such action is rooted in processes of social interaction. It is also posited that a socio-psychological approach would view persons as acting towards one another on the basis of meanings, modified through interpretive processes used by such persons in dealing with the symbols they encounter. (Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds, 1975:Pl).

An important vehicle to such processes would appear to be language. It is to its relevance that attention will now be directed. Central to the question of meaning is the relationship between language and the world outside language:

![Diagram]

What is to be observed here is an inextricable link between language and contexts of situation. Indeed, the context of situation is central to an explanation of how language works in society. To understand the context is to state the relationship of utterances to situations in which they are used. (Robins, 1964:P25). The point here is that utterances are brought into relationship with the relevant components of a social actor's environment. This may be expressed:

(i) The verbal action of persons.
(ii) The non-verbal action of persons:
   (a) the relevant objects.
   (b) the effects of verbal action.

(Robins, 1964: P26).

To state, then, what is meaningful to social actors is to refer to the outcome of the interpretation they invest in those persons and objects around them.

"Meaning in language is not a single relation or a single sort of relation, but involves a set of multiple and various relations holding between the utterance and its parts and the relevant features and components of the environment, both cultural and physical, and forming part of the more extensive system of interpersonal relations involved in the existence of human societies."

(Robins, 1964: P27).

This outcome - to be sure - is not a self-generated static occurrence, but the consequence of a negotiated emergent process that is viewed as having its important basis in what a social actor counts as relevant to his perspective. Alternatively expressed, the meaning inherent to his "knowledge of the world" is importantly bound up with how he defines situations. This negotiated emergent process should be seen to be operative even if linguistic signification (language) is encountered by individuals in an objectivated sense.\textsuperscript{5} Crucial to objectivation is that it is realized in everyday life: it originates in, and has its primary reference to everyday life. It represents those situations within which, along with others, persons as individuals participate. Understanding language, therefore, is a requirement to understanding everyday life.
(Berger and Luckmann, 1966:PP37-38). The initial step to seeing objectivation as negotiated lies in recognizing that everyday life is grasped through interpretation; as such, it is subjectively meaningful. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: P19). Further, what is subjectively meaningful is grasped by means of typifications which operate reciprocally. Individuals may, for instance, interpret others as men, Europeans, or jovial types. Typifications are also subject to reciprocal interference. In face to face situations, they are subject to ongoing negotiation. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:PP30-31).

The important point to be grasped is that typification is perspectival. In social interaction it will thus be associated with negotiation and emergence.

Persons may become aware that typification is perspectival through acting back on themselves, by being reflective. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:PP29-30). Indeed, this would seem to be the only way in which the subjective basis to the "taken-for-granted" objectivated world would become apparent. Reflectivity would allow persons to become aware of what is relevant to them; hence, the emergent processes that accompany their interpretation of the situations in which they exist.

"Only the already experienced is meaningful, not that which is being experienced. For meaning is an operation of intentionality, which, however, only becomes visible to the reflective glance."

(Schutz, 1970:P63).
The inference thus drawn is that a socio-psychological study of processes of social interaction involves studying how people come to view their worlds. As such, it takes account of how they impute meaning to situations. Doing this entails a recognition of the interpretive procedures they bring to bear on such situations. In this lies the central relevance of language to the study of social interaction.

Persons in Relation to Each Other

Reference must now be made to some particular statements of Laing's for the purpose of further indicating what the socio-psychological nature of the study of social interaction connotes. Laing states that his concern is with persons as they relate to him (investigator) and other persons. It is the group context - importantly the family - within which relationships of persons, identified by intensive face to face reciprocal influence on each other's experience and behaviour, which is the focus of study. Such relationships, he further states, characterize the family nexus comprised of persons in kinship groups and those who, while not connected by kinship ties, are viewed as family members. (Laing, 1970:F21).

Important to the nexus is the manner of its characterization. To see this, it has to be compared to a series. The series exists as a multiplicity where no person is essential. All individuals here are quantitatively inter-
changeable. Any unity that exists in the series exists in the form of reciprocal indifference on the part of persons to each other. What is common to the series is what is external to it. The members of a bus queue, for example, have as a common object only the bus. (Laing, 1962: P9).

Unity, too, is a quality of the nexus. The unity here does not rest on externality. Group identity is based on acts of synthesis by its members: individuals not only see themselves as members of a group, nor recognize that others see themselves as members too. They also recognize that others see them as viewing those others as members. This must occur reciprocally. Laing further states that within the nexus, the group to each member (not as a social object observed by outsiders) is:

"...the synthesis of the multiplicity of its members and the synthesis of the multiplicity of syntheses that each and everyone invents and maintains."


The unity of the nexus is thus constituted by the unification on each person's part of the plurality of syntheses.

Laing hastens to point out, though, that the nexus should not be viewed finally and conclusively as a whole. It is not a totality. To so view it would be to attribute to it the characteristics of an object, thus admitting of the notion of organismic structure. This structure, Laing points out, is representative of a mere illusion. It is a mirage. The nexus is not organismic. (Laing, 1962: P11).
The study of the family as a nexus would, thus, entail the pursuing of a goal that allows for examination of the following in a simultaneous way:

(i) each family member.
(ii) the relations among family members.
(iii) the family itself as a group.

(Laing, 1970: P23)

At this point, it may be useful to see:

"Society is a human product. Society is objective reality. Man is a social product. ... an analysis of the social world that leaves out any one of these three moments will be distortive."

(Berger and Luckmann, 1966: P61)

The point is that Laing's view of the family as nExal refers to a dialectical subject-object interplay. He seems to bring this out when he states that each person exists not merely as an object in the world of others. His experience and acts emanate also from his location in space and time. He constitutes his own centre with his own point of view. One of the tasks that falls to an investigator of social interaction is to discover each individual's perspective about situations which he shares with others. (Laing, 1970: P19).

What seem crucial to the aforementioned exposition are:

1. To study the nExal family is to see its members as engaged in continual processes of negotiation. It is to view them as interpreters of their world, and
to see them assigning meaning to their action.

2. Given the previous reference to objectivation, Laing's comment about the spatio-temporal nature of experiencing and the performance of acts, implies that, in so far as objectivation exists in families, to what extent do respective members subscribe to such objectivation?

3. In a general sense, socio-psychological would mean that reality is socially constructed; this would strengthen the position that argues for a subject object interplay in persons' meaningful behaviour in processes of social interaction. This stance may be elaborated by examining Laing's statements about phenomenology.

Laing's View of Phenomenology

Once more, this is done by making reference to persons. Laing argues that as persons we are aware that we can be ourselves in and through our worlds. There is also a sense in which, upon death, our worlds will cease to exist, even though the world in which we once existed will still go on. The concrete basis to a person's existence is, however, his "being-in-the-world," his relation to other men. He cannot exist without "his" world - his relationship to other persons - nor can "his" world - being aware that he is his own self - exist without him. (Laing, 1965:PP19-20).

Persons, therefore, relate and experience themselves as so relating. They also experience the possibility of
relating. This personal mode of relating, the form of a relationship, is complemented by the style of a relationship. One's identity is also established in and through the manner in which one relates to persons and non-persons who make up one's world. (Esterson, 1972:PP214-215.)

What is important to the form and style of a relationship is that experience is appropriative: a person has his own sense of what the world in which he lives means to him. He is engaged in constructing his reality. This he does as a subject. Yet, such construction is coextensive with reciprocal processes of social interaction, central to which are interpretation and reflectivity, the basis of meaning.

Once more, the emergent nature of social interaction should be seen at work. Phenomenology, then, should be concerned with how people construct their worlds. As such, it ought to deal with those very processes of negotiation and emergence. This concern appears to be indicated: phenomenology elucidates reciprocities among persons, as well as among persons and groups.

"It examines the behaviour and experience of multiplicities of persons in relation to themselves, each other, and to the groups they comprise. It studies persons in their appropriate social contexts and is concerned with the sense of their praxis and that of their groups."

(Esterson, 1972:P223)

To refer to praxis, though, is to refer to both intentionality and meaning. Laing does make such reference when he argues that persons are not organisms, nor should they be viewed in terms of energy forces or systems. Their
behaviour should be interpreted in terms of intentionality and meaning. (Laing, 1965;P22).

One of the central tasks, therefore, for the investigator making use of phenomenology is suggested:

"How can we speak in any way adequately of the relationship between me and you in terms of the interaction of one mental apparatus with another."

(Laing, 1965;P19)

Phenomenology further seeks to place particular experiences of persons within the context of their whole "being-in-the-world." (Laing, 1965;P17). To do so requires the relating of their actions to their manner of experiencing situations. In addition, it is in terms of their present that the past is understood. (Laing, 1965;P32).

To complete this task of delimiting the socio-psychological, reference should be made to dialectical science. A suitable point of departure for attending to it is to be located:

"The rationality required to study persons is embodied in dialectical science. This is a science of persons. It is a science of social situations. Social phenomenology is a dialectical science."

(Esterson, 1972;P221)

Dialectical science further seeks to totalize activity by relating the act of knowing to what is known. Totalization is the fundamental way of grasping the dialectic in action. The experience, thus, of the relationship between the knower and what is known is itself dialectical. (Laing, 1964;P113).
Dialectical science, therefore, also requires that an attempt be made by the investigator to find out how he is himself constructing knowledge. He should constantly reflect, and examine the basis of his construction. The issue which examination immediately raises is that of critique of construction itself.

In this regard, Laing states that nothing can become dialectic from the point of view of analytic reason. (Laing 1964:Pl01). To see the basis of this stance, attention should be paid to the following exposition. The diagnoses related to his joint work (Sanity, Madness and the Family) are prefaced by references to "schizophrenia" from a clinical standpoint. These references, reflective of an "analytic-positivist" approach, represent a view of persons as displaying patterns of mechanically determined events, "symptoms". (Esterson, 1972:PP266-267). This view, consonant with detached observation, is also to be found in the conventional natural scientific approach to the study of phenomena. This approach used to study persons extrapolated from their relevant social contexts and relationships views persons as entities with attributes that can be conveniently typified and categorized. It is incapable of clarifying the steadily shifting interplay of action and experience between persons and their "significant others". In the area, therefore, of the study of persons, the natural scientific approach reifies: it treats persons in relation as things. (Esterson, 1972:PP225-226).
The dialectic negates the analytic, the natural scientific:

"the person's experience of his social context is elucidated, and related to the observed actions of others. A totalization is made, rendering intelligible the hitherto unintelligible events used to justify the diagnosis."

(Esterson, 1972:PP266-267)

Dialectical negation is accomplished initially through examining and defining what an attempt is made to understand. Such movement is followed by a clarification of action within a group of persons and explication of patterns of experience. The final moment relates interexperience to action. (Esterson, 1972:P273). As a negation of analytic reasoning, the dialectic comprehends it in a wider synthesis.¹⁹ (Esterson, 1972:P267).

As a method of knowing, therefore, dialectical science cannot make use of a position outside that to which it is to be applied: it operates not by devising methods outside the subject of its investigation and then seeking to apply those methods to that subject. (Laing, 1964:P94).

The dialectic is thus revealed through persons' socio-historical locations. It is through "human history," the praxis of persons existing in concrete material conditions, through discovering such conditions and persons' subjection to them that there is a manifestation of the dialectic. (Laing, 1964:P99).

It might appear that this last reference to the dialectic places it in a deterministic mould. This is not the case though. Thought constitutes the praxis of
individuals in determined conditions at particular historical moments. It is simultaneously being and knowledge of being. (Laing, 1964:F95). In as much as a world of objects may exist, persons can know these objects by interpreting them. As such, the dialectic does not view persons as devoid of subjectivity. This is brought out in Laing's view of achieving synthetic progression through dialectical reason. (Laing, 1964:F105). Synthetic progression attempts the recomposition of the understanding of the movement of history by starting from the synchronic and its contradictions towards the diachronic and its intelligibility. Alternatively expressed, this is a movement from the present to the past. It would also indicate that persons are reflective.

Summary and Implication

In summary, the socio-psychological may be seen as possessing the following attributes:

1. It studies persons in their own constructed "contexts of situation."

2. Such contexts are coextensive with negotiation and emergence. As such, persons are engaged in meaningful behaviour.

3. Negotiation and emergence are consistent with the complex nature of reciprocation in interaction.

4. Socio-psychological means that persons should be treated as persons: it seeks to dereify.
The significant issue which this exposition of the socio-psychological raises for sociology is: is it more advantageous to pursue the study of meaning or the study of causation?
Footnotes

1. The reference to Laing throughout this work will not be exclusive. At certain points, it will draw primarily on his work with, and joint pronouncements of, his two former colleagues, Aaron Esterson and David Cooper.

2. Language here refers to a phonological system organized syntactically.


4. "...every element of speech acquires its special secondary meaning from the context or social environment within which it is used and, in addition, gets a special tinge from the actual occasion in which it is employed." See Schutz, A., On Phenomenology and Social Relations (ed), H. Wagner, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970, p 97.

5. That is, it is viewed as a process through which human subjectivity embodies itself in products available to one's self and others as elements of a common world. See Berger, P. and Pullberg, S. Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness, History and Theory, 1965, Vol. 4, No. 2, P 199.

6. The reference here includes Esterson's views. Laing speaks about existential, whereas Esterson speaks about social phenomenology. These views are, however, not seen to be contradictory.

7. The movement of an arm can be viewed as a mode of flexion and extension of joints. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as striking a blow. Movement, in the initial sense, is explicable anatomically and physiologically. In the latter case, it can be seen as reflecting the intentions of the person to whom the arm belongs. The first interpretation is suitable to the study of things and organisms, whereas the second is appropriate to the study of persons. See Esterson, A., The Leaves of Spring; London: Pelican: 1972, P 214.

8. The reference to the dialectic here is as an investigational tool.
CHAPTER II
Laing’s Critical View of Schizophrenia

Repudiation of the ‘Fact’ of Schizophrenia

This question gains added significance once attention is paid to Laing as a prominent critic of psychiatric practice and some of the important responses to his criticism.

To be sure, Laing is by no means the singular prominent critic of psychiatric practice. Michel Foucault, for instance, repudiates objective scientific knowledge of mental pathology. To Szasz, “mental illness” represents problems in social adaptation not attributable to the malfunctioning of the body’s physiological mechanisms. (Szasz, 1961: P37). Significant responsibility, though, for levelling criticism should be borne by Laing. He states in regard to schizophrenia:

“No one has schizophrenia, like having a cold. The patient has not ‘got’ schizophrenia. He is schizophrenic.”

(Laing, 1965: P34)

Schizophrenia may well be viewed as an assumption, a theory or a hypothesis. It is not, however, a fact. (Laing, 1970: P11).

The psychiatrist with his clinical viewpoint in the presence of a prediagnosed person – already regarded as a patient – has frequently believed that he is in the presence of schizophrenia. Acting on the assumption that he is attending to an established fact of illness, he seeks to find out its cause, assess its outcome, and treat its course.
Illness - presumably genetic, constitutional, organic, or physiological - is seen to be a 'fact' to which persons are subject or undergo. To do so is unequivocally false. (Laing, 1970: P18).

"Even two psychiatrists from the same medical school cannot agree on who is schizophrenic independently of each other more than eight out of ten times at best; agreement is less than that between different schools, and less again between different countries. These figures are not in dispute. But when psychiatrists dispute the diagnosis, there is no court of appeal. There are at present no objective, reliable, quantifiable criteria - behavioural or neurophysiological or biochemical - to appeal to when psychiatrists differ."

(Laing, 1970: P12)

The Importance of the Social

Laing further argues that if a person's actions are regarded as signs of illness one would be imposing one's categories of thought on that person. It would thus be unlikely that what the person is trying to communicate will be understood. (Laing, 1965: P33).

It would seem from this last statement that Laing attaches importance to how persons view situations in which they exist as a means of understanding 'mental pathology' - social interaction. In an explicit indication of such importance, he argues that in regard to those labelled psychotic or neurotic, the important issue should not be the study of individuals. Rather, it should be the study of social situations. He criticizes psychiatric practice for viewing the behaviour of such individuals as primarily representative of pathological process occurring in them.
To do so is to both enclose the study of situations in a medical metaphor and to condition the conduct of those enclosed by it. Not only are such individuals isolated from situations, but in their isolation, they cannot be seen as persons. Concomitantly, it becomes difficult for the doctor to act as a person.

A person does not exist without a social context. He cannot be taken out of his social context and still be seen as a person. (Laing, 1972:113). In this regard, the specific question Laing poses to psychiatric practice is: are the experience and behaviour that psychiatrists take as symptoms and signs of schizophrenia more socially intelligible than has come to be supposed? (Laing, 1970:12). This question of intelligibility is very important to Laing's conceptualizing. Appropriately, an explication of it will be provided. Such explication would appear to strengthen the argument that Laing attaches importance to social interaction.

Social intelligibility refers to contradictions and ambiguities in patterns of interaction which relate to persons' intentions. (Esterson, 1972:3). Contradiction in a social unit represents the experience of simultaneous affirmation and negation within that unit in regard to an issue. (Esterson, 1972:251).

Laing makes use of the Sartrean designation process and praxis: outcomes or occurrences which have no agent as their author, and events or outcomes that are deeds done
by doers. He further states that in as much as action may become too far "alienated" from a person's responsibility to be directly apprehended in terms of the deeds of an identifiable agent, it will nevertheless be intelligible if a retracing can be made from what is going on (process) to who is doing what (praxis). (Laing, 1962:PP7-8).

Thus, the symptoms of 'schizophrenia' conventionally viewed as evidence of process are to be apprehended as praxis - even if alienated and mystified. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:PI65).

Mystification as used here to refer to the reciprocal interaction of person directly with person, means both the act of mystifying and a state of being mystified: it has both an active and a passive meaning. Used actively, it means to cloud, obscure, befuddle, to mask experience, action (whatever is taking place). In a passive sense, it refers to a feeling of being muddled or confused.5 (Laing, 1965b:PP343-344).

The aforementioned exposition of intelligibility would seem to provide a clear indication of persons in relation to each other.

The Merit of Criticism

The relevance of Laing's criticism lies not just in recognizing that the line between "sanity" and "madness" is less clear cut than assumed by orthodox psychiatric practice. (Collier, 1977:PI44). What should also be grasped is a critique of both the construction and use of knowledge. Appropriately, this may be done in regard to:
the theoretical status of concepts such as "illness," "cure" and "health" should be viewed as representative of terms borrowed metaphorically from other sciences. That this manner of borrowing is common to all sciences is, doubtless, the case. Initially, what is borrowed serves as a model, thus enabling new research to begin and new theories to be easily understood. Consequently, the origin of the borrowed term is forgotten; it then acquires a new sense, rigorously defined within the new science.

The danger, though, in this practice, is that it could lead to mistaken argumentation based on the previous sense of terminology. (Collier, 1977:148). An illness is not a phenomenon to be located in the realm of mental processes, meanings or human interaction. It is to be located in organic processes. The defining attributes of disease belong to the field of the biological sciences rather than the social or human sciences.

The result of treating psychosis or neurosis as illness is that its symptoms are then seen as explained simply by invoking the illness, and not as relevant to anything else in a person's life. (Collier, 1977:149).

Important Questioning of Criticism

An attempt should now be made to attend some of the more important responses to Laing's criticism.

This is initially done in regard to the objection to
placing "mental illness" within a medical context. The focus of critical response is the following Laingian statement:

"...It is wrong to impute a hypothetical disease of unknown etiology and undiscovered pathology to someone unless he can prove otherwise."

(Laing, 1967: P71)

The response to this is that all diseases are hypothetical entities. All are labels. There is, for example, no such thing as diabetes. There are individuals who manifest physical symptoms and have experiences related to the hypothetical disease. Such a disease entity, though, represents a very powerful category: without it, medical research would be unthinkable and practice confused. In the practice of medicine, it is thus common to attribute diseases of unknown etiology and undiscovered pathology to patients who cannot prove otherwise. (Seigler, Osmond and Mann, 1971: PP126-127).

What can be inferred from such a stance are:

1. The assignment of technical authoritative competence to expertise.
2. Progress as a consequence of the employment of such expertise.
3. Recommendation of its continued utilization.

There may not be too much serious questioning as to probable benefits to be derived from 1, 2 and 3. Yet, conspicuous by its very absence from Seigler et al's, position is that it is because clinical medicine deals with organic
physiochemical entities\(^7\) that these three factors become important. In the case of what has come to be known as "mental illness" such entities are not dealt with; hence, these factors would appear not to be applicable. Their application may well constitute a misappropriation of medical knowledge. Further, in it, should be seen a negation of social interaction.

Arguments that there is nothing wrong with the use of hypothetical entities, since physical diseases are hypothetical entities, are irrelevant. A great deal is wrong with hypothetical entities which do not contribute to the explanation of phenomena.

"If the symptoms of the patients (who had all been diagnosed schizophrenic) studied in Sanity, Madness and the Family can be explained in terms of the relations of those patients to their families, then one need only postulate the existence of those symptoms and those relations..."

(Collier, 1977: P152)

Another important criticism levelled against Laing is that an appeal to intelligibility will not allow for evasion of the requirements of comparison. Without the use of control groups selected from non-schizophrenic families, it is difficult to argue that the behaviour of families of schizophrenic patients can explain the origins of schizophrenia. (Sedgwick, 1971: PP26-27).

A response can be made to this criticism by looking at a number of statements of Esterson and Laing's. Esterson sees his method of studying persons as having emanated from being confronted with the problem of individuals deemed
schizophrenic. The relatives of such persons presented the issue of schizophrenia as a medical one: it was for that reason that they sought a doctor's advice; and as a doctor, he was trained to regard persons as suffering from something wrong inside them, to view that "malfunction" as a medical type process, schizophrenia. Such persons, though, were found to be accessible despite reports that they were not supposed to have been so. Yet, his medical and psychiatric training appeared to be leading him to pre-judgement: an assumption of internal "malfunction," and given its existence, its representation of a clinical process.

If either of the assumptions of the apparent pre-judgement were incorrect, he would have been sharing misperceptions with members of these persons' families: diagnosis would have reflected and confirmed those members' prior views. Confronted, thus, with a contradiction, he sought to resolve it. That required a switching of focus from persons labelled schizophrenic to the social units - the families to which they belonged. (Esterson, 1972: PP274-275). It seems clear that the central issue here is to make patterns of interaction comprehensible. Esterson points out, though, that a common response is to forget the issue about social intelligibility he raises with Laing, and then to level criticism against them for not attending to other matters: in the absence of use of "objective" reliable rating scales and controls, the examination of eleven cases - all women - prove nothing.
He argues that such criticism might have been justified had they intended to test the hypothesis that the family was a pathogenic variable in the genesis of schizophrenia. That, they did not set out to do.

"We set out to illustrate by eleven examples that, if we look at some experience and behaviour without reference to family interactions, they may appear comparatively socially senseless, but that if we look at the same experience and behaviour within their original family context they are liable to make more sense."

(Laing and Esterson, 1970:Pl2)

These statements, while not indicative of what is conventional in a "naturally scientific" experimental sense, do reflect comparison: they direct attention to the examination of phenomena in an alternative way. Such examination should not be viewed, though, as an unsophisticated variant of comparison in an experimental sense, since it was not presupposed by the principle inherent to experimentation.

To criticize Laing, therefore, for not using control groups would seem to be irrelevant.

It is, nevertheless, necessary to point out that Laing's research on so-called "normal" families - never published - indicates that mystification was much more significant than originally expected. This raises the important question as to the existence of schizophrenia only in some families. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:PP165-166). In some families, mystification occurs to a much greater extent than in others. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:PP166-167).

Should this be so, added weight would be given to
Laing's request that schizophrenia should be studied from the standpoint of social intelligibility.

This last statement about intelligibility leads right back to the consideration of persons actively constructing and interpreting social relationships rather than entities whose states are determined by "objective factors." It is, indeed, appropriate to posit that a significant issue for sociology is whether it is more advantageous to pursue the study of meaning or that of causality.
Footnotes

1. The reference here is to orthodox psychiatric practice.

2. Foucault's argument is: "...mental pathology requires methods of analysis different from those of organic pathology, and that it is only by an artifice of language that the same meaning can be attributed to "illnesses of the body" and "illnesses of the mind." A unitary pathology using the same methods and concepts in psychological and physiological domains is now purely mythical, even if the unity of body and mind is in the order of reality."

3. There may well be points of contact between Laing and Szasz: a critique of scientific method in the human sciences and scepticism about mental illness. Szasz is, however, mainly a polemical writer whose theoretical tools are directed to winning his case against medical and for moral judgements about "mental illness." His work lacks the theoretical interest of Laing's and does contain some rather un-radical political ideas - his opposition to socialized medicine. See Collier, A.R.D. Laing: The Philosophy and Politics of Psychotherapy, New York: Pantheon Books: 1977: P146.

4. "...in that vast domain of psychiatric practice - the so called functional disorders - when persons are checked over completely and found, in the present state of our knowledge, to have nothing the matter with them physically, they are said to have something the matter with them mentally. This is a device, an extended metaphor or analogy that has become institutionalized and politicized."

5. It should be noted that Laing's reference draws on the Marxian concept of mystification as pertinent to relations among classes in society.

7. Some philosophers of science - Polanyi - would question the basis to advancement in such handling. See also Foucault's comments about clinical medicine; Foucault, M., The Birth of the Clinic: New York: Vintage: 1975: PP112-113.

8. Laing states that subsequent to his study of families where at least one member of each was diagnosed as schizophrenic, he conducted some studies, with Esterson, of "normal families" to provide a contrast. They examined "ordinary" families in London in the same manner as families of persons diagnosed as schizophrenic were examined. They were confronted with major methodological difficulties in comparing group processes. He states: "I didn't have the mathematics of groups - quite advanced mathematics - to resolve those problems. So for that and other reasons, we have not yet published this research." See Evans, R., R.D. Laing: The Man and His Ideas: New York: Dutton: 1976: P30.

The aforementioned must certainly represent a very weak link in the Laingian chain. Even if it is accepted that Laing rejected the use of experimental methodology, the very fact that he did not see the family as a "pathogenic variable in the genesis of schizophrenia" should warrant a disclosure of studies of "normal" families. This study could, at least, be conducted phenomenologically.
CHAPTER III
The Intelligibility of Schizophrenia

An effort should now be made to provide substantive reference to the socio-psychological as a means of indicating how "schizophrenia" is made intelligible. Here, it is the 'context of situation' that is used as the reference point of examination. In this regard, three families will be used as examples: The Abbots, the Blairs, the Kings. Initially, the clinical attributions about particular familial members will be presented.

Clinical Perspective

The Abbots

Maya is twenty-eight years old. She has been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. Three years after her first hospitalization, there were clinical attributions by her parents that she had auditory hallucinations, was depersonalized, showed signs of catatonia, exhibited affective impoverishment and autistic withdrawal. She was also deemed to be occasionally impulsive. (Laing and Esterson, 1970: PP31-32).

The Blairs

Laing states that Lucie had been first admitted to a mental hospital twelve years before his investigation began. For the next ten years she remained an inmate. Thereafter, efforts were made to maintain her as an outpatient while she lived with her parents, but those efforts failed after six
months. The hospital records disclose the usual dismal reports over the years so typical of schizophrenia. Her affect is flattened. She has auditory hallucinations, ideas of reference and influence, varying delusions of persecution. She says she is tormented and torn to pieces; she feels that people put unpleasant sexual ideas into her head. She suffers from vague and wolly thoughts. She speculates on religious themes; she is puzzled about the meaning of life. When the investigation began, she was no better in all those respects and was, in addition, more impulsive. (Laing and Esterson, 1970: P51).

The Kings

Hazel is sixteen. She was admitted to hospital in a catatonic state, said nothing, would not move or eat. She appeared very frightened.

When she began to speak, she said in whispers that she was afraid that her mother wanted to poison her. She also thought that the girls at school said she was silly and stupid, and that she wanted to murder her brothers. (Laing and Esterson, 1970: P221).

The statements above represent actual clinical diagnoses of particular familial members. In each case, there is reference to 'abnormality' as well as irrationality in thought processes. In other words, indecies of schizophrenia have been delimited. Here are diagnoses of abnormal behaviour coextensive with unreasonable expressions - here are accounts of 'deviant' behaviour.
It is necessary, though, to suspend judgement as to the existence of such behaviour, to look at these cases more closely to see how persons construct their worlds. Initially, it is important to realize that both Lucie and Maya, as well as Hazel, are members of social groups, families; it would seem appropriate to look at interaction patterns within such groups. A useful point of departure is constituted by a specific question on one family: to what extent is Maya’s schizophrenic experience and behaviour intelligible in the light of the process and praxis of her family? (Laing and Esterson, 1970:32).

Constructive Relocation

It is argued that the proper response to such a query ought to be grounded in a recognition of "schizophrenia" as representative of a constructive human response to a series of major contradictions as the crucial dynamics of patterns of interaction in those families. The pertinent question, thus, becomes what is of importance in dealing with such patterns?

In looking at the Abbot family, Maya’s position, initially, is representative of a response to equivocation on the part of her parents. By the age of eighteen, she was very successful at academic work. To such success, her parents responded with pride. Yet, at the same time, they seemed to express an anxious concern for her. She was too clever and too much of a hard worker. Constant reading
would bring her no enjoyment. (Laing and Esterson, 1970: P35).

Not only is parental ambivalence operative here, it should be recognized that since cleverness and hard work are two correlates to academic success, criticizing both of them should, in Maya's terms, be viewed as criticizing their concomitant success. Recall, though, parental praise of success.

This ambivalence was not the only characteristic of the Abbot parents. Maya was also in a situation of unwanted control - control which she recognized, but which, when referred to was seen by her parents as an indication of her insanity. In part of the therapeutic session, Maya seemed sure of no need to remain in hospital, yet she believed her mother was trying to keep her in. Her mother's reply was:

"I think Maya is - I think Maya recognizes that - whatever she really wanted for her good I'd do - wouldn't I - no reservations in any way - I mean if there are any changes to be made I'd gladly make them unless it was absolutely impossible."

(Laing and Esterson, 1970: P43)

Here, two factors are important: Mrs. Abbot's assumption that she knows what Maya wanted as against what Maya really wanted: in contrast to Maya, she knows what Maya wants and would be willing to provide for only those wants. Maya, in other words, does not know what she wants. Yet this is clearly not the case.

Further, Maya was quite sure that her parents were
forcing their opinions' on her and were attempting to destroy her mind. This very recognition of hers was deemed also to represent her illness.

What seems to be taking place is an effort at mystification, an attempt to deny Maya's praxis.

It was both inappropriate and insane for Maya, an adult, to think that she knew what she wanted. When to this is added the ambivalence earlier referred to, it may be seen how an important context for her 'withdrawal' was constructed. A negation of self, an absence of self confirmation grounded in ambivalence or contradiction, would be associated with construction of the self for the self. That Maya's 'being' became primarily a self for the self can be seen from her insistence that her seeking of refuge in books was a response to parental intrusion. (Laing and Esterson, 1970: P35).

Maya's case could be represented: She was caught in a conflict between her striving for autonomy and a perpetual need of a social structural process (parents) to mould the person socio-psychologically.

Nowhere is such a state of affairs more appropriately exemplified than in the Blair family. According to Mrs. Blair, not only is her husband a constant guard of Lucie's behaviour in an acute sense, not only must she give account of every action she performs beyond the confines of the Blair house, but she was even discouraged in terms of thinking about a career. On a specific occasion, when she
endeavoured to entertain some friends, Mr. Blair snubbed them and criticized her. (Laing and Esterson, 1970: P55).

Lucie's great dilemma is one in which she is confronted with a calculated effort to destroy any dynamics of self in striving for autonomy. Such action was firmly grounded in contradiction. While in Mr. Blair's absence, Mrs. Blair would tell Lucie about Mr. Blair's calculated efforts to destroy her striving for independence; she generally does not agree with Lucie when Lucie says the same things, even in his absence. In addition, it has been agreed between them (Mr. and Mrs. Blair) for many years that when he is present, Mrs. Blair must side with him. (Laing and Esterson, 1970: P56).

Thus, attribution to Mr. Blair precedes on one occasion confirmation, and on another, its absence. Lucie is the recipient of confirmation associated with contradiction in attribution.

Contradictory attribution, though, is not everything with which Lucie has to contend. Not only does Mrs. Blair recognize that Mr. Blair is averse to the independence of women, but she also blames Lucie for not recognizing this quality of his and, further, for not preventing herself from becoming angry, excited or upset about it. (Laing and Esterson, 1970: P70).

The complexity of Mrs. Blair's behaviour becomes: Lucie must face Mrs. Blair's inconsistency in her variability of attribution to Mr. Blair. She must also cope with
Mrs. Blair's apparent recognition of Mr. Blair's irrationality and, crucially, her endorsement of it. This seems to be Lucie's confrontation with great unreason, punctuated by inconsistency in confirmation. She provides a clear indication of the negative aspect of inconsistency and, in so doing, points to an effort at mystification:

"I can't trust what I see. It doesn't get backed up. It doesn't get confirmed in any way - just left to drift you know. I think that's what my trouble is. Anything I might say it has no backing up. It's all due to imagination you know. It's just put a stop to, cast away sort of thing, whether it's because I know some truth about things and yet I can't defend it - I don't think I've got a real grasp of my situation - what can I do....?"

(Laing and Esterson, 1970: P58)

Even though Lucie is deemed schizophrenic, she presents quite an intelligible verbalization of her state of affairs. Is it not significant then that not only should she ask what could she do, but should also report that she was tormented, torn to pieces and confused about the meaning of life or that she speculated on religious matters? The response is yes: these reports are coextensive with constructive action on her part, and represent instances of praxis. Lucie's question is significant not only because it seems to be indicative of a state of engulfment within the Blair family's interaction patterns. It would also appear to be a pointer to engulfment within all three families. In this regard, Laing argues that the impression gained from comparing families of schizophrenics with other families is that they are relatively closed units and that the future
patient is completely enclosed within them. In no family was this so much the case as with the Kings. (Laing and Esterson, 1970:PP224-225). Hazel's confrontation in this group is with an almost total negation of her self. As a person, she is not credited with the ability of thinking for herself. Yet, she is very definitive of the need of her autonomy. The point here is that there is a conflict between Hazel's need of protectiveness and a clear cut rejection of such a need.

Hazel's great difficulty is that she had never been allowed to go out with her father because, according to Mrs. King, he could not be trusted. (Laing and Esterson, 1970:PP225). She had always been under the constant guide or control of her grandfather, Mrs. King's father. The important question becomes: why the duality in protectiveness and control, and was Hazel appreciative of it? Reference must be made to Mrs. King for an answer to the initial part of this question. Mrs. King argues that Hazel prefers such protectiveness; further, she knows that Hazel expresses such preference because she has the same feelings as Hazel; she has no desire to seek independence of her mother; this is the way Hazel feels. Hazel neither wants friends nor likes meeting people, but dislikes being by herself when going to and from school. Yet Hazel, with complete certainty, expresses no need of protectiveness or control. (Laing and Esterson, 1970:PP225-226).

The factor to be noted here is Hazel's assumed need of
independence and its association with an effort to mystify. Mrs. King seemed to want to dominate Hazel and used her father (Hazel's grandfather) as an instrument. Hazel was thus confronted with a dual negation of self. This provides an important instance of praxis on Mrs. King's part.

It may be asked whether in the light of such negation it is not significant that Hazel upon admission to hospital was catatonic - that she said nothing, would not move or eat - that she looked frightened and, importantly, she said in whispers that someone was trying to poison her? The response is that it certainly is. Her withdrawal and fear may be seen as representative of a constructive process of a self for the self, expressed within a context of negation. Her state, no different from Lucie's and Maya's 'schizophrenia' may be seen: contradiction — inconsistent confirmation — (self for the self) — constructive relocation.

The point is that while behaviour viewed as schizophrenic may well be termed 'deviant,' it takes place within a context of action of persons in relation to each other. To the extent that deviant behaviour has objective 'facticity' this facticity is both negotiated and emergent. Deviance is not a reified entity.

**Labelling by Persons**

Attention should now be turned to other patterns of interaction relevant to constructive relocation. Suitable points of departure for their examination are once more thought to be represented by the families themselves. It
is to Maya's case that initial attention will be granted. Maya, until she was eight years old, was very close to her father. The emotional bond that had existed between them was a close one. At the age of eight, she left home. When she returned to reside permanently with her parents, she demonstrated, in their terms, a strange form of selfishness, an aspect of behaviour inconsistent with that she expressed prior to departure. Her parents' major complaint was that she was no longer their little girl. For instance, the activities in which she formerly engaged with her father, she wanted to do by herself. Reading the Bible had become a personal act, nor did she express a desire to pray in his company any more. At meal times she distanced herself from her father. Both swimming and going for long walks had become personal acts. (Laing and Esterson, 1970: P34).

Such aspects of her behaviour, seen as expressive of the opposite of those prior to departure, were interpreted as constitutive of the initial acts of her 'illness.'

Important in this context is parental labelling of Maya and her position within the family unit. Recall also Mrs. Abbot's assumption as to what Maya wanted. Add to this that Maya was still thought of as a little girl. It ought to be remembered, too, that Maya saw her escape in books, an aspect of behaviour also deemed inappropriate.

The point of putting all these factors together is to attempt to show that the Abbot family represented a social group that contained an authority structure within which
power and its absence were clearly delimited. Only the possessors of power defined what was 'normal' and interpreted what represented abnormality. Not being their little girl was a parental definition; it was a first sign of 'illness.' Logically enough, though, Maya, once she was advancing in age, could not have been expected to be 'their little girl.' The factor important here is power to label and define. It was not, however, that there was power to label in an initial sense on the part of Abbot parents. The seeking of refuge in her books was further labelled as starving herself of enjoyment; this necessitated her removal from them. Yet recall Abbot parental pride in academic success.

Labelling, then, associated with power and contradiction in authority structures, is an important aspect of the context within which constructive relocation is expressed. It is Lucie's case, however, that is thought to provide an example of the subtle operation of power associated with contradiction. Recall both Mrs. Blair's recognition and reporting of Mr. Blair's control of Lucie. Lucie was also made aware of this by her. Importantly, though, that was done in Mr. Blair's absence. In addition, there was an agreement that in his presence he be supported. Simply put, there was a tridimensionality to Mr. Blair's power. It gained its instrumentality through Mrs. Blair's recognition of it, her support of it in the presence of its origin and, importantly, her refusal to acknowledge its
recognition by the person to whom it is applied.

Criticism of Clinical Labelling

Maya, Lucie and Hazel had all been diagnosed as schizophrenic; they had further been institutionalized by the 'technical authoritative competence' of psychiatry. Such competence ought not to go unquestioned. It would appear to represent institutional confirmation of parental labelling. This may be understood: there are two aspects of behaviour of these persons which are apparently symptoms, 'ordinary' behaviour conflicting with particular views of families; e.g. striving for autonomy. Mystification, to which such behaviour becomes subject, gives rise to greater confusion. Thus, the second aspect of behaviour is seen as 'bizarre.' The orthodox psychiatrist, failing to examine the family context, attends to the second aspect only. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:166).

What is to be seen is an example of criticism of the construction and use of knowledge that does not treat persons as persons. This criticism gains significance in that orthodox psychiatry seeks to understand the present in terms of the past. This is a way of not studying how persons construct their worlds.

To argue, though, against studying the present in terms of the past by no means de-emphasizes the importance of the past. Persons are interpretive. Decisive, therefore, to interpretation are internalization and reflectivity. At issue is what persons survive from the past. (Collier,
The emphasis, in the therapeutic situation, of a reciprocity of movement between (a) self and (b) self and system, also reflects criticism. Reciprocation should occur in a movement from (1) self and system to self and (2) from self to self and system. (Esterson, 1972: P225). Of interest here is that in the therapeutic relationship, the perception of the therapist should be a constantly changing one which ought to be grounded in self reflection. Phenomenologically, once the therapist is committed to letting the 'context of situation' be revealed, he should constantly question his view of situations or phenomena he is examining. It is in so doing that he would be able to map the 'social and historical achievement' to which much of orthodox psychiatry unjustifiably lays claim: in its clinical orientation with a basis in a natural scientific approach there is little prominence granted to how persons construct their worlds. There is every indication, however, of reference to entities which may appear to be amenable to convenient categorization; e.g., impoverished affect.

Hence, what in therapeutic practice may seem to represent objectivity may be no more than subjectivity clothed in methodological contradiction which confirms and compounds negative labelling.

Laing may, therefore, be seen as requesting that the conscious or unconscious institutionalized 'repression' in the name of therapy which has borrowed, and uses, procedures unsuitable to its practice be modified.
This does imply a need of revisionism, and raises the important question as to what is attempted in Laing's study of patterns of interaction in these families.
Footnotes

1. The use of process is not the same as Laing's.

2. The reference here is to the clinical diagnosis of schizophrenia.

3. The reference to deviant behaviour bears some resemblance to:

   "Human behaviour is deviant to the extent that it comes to be viewed as involving a personally discreditable departure from a group's normative expectations, and it elicits interpersonal or collective reactions which serve to "isolate," "treat," "correct" or "punish" individuals engaged in such behaviour."


4. The use of term families refers to persons in authority.
CHAPTER IV

Demystification

Reification

The task which Laing seems to have embarked upon is one of demystification. It is comprised both of an effort to resubjectivize the mystifiers and those subject to demystification as well. To deal with this question of demystification, it is initially necessary to attend to reification.

Reification represents an apprehension of the products of human action as though they were not so produced. In consciousness, relationships between persons and their worlds are reversed. Persons, the producers of their worlds, are seen as products: human action becomes an epiphenomenon of non-human processes.

"The reified world is by definition a dehumanized world. It is experienced by man as a strange facticity, an opus alienum over which he has no control rather than as the opus proprium of his own productive activity."

(Berger and Luckmann, 1966: P89).

Reification, then, is dehumanized consciousness.

To better understand it, reference should be made to three levels of consciousness: the prereflective, the reflective, and the theoretical. (Berger and Pullberg, 1965: P204). The first concerns persons' direct presence in the world, the second relates to reflective awareness of the first. Out of this reflective consciousness may arise
various conceptual formulations as to one's presence in the world. It is on the second and third levels that reification can occur. Its foundations, importantly, lie at the prereflective level. It seems clear that the reference to levels of consciousness indicates a link between thought and socio-historical location.

Reification, then, dissolves this link. The relationship between persons, the producers, and their products is broken. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: P69).

Reification thus reduces the range of reflectivity and choice in persons and automatizes conduct. It converts the concrete to the abstract and concretizes the abstract. As such, it replaces action by process.¹ A reified consciousness is, therefore, one of mechanical causality. (Berger and Pullberg, 1965: PP207-208).

To speak, however, of a break between human authorship and its products is to refer to alienation, representative of a person's consciousness, both of himself and his world, as estranged externality. This alienated consciousness, further, is false - the actual means by which it and its world have been produced are forgotten. Once such false consciousness achieves a theoretical formulation, it operates as mystification. (Berger and Pullberg, 1965: PP204-205).

Mystification

Laing's view closely approximates that expressed in the last statement. Mystification entails substituting
false issues for actual issues. (Laing, 1965:P344).

The relevance of mystification to the family context inheres in issues concerned with the rights and obligations each member of a family has in regard to others. Mystification is especially powerful when the rights-obligations relationship operates such as some persons appear to possess the right to determine the experience of other persons, or similarly when persons seem under obligation to others to experience or not experience themselves, their worlds and those others in particular ways. (Laing, 1965:P346). Mystification, therefore, also represents an attempt to impose consciousness.

Demystifying

Any effort to demystify should entail: 1. a pointer to how persons define their situations; 2. importantly, it should also provide an indication of aspects of imposition of knowledge. Central to this effort is the treatment of praxis as praxis rather than as process. It would thus involve the elucidation of ways in which persons seek to control and dominate other persons, as well as making those others aware of such control and domination.

It can be argued that Laing's efforts to demystify is coextensive with an attempt to help remove repression within the family. He takes his point of departure from the "experience of the most manifest victims of psychological repression." (Collier, 1977:P165). Collier further states
that he concentrates on the family in order to use phenomenology as a theory on which the practice of liberation at the micro-social level can be based.

Questions and Implication

The possibility, though, of an alternative, non-pathogenic, non-repressive organization of micro-social structures is far from being theoretically worked out by Laing.

The further issue arises as to what extent can micro-social aspects of liberation be separated from other aspects, and how can they be affected by the micro-social? In addition, what are the pitfalls of separation, and to what degree is Laing so associated? (Collier, 1977: P166).

The twin issue raised is that of the link between the micro and micro-social, as well as change in social structures.
Footnotes

1. The use here is the same as Laing's.
CHAPTER V

Laing and Schutz

The foregoing references to the socio-psychological - its delimitation and exemplification have been used to provide critical appraisal.

An effort will now be made to use aspects of its moments for the purpose of providing reflective or "in house" criticism. In this regard, it seems useful to relate (1) Laing and Schutz, and (2) Laing and symbolic interactionism*, as well as (3) Laing and the labelling perspective of deviance.

It is to (1) that reference will initially be made. It seems useful to link both Laing and Schutz to sociology. Both have roots in phenomenology. It is, perhaps, within such a context that they can both be related to the sociological tradition emanating from Max Weber,1 which views meaning as significant to understanding social interaction. (Howarth-Williams, 1977: P174).

The point of departure for a comparison is a reference to Schutz's notion of common sense constructs. Common sense constructs are those with which "the wide-awake grown-up man looks at the intersubjective world of daily life within which and upon which he acts as a man amidst his fellow men." (Schutz, 1962: P7). Emanating from common sense constructs is common sense knowledge. (Schutz, 1962: P8. Basic to common sense knowledge are three specific attributes:

*The reference here is to the Chicago and Iowa Schools.
1. the reciprocity of perspectives;  
2. the social origin of knowledge;  
3. the social distribution of knowledge. (Schutz, 1962: Pi).

The social origin of knowledge connotes the idea that it is only a small part of an individual's knowledge of the world which originates within his experience. The greater part is socially derived.

The social distribution of knowledge indicates that knowledge has varying degrees of clarity, distinctness, precision and familiarity. Both what a person knows, as well as the manner in which he knows the "same fact," differs from his neighbour. In a reciprocal sense, persons know some things which others do not. (Schutz, 1962:PP13-14).

In regard to the reciprocity of perspectives, Schutz argues that a person knows and takes two things for granted: that intelligent others exist, which suggests that the objects of the world are available to their knowledge - objects are either known to, or can be known by them. Secondly, the same object connotes something different to that person and those others.

The basis to such difference is that one persons's spatio-temporal existence, his "here," is not the same as another's "here." In a reciprocal sense, certain objects, while they are within the reach of some persons, i.e., their seeing, hearing - are not within that of others.
"My and my fellow-man's biographically determined situations, and therewith our respective purposes at hand and our respective systems of relevances originating in such purposes, must differ, at least to a certain extent."

(Schutz, 1962:Pl1)

Schutz points out, however, that this difference in perspectives can be overcome by two basic idealizations: the idealization of the interchangeability of standpoints and that of congruency of systems of relevance. (Schutz, 1962:PP11-12). The first indicates that I as a person take it for granted — and assume as well that another person does the same — that if someone's 'here' becomes mine I shall experience objects with the same typicality as he does. Further, the same objects would be within my reach as his. The congruency of systems of relevance indicates that in the absence of alternative information, it is both taken for granted by me and another person that our perspectival differences are irrelevant to the purposes of either of us. We both assume — 'until further notice' — that our selection of potentially common objects and their attributes takes place in identical ways.

Schutz goes on to argue that it is these common sense constructs, first level\(^2\) constructs, which constitute the basis to the constructs of social science, constructs of the second level. Given this view, it is necessary to look at his statements about the relevance of social science to the question of subjective interpretation of meaning for the social actor: the interpretation of action and its settings
in terms of the actor (Schutz, 1962; P34).

The issue raised here is by no means simple. The subjective meaning action has for the actor is both unique and individual; it emanates from his unique and individual biographically determined situation; social reality has a specific meaning and relevance to particular persons. (Schutz, 1970; PP272-273). An attempt, therefore, to grapple with this issue should involve further reference to first and second level constructs.

Schutz states that since first level constructs of common sense experience refer to subjective elements, the 'Verstehen' or understanding of the actor's action must entail reference to the subjective meaning action has for the actor. (Schutz, 1970; P274).

The issue, thus, with which social science is confronted is how is it possible to study subjective meaning scientifically? (Schutz, 1962; P35).

Three factors are important here: A distinction in regard to Verstehen, the attitude of the social scientist, as well as postulates for the construction of concepts of human action. One aspect of Verstehen refers to the experiential form of common sense knowledge. The other refers to an epistemological problem, while a third aspect refers to a method peculiar to social science. (Schutz, 1970; P274). For purposes of convenience, these three aspects will be referred to as Verstehen (1), (2) and (3) respectively.
To Schutz, the attitude of the social scientist should be that of a disinterested observer of the social world. The observed situation should be merely the object of his contemplation. He should not participate in it, but look at it with the same detached equanimity as the natural scientist views occurrences in the laboratory. (The adopting of an attitude of disinterest enables the social scientist to detach himself from, and supercede his biographical situation within the social world. This superceding places him in a scientific situation, within which the scientific problem alone determines what is and is not relevant to its solution.

"...the scientific problem is the "locus" of all possible constructs relevant to its solution."

(Schutz, 1970:PP275-276)

Schutz's postulates are:

1. the postulate of subjective interpretation.
2. the postulate of adequacy.
3. the postulate of logical consistency. (Schutz, 1970:PP278-279).

The postulate of subjective interpretation requires (a) a construction of a model of an 'individual mind,' and (b) a decision to be made in regard to what qualities are to be attributed to it, such as an explanation of observed "facts" reflect the "activity of such a mind in understandable relation." The central theme here seems to be that the imputed contents of consciousness must emanate from the activity of such consciousness.

The postulate of adequacy requires that the constructs
be so devised as their indication of acts performed by an actor is understandable to both that actor and his fellows in terms of common sense interpretation of everyday life. The idea conveyed here seems to be that there ought to be consistency between scientific constructs and the constructs of common sense experience of social reality.

Logical consistency denotes that the conceptual framework implied in the constructs of the social scientist ought to be devised with the highest degree of clarity and distinctness. The key point here is that these constructs should be set up in accordance with the principles of formal logic. The fulfillment of this condition would both allow for the objective validity of constructs as well as establish their status as scientific rather than common sense thought.

The important theme to be identified in regard to the postulates is the satisfying of the need of subjective interpretation as well as principles of "objective" scientific procedure.

The following, then, constitute the basis to comparison between Laing and Schutz.
1. common sense constructs.
2. Verstehen.
3. the attitude of the social scientist.
4. postulates for the construction of concepts of human action.

They all concern the important question of objectivation or intersubjectivity.
In an application of Laingian insights to Schutz, Howarth-Williams states that Laing can be used empirically to question and reject the assumptions behind Verstehen (1). He also states that Schutz ignored Verstehen (2), an aspect on which Laing's theoretical work has a bearing. Further, when it is brought to bear, Verstehen (3) becomes untenable and collapses. (Howarth-Williams, 1977; P180). Alternatively expressed, the argument is: Laing's analysis of processes of interaction when placed against the assumptions of Verstehen (1) make it untenable; his elucidation of the dialectic when placed against Verstehen (2) allows for the collapse of Verstehen (3).

Howarth-Williams considers the categories, reciprocity of perspectives and the social distribution of knowledge, and notes the assumption of congruence of systems of relevance between perspectives. He then uses the following example to regard such an assumption as dangerous: given a family whose members are F (father) M (mother) and D (daughter) Schutz's assumption would imply that - unless there is reason to believe otherwise - F's view of M is empirically identical to D's. F's and D's different biographical situations are irrelevant. This, he sees as false: one need not refer to 'Sanity, Madness and the Family' to know that this is so. (Howarth-Williams, 1977; P181). The point here is that Schutz denies the uniqueness of persons' perspectives, whereas Laing asserts it. On the one hand, there is reference to a fundamental homogeneity; on the
other, to heterogeneity. (Howarth-Williams, 1977; p182).

In regard to the social distribution of knowledge, Schutz rightly notes the differentiation to the possession of knowledge. His notion, though, of distribution of knowledge is viewed as inadequate. Distribution is more pervasive than his use implies. The significant degree of disjunction of knowledge of the "same fact" points to the inadequacy of the term, social distribution. (Howarth-Williams, p183).

The point of interest about this comparison is Schutz's inattention to the significant existence of contradiction.

In reference to his view of the disinterested attitude of the social scientist, it is argued that social reality is constituted by the dialectic. The very study of this reality is an aspect of the dialectic. Its relationship (study) therefore, to other aspects of reality is a dialectical one. Schutz, however, implies:

"that the observer does not exist in a dialectical relation to what he observes. His negation of himself relies in the fact that although he recognizes the intersubjective (and ... synonymously dialectical) nature of social reality, he thinks a social scientist can simply step outside this reality and view it objectively."

(Howarth-Williams, 1977; p184)

Schutz is advancing a claim to intersubjectivity devoid of the dialectic.

So far, critical comparative reference - through the use of Laing's studies of interaction - has been made to Verstehen (1) and Verstehen (2). Attention now turns to
Verstehen (3). Of relevance here is the postulate of logical consistency, the compatibility of constructs with the principles of formal logic - such compatibility warranting the objective validity of these constructs. It is precisely because compatibility warrants objectivity that there is something wrong with this postulate. (Howarth-Williams, 1977: P185).

Not only is the dialectic evidenced as contradiction in the ontological sphere of social reality, it is manifested epistemologically as well. Epistemologically, therefore, the verbalization of accounts fully compatible with the principles of formal logic denies the ontological nature of that which it is a verbalization. If the postulate of logical consistency is to grasp social reality in its actual ontological status - intelligible totalization of varying praxes - it would negate itself in its inevitable superseding of the principles of formal logic. As such, it would defeat its own object, regulating the understanding of social reality. It would itself be contradictory, only though, in an inert, non-dialectical manner.

The attempt, thus, to give Verstehen (3) an analytic objective epistemological basis creates more problems than it solves. (Howarth-Williams, 1977: PP186-187).
Footnotes


2. First level would seem to refer to what the actor knows from his own perspective.

3. The use of the term scientific problem would seem to refer to aspects of social interaction which are being investigated.

4. Verstehen, as a basis of comparison, is implied rather than direct.

5. Assumptions would seem to refer to Schutz's discussions of idealizations as a means of overcoming the actors' perspectival differences in common sense knowledge, while references to Verstehen (2) and (3) appear to be to investigative methods, specifically the disinterested attitude of the social scientist and the postulate of logical consistency.
CHAPTER VI

Laing and Symbolic Interactionism

The Substantive Links

Laing's relationship to symbolic interactionism may appropriately be looked at by referring to statements of Mead's, Thomas's, Blumer's and Kuhn's.

Mead sought to account for the social in the individual through statements about the mind and the self. In dealing with the mind, his three terms, gesture, thought, and meaning are seen as important.

Gestures are stages of human action which result in adjustment of responses to those of other human beings. (Mead, 1934:PP4-5). The gesture is, however, not consistent with mere organismic reaction. It acquires significance because it is part of a social interactive process within which "the individual's content and consciousness of the flow of meaning depends on his thus taking the attitude of the other toward his own gestures." (Mead, 1934:P47). From this statement, he infers that the gesture arouses two responses: one, explicit, from the person to whom it is addressed; the other, implicit, from the person who makes it. It is this implicit nature of response that Mead likens to thought.

Of importance here is thought, an individual process that originated socially. Mead conceptualizes thought as the evocation within the individual of the response which he is calling forth in another individual. It is a process of an
individual's participating in the action of another individual, or to use Mead's term, "a taking of the role of the other, a tendency to act as the other person acts." (Mead, 1934: P73).

It can be inferred, then, that if a person, through the implicit nature of response, takes the role of another individual, and thus acts as that individual, that he understands that individual. Mead refers to this understanding as meaning the common response in one's self as well as in the other person (Mead, 1934: P73).

The references to implicit response and taking the role of the other would appear to indicate that persons play active interpretive roles in the process of social interaction. To provide, however, a more forceful indication of such roles, attention should be turned to the self.

The important basis to the construction of the self is the process of "communication." This process is aimed by a person not only at others, but also at himself as well. (Mead, 1934: P139). Operative here is a process of acting back on one's self, a reflective process which gives to a person both subject and object qualities. (Mead, 1934: P136). The interpretation of this subject object delimitation as a means of viewing persons as playing active roles is two fold. A person's subject nature is seen in his initial action. What gives him his object nature is the reflective process that emanates from responses of others to whom his initial action is directed. The object nature does not represent mere
reaction: the person acts back on himself.

No clearer statement of such acting back and its implication for the playing of an active role by the person could have been provided than the one Mead uses to respond to the question: How can an individual get outside of himself (experientially) in such a way as to become an object to himself? In his reply, he states:

"The apparatus of reason would not be complete unless it swept itself into its own analysis of the field of experience; or unless the individual brought himself into the same experiential field as that of other individual selves in relation to whom he acts in any given situation."

(Mead, 1934: P138)

Especially important in this response are the expressions, "own analysis," "apparatus of reason," and "individual." These expressions would appear to indicate that the ability to actively interpret can be attributed to persons for the purpose of understanding their action.

It is necessary to refer to one other statement of Mead's as a means of explicating the interpretive processes that take place in social interaction.

Mead argued that in the union of self as subject and self as object a complete self emerges. The complete self reflects the social process in its entirety, and each of the elementary selves that make up this complete self reflects the various aspects of the social process in which persons are involved.

"...the various elementary selves which constitute or are organized into a complete self are the various aspects of the structure of that complete self
answering to the various aspects of the structure of the social process as a whole. The structure of the complete self is thus a reflection of the complete social process."

(Mead, 1934: P144)

Since, therefore, the unity and structure of the complete self reflects the unity and structure of the complete social process, it should follow that in so far as persons exist in social worlds, these worlds are constructed by those persons themselves - persons engaged in negotiated behaviour through the assignment of interpretation and meaning.

This is an appropriate point at which to be reminded that the "context of situation" is not a self generated static entity, or that the nexal family exists on the basis of how its members interpret their world.

The merit of Mead's statements lies in recognizing that in so far as an objectivated world may be seen to exist, it emerges from its investment with meaning: persons are not reified entities.1

Blumer sees a number of implications arising from Mead's statements. These implications are best attended to in regard to self interaction.

Blumer argues that the possession of a self endows persons with a "mechanism" of self interaction or self indication - a mechanism used in the formation and guidance of their own conduct. As such, a person can designate things to himself, he can choose. Further, he can analyze and make judgements about such designations (Blumer, 1966: P535).
With the mechanism of self interaction, persons are not mere respondents whose behaviour emanates from what play upon them from the "inside, outside" - or both. They act, instead, toward their world. They interpret what confront them and organize action on the basis of this interpretation. (Blumer, 1966: P536).

Self interaction by placing a person "over against" his world rather than simply in it allows him to make sense of it through his own definition. (Blumer, 1966: P537).

Blumer points out that since interpretation by persons takes place on the basis of objects designated, meaning acquired and decisions made, it should be viewed from the standpoint of such persons. Reliance on such categories as "social system" "culture," "norms," "values," "status positions," and "institutional organization," step above persons (acting units) thus negating the interpretive processes through which they construct their action. (Blumer, 1962: PP188-189).

Here is an implicit - yet important - request that the subjective in persons not be dissolved. It is not that Blumer overly emphasizes the subject: he does not deny the existence of structure.

Symbolic interactionism does recognize the presence of structure. Structure, however, constitutes merely the framework within which social action can occur. It may well set the conditions for, it is not the determinant, though, of social action. Further, both structure and changes within
it are constructed by persons not "forces" which leave those persons out of account. (Blumer, 1962:PP189-190).

The most important elements confronting acting units in situations are the actions of other acting units. In modern society with its increasing networks of action, situations in which the actions of persons are not regularized or standardized are often constructed. Concomitantly, processes of interpretation used by persons may vary and shift greatly. In the light of this, Blumer argues that social action may move beyond or diverge from existing structure. (Blumer, 1962:PP90).

Symbolic interactionism would thus encompass a range of generic forms of interaction-cooperation, conflict, consensus, disagreement. (Blumer, 1966:PP538).

Blumer's statements are significant: they would appear to point to the definitional basis to which a person comes to have "his" own perspective of the world in which he lives, his sense of appropriation.

It is to the comments of W.I. Thomas that reference will now be made, not merely to point to the sense of appropriation, but also to solidify the stance that persons are engaged in actively constructing social relationships through the meaning invested in their situations.

Thomas takes the view that the fundamental issue for social science is the study of subjective behaviour, as it is revealed at both individual and group levels. (Thomas, 1937: P1).
Adjustive behaviour does not take place, though, in a statistical manner. It does not operate mechanistically whereby cause and effect become isolable objective factors, and behaviour is observed to be objective. The factor of subjective experience intervenes. Adjustment takes place on the basis of inference. (Thomas, 1931:PP189-190).

Also important is that persons in their efforts at adjustment are never sure of the condition(s) to which they are adjusting. It is not possible to determine all the factors which may exist in a situation.

To the extent, though, that adjustive behaviour with its inferential and subjective aspects has interpretive components, "if men define situations as real they are real in their consequences." 4

Not unlike Thomas, Kuhn’s concern is with the task of social science. He states that the social scientist does not view the individual in terms of external factors which play upon him. The individual, instead, gives meaning to those factors on the basis of how they are selected and defined for him by the symbols of his language. Objects, therefore, do not possess intrinsic meaning. Meaning, which is received from culture, is assigned to objects by individuals, through language. (Kuhn, 1956: P23).

Here, Kuhn would appear to be pointing to persons’ ability to interpret as well as to the subjective.

Methodological Divergence Within Symbolic Interactionism

(i) Determinism

Kuhn, however, dissolves the subjective. This may be
seen in his reference to the self. He states that it is through groups whose judgements individuals take into account, and with which they identify themselves as social objects, that self identification occurs. Kuhn’s pointer here is to reference groups.

The self made up of an individual’s attitudes toward himself can be conceived as representing all the responses he might make to the question, "Who am I?" Such a question can be answered only if an individual refers to himself as a member of a group which gives him an identity, refers to those social categories his reference groups deem important to so identifying him, or he evaluates himself on the basis of norms held by his reference groups.

Kuhn further states that the individual’s responses will be made up of attitudinal statements that most appropriately indicate what he will do in any situation - his plans of action. Such statements point to the norms he will invoke for the purposes of defining a situation and determining the role he will play. (Kuhn, 1956:PP43-44).

To Kuhn, then, society is "sui generis." There is no "I." Only objectivation exists. Such a position is viewed as deterministic.

Further indication of this determinism may be seen in regard to Kuhn’s statements about self theory. The self theorist, unlike the symbolic interactionist, defines a theory as a set of interrelated empirically tested generalizations. He is, further, intent on such theory construction.
The self theorist views what the symbolic interactionist calls theory an orientation. (Kuhn, 1956:p22). To Kuhn, a theory is useful to the extent that it is accurate as a basis of prediction.

In a reference to attitude measurement, he presents a clear explication as to what accuracy might mean. Measurement must be standardized, objective and dependable. It ought to be performed such as research carried out under identical conditions can be replicated, thus obtaining the same results. These conditions may be fulfilled through the setting up of agreed-upon concepts for the ordering of plans of action: in formal discourse, individuals convey attitudes in variant non-comparable ways. (Kuhn, 1956:p225).

(Meltzer and Petras, 1970:p10), Quite appropriately, appraise the position of self theory: self theory does not account for either impulses or the "I-me" components of the self. The self becomes solely a me, and conduct is held to be wholly predictable (in principle) on the basis of internalized expectations. Once the actor's reference groups are known, his self attitudes can be predicted. In turn, if his self attitudes are known, his behaviour can be predicted.

Antecedent conditions determine the person's self, and the self determines his conduct.

Self theory thus preserves a premise viewed by many as essential to the scientific enterprise, that of determinism. In so doing, though, it ignores the processual character of the self.
(ii) Process

It is Blumer who has attempted to deal with this processual character. He criticizing the conduct of sociological inquiry for its lack of what he terms conceptual guidance or the uncritical acceptance of concepts. (Blumer, 1954:p9). This state of affairs is compatible with conceptual ambiguity, a basic deficiency of social theory, which impedes social science investigators from coming to close grips with the empirical world, since they are not sure of what is to be understood.

"Our uncertainty as to what we are referring obstructs us from asking pertinent questions and settling relevant problems for research."

(Blumer, 1954:p5)

The use of concepts in social theory does not rest on precise specification of attributes to be examined. At best, it allows for rough identification; in so doing, it is incapable of distinguishing between what is covered conceptually and what is not. Further, it encourages theoretical formulation with only slender connection to the empirical world. Consequently, it severely restricts conceptual growth and refinement which may emanate from the findings of empirical research. (Blumer, 1954:p5). The upshot of all of this is that direct empirical observation is vitiated.

Blumer contends that efforts to remove conceptual ambiguity by such means as operational definitions, experimental construct of concepts, factorial analysis, the formulation of deductive mathematical systems, would not be
suitable. They are unable to isolate the specific instances of empirical content and further identify this content by bringing together these instances in a class with a common distinguishing feature. (Blumer, 1954: P6).

What then is Blumer's proposition in regard to investigation? Two things are important here: the distinction between definitive and sensitizing concepts and Blumer's view of the social world as empirical. (Blumer, 1954: P7). A definitive concept refers to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed "bench marks." The definition or bench marks serves to clearly identify individual instances of the class and the composition of that instance covered by the concept. Further, a definitive concept furnishes prescriptions of what to examine.

A sensitizing concept, though not possessing the quality of specification of attributes or bench marks, provides an investigator with a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. It suggests directions along which to look.

The empirical social world is the "natural" social world of everyday experience. Here, every object of consideration—a person, group, institution—possesses a distinctive, particular or unique character and exists in a context that is similarly distinctive. It is this distinctive aspect of empirical instance which requires the use of sensitizing rather than definitive concepts.
"In handling an empirical instance of a concept for purposes of study or analysis, we do not, and apparently cannot meaningfully, confine our consideration of it strictly to what is covered by the abstract reference to the concept."

(Blumer, 1954:PP7-8)

The investigator should not disregard what gives each instance its peculiar aspect and restrict himself to what it may have in common with other instances in a class covered by the concept. What is common - what the concept refers to - is expressed in a distinctive manner in each empirical instance and can be approached by accepting and working through the distinctive expression.6

The point here is that since the immediate data of observation in the form of distinctive expressions differ, in approaching the empirical instances an investigator cannot rely on benchmark or fixed objective traits. (Blumer, 1954:P8).

Laing's Relevance

It is clear that Blumer is recommending the use of sensitizing rather than definitive concepts in sociological inquiry. Concomitantly, he cautions against an inability to acknowledge and examine the particularity and distinctiveness of social phenomena.

It is in these respects that there is an affinity to the Laingian recognition and explication of heterogeneity of consciousness as well as the critique of knowledge, that seeks to objectify.
What may thus be inferred is that while Mead, Thompson, Blumer, Kuhn and Laing can be seen as viewing persons as interpretive, reflective and engaged in meaningful conduct, Laing stands with Mead, Thomas and Blumer, rather than Kuhn.

Difference, in so far as Kuhn, Mead, Blumer and Thomas are concerned, conventionally represented by the Iowa and Chicago schools of symbolic interactionism, may be conceptualized: the Iowa school conceptualizes self and society structurally, whereas the Chicago school views them processually. Social action on the one hand is seen as released, and role performance represents role taking. On the other, it is seen as constructed and role performance represents role making.

It is to role making and construction, rather than role taking and release that Laing stands closer.

Implication for the Iowa School

Given that the central issue between these schools is methodological, and Laing's empirical demonstration of heterogeneity of consciousness, it would be appropriate to pose the question as to what attributes of the self theory (the Iowa school) is examining, and to see what this query implies.

These may usefully be done by initially attending to:
1. Orientational others.
2. Actual attitude measurement.
3. The assumptions behind (i) measurement, and (ii) the purpose of analysis of measurement.
In a reconsideration of the concept of reference group, Kuhn makes use of the term orientational others. This term concerns:

(a) others to whom an individual is fully, broadly, basically, psychologically and emotionally committed;
(b) others from whom an individual derives his general vocabulary, part of which constitutes his most basic and crucial concepts and categories;
(c) others who have provided, and continue to provide, an individual with the categories of self and other, as well as with meaningful roles to which such provision refers;
(d) others through communication with whom an individual's self conception is maintained, and/or changed. (Kuhn, 1964; P18).

Actual attitude measurement makes use of the twenty statements test. In its administration, each prospective respondent is requested to provide twenty different answers - as if to himself, rather than to someone else - to the question, "Who am I?" (Tucker, 1966; P350).

One assumption behind such measurement is that should a respondent answer as if he were responding to himself, he should do so as an object. Another is that to respond, the person should know who he is and should provide this knowledge in words. Self theory further assumes that an individual's knowledge of himself will be based on knowledge derived from orientational others in various situations. (Tucker, 1966; P350).
It also posits the generality of the question, "Who am I?" such as responses offered will not be restricted to specific contexts, in particular, testing situations. This assumption is made to allow for the test's predictive utility. (Tucker, 1966: P352).

All these assumptions, viewed separately, are consistent with the self as formulated by self theory.

Attention will now be granted to the assumptions behind analysis. The content of each response is analyzed and thereby placed in either a consensual or non-consensual category. Consensual statements are those which, in order to be understood, are in need of no explanation. (Kuhn, 1956: P244). Eg., "I am a man," "I am a student," "I am a teacher." The assumption here is that consensus is universal in regard to objects identified by these statements. The objects so identified possess a common meaning to all concerned.

Sub-consensual statements refer to attitudes or traits which need to be interpreted by a respondent, such as his attitude relative to others can be determined. Eg., "I am a good student," "I am an angry person." Such statements refer to norms that vary. For their denotation to be grasped the investigator must additionally analyze them. (Kuhn, 1956: P244).

The point about such analysis is that negligible consensus on meaning related to objects identified by these statements exist.

The first issue that arises in regard to what attributes
of the self are being measured is one of situationality. This is concerned with the problem of determining how do social factors (behaviour of others) in the test situation affect the observable behaviour of respondents obtained in that situation. This problem relates to the assumptions of measurement and analysis.

Each assumption, taken separately, would appear not to exhibit contradiction in the theory-analysis relationship. Viewed collectively, contradictions do seem to emerge. Place, for instance, the following together:

1. Self attitudes emanate from a specific context of behaviour, thus they are not meaningful without an explication of that context.

2. Responses to the question, "Who am I?" do not apply to particular situations: they are general (Tucker, 1966:PP354-355).

The second issue relates to content analysis. Recall that it makes use of meaning and object: consensual and non-consensual statements. Recall also (1) the assumption that an individual's knowledge of himself is contained in responses to the "twenty statements test," (2) that it is an individual's own perspective (plans of action) that constitute the point of investigation.

Importantly, though, in the analysis of statements, the investigator imposes meaning on each of them from his own perspective. Such imposition might have been suitable had there been no assumption that the actor's viewpoint or perspective is the point of investigation. Self theory
assumes, though, that the experience of the actor is the point of investigation. The procedures it follows in content analysis, however, appear to contradict this assumption. (Tucker, 1966:PP356-357).

The self theorist-researcher would seem to be using meaning on two different levels. On the one level, the investigator assumes that the individual knows the meaning he gives to himself and he (investigator) gets such meaning from the "twenty statements test." At the other level, meaning is derived by the investigator without taking that individual's perspective into account. He decides, instead, which responses possess consensus in terms of another context (his own, culture) which may not have relevance for the individuals who provide the responses.

The basis of decision making would appear to be common sense. (Tucker, 1966:P357).

Yet, the investigator may do well not to rely on his own common sense understanding for the content analysis of communication. Should he rely on such understanding, it would not be possible for a distinction to be made between what he could understand in view of his theoretical constructs, and what he can understand as a member of the same society or audience in which the communication occurs. (Cicourel, 1964:P155).

The central theme of the aforementioned critical reference is: in the first place, self theory dissolves subjectivity in its determinism. It then proceeds to tap and
analyze assumed attributes of a unitary self, but does not do so. Inevitably, it is faced with the question of relevance of context.

The meaning it derives from investigation, though, stems from its own imposition. It would appear to be examining heterogeneity, but fails to acknowledge this in its own "taken-for-granted" assumptions as to how reality is socially constructed.

The implication, thus, for self theory, the Iowa school, seems clear. In a dual empirical sense - Laing's studies of interaction in families, as well as its own analysis of attitudes - there are indications that the self is a construct neither of a social determinism, nor a determinism imposed on the basis of theoretical formulation.

This reference to imposition raises the issue as to whether sociological investigation can ignore the meaning constructed by actors in their contexts of situation. It is directly related to the wider issue of pursuit of the question of meaning or that of causation.
Footnotes

1. Blumer credits Mead for having reversed traditional assumptions that persons exist in worlds of pre-existing and self constituted objects; the responses to which make up their behaviour, and that their minds and consciousness are original "givens." See Blumer, H., Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead, American Journal of Sociology: Vol. LXXI: No. 5: 1966: P535.


3. Ibid, P5.

4. Ibid, P81.

5. Kuhn states that the social group is paramount for symbolic interaction theory: "...it provides both the language through which interaction takes place and the mutual others with whom interaction occurs. The group is antecedent to the individual and so is its language. As a new individual is inducted into the group, he takes on its objects, whose attributes derive from the group's communicative categories." See Kuhn, M., "The Reference Group Reconsidered," Sociological Quarterly: Volume 5 (Winter) 1964: P14.

6. "We have to accept, develop and use the distinctive expression in order to detect and study the common." (Blumer, H., What is Wrong with Social Theory?, American Sociological Review: Volume 19: Number 1: 1954: P8).

7. Are these attributes, for instance, unitary or heterogeneous?
CHAPTER VII

Laing and the Labelling Perspective of Deviance

Introduction

Attention now turns to the relationship between the labelling or interactionist perspective of deviance and Laing's studies of interaction. The central task here is to initially provide an overview of the perspective as a means of indicating similarities to Laing's studies. This will be followed by an examination of:

(1) Differences between Laing's studies and the perspective.
(2) An examination of criticism of the perspective.
(3) A consideration as to whether criticisms applicable to the perspective are applicable to Laing's studies.
(4) A consideration as to whether Laingian insights may be applied to the perspective.

From the outset, it needs to be pointed out that the labelling approach emanated from themes representative of various theoretical positions. Further, in so far as its proponents offer no unified propositional statement about deviance to be tested, it should be viewed as a perspective. Whatever unity exists lies not in the area of common theories, but common substantive issues for study. (Plummer, 1979:PP86-87).

Overview of the Perspective

The labelling or interactionist perspective claims that its point of analytical departure is not based on the assumption
that consensus on norms and values exist in social groups. (Rubington and Wineberg, 1973: P8). Its stance is grounded, instead, in the following assumptions: social interaction among people and groups takes place on the basis of communication by means of shared symbols which allow such individuals and groups to type each other and to initiate action on the basis of such typing.

The designation of deviance, therefore, or deviant labels represents symbolic tagging that serves to separate and stigmatize those to whom it is applied.

The key point of the perspective is that "deviant" individuals and situations involving deviant behaviour result not simply from discreet acts of wrongdoing or departure from norms, they also reflect patterns and processes of social definition. (Schur, 1971: P4). Neither acts nor individuals are "deviant" in the sense of immutable objective reality. (Schur, 1971: P14). The interactionist perspective thus claims to give analytical significance to the impact on social interaction of definitions of, and attendant action against, individuals or groups. Specifically, its task here is one of seeking to apprehend circumstances under which persons are set apart as deviant. (Rubington and Wineberg, 1973: P4).

Interaction, though, exemplifies reciprocation. In taking this factor into account, the perspective attempts to deal, also, with the reactions and viewpoints of those designated deviant. Consideration is granted to the manner
in which individuals react to being deemed deviant, how is a deviant role adopted, and what modifications of, and alterations to, the alleged deviant's self concept occur. (Rubington and Wineberg, 1973: P4). In summary, then, the perspective claims that it seeks to understand deviance within a framework of the reciprocal nature of symbolic interaction. As such, there is a claim to view deviance as subjectively problematic. (Rubington and Wineberg, 1973: P3).

Such deviance may be understood on three levels of social action: the perspective advocates analysis at all three levels: collective rule making, interpersonal reactions, and organizational processing. (Schur, 1971: P11). The one crucial aspect to such analysis is the view of deviance as an ascribed status; hence, the emphasis the perspective places on reactions to deviance. (Schur, 1971: P12).

Erikson in seeking to conceptualize this stance argues:

"From a sociological standpoint deviance can be defined as conduct which is generally thought to require the attention of social control agencies - that is conduct about which "something should be done.""

(Erikson, 1962: P308)

Deviance is not an inherent characteristic of certain forms of behaviour; it is a property conferred on such forms by audiences which directly or indirectly witness them. (Erikson, 1962: P308). To him, therefore, since it is the audience that determines which actions will constitute instances of deviation, it is the critical sociological
variable to the study of deviance.

One way in which the social audience contributes to deviance is through its application of rules. (Becker, 1964:p1). All social groups make rules which define situations and aspects of behaviour appropriate to such situations by specifying some actions as right and others as wrong. Further, social groups seek to implement these rules.

When a rule is implemented, the person who is alleged to have violated it may be seen as a special type of person: one who cannot be trusted to live by the group's agreed upon rules. Such a person is regarded as an outsider.

The reference to rules would appear to indicate two things: the ability to define, and the ability to apply sanctions.

One of the most far reaching statements on audience reactions has been provided by Lemert, who makes a distinction between primary and secondary deviation. Primary deviation emanates from varied sources: eg., physiological, psychological, cultural. (Lemert, 1972:p62). Secondary deviation, on the other hand, refers to those socially defined responses which groups or individuals make to problems created by the societal reaction to their deviance. Such problems centre on stigmatization, social control, punishment or segregation. Not only do they become central facts of existence for persons experiencing them, they alter psychic structure, thus producing specialized organization of roles
and self regarding attitudes. Those actions to which such roles and attitudes refer constitute secondary deviation. (Lemert, 1972: P63). In his reference to its operative principle, Lemert states:

"When others decide that a person is non grata, dangerous, untrustworthy, or morally repugnant, they do something to him, often unpleasant, which is not done to other people. This may take shape in hurtful rejections and humiliations in interpersonal contacts, or it may be formal action to bring him under controls which curtail his freedom."

(Lemert, 1972: P68)

It is secondary deviation that Lemert views as more pertinent to sociology. (Lemert, 1972: P48). Schur delineates three audience types:

(1) Society at large, which represents the complex of interwoven groups and interests. From such groups and interests emanate general reactions to, and labellings of various aspects of behaviour.

(2) Those persons (including significant others) with whom an individual engages in daily interaction, and by whom he is repeatedly labelled either positively or negatively.

(3) Official and organizational agents of control. These are prominent among the direct reactors or labellers; through their institutional procedures and organizational settings, they implement broad societal definitions. (Schur, 1971: PPL2-13).

The question thus arises as to the ability of the deviant to resist labelling. In seeking to address itself to this matter, the labelling perspective stresses an individual's
difficulty in "shaking off" a well developed deviant identity successfully imputed to him. It claims, though, that it does not deny the possibility of successful resistance to such imputation. Nor does it question the likelihood that there may be substantial patterned variations to an individual's susceptibility and resistance to labelling. (Schur, 1971: P31). In fact, it claims to view such susceptibility and resistance as being significantly determined by differences in power. Such differentials are not, however, built directly into a definition of deviance. (Schur, 1971: P31).

No statement about the perspective would be complete without a reference to the comments of Thomas Scheff's. Initially, the concept of residual rule breaking will be looked at. Residual rule breaking refers to the residue of differential types of violations for which social groups provide no specific labels. There are numerous aspects of behaviour, the violations of which are easily categorized by social groups. There are, however, norms governing behaviour over which agreement is so complete, such as members of social groups do not specifically or explicitly define them.

When behaviour is seen as violating such assumptive norms, residual rule breaking is said to have occurred. (Scheff, 1966: P34).

Scheff notes that residual rule breaking could arise from a variety of sources - eg., organic, psychological,
external stress, volitional acts of innovation or defiance. He adds though:

"the most important single factor (but not the only factor) in the stabilization of residual rule breaking is societal reaction."

(Scheff, 1966: P54)

Residual rule breaking may be stabilized if it is defined to be evidence of mental illness, or if the rule breaker is placed in a deviant status and begins to play the role of the mentally ill.

(Scheff, 1966: PP64-68) further argues that much of the role playing of the mentally ill is presupposed by the existence of stereotypes of insanity either learnt in early childhood or maintained and reaffirmed in adulthood. His position is that once deviance - rule breaking - becomes a public issue, the stereotypes of mental illness direct the behaviour of both those reacting to the deviant as well as the deviant himself.

"When societal agents and persons around the deviant react to him uniformly in terms of the traditional stereotypes of insanity, his amorphous and unstructured rule breaking tends to crystallize in conformity to those expectations thus becoming similar to the behaviour of other deviants classified as mentally ill and stable over time. The process of becoming uniform and stable is completed when the traditional imagery becomes part of the deviant's orientation for guiding his own behaviour."

(Scheff, 1966: P82)

A general statement about the orientation of the labelling or interactionist perspective can now be offered. It is: the labelling or interactionist perspective posits that deviance is an ascribed status. It is conferred on
behaviour by selected groups or individuals. The responses of such groups or individuals in their definitions, classifications and acts of rejection are significant to the determination as to whether behaviour is to be labelled deviant.

This seems to be an appropriate juncture at which to present proposals for the study of deviance as laid out by one of the perspective's principal spokesmen, Howard Becker. Becker's stance in regard to sociological research is that it cannot be conducted free of personal and political sympathies. (Becker, 1967:P239). There is no position - he says - from which sociological research can be conducted, which is not biased. In doing sociological research, the investigator must do so from someone's point of view. (Becker, 1967:P245). The issue, therefore, with which the investigator of deviance should deal is not whether 'sides should be taken; it is, instead, whose side should be taken. (Becker, 1967:P239).

The Becker recommendation, implied, yet very significant, is to take the 'side of the deviant, the "underdog."

"When we acquire sufficient sympathy with subordinates to see things from their perspective, we know that we are flying in the face of what 'everyone knows.'"

(Becker, 1967:P243)

Differences between Laing's Approach and the Perspective.

Differences between the interactionist perspective and Laing's approach may be noted along two dimensions: observed
and inferred. In regard to the first, it can be stated that while Laing's approach does not accept the existence of "mental illness," the perspective does.³ In so far as Laing seeks to deal with levels of social action, he is viewed as attending to two levels. They are interpersonal relations and organizational processing. Similarly, given that the perspective has delimited three types of social audience for its exposition of response to behaviour, only two such audience types are regarded as featuring in Laing's approach. One is represented by official and organizational agents of control, while the other is represented by those persons (including significant others) with whom an individual engages in daily interaction and by whom he is repeatedly labelled - either positively or negatively. Laing's approach argues neither for the operation of stereotyping at the level of individual actor behaviour, nor does it propose such operation at the level of response to behaviour. The inferred difference between the perspective and Laing's approach concerns the question of power. The perspective claims not to build power differentials directly into its conceptualization of deviance. Nor does Laing build such differentials directly into his reference to the relegated status of persons.

Laing's reference to power does not, however, mean that it emanates from harmonious relations within authority structures. The operation of power is importantly associated not only with contradiction and absence of agreement on norms
and values between authority structures and persons deemed ill. It is linked, also, to contradiction and absence of agreement within these very authority structures. Power, given its basis in authority structures, is linked to compromises and dilemmas within these same structures. It is a negotiated, emergent process.

The perspective, on the other hand, does not seek to attend to power as emanating from both the presence of contradiction and the very absence of agreement on norms within authority structures. Alternatively expressed, the perspective, despite its assumptions of deviance as subjectively problematic, and of absence of consensus on norms and values, attends to the discrepancy of norms and values between authority structures and the controlled, rather than such discrepancy as well as that between norms and values within such authority structures.

The point here is that whereas Laing problematizes the question of power, the interactionist perspective does not.

Criticism of the Perspective

An attempt will now be made to critically examine the perspective. The following would seem to constitute points of critical reference:

(1) The labelling perspective fails to adequately address itself to the question of how knowledge is constructed and used.

(2) As a perspective that seeks to inquire into social interaction, it seems to lack critical self reflectivity.
Its conduct of inquiry appears to be predicated on "taken-for-granted" "common sense" notions.

(3) It does not account for the complex reciprocal nature of social interaction. Included here is its inability to grapple with the emergent, negotiated nature of the social construction of reality.

(4) It is deterministic in its denial of intentionality and subjectivity to persons.

(5) As a perspective about social interaction, it is astructural.

It would seem useful to refer to Lemert as a means of initiating this examination. Lemert uses the term, societal reaction, to refer to those processes by which societies respond either formally or informally to deviants through officially delegated agencies. His approach did not dismiss the importance of the characteristics of deviants. Indeed, it sought to allow for the fact that forms of deviance affected the manner in which societal definitions were internalized. (Lemert, 1974:PP457-458). He, however, stressed the need to initiate analysis of deviance from a societal reaction standpoint - social control.

The point here is that a reference to actor behaviour should include an account of behaviour from the standpoint of societal reaction. Lemert's charge is the labelling perspective's view of deviance as a group creation based on labelling and the recommendation to adopt an "underdog" stance in deviance studies are inconsistent with its Meadean heritage - accounting for behaviour from the actor's
standpoint. 1 (Lemert, 1974: p459).

Gouldner throws additional light on this inconsistency. His stance is that in the study of rule makers or rule enforcers - the "overdogs" - the perspective should account for behaviour from their standpoint.

"....men's definition of their situations shapes their behaviour, hence to understand and predict their behaviour, we must see it as they do."

(Gouldner, 1968: P104)

Gouldner argument is, thus, that to the extent that the behaviour of rule enforcers is not looked at from their standpoint, the perspective contradicts its Meadian tradition.

The perspective is contradictory in yet another way. Underdogs regard themselves from the standpoint of "respectable" society. Some blacks, for instance, denigrate other blacks by calling them "nigger." To adopt an underdog perspective would then be to adopt an overdog perspective, that of dominant culture. Gouldner correctly infers that seeing deviants from their own standpoint is also to see them from the standpoint of dominant institutions and "respectable" society. (Gouldner, 1968: P107).

Warren and Johnson also see the perspective as adopting an overdog standpoint despite its ostensible claim to adoption of an underdog perspective; hence, as contradictory. They point out that, in practice, categorizations such as homosexuality, gambling, alcoholism, crime, prostitution and suicide are retained by the perspective. It, at the same time, disowns such categorizations - importantly though.
only in a rhetorical sense. This is not mere rhetorical repudiation. It is an absence of tangible repudiation that utilizes definitions of deviance as seen from the standpoint of superordinate officials. (Warren and Johnson, 1972:PP 80-81). Advancing an ostensible underdog argument, while viewing deviance from an official standpoint - "...a theory practically concocted from 'both sides' of the question of deviance...cannot practically be used to describe a situation from one side." (Warren and Johnson, 1972:P84). A "true" underdog perspective cannot, however, be attained. 6

Quite apart from inconsistency, though, an underdog stance should be seen as reflecting inadequacy and distortion. Superordinates suffer. To ignore such suffering is to fail to attend to that important aspect of the process of interaction, its reciprocal nature. In Gouldner's words, it manifests neither a respect for truth nor a sense of common humanity. (Gouldner, 1968:P106).

Of central relevance to Warren et al's, and Gouldner's comments is that a central task for a sociology of deviance is its attention to the complexity in the reciprocal nature of the process of social interaction. It appears to be this complexity in reciprocation to which the labelling perspective fails to attend.

It may, indeed, seem appropriate to point out that the rest of society views the deviant as unworthy of respect usually granted to its other members, and also to champion a position that deviants are as good as anyone else, or that they are more sinned against than sinning. (Becker, 1967:}
To infer, though, that because of these a balanced picture is not presented, seems to be representative of a fundamental error. It is precisely that the deviant is "more sinned against than sinning" that there would appear to be need of a balanced presentation. If the investigator's aim is to seek to grapple with the issues of social interaction, a one sided view would seem to be out of order: the study of what has come to be known as 'deviance' is still - after all - a study of the complex reciprocal nature of processes of interaction.

That the perspective views the deviant as someone who has been successfully labelled, also reflects inattention to complexity in reciprocation. Such inattention magnifies the arbitrary aspects of societal reaction. As such, the perspective's approach to the interactive process is unilateral; at the same time, it removes the elements of choice and individuality from actor behaviour. (Lemert, 1974: P459). Neither can such a unilateral approach nor the removal of elements of choice and individuality remain unquestioned.

Situations do exist whereby labellers actively negotiate - in collusion with officials - labels for themselves. Since such negotiating processes are frequently initiated by the recipients of labels, there can be hardly any point to positing that they are "structurally determined by a given officialdom." (Warren and Johnson, 1972: PP88-89). The question is thus raised as to whether the labelling per-
spective does not adopt a deterministic approach to deviance. Rotenberg views an overemphasis on societal reactions as representative of a social deterministic model, which characterizes a person as a pawn with neither a will of his own, nor an ability to be interpretive. (Rotenberg, 1974: P338). To argue against determinism is to argue that self-labelling can occur.

Gove posits that it does take place. Some persons do play active roles in obtaining deviant identities. In the area of mental illness, he claims psychiatric care is started by persons independently of any external labelling. Gove adds that the question of self-labelling has gained little attention from the perspective. Even when an attempt is made to deal with it, it is conceptualized in terms of a deviant stereotype. (Gove, 1975: P14).

A social response cannot be equated to its psychological impact. Hence, to argue for the effect of stereotypical responses without ascertaining their variable effects on social actors is inadequate. (Rotenberg, 1974: P339). The circumstances under which self-labelling is a consequence of, or accompanies social labelling, remain unspecified by the perspective. (Rotenberg, 1974: P335-336). It is unable to account, also, for the fact that some labels are not internalized. (Rotenberg, 1974: P337).

The gist of the foregoing statements on negotiation and self-labelling is that the perspective represents both distortion and inadequacy. Both of these may be seen in its
treatment of the question of social control. The charge here is that the issue of consensus is not problematized.

Gove challenges the assumption that the more powerful an actor is the greater the probability of his being placed in a deviant rôle. In regard to the hospitalization of the mentally ill, he argues that it is very often the case that those who hold positions of power in families are hospitalized more readily than those who do not hold power. (Gove, 1975: P44). It is not that there is merely a claim of misrepresentation. What seems to be indicated is that at the level of social control (rule enforcement) the question of consensus is far from being a simplistic one. It is this non-simplistic nature to which the perspective fails to attend.

Lemert clearly exposes this failure. He views group interaction as grounded in evaluative processes through which actors arrange values, interests and purposes in terms of gains to be obtained from the groups of which they are members. Such evaluation entails the sacrificing of some values in order to satisfy others. The order in which interests and values become satisfied represent not merely group allegiance. It importantly reflects, also, both the means available for such satisfaction as well as the costs of such means. Rule enforcement that results from such a process points to dilemmas, expectations, and compromises, rather than expresses norms and values. (Lemert, 1974: P463). Lemert, thus, questions the argument that agreed-upon rules
emanating from the "culture" of labellers can create deviance, given that some of the principal difficulties experienced by social controllers are not only how to choose from among a set of rules, but also how to establish a basis of choice. (Lemert, 1974:460). The point here is that one concomitant to the ignoring of this important issue is inattention to the significance of conflict and contradiction within dominant groups. Conflict is confined to that between the groups and those it attempts to label.

A charge of confinement is also levelled by Davis. Her argument is that emphasis on the effects of labelling on actors fails to take account of both the processes and effects of how conflicting interests of organizations are managed, as well as the struggles for power within and among social control agencies. (Davis, 1972:448).

The point of critical reference would appear to be that the perspective is astructural. Davis seems to make such a position explicit in regard to the following limitations:

(1) a culturological and behavioural emphasis which systematically neglects organizational variables.

(2) an apparent concentration on the actor which neglects the social context. (Davis, 1972:466).

At this stage, there are two specific critical comments which should be attended to. They are:

(1) Despite the ostensible claim to be a critical sociological perspective (its underdog stance) the labelling perspective does not indict the highest levels
of authority or power.

(2) Its view of how someone becomes mentally ill is substantially incorrect.

In respect to the second comment, Gove states that the perspective views the deviant as victimized. In the area of mental illness, he claims negligible evidence exists to support such a position. Rather, substantial numbers of people suffer from "serious psychiatric disorders," which are separate from any secondary deviance that may be linked to the role of the mentally ill. (Gove, 1975: P67).

Gouldner claims that criticism rather than being levelled at those master institutions that "produce" the deviant's suffering, is directed at care taking institutions and the low status officials who run them. As critique, the "underdog" sociology fails to attend to superordinate officials who shape the operation of the care taking institutions. It rejects the standpoints only of such persons as the housing agency director or the prison warden. (Gouldner, 1968: P107).

Gove's claim as to existence of "serious psychiatric disorder" cannot go unattended. He appears not to view the conceptualizing of serious psychiatric disorders as an epistemologically problematic issue. He proceeds from an apparent unquestioned acceptance of the official orthodox medical view of psychiatric disorder, despite the symbolic, interpretive processes utilized by persons.

Gouldner's claims may best be examined through additional reference to Becker's statements. Becker's superordinates
are, indeed, intermediaries - low status. A reference (Becker, 1967; P240) to superordinate parties in hier-
archial relationships as representative of forces of approved and official morality ought to be accompanied by an indication of such forces. Criticisms which he claims to advance against superordinates should not be restricted to those at the intermediate level.

This requirement would appear to be especially im-
portant given the request that the "hierarchy of credibility" should be recognized for what it is (Becker, 1967; P247) and further that through a refusal to accept this said hierarchy, disrespect for the "entire established order" will be ex-
pressed. (Becker, 1967; P242). The argument, therefore, that an inquiry will be made into the constraints and con-
ditions of institutions run by administrators and physicians by making these superordinates the subjects of study seems inadequate.

There is, however, a wider important issue to attend to. Criticism of superordinates - whatever their level - should be concerned with the question of how knowledge is constructed and used: some underdogs do think as overdogs:

"In any organization, no matter what the rest of the organization chart shows, the arrows indicating the flow of information point up, thus demonstrating ...that those at the top have access to a more com-
plete picture of what is going on than anyone else. Members of lower groups will have incomplete infor-
mation and their view of reality will be partial and distorted in consequence."

(Becker, 1967; P241)
It is, doubtless, the case that officials do develop means of denying institutional failure; it may seem all right to use an underdog viewpoint to demonstrate that institutions do not perform as they claim to (Becker, 1967:PP242-243).

To do this, though, seems inadequate. It does not seek to grapple with the issue of how knowledge is constructed and used. It is not that Becker is unaware that intermediaries do not represent the sole category of superordinates. Prison administrations do not possess the ability to act as they wish. These intermediaries, for example, cannot freely respond to the desires of inmates. He rhetorically asks whether these superordinates might not be studied and their viewpoints about their relations with superiors presented, thus allowing for a deeper sympathy with them, while at the same time, preventing the bias of one sided identification with deviants. This approach, however, he rejects. It represents a simplistic solution, the pursuit of which leads to the problem of infinite regress. Questioning the superiors of prison administrators would lead to complaints to the governor and the legislature. Questioning these will, in turn, lead to complaints by lobbyists party machines, the public and the newspapers. There can be no end to questioning. (Becker, 1967:PP246-247).

The talk about "deeper sympathy" and "infinite regress" would appear to miss the point though. It represents clearly inattention to the important issue of how knowledge is constructed and used. That "newspapers," "party machines,"
"lobbyists" and the "public" may all be involved, indeed points to the necessity of grappling with this issue. The underdog sociology, though, does not. Neither does reference to a new conceptual definition of deviance, nor does defence of a case for concentration of study on the powerless do so. (Plummer, 1979:PP97-98) derives a categorization of deviance from the use of two criteria to define this phenomenon:

(1) rule violation.
(2) the application of stigma and devaluation either by self or others.

Issues of rule violation are concerned with questions of which rules and whose rules. It is from these that the classifications, situational and societal deviance, emanate. Societal deviance refers to forms of action commonly viewed by most persons in society as deviant, or to abstract meaning - eg., law, reified norms - attached to such action. This category suggests the existence of significant agreement over the identification of deviance, despite subsequent dissensus that may arise over its suitability.

Situational deviance refers to the actual ways in which persons construct rules and interpret their violations within particular contexts as representative of deviance.

Plummer argues that while both construction and interpretation may be conditional on the aforementioned abstract meaning, there is greater freedom to either reject or neutralize societal versions of deviance, or to construct rules and definitions incompatible with those that commonly belong
to society.

These conditions may very well obtain. Notably absent, though, from Plummer's formulation is that granted abstract meaning in reified norms or law, they may well not occur. Quite clearly, he neglects to deal with the question of construction and use of knowledge.

In defence of concentrating studies on the powerless, Plummer's stance is that it should be obvious that theoretical necessity guides the sociology of deviance to such study.

"...the study of deviance is the study of devalued groups, and devalued groups are, groups which lack status and prestige."

(Plummer, 1979:110)

He additionally acknowledges that there may be merit to a study of superordinates: "top dogs": the means through which prestige and stigma are attached may be grasped. He insists, though, that a sociology of deviance that does not make the powerless centrally relevant to its investigation may be very odd.

What Plummer seems not to take into account is that investigating the powerless is by no means inconsistent with a study of the construction and use of knowledge. This study would seem to be highly warranted given his own recognition that what constitute the labelling perspective's central concern are: the excessive encroachment of technology, bureaucracy, and the state on personal life in no merely overt manner, but and importantly - in a subtle way also. Overtly, in the forms of increasing medicalization
and criminalization of deviance, bureaucratization of social control agencies, and the associated "dehumanization" of "victims'" lives. Subtly, in the form of everyday alienation, meaninglessness despair, and fragmentation. (Plummer, 1979:Pl11).

The reference to structure and significant location in it of construction and use of knowledge would seem to be clear. Despite this, Plummer reverts to the perspective's symbolic interactionist tradition to defend its astructuralism. He states that symbolic interactionism clearly recognizes that it is by means of the social action of persons any wider social order is constructed and that it views persons as wrestling with this order. He goes on to argue that symbolic interactionism views the notion of structure as a reification which negates process, emergence and negotiation. (Plummer, 1979:PP114-116).

Given such a stance, a significant task for the perspective would be a dereification of structure. One way to embark on such a task would be to attend to the issue of construction and use of knowledge. Plummer comes nowhere, though, to suggesting grappling with dereification in this way.

The Case for Modification

The foregoing examination would suggest a need of modification of the perspective, the core of which would seem to be required in the area of construction and use of
knowledge. By way of example, reference has already been made in this respect to the issue of "underdogs" thinking like "overdogs." Such an approach would also seem to be relevant, too, to understanding the problematic issue of self labelling. To the extent that a major premise of the perspective, societal reaction "produces" deviance is a reworking of the dictum, "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences," (Schur, 1969:318) this suggestion would seem to be in order. Inability to attend to the construction and use of knowledge is an important aspect of astructuralism, a matter to which the perspective clearly needs to address itself. To Davis, the link is inextricable, and her recommendation that it be dealt with, by no means, exempts the perspective.

She requests that in a period of chronic and often drastic change institutionalization should be seen as emerging from a conflict of power and ideological struggles. What may be observed through the elementary aspect of power and conflict inherent to institutionalization, is the emergence of a legal order that buttresses a restrictive section of the "moral" order of society.

"The distribution of power, legal definitions and controlling activities are central issues that provide analytic starting points for delimiting those structural conditions that create the basis for generating a body of rule breakers. Labelling in this sense is a consequence and symbol of power."

(Davis, 1972:468)

The persistent issue for sociological theory and research is the manner of appropriation and maintenance of such power
through organizational exchange and legitimacy. Here is a clear call to both recognize the importance of the wider structural component to deviance and to problematize its study.

Acknowledgement of Astructuralism and the Need to Problematize

There does seem to be a recognition of the importance of this wider structural component in a reference to the perspective's restricted criticism.

First hand observation, for instance, may mean only that groups to which access is easily gained would be investigated, thereby preventing the powerful from being studied, hence going against the recommendation that all parties to deviance should be studied. (Becker, 1974: F52).

A clear indication of the need to recognize the importance of the wider structural component is provided by the statement that both the persistence and intensity of interaction are not compatible with face to face communication. (Becker, 1974: PP44-45).

The need to problematize the issue of deviance also appears to be recognized. Drawing on the perspective's symbolic interactionist tradition, Becker states that it attaches great significance to the common place. It rejects "mysterious invisible forces" as aspects of explanation. Indeed, there is a persistent need to seek to understand phenomena in all their complexity. The search, thus, for clear cut categories of deviant acts with the expectation
that their committing can be clearly determined is not to be recommended.\textsuperscript{13} (Becker, 1974; P46).

The Proposal to Handle Astructuralism

Given recognition of the importance of the wider structural component, a central issue to be attended to is: what proposals are offered to deal with it? The response is that an adequate critique of the construction and use of knowledge is still to be offered by the perspective.

Becker, again drawing on the perspective's interactionist tradition, claims that in its attention to definitions of situations particular reference is made to the manner in which groups achieve and utilize power to define how others will be viewed, understood and treated. He further argues that while superordinates can maintain power by "primitive" means of control, they opt for control over how people define their worlds.

It is in the light of such preference that an attack on definitions of labels and conceptions of "who's who" is recommended. (Becker, 1974; P62).

Becker extends his argument by stating that to study how rules are made by "moral entrepreneurs" and are enforced is to study the way in which superordinates of every description maintain their positions. Alternatively expressed, this is a study of how oppression becomes normal and legitimate in an everyday sense.

Two moments in the foregoing comments may be recognized. A claim to the perspective's emphasis on the importance of
the wider structural context to construction and use of knowledge, as well as reference to such construction and use in securing oppression. This inference would seem to be consistent with the argument that interactionist analyses in examining both the controllers and controlled violate "society's hierarchy of credibility." As such, the monopoly on the truth and the "whole story" claimed by those in positions of power and authority is questioned. (Becker, 1974: P62).

Yet, what is done with these claims is not to use them as a basis for putting forth a critique of the construction and use of knowledge.

The stance Becker adopts is: the rapidity with which the highest categories of superordinates react to analyses of even very low levels of mismanagement should enable the extent to which such analyses attack institutions, their agents and subordinates - intermediaries - to be seen. Such an approach has special "moral sting." It enables a comparative examination to be made between actual institutional practices and the professed aims and descriptions of those practices. Its critical thrust invariably lies in the working of society and its parts which it exposes for evaluation. (Becker, 1974: P61).

This is reference to contradiction, however. It is contradiction, too, at intermediate levels. It may well represent evaluation. It is evaluation, though, which is indirect; and like contradiction, it reposes at superordinate
levels which are intermediate. It may also be in order to state - as Becker does - (Becker, 1974; p72) that confidence ought not to be placed in official accounts of deviance, and to champion the cause that such accounts should be the raw material of social science analysis rather than unquestioned statements of "moral truth." Given this orientation, it would appear that an appropriate step to take would be to offer a critique of the construction and use of knowledge.

It is this that is not done, though.

The central question raised by the foregoing comments is how may a sociopsychologically orientated perspective about action, that has come to be viewed as deviant, offer a critique of the construction and use of knowledge as a means of accounting for the wider structural component?

This question is linked to the twin issue of the relation between the macro and micro-social as well as change in social structures. This issue is also very relevant to Laing's approach, which, not unlike the perspective, may be criticized for its structuralism and inadequate account of the construction and use of knowledge. Prior to attending to such criticism, it may be well to deal with Laingian insights that may be applicable to the perspective.

Laingian Insights

The question of what has come to be known as "deviance," as shown by Laing's examples, should be confronted as an epistemologically problematic one. If there is a claim -
as the labelling perspective makes - that conventional categories of deviance should be rejected, they ought, in reality, to be so rejected.

One corollary to rejection, as Laing demonstrates, is a direct critique of the construction and use of knowledge. Concomitant to such critique would appear to be an important pointer to a context for understanding self labelling. Importantly associated with critique is a significant action component in the provision of alternative institutions. This can be seen in regard to at least two institution types, hospitals and universities.

In the case of the first, Kingsley Hall was set up by Laing in 1965 as an alternative community. It provided shelter to those persons who wanted to evade the harrassment of mental hospitals or their families. (Schatzman, 1971: P259). Within Kingsley Hall, persons were viewed as neither staff nor patients. Unlike mental hospitals, no super-subordinate hierarchy existed to impede intergroup movement. There was no organization to impose a necessity to administer persons, or make rules. Persons simply chose to assume obligations of reciprocal relations with others. (Schatzman, 1971:P267). Kingsley Hall was also part of a wider counter cultural context which consisted of drama groups, artists, "New Left" intellectuals, and classes from the Anti-University of London. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:P70).

Its significance as an alternative institution lay in its "embodiment of sudden, structural, radical, qualitative
changes." It destructured internal roles and, at the same time, created restructuralization in that as an important aspect of counter culture, it led to a cultural underground. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:p70).

Abolition of role structures was also to be found in the Anti-University, instituted in 1968. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:p71). The aim here was to encourage changes in the relationships among persons, foremost among which was that of staff and student.

A commune, the counter-cultural equivalent of the family, was also associated with the Anti-University. The two later became synonymous.

These alternative institutions may be viewed as representative of resistance on a day to day basis. Their existence would appear to point to a major surpassing of the perspective.

Laing's Astructuralism

(i) Programme of Institutional Change

Reference should be made to the theoretical framework of such action, another category of institutions, and some statements about Laing's attitude to psychedelic drugs to explore the question of his astructuralism.

Laing argues that sociality is constituted of perpetual networks of contexts, meta and meta-meta contexts. These make up the total "social world system" the intelligibility of which can be referred to no further social system. (Laing, 1972:p111). Modern industrial society, therefore,
with its network of systems is amenable to revolutionary change not at extreme macro\textsuperscript{14} or micro-social points, but rather at intermediate system levels, through abrupt, structural, radical, qualitative changes. Schools, factories and universities are examples of such levels. (Laing, 1972: PP112-113).

What would seem central to this argument of Laing's is a view of social reality in a hierarchical structural sense and significant reference points of its irrational aspects are particular contexts. Irrationality thus may be rendered rational, hence intelligible, through a process that begins at the level of the individual and ends at that of the total social world system. (Howarth-Williams, 1977: PP69-70).

Laing also argues that while alternative institutions of care can, in fact, be set up, no comparable ones can be, in the area of law and order; eg., the army, the police force. To the extent that these institutions may have irrational bases in society and may, thus, be unnecessary, action to destructure them should be peaceful.\textsuperscript{15}

Laing's attitude to psychedelic drugs may best be attended to in regard to L.S.D. He criticizes the use of L.S.D. by persons in attempts at transcendence of powerlessness and constrictions imposed by those systems of which they are a part. People merely confuse themselves by not realizing experiencing, suffering or momentarily forgetting such imposition. This use of L.S.D. leads to a cessation from action.
On the other hand, L.S.D. can be useful if it leads to what he terms a cessation of action from the ego. This, Laing insists, does not constitute inaction. It represents action from the "self."\textsuperscript{16}

This comment, properly contextualized, about action from the self would seem to give L.S.D., not just personal, but political import. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:P75).

"True sanity entails... the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self completely adjusted to our alienated social reality."

(Laing, 1967:P15)

Individual praxis, then, stemming from the true self, not the ego, is politically desirable. Ego dissolution through use of L.S.D. can dismantle a person's links to conventional social institutions - "alienated social reality." What seems to further attest to his claim that action from the self does not mean inaction is that the very people and groups in the alternative institutions he set up were users of L.S.D. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:P76).

It is against the background of the aforementioned three areas that a case for Laing's astructuralism may be made. It is in order to argue, as Laing does, against self integration with alienated social reality. Such a position would, indeed, be consistent with his view of persons as the antitheses of objectification. What seems most untenable, however, is to link ego dissolution to use of L.S.D. A Marcusean comment is pertinent here. Marcuse criticized what he viewed as the narcotic character of drug culture

Marcuse's comment points to Laing's profound personal idealism in his suggestion for change - a grappling with alienated social reality. His astructuralism appears to be clearly exposed.

It may be further recognized in regard to those institutions with irrational bases in society and which may thus be unnecessary - the police force. In relation to the macrostructure of society, institutions such as these would appear to be both necessary and rational. Laing's own reference to intelligibility, and his insistence that all levels of social reality should be accounted for, would require that they be located in their own context, the class struggle. This, he, however, does not do. (Howarth-Williams, 1977:PP72-73).

The central issue, though, is: whether contexts and meta-meta contexts can allow for such location? The answer would seem to be no.

(ii) Family Studies

It may appropriately be supported in regard to Laing's work with families, which has not eluded a charge of reductionism.

It is argued that his observations in these families bypass the antagonistic relationship between persons and society. (Jacoby, 1973:44). On the one hand, the family
is seen as a mediating agency between the person and society; on the other, it is accepted as the "cause" rather than the victim of social oppression. A social constellation is banalized to an immediate human network. To do so is to forget that the "relationship between "you and me" or "you and the family" is not exhausted in the immediate: all of society seeps in" (Jacoby, 1973: P45). If it is clear that the immediate relationships of boss and worker, teacher and student are grounded in non-immediate social configurations, it is no less clear of the family relationship. The family may be the immediate context of schizophrenia; it is not, however, the "context."

Laing's studies point clearly to the extent to which the family as the immediate situation of schizophrenia is not the situation. He does very little with this, though. In these studies, he does not seek to explain the consistency of mothers' attributions, projections and intrusions. Yet, these actions can be linked to the experience and roles of mothers in nuclear families where a mother's identity is connected to her children's well being. This involves the constant supervision of children with a profound concern for their "psychic health." (Poster, 1978: P134).

Poster relates this concern to women's relegation to the home and argues, further, that it entailed the emotional influencing of children. In so far as women, during the initial period of their children's growth, were confined to a condition of almost total child care, it may reasonably be
expected that they might develop attachments to their children and, on occasions, resist a loss of total involvement with them as they mature to independence.

In as much, therefore, as Laing makes schizophrenia intelligible at a micro-social level, there seems to be a need of supplementing this with a historical and social analysis of family structure.¹⁷ (Foster, 1978:P135).

An approach that, thus, claims to deal with the "real" context of schizophrenia by incorporating additional persons to this context is ultimately to be confronted by larger numbers than which it could hope to attend to. The most extended family therapy, though, leaves social roots untouched. (Jacoby, 1973:P47).

Laing's shortcoming is, thus, that he leaves out society.¹⁸ (Jacoby, 1973:P45).

(iii) Construction and Use of Knowledge

Astructuralism is exposed in yet another domain, that of construction and use of knowledge. The reference point of such an observation is the distinction between physical and psychological medicine.

It certainly can be argued, as Laing does, that there may be differences in definitions and their contexts between physical and psychological medicine. It is quite plausible that while a diagnosis of tuberculosis, even if incorrect, does not affect the disease, one of schizophrenia may be followed by schizophrenia. (Jacoby, 1973:P47).

Given this, nevertheless, a distinction between the
biological and psychological would appear to be unwarranted: biological science is, itself, constructed and used socially. Laing's criticism of the psychological from a social standpoint in not clearly indicating that physical medicine is also within a social dynamic, \(^{19}\) separates it from history and society. \(^{20}\) (Jacoby, 1973:47).

It is at this juncture that it becomes clear that the promise of neither the labelling perspective nor Laing's studies has been fulfilled. On the one hand, an "underdog" sociology, while it recognized the danger of "infinite regress," in perpetual contexts, failed to offer a critique of the construction and use of knowledge. On the other, a therapeutic approach, in seeing intelligibility in the action of persons deemed "mentally ill," advances a critique of the construction and use of knowledge, but fails to extend its scope. It, instead, opts to examine a perpetuity of social contexts.
Footnotes

1. Schur does acknowledge the grounding of the perspective in symbolic interactionism.
   "It is in this general theme of process, in concentrating on deviant roles and the
development of deviant self conceptions... that we see most clearly the indebted-
ness of labelling analysis to the theoretical perspective of symbolic inter-
actionism."


2. Schur uses the term, role engulfment as a subconcept of secondary deviation to denote what he views as the
social-psychological impact on the individual. In this regard, the two important factors are:
(a) how an actor is defined;
(b) how the actor defines himself.

Schur further argues that as role engulfment increases, there is a tendency for the social actor to define him-

3. Scheff states that he has always accepted claims from genetic and physiological sources as valid. Further,
"it has been demonstrated repeatedly that particular cases of mental disorder had their origin in genetic,
biochemical or physiological conditions." See Scheff, Thomas, J., Reply to Chauncey and Gove: A

4. Davis states that Lement's "lineal descendants," in using reactions of the labelled as analytical starting
points, have neglected a fertile area of investigation, social control. Pursuit of issues such as power dif-
fences and ideological struggles is abandoned in preference for a social-psychological approach that
emphasizes the deviant category, actor and group. See Davis, N., Labelling Theory in Deviance Research: A

5. While the reference here seems to be to the United States, denigration also occurs in the British Carri-
bean. In this regard, the comment about "dominant culture" would seem to point to the importance of
attending to the construction and use of knowledge. The Carribean countries were once colonial posses-
sions.
6. "...the observer is always Here, within himself, his biography, his space and time, while the "parties" are both There - only their interactions open to the observer and his memories of past interactions." See Warren, C. and Johnson, J., "A Critique of Labelling Theory from the Phenomenological Perspective," in Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance: A., Scott and J. Douglas, eds, New York: Basic Books, 1972: P84.

7. Granted the strong links the perspective has to symbolic interactionism which stresses persons' contributions to their own identities and behaviour, the tendency to neglect apparent contributions they make to the establishment and modification of deviant identities is quite puzzling. See Gove, W., The Labelling Perspective, An Overview in W. Gove (ed) The Labelling of Deviance: New York: Sage Publications, 1975: P14.

8. All that is certain about "mental illness" is that some people assert that other people have it. Epistemologically, it has the status of an explanatory concept or a working hypothesis. No one has proven it to exist as a thing nor has any one described its attributes with scientific precision and reliability. See Schatzman, M., Madness and Morals in R. Boyens (ed) R.D. Laing and Anti-Psychiatry: New York: Harper and Row: 1971: P243.


10. The reference here is to the hierarchy of credibility.

11. The argument here is that given that symbolic interactionism does not begin analysis from a notion of structure, the perspective - with its tradition in this school of thought - should not be criticized for inattention to structure.

12. The reference to problematizing seems to be indicative of a need to substitute a critically self reflective stance for the taken-for-granted notion of the social construction of reality.
13. "...social rules far from being fixed and immutable, are continually constructed anew in every situation to suit the convenience, will, and power position of various participants." See Becker, Howard, S., "Labelling Theory Reconsidered" in P. Rock and M. McIntosh, eds., Deviance and Social Control, London, Tavistock, 1974: P51.

14. Extreme macro-social change would be a taking over of state power.


16. The source of these comments is: Side I, Record Number 14: "Dialectics of Liberation Conference," Ibid, P75.

17. Therapeutically, the absence of a developmental theory in Laing's work may also be noted.

18. There is a failure to examine systematically the role of others or factors other than the immediate parents or siblings. There is also a tendency to adopt a unilateral model of socialization emanating from parent to child. The family seems to shape the child's experience within the family. See Morgan, R.H., "Social Theory and the Family," London: Routledge and Kegan Paul: 1975: PP126-127.


20. This point about "history and society" is amply borne out in regard to Guyana where differential response from the colonial government and foreign based companies to the diseases, tuberculosis and malaria, between the late thirties and late fifties was inextricably linked to agricultural commodity production.
CHAPTER VIII
Causation and Persons

Causation in Intelligibility

The preceding critical references to Laing's astructuralism would seem to be justified. There are, however, two other aspects of Laing's work, the criticism of which may be questioned.

Such criticism needs to be attended to as it concerns his repudiation of causation in preference for a study of meaning and his notion of who is a person in social relationships. These are both central to his work with families. In regard to the first, it is argued (Collier, 1977: PP51-52) that in using the concept, intelligibility, Laing's search for explanation of current inter-relations among phenomena is one that precedes an examination of their origin and past history. This procedure, if at all it can be distinguished from causation, may be so distinguished only loosely. In as much, therefore, as Laing rejects the notion of causation, he makes use of it. To say, for instance, that the alleged symptoms of schizophrenia are the outcome of interaction and interexperience with parents is to make use of causation.

His case studies strongly imply that it was family circumstances which made "patients" act and experience situations as they did. Acts initially unintelligible became intelligible when viewed as responses to those of others. Those acts of others, along with the emotional disposition of the agents of action, explain the later actions of these agents. Laing
is using intelligibility causally.

"...the accounts Laing gives of the social intelligibility of schizophrenia do involve causal concepts and do contribute to knowledge of the origins of the phenomena described."

(Collier, 1977:P78)

Collier points out, though, that intelligibility also says something about the meaning of phenomena. There are a number of important points to be remembered at this juncture. To the extent that Laing seeks to let persons reflect, he is attending to meaning constructed by those persons themselves. Further, the reference to symptoms as the outcome of interexperience and interaction is coextensive with that about the social reality in which persons live.

Collier seems to recognize meaning in reflectivity. He fails, however, to view outcome as referring to this very reflectivity on the part of persons to grasp their own constructs, hence meaning. His argument would seem to indicate that there are factors separate from persons' own constructs which determines, hence causes their actions. Nowhere does he demonstrate this, though, nor is it, of course, evident in Laing's case studies.

Even if it is accepted that Laing does contribute knowledge, as he puts it, to the origins of schizophrenia, it would seem to be false to associate this with a notion of causation.

Collier's principal mistake, though, is a failure to emphasize the operation of contradictions.
There is a temptation to say, at this point, that Laing - eminently - is dealing with meaning and not causation. The issue is by no means as simple as it appears. The crucial point is that causation is involved in meaning grasped reflectively. Importantly, though, this is not causation to which Collier appears to refer.

The foregoing comments in support of Laing represent, at best, a prelude to a profound examination of the issue as to whether it is more advantageous to pursue the question of meaning or that of causation. Suffice it to say at this juncture that the causation with which Laing deals is not some extant category determined by an investigator which bears little relevance to the knowledge constructed by persons in relation to each other.

Persons

Not unlike Collier, Mitchell examines Laing's work in respect to one of its central aspects, his concept of a person.

Mitchell argues that to state that the study of human beings starts from a relationship to others as persons and then goes on to still see those others as persons, is to pursue two tasks: an account of persons as persons and an examination of interpersonal relationships. The question raised by this duality ("Who is a person?") cannot be answered, as Laing does, by saying that a person is his relationship to others, as this leads to the problem of determining what
interrelationships represent. (Mitchell, 1974: P235). Laing is thus confronted with a dilemma of tautology.

It is Mitchell, though, rather than Laing, who seems to be caught in a trap of tautology. Laing's reference to one's relationship to others as persons indicates that those others are intentional beings and are capable of making their own choices. This would seem to point to the person in continuous and heterogenous, rather than unitary and homogenous senses. An attempt at deduction, hence the mistake of tautology, from the person as person or as signified in interrelationships cannot, therefore, be an issue for Laing.

Mitchell's central problem, like that of Colliers, is a failure to emphasize the importance of contradiction.
Footnotes


2. These separate factors are those of which persons are not conscious. Collier's reference here is Freudian.
   An important distinction between Laing and Freud should be made. They both make use of reflectivity.
   In Freud's case, it is to grapple with the unconscious. In Laing's, it is to grapple with contradictions which may have been forgotten. Reflectivity is not the same in each case.
   Collier may be hard pressed to justify the causation emanating from unconscious factors, as these relate to "inductive systematization," whereby conclusions are not logically implied by premises. For an interesting discussion of inductive systematization see Hempel, Carl G., Aspects of Scientific Explanation: New York: Collier-McMillan Ltd., PP174-176.

3. Relationship refers to that of an investigator.
CHAPTER IX

Neglect of Symbolically Meaningful
Construction of Knowledge

Introduction

The aforementioned examination marks the completion of analytical treatment of Laing's work. Two issues were repeatedly raised during this treatment. They are:

1. Whether it is more advantageous to study meaning or causation.

2. How might a socio-psychologically oriented sociology address itself to the dual question of the link between the macro and the micro-social and account for change.

These issues will now be attended to. Appropriately, (1) will be initially dealt with. Here, it is important to look at the symbolic construction of knowledge by persons.

The Symbolically Meaningful Construction of Knowledge

In such construction, persons do not react to objects overtly, or are simply aware of their existence; they have conceptions of them which are symbolic constructs. (Langer, 1957: PP60-61). Their knowing rests primarily on the attainment of concepts, the apprehension and use of systems of symbolic meaning. (Geertz, 1973:P49). In conceptualizing, they match their symbolic modes against those states and processes of the wider world. (Geertz, 1973:P214).
This last statement of Geertz's would appear to provide an important indication of that ability to impose, interpret and construct meaningfully. Geertz, however, provides a clear index of it in a reference to culture: man is an animal enmeshed in webs of significance he has himself created. It is such webs that make up culture, the analysis of which cannot be conducted in terms of experimentation in search of laws, but rather in pursuit of meaning along interpretive lines. (Geertz, 1973:5).

Pike puts forth a similar argument to Geertz's on culture. Pike states that not only does human behaviour encompass a broad range of activities, it is also simultaneous. Persons, though, in their responses to the behaviour of others in their culture act as if behaviour were not simultaneous - as if it constituted a sequence of separate entities. This represents a structuring of human action as though it were segmented into chunks. Here it is necessary to see imposition, which Pike views as emicization. (Pike, 1964:PP54-55).

Langer's presentational and discursive modes place Pike's position in high relief. She states that meaning provided by language is successively understood; it is grasped by a process of discourse. The meaning of other symbolic entities is presented holistically through their relations within a total structure. As symbols, they are involved in simultaneous integral presentation. This represents presentational symbolism in contrast to the former discursive symbolism. (Langer, 1957:97).
"The symbolic materials given to our senses, the Gestalten or fundamental perceptual forms which invite us to construct the pandemonium of sheer impression into a world of things and occasions, belong to the presentational order. They furnish the elementary abstractions in terms of which ordinary sense experience is understood."

(Langer, 1957: P98)

The distinctive feature of Geertz's, Langer's and Pike's statements is to be seen in: to the extent that human knowledge exists, it is constructed meaningfully through the use of symbols.

The Reference Point of Symbolic Constructs

This stance may be supported by attending to statements of Schutz's. Schutz argues that persons exist in a world of daily life which transcends them. (Schutz, 1962: P293). This world is prior to persons' existence and was experienced and interpreted by their predecessors as an organized world. (Schutz, 1970: P72). It is, in other words, a historically given world.

It is also an intersubjective world. It is both the location and object of interaction and action. To effect the purposes pursued along with others in it, persons seek to dominate and modify it. They, thus, operate not merely within this world, but also upon it. The life world, however, provides resistance to action. It both affects and is affected by action. Persons are, therefore, constantly engaged in trying to make sense of it.

Prominent among the means through which such sense is made are indications, marks and symbols. These, Schutz
insists, are all experienced within the very reality of everyday life. (Schutz, 1962:P293).

Here, a person discovers that he exists in a biographically determined situation, an environment - both sociocultural and physical, which is defined by him. The biographically determined situation, further, represents the sedimentation of all his prior experiences, knowledge he habitually organizes, and which is thus unique to him. It also includes possibilities of future action, his purpose at hand, which defines those elements in his situation that are relevant to it. (Schutz, 1970:P73).

Thus, in his biographically determined situation, a person can project. He can reflect also.

"I know or assume that, disregarding the technical objects and other limitations, such as the principal irretrievability of the past, I can bring my recollected world back into my actual reach, if I return to whence I came (world within my restorable reach); I expect also to find it substantially the same (although perhaps changed) as I had experienced it while it was within my actual reach; and I know or assume also that what is now within my actual reach will go out of my reach when I move away but will be, in principle restorable if I later return."

(Schutz, 1962:P308)

It is such reflectivity that forms the basis of assigning marks to objects. Schutz, in emphasizing the arbitrary character of use of marks, states that they have nothing to do with what they should remind a person of: both they and the objects which they represent are interpretable because they exist in contexts set up by persons. (Schutz, 1962:PP308-309).

Indications represent the apprehension of entities as
though they were interrelated. Knowledge of interrelation is, however, vague. It may lack clarity. (Schutz, 1962: PP310-311). This absence of clarity is brought out in a reference to Husserl: an object, fact or event actually perceptible to an individual may be experienced as related to another object of the past, present or future not actually perceptible, such as his conviction as to the existence of the former is experienced opaquely as the motive for his conviction, assumption, or belief in the past, present or future existence of the latter. (Schutz, 1962:P311).

This motivation, Schutz argues, constitutes a pairing between indicating and indicated. He importantly adds that the indicating entity is not an object in itself. It is by means of the individual's imposition that it calls forth what is indicated. Both marks, indications, as well as symbols, constitute the basis of signification. (Schutz, 1962:P337). He goes on to define the symbol as an appresentational reference in which the appresented member of the pair is an object, fact or event within the reality of daily life, whereas the other appresented member refers to an idea which transcends the experience of daily life. (Schutz, 1962:P331).

These three forms of representation can be substituted for each other. The meaning which they each convey may thus be subject to variation through transference. It is this which exposes both the ambiguity of symbols, the vagueness of transcendent experiences represented by them and, importantly, the problem of translating the meaning of such experiences into precise denotation. (Schutz, 1962:P338).
This last statement is, indeed, consistent with Schutz's argument that knowledge constructed in the life world is incoherent, partially clear, and non-homogenous. (Schutz, 1970:PP25-76).

Symbolism, then, with the twin attributes of imposition and interpretation, is central to meaning. This point is expressed by both Signorile and Brown. Signorile, echoing Langer, states that meaning is not to be discovered through a correlation of symbols with "facts" but internally by examining the links within the symbolic domain itself. (Signorile, 1980:PL24). To Brown, symbolism not only makes things clear - the discovery of reality, it makes things real - the creation of reality. (Brown, 1977:R40). It will also be apparent that the reference here is to meaning as revealed by persons' own construction of reality.

The Apprehension of Meaning

A central issue to be confronted by investigators of social interaction is how is meaning that emanates from persons' reflectivity to be studied. It is to Schutz that attention will once more be directed. Schutz distinguishes between because and in-order-to motives: the because motive "refers from the point of view of the actor to his past experiences which have determined him to act as he did." Eg., a murderer was motivated to commit his deed because he lived in a particular environment, or he had certain childhood experiences. The in-order-to motive signifies the end which action has been performed to bring about. Eg., the motive of the
The state of affairs to be brought about requires the performance of action in phases. These phases or intermediary steps are means for an actor's attainment of the ultimate in-order-to motive. They are known only to the actor. Only he knows when his project begins and when it ends. Only he is thus aware of why his project will have been performed. The person with whom he is engaged in interaction does not know about these sub-actions. He merely knows what is revealed to him by a performed act or past phases of a continuing action. In order to understand what the actor meant by his action, that person would have to use the observed act as a starting point and construct from it the in-order-to motive for the sake of which the actor did what was observed.

Schutz, therefore, infers that the meaning of an action is different for an actor, the person who participates in interaction with him, as well as an observer who is not a party to such interaction. (Schutz, 1962:PP23-24). The significance of such differentiation lies in recognizing that persons are presented with merely an opportunity to understand the action of others. The understanding of that action would depend on a search for the meaning action has for the actor.

Reconstruction by an observer, thus involves a search for the cause of action. Importantly, though, such cause should be revealed in the meaning provided by the actor.
This search requires the actor's reflecting, a turning back to become an observer of his own acts, thus grasping their because motives. (Schutz, 1970: Pl27).

Causation is, therefore, central to meaning which is revealed by persons' symbolic constructs in their everyday life. Causation is thus an important symbolic construct. The response, therefore, to the question about studying meaning (Pl27) is that it involves a search for causation as persons' significant symbolic constructs of their everyday life.

The Centrality of Symbolism to Investigation

At this juncture, additional questions become relevant:

1. What is the dominant conventional methodology used in social science for studying social interaction?

2. Is the use of symbolic constructs central to this methodology?

3. If so, do such constructs capture causation as revealed by the symbolic constructs of social actors in the everyday world?

Each of these questions will be examined. Prior to this, an explanation of what is meant by the term, methodology, would seem to be in order.

Methodology constitutes a set of mid-range techniques and principles: methods. These encompass procedures such as conceptualizing, hypothesizing, observing and measuring. Also covered by the term, methods, are experimenting, model building, theorizing, explaining and predicting. (Kaplan,
Given these procedures, the use of the following have come to be accepted in social science investigation:

1. Concepts
2. Hypotheses
3. Operationalization
4. Measurement

The application of all of these emanate from the selection of problems to be investigated: causal relationships are usually posited as existing among variables to which they apply. It is to their examination that attention will now be directed.

The selection of problems would appear to be a simple and straightforward procedure. It invariably concerns what to an individual - from his own perspective - in the social world is worthy of being investigated.

Concepts refer to the same explanation of their operation as indicated by Langer. They are, as such, symbolic constructs. They have meaning because someone gives meaning to them. (Kaplan, 1964:P46). They operate as rules for judging or organizing aspects of experience, such as to facilitate investigation. Such rules emanate from particular contexts in which judgement is to take place. Within these contexts, various possibilities as to their application exist. These possibilities, in turn, are directly linked to perceptual cues which select the rules used in conceptualizing. (Kaplan, 1964:P46). Here is a clear pointer to
the impositional nature of conceptualizing in investigation.

A hypothesis represents a set of units and variables, and expresses the manner in which the units distribute on the variables. The form of expression is:

1. the presentation of a unit, eg., "house," "tomorrow."
2. the presentation of a variable, eg., "colour," "meteorological state" with its values, "red," "rainy."
3. These phases, once integrated, may lead to the following hypotheses:

   (i) "This house is red."
   (ii) "It will rain tomorrow."

(Galtung, 1967:PP309-310)

Hypotheses also possess the attributes of generality, testability, predictability, communicability, reproducibility and terability. (Galtung, 1967:P315). Generality concerns units in an intended field of terability, a specification of which indicates the conditions whereby a hypothesis is valid. (Galtung, 1967:P316).

Testability refers to the capability of confirmation or disconfirmation of inferences drawn on the basis of comparing a hypothesis and an empirical distribution. (Galtung, 1967:PP324-325).

Predictability encompasses three time ordered events: the formulation of the hypothesis, those situations from which information is obtained given formulation, the knowledge about information gained by the formulation from such situations. (Galtung, 1967:P328).
Central to the processes to which these attributes refer is the investigator's symbolic imposition, which is clearly expressed in regard to communicability, the important basis of which is intersubjectivity.

The communicability of a hypothesis inheres not merely in its transmission of meaning to others, but in the fact that both communicator and communicand have the same image of what is communicated. This necessarily involves the communicand's sharing of the evaluation to which the hypothesis refers. (Galtung, 1967: P334).

Reproducibility refers to the same conclusion obtained through repetition of the processes required by the hypothesis. (Galtung, 1967: P335). Indispensable to reproducibility is that investigators should examine identical information, understand original processes of investigation and, importantly, accept them. (Galtung, 1967: P336).

What then is the centrality of symbolic constructs to intersubjectivity? Symbolic constructs are central in that meaning collectively or consensually assigned to a situation either replaces or bears scant resemblance to originally varied forms of meaning emanating from particular personal perspectives. It will also be apparent that the life world is the reference point for these constructs and that they are expressed conceptually.

Conceptual expression is placed in high relief by operationalization, the performance of physical operations on objects of experience. (Kaplan, 1964: P39). The principle
at work here is that a concept is made to correspond to, or is represented analogically by a set of operations. Knowing the operations is thus synonymous with an understanding of the concepts. Operationalization thus presents a way of empirically specifying the meaning of a particular concept. (Kaplan, 1964: P40).

The most cogent exemplification, nevertheless, of symbolism is provided by measurement, the assignment of numbers to objects through the application of rules. In the links so constructed, one number corresponds to each object. This is the mapping of objects onto abstract spaces. (Kaplan, 1964: P177).

That the use of rules has a significant place in measurement is to be clearly seen in the fact that measuring is not the mere application of a yardstick, it is also the construction of this yardstick. (Kaplan, 1964: P197). Further, "we do not first identify some magnitude, then go about devising some way to measure it." (Kaplan, 1964: P177).

These statements provide clear reference to the impositional and conceptual character of measurement. Kaplan provides further evidence of this; in so doing, he points directly to the symbolism in measurement. What is crucial to all measurement is symbolic representation. Measurement enables objects, relative to rules of assignment, to be conceptually represented. (Weyl, 1949: P144). It is by means of symbolism that relations among objects are revealed. (Kaplan, 1964: P178).
Measurement, then, which shares with other symbolic constructs the quality of co-ordination of objects of a symbolic system, is governed by, thus, can never be better than the conceptual operations which it involves. (Kaplan, 1964: P215).

"...whether we can measure something depends not on that thing, but on how we have conceptualized it, on our knowledge of it, above all, on the skill and ingenuity which we can bring to bear on the process of measurement to which our inquiry can be put to use."

(Kaplan, 1964: P176)

What follow measurement are efforts to establish links between or among what are measured, variables. These links are usually causal. It is to the question of causation that attention will now be turned.

(Moser, 1958: PP211-214) states that three forms of evidence are important to causation. For a phenomenon, X, to be a cause of a phenomenon, Y, X and Y must be related. Further, if X always led to Y, it would be a sufficient condition for Y's occurrence; it would be a necessary condition if Y occurred only after X.

The second form of evidence important to causality relates to the order in time of variables. If Y precedes X, X cannot be a cause of Y.

The establishment of causality requires also that other variables can be excluded as bases of explanation of an association. For instance, a third variable, Z, may cause two effects, X and Y, whereby these become associated. This does not mean that Y cannot be predicted from X, but an
explanation of causative relationship between them, which excluded Z, would be incorrect. This is, indeed, a very simplistic view of causality, which may be quite difficult to establish even in the case of two variables. The problem, for example, of establishing the time sequence of variables when one is an opinion attribute, becomes particularly pronounced; eg., the link between income and conservatism.

Difficulty can be enhanced through the effects of extraneous variables. This may be seen in regard to a probable disturbing effect from the variable, age:

1. *A
   I
   C

2. A→I→C

3. A→C→I

The above relationships may be explained: 1. the income conservatism link can be explained by positing that each is the effect of a third variable, age; 2. aging increases people's earning capacity thus leading to their expressing conservative views; 3. aging causes conservatism which, in turn, leads to higher incomes.

Moser points out that the "real life" situation reflects much greater difficulty than these three directions of causality would appear to indicate: far more than one extraneous variable has to be dealt with. The important thing to be recognized here is that while the complexity and

* A = Age    C = Conservatism    I = Income

Arrows signify the direction of cause effect relations.
plenitude of social relationships in the life world are acknowledged, there is, nevertheless, abstraction from them to posit causality. That such an operation is symbolic is also eminently the case.

The Negation of the Social Actor's Meaning

It may be argued, though, that actors in the life world do make abstractions from complexity and plenitude and do so symbolically as well. Would the existence of such processes not lend support to the notion of causality just previously referred to? The answer would seem to be no.

Man's commonality (investigator/social actor) through symbolic constructs, by no means implies that persons occupy identical biographically determined situations, hence that their systems of relevance are the same. To proceed, therefore, from particular biographically determined situations in the life world - as investigators who make use of the conventional methodology do - and to seek to formalize their systems of relevance in a set of procedures does not grasp causation in the meaning constructed by actors in the life world.

The response to this argument would be that in formalization it is the non-tacit, non-personal, objective subject, the logical subject that is operative. In as much, though, as the logical subject may well be important to the conduct of inquiry, it is problematic to see it - it may very well be a mistake - as the basis of such inquiry. This may
appropriately be dealt with in regard to the concept of hypothesis.

(Galtung, 1967: PP330-334) considers the merits and demerits of formulating hypotheses prior to (ex-ante) and after (ex-post) data collection. In the first case (ex-ante) an investigator may approach data with a mental bias, thus restricting himself to only certain of their aspects. He may even attempt to fit data to the hypothesis rather than let the data reveal themselves and play upon it.

On the other hand, a hypothesis formulated ex-post is disadvantageous in that an investigator, rather than being guided by theory to new discoveries, allows himself to be manipulated by data.

Galtung, however, prefers ex-post formulation, even though, as in the case of ex-ante formulation, an investigator is guided by theory. What is crucial to Galtung is which approach gets more out of the data, given the use of theory. It is the ex-post: the investigator looks at them with a "more open mind."

Galtung's argument may be summarized: the disadvantage of ex-ante formulation may be owed to the primacy of the logical subject, whereas ex-post disadvantage may stem from the logical subject being secondary. Ex-post formulation is to be preferred, though: there is at least a notable instance when the logical subject is primary.

The specification of circumstances, though, of such primacy is by no means explicit. At best, it reposes at
the highly assumptive level, open mind. A case for primacy is far from being established.

This position can be supported by examining operationalization, another very significant aspect of the conventional methodology. Hempel states that central to operationalization is that the test of whether a statement is scientific is its referability to some particular manipulation of subject matter under study. He argues, though, that such a position would be a very narrow one.

"An operational definition grants experiential meaning to the term it introduces because it enables us to decide on the applicability of that term to a given case by observing the response the case shows under specifiable test conditions."

(Hempel, 1965:Pl25)

This comment of Hempel's would appear to indicate that the investigator's biographically determined situation is basic to the conduct of inquiry.

Yet this principle of operationalization restricted as it may be, constitutes a significant basis to social investigation, where what matter are that both operationalization and its outcome(s) can be agreed upon by different investigators. (Hempel, 1965:Pl26).

What then is the basis of identity of operations between two investigators? (Kaplan, 1964:PP40-41) argues that it lies in recognizing that different concepts are defined by different operations. In the absence of this, neither would mutual corroboration, nor for that matter, mutual criticism, be possible.
Here, it would be difficult to establish primacy of the logical subject.

It may be useful to indicate what is significant about the logical subject's not being primary. Basic to investigative practice - its significant reference point - are persons from whose life worlds inquiry emanates as a manner of perception and expression. (Brown, 1977:P46).

The perspectival nature of the construction and use of knowledge is certainly a central dynamic of the conduct of inquiry.

Popper's discussion of inductive inference - a principle of using singular or particular statements as the basis of universal ones - clearly exposes this perspectival nature. Popper argues that it is false to use singular statements, no matter how numerous, as bases of inferring universal ones. (Popper, 1959:PP27-30). To do so would be to make use of inductive inference, which entails the problem of how to establish the "truth" of universal statements which are based on hypotheses and theoretical systems.

This problem is usually approached by arguing that the truth of a universal statement is "known by experience." It is clear, though, that an account of experience or the result of an experiment can be a singular and not a universal statement. Thus, when it is stated that the truth of a universal statement is known from experience, what is meant is that the truth of a universal statement can be reduced to the truth of singular ones and that these singular ones are
known by experience to be true. This amounts to stating
that the universal statement is based on inductive in-
ference which, to Popper, entails infinite regress.

"...if we try to regard its truth\textsuperscript{3} as known from
experience then the very same problems which
occasioned its introduction will arise all over
again. To justify it, we should have to assume
an inductive principle of a higher order....
Thus the attempt to base the principle of
induction on experience breaks down, since it
must lead to an infinite regress."

(Popper, 1951: P29)

In an appropriate conceptualization of the problem of in-
ductive inference, he brings out, in high relief, the dif-

culty attendant on efforts to both grant the logical subject
primacy as well as to negate the perspectival nature of the
construction and use of knowledge: the belief in inductive
reasoning is primarily owed to a confusion of the psychology
of knowledge which deals with "empirical facts," and the logic
of knowledge which deals with logical relations.

(Popper, 1959: PP34-37) goes on to state that the central
basis to rejection of induction is its inability to provide
a suitable "criterion of demarcation" which would enable a
distinction to be made between empirical science and meta-
physics.

To Popper, the issue is not, however, one of distinction.
It is that of proposing a suitable convention, whereby the
concepts of empirical science and metaphysics can be so de-


whether or not it is closer to empirical science.

Popper's proposal for convention or agreement is one which emantes from discussion of issues among persons who possess a common purpose. He insists, however, that the choice of purpose is a matter of decision, not representative of rational argument.

Once more, the perspectival nature of the construction and use of knowledge is revealed.

Popper might well be pointing to the perspectival nature of the investigator's construction and use of knowledge. His discussion raises two fundamental issues for conventional methodology's notion of causation. Is the infinite plenitude of nature amenable to finite construction? (Signorile, 1980: P129). Given the linearity of the discursive mode, can presentational symbols admit of causally adequate meaningful formulation? (Signorile, 1980: P133). The responses to both these queries would appear to be negative.

Polanyi's distinction between focal and subsidiary awareness is a useful point of departure for an explication.

(Polanyi, 1969: PP316-317) argues that a deliberate act of consciousness has not merely an identifiable object as its focal point; it has, also, a set of subsidiary elements which are fused to form clues to its object or its parts. The relation of fusion to the focal object is one through which tacit rather than explicit inferences are drawn from clues. It is not one of deduction, but one of integration. Any going back to premises of tacit inference constitutes not a retracing of steps, but their effacing.
Final Inference

The application of the conventional methodology does involve symbolic constructs. Basic to such symbolism is the tacit and personal subject who, like the subjects of investigation, occupies a particular biographically determined situation in the life world, from which knowledge constructed is perspectival. It is the attempt to formalize this knowledge with the aim of accounting for causal relations among variables that negates causation in the meaning constructed by social actors.

To seek, therefore, to grasp the meaning constructed and used by social actors, rather than analyze causality produced by investigators, may be a worthwhile pursuit of sociology's.
Footnotes

1. These steps were provided during lecture 2 of the Honours Seminar, Department of Sociology, University of Windsor, 1978-79.


3. The reference here is to the universal statement.
CHAPTER X
The Macro/Micro-Social Link and Change

The Sociological Problematic

A socio-psychologically orientated sociology may usefully approach the macro/micro-social link and social change:

1. It can view the everyday world as the focus of the problem of sociological inquiry.

2. It may attempt to offer a critique of the construction and use of knowledge.

3. It may seek to demystify the notion of structure.

It must be stressed that the position to be put forth here is purely programmatic in nature. At best, it should be viewed as representing yet another basis to discussion of one of sociology's most important questions.

It is initially important to say what the everyday world represents and what does viewing its study as problematic mean. The everyday world is directly experienced by persons who are both physically and socially located within it.

"We experience it as conditions, occasions, objects, possibilities, relevances, presences...which are organized in and by the practices and methods through which we supply and discover organization."

(Smith, 1975: P367)

The problematic refers to the direction of investigation to issues which may not have been raised or problems that are "latent" in the occurrences within the experienced world.
Smith points out that to view the everyday world as the locus of the sociological problematic does not mean that, in itself, it is made an object of study. To do so would be to view it as a self contained universe of inquiry and methodologically to sever its links to those ways in which it is embedded in a socially organized context larger than its direct apprehension would indicate. (Smith, 1975:P367).

She refers to an important explication of this larger socially organized context: an Indian from Mistassini, Quebec, could not make sense of actions by game wardens to confiscate his moose meat, a one month’s food supply. The organizational information which makes sense of apparent senselessness is that during the nineteen sixties the Quebec government encouraged and licensed tourist outfitters to settle in Mistassini. Concomitant to encouragement was the decision to transfer the use of animal resources from subsistence hunting by Indians to sports hunting by whites. For several years, subsistence hunters were harassed by game wardens who flew to Mistassini to seize Indian meat. (Richardson, 1972:PP67-68).

Similar sense may be made of the personal liability and criminalization subsequent to the instituting of the enclosure acts in England. These acts drove peasants off the land. Many of the landless resorted to poaching, which was responded to by game laws that stipulated such forms of punishment as whipping, hard labour, banishment and death. To be
caught with a gun when poaching meant fourteen years banishment. To be convicted of violence meant death by hanging. The fact that magistrates were themselves landowners assured poachers that they would find little mercy. (Gregg, 1965: PP27-34).

The aforementioned references would seem to represent indecencies of the creation of radical changes of, or intrusions into, persons' daily lives. These do not emanate from a logic of organization that is part of the setting in which they occur. They are instances of the problematic implicit to the social organization of everyday life. (Smith, 1975: P370).

What Smith seems to have done by way of example is to point to the construction of knowledge that forms a legitimating basis to action. It is in this context that the following should be understood: the study of a particular social situation constitutes an essential part of the understanding of a total process. Here, the micro-sociological level of the everyday world and the macro-sociological inquiry into formal organization, political elites, social class, the education system are brought into interdependent relationships. (Smith, 1975: P375).

Critique

Smith might well have alluded to the construction and use of knowledge. It is Le Fevre who provides salient indecencies of such construction and use, and also puts forth a critique of them.
The main contention of his critique would appear to be that an inextricable link between the construction of knowledge and its use serves to disregard the dialectical nature of everyday life. Further, this is an imposition which negates persons' socio-historical locations, thus their construction of reality.²

Not unlike Smith, Le Febvre offers a description of everyday life. Everyday life is:

"...not a chasm, a barrier, or a buffer, but a field and a halfway house, a halting place and a springboard, a moment made of moments (desires, pleasures - products and achievements - passivity and creativity - means and ends) the dialectical interaction that is the inevitable starting point for the realization of the possible."

(Le Febvre, 1971:P14)

One important instance of disregard is provided by the specialized sciences which seek to isolate and categorize³ the "facts" of the everyday world for their own convenience. (Le Febvre, 1971:P26). Everyday life has ceased to be an area rich in potential subjectivity. It has become an object of social organization. (Le Febvre, 1971:PP59-60).

These sciences seek to be integrated with consciousness and despite their ostensible form and aim to operate as non-ideologies, they do operate as ideologies⁴ they conceal the fact of everyday life. (Le Febvre, 1971:P72).

It would not be incorrect to say that the reference to imposition and its negating of reality is coextensive with domination,⁵ an aspect of whose operation can be located in the link between writing and bureaucracy. Writing, Le Febvre
states, through its understanding, produces rules. Its repetition fosters accumulation of the tools of knowledge, given its permanence and definitive form. It is also a promoter of social organization and culture. With its basis in the division of labour, it is a superstructural precursor of ideologies. (Le Febvre, 1971: PP153-154).

It is with a grounding in these attributes that the techniques, knowledge and rationality of bureaucracy become intensified:

"...bureaucracy's propensity to found its power on the written word leaves little in doubt."

(Le Febvre, 1971: PP159)

Both "social conscience and pure reason" become identified with bureaucratic conscience and bureaucratic reason, so does wisdom with the bureaucratic mind.

It is within these links which train persons for the bureaucratic management of their daily lives - links which rationalize private life - that domination resides. (Le Febvre, 1971: PP159-160).

This seems to be a reference to the operation of domination in the ordinary "taken-for-granted" aspects of existence.

Of importance, then, to a socio-psychologically oriented sociology is not critique that uses the level of the mere commonplace as its reference point. It is critique that is, at once, pervasive. It is restricted to no particular social context.
Dereification of Structure

The point of the foregoing arguments of Le Febvre's seems to be that of laying the foundations of dereification of structure. What would seem to be central to such dereification is the historically given nature of knowledge in the life world, which persons can interpret through reflecting. Given this knowledge, they can also project. The social worlds constructed, to be constructed, or which will have been constructed, would not be the same as those that stem from antecedent formulations or categorizations used as bases of explaining either current "structures" of the social world or predicting their forthcoming states.

The question of instances of dereification and the implied issue of change are thus raised. Three socio-historical constellations may be conducive to dereification. (Berger and Pullberg, 1965:PP209-211).

1. The overall disintegration of social structures which would involve a corresponding disintegration of "taken-for-granted worlds." In such a situation, rules come to be viewed as human actions and institutions as constructed by means of such actions.

2. Situations of culture contact can provide an impetus to dereification. Culture contact through provision of alternative ways of viewing the world and ordering lives within it, can be a precursor to a crisis in knowledge.

3. The social marginality of persons or groups may also
provide an important instance of dereification. This marginality may be either chosen or inflicted, may take a variety of forms - ethnic, religious, political - hence can represent persons in different socio-historical locations. Analysis of the knowledge constructed in such differential locations could provide a theme of dereification.
Footnotes

1. So would the scenes from the film, "Slaughter House Five," representative of persons conducting ordinary business in Dresden on one day, and their destruction by bombing the next. Absent is the organizational process which connects the two moments of life and death in the everyday world. See Smith, D., "What it Might Mean to do a Canadian Sociology: The Everyday World as Problematic," Canadian Journal of Sociology: 1 (Fall) 1975: PP369-370.

2. "Asociology which retains its grasp of itself and its subject matter must be a continuing clarification of everyday life. The fulfilling of this task entails a critique of consciousness which is the very stuff of everyday life," Berger and Fullberg, 1965: P211.

3. Examples are family sociology, consumption psychology, anthropology or ethnology of contemporary communities.

4. Ideologies include functionalism, structuralism, operationism or scientism. Le Febvre's reference to ideologies is Marxist: ideas considered with reference to their origin and use rather than their validity or "truth" value.


6. These tools are reasoning and reflection.

7. Le Febvre's polemic is directed against "capitalism." Smith's problematic is constituted by the social relations of capitalism, whereby "the socially organized forms in and through which persons depend on each other are external to them." (Smith, 1975: P371). The question as to whether such relations are specific to so-called western capitalist societies is highly debateable.
CHAPTER XI

Conclusion

(Nelson, 1971, P298) contends that Laing's work is a warning that sociology would have to reconstitute its notions of persons' existence, experience and expression.

The relevance of this socio-psychological evaluation (by no means encompassing his work in its entirety) to reconstitution would appear to lie in an emphasizing of the need of resubjectivizing of persons: persons do constitute the antithesis of objectification. This need of resubjectivizing may be seen within the context of the implications raised by this analysis:

1. The indeterminate or dialectical nature of social interaction.
2. The endeavour to pursue the study of meaning constructed by social actors.
3. Pursuit of the issues of the micro/macro-social link and change in terms of a critique of the construction and use of knowledge.

The connecting thread between these implications and Laing's "warning" may be seen in:

1. The objectified/reified world is a world of domination.
2. Sociology as science\(^1\) should reject such objectification and reification.
3. This is a proposition of sociology as radical\(^2\) activity.

1
2
4. Failure to perform such activity negates sociology as science, and relegates it to the status of ideology in the interest of domination.

If sociology is to take up the aforementioned challenge, it would have to do so as a critical sociology and may have to deal with two major questions. They are methodological and substantive. In regard to the first, the issue raised is whether the social actor's perspective can be taken by the investigator. Alternatively expressed, it is whether the investigator's biographically determined situation can be transcended. This may, indeed, be difficult to achieve. One answer to this difficulty may be to treat, as Laing does, the investigator's perspective as a source of inquiry.

The substantive question would appear to centre on what is to follow critique. This is no mere theoretical query. It arises in Laing's own studies where he points to mystification and efforts to deny persons' praxes. What if agents of mystification and denial are made aware of their actions and do not wish to modify them? What becomes the task of a critical sociology? One immediate answer would be to talk about provision of alternative institutions. Alternative institutions, though, do not replace existing structures of domination.

Finally, this analysis of Laing's work would also seem to be relevant to a keenly contested debate within sociology, the link between Marxism and a socio-psychologically oriented
sociology. On the one hand, some Marxists have been critical of a socio-psychologically oriented sociology for an alleged ahistorical nature.

The central idea of this charge would appear to rest on the view that the "being" of persons is not a self-sufficient phenomenon. It represents a process stretched between the embodied self and the natural world of its presentation. (Lichtman, 1970: P88). Persons cannot be the sole producers of their own nature, precisely because human self determination takes place through a medium with its own structure. (Lichtman, 1970: PP90-91).

The point here seems to be that a socio-psychologically oriented sociology pays negligible attention to the fact that persons are made by history.

This is clearly spelt out in the comment that a socio-psychologically oriented sociology, apart from being highly subjective and voluntaristic, is unaware of historical concreteness. (Lichtman, 1970: P77). While it may indicate daily routines and taken-for-granted aspects of social situations or institutions, it cannot provide theoretical explanations of the causes of these situations or institutions and offer workable strategies for institutional change or elimination. (Bandyopadhyay, 1971: P17).

In this context, reference may be made to two important concepts, objectivation and objectification. Lichtman argues that the account of objectivation - paradigmatically represented by two persons from different social worlds starting to interact - is too detached from actual social
situations to allow for any understanding of the importance of structure.

The comment on objectification is more pointed. Used as a concept by a socio-psychologically oriented sociology, it fails to relate the objectification of consciousness, purpose and meaning to an evolving productive process, the social stages of which are coextensive with periods of human history. Unlike it, Marxian theory possesses a fundamentally concrete and historical stance from which to account for objectification. (Lichtman, 1970:PP87-88).

It may not be incorrect to argue that this stance is steeply grounded in the relevance of the socio-economic relations among classes, "the social relations" of production.

Bandyopadhay would appear to be making an important reference to it in his recommendation that the opposites and reciprocities of principal contradictions in the "world capitalist economy" or "capitalist state" be analyzed dialectically. He even cites as an example of analysis the interdependence of economic development and underdevelopment, whereby the emergence and structure of the former create the emergence and structure of the latter. (Bandyopadhay, 1971:P25).

On the other hand, a socio-psychologically oriented sociology may be seen as making critical reference to Marxism. In this regard, Laing's work may be viewed as an important exemplification of critical commentary on Marxist economism.
The point is that economic strategies for struggle against domination would be short sighted. 6 (Schneider, 1975; P260). A significant corollary here is that the "working class," though constitutive of one of the principal opposites in the social relations of production, does not represent the sole subject in history. The working class may well be exploited, and may well bear the burden of the accumulation of capital; as such, it is the basis of revolutionary action. As a class, though, it is limited. It cannot rise to a conception of social totality. It is ignorant of society's global operation. (Le Febvre, 1976; P94). The role of the working class as subject is conjunctural rather than structural. (Le Febvre, 1976; PP80-81). The working class represents one of many subjects - persons labelled mentally ill, gay people, blacks, women - who daily struggle against objectification and domination.

The debate continues in earnest. One of its important current aspects is represented by "phenomenological Marxism," whose stance is that Marxian theoretical concepts emanate from persons' "life worlds," reference points of everyday common sense and experience. It attempts to reground Marxian theory in subjective experience and motivation, and oppose deterministic versions of materialism that confine the struggle against domination to purely structural movements. 7 Despite this, as well as the view that Laing is no mere critical investigator relevant to a sub-branch
of medicals sociology - he raises issues for the conduct of sociological inquiry at much more important levels - it may be premature, if not overly ambitious, to claim any superiority for a socio-psychologically orientated sociology.

It may, therefore, seem far fetched to posit as one Marxist does (Bandyopadhyay, 1971: P27) that the existence of competing sociologies does not mean that one of them is not the "truest."
Footnotes

1. The reference to science is to a way of knowing.

2. Radical here means going to the roots of phenomena - the effort to examine the basis and practices used in producing these phenomena as well as its own. It also signifies a political stance oriented to fundamental social transformation. See Chua, E.H., Delineating a Marxist Interest in Ethnomethodology. The American Sociologist: 1977: Vol. 12 (February) Note (1) P24.

3. Smith provides an interesting reference to how such ideology might operate. It seems to closely parallel Berger and Pullberg's discussion of reification and mystification. It is:
   1. The separation of what is said from actual empirical conditions of persons' lives and from actual individuals.
   2. The arrangement of these detached ideas to demonstrate order among them, which purports to account for what is observed.
   3. Modification of these ideas such as they appear as distinct entities (eg., value patterns, norms, belief systems) to which agency or possible causal efficacy may be attributed.
   4. The reattribution of these entities to "reality" by attributing them to persons who are then made to represent ideas.


4. The reference is both to the Chicago school's version of symbolic interactionism and phenomenology.

5. Lichtman is using the work, "The Social Construction of Reality": Berger, P., and Luckmann, T., as the source for discussion of these concepts.


Schneider provides a useful discussion of this ideology in terms of estheticisation in the commodity world: a basic contradiction exists between use value and exchange value of commodities. While commodities may have real value to consumers, to sellers they represent means for attaining exchange value in the form of money. This contradiction forms the basis of a tendency to transformation in use form - the shape of commodities. From the standpoint of exchange value, use value merely constitutes bait.

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