

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND SOCIOLOGY:  
OUTLINE OF AN INTRODUCTION  
TO SOME CURRENT PROBLEMS

The relations between psychoanalysis and sociology pose a difficult problem. The complexity of psychoanalysis, the evolution of certain features of Freud's theories, the diversity of doctrines and interpretations encountered among its representatives (and this is often true even within the same country), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the youthfulness, one might say, infancy, of sociology—that latecomer among the sciences of man, which derives its concepts and its methods from research itself and from the problems with which our civilization confronts it—all this would justify labelling as imprudent—even rash—any attempt to study their relationship and their prospects for collaboration. We readily accept the reproof. And yet, however rash it might be, this venture, in our opinion, is in no sense a concocted one. The necessity of attempting it is evident. For more than twenty years, the studies, inquiries, researches which we have been involved in concerning collectivities of men at work, the interpretation of their attitudes, of their reactions to new techniques and to the con-

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straints of rationalization from “higher up,” as it evolved from Taylor through the diverse stages of so-called “scientific” organization, the attempts to measure their “satisfaction,” to explain the variations in their output, their absences, their professional fluidity, and, last but not least, their behavior when not at work, the forms and content of their “leisure” —all these experiments have continuously and increasingly stimulated our interest in psychoanalytical concepts and interpretations. Frequently this evoked in us the temptation to indulge in “unseasonable extrapolations,” utilizing analytical theories which, having been discovered in the field of individual psychology, ran the risk, at first glance, of not being transferable to the field of collective behavior.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, this touchy subject is approached here in a spirit that is in nowise insistent, even less “imperialist.” The time for imperialism, insofar as it pertains to sociology or to any other science of man, is past. Basically, the science of man is *one* and the diverse disciplines are but varied means of approach in the effort to understand an infinitely complex reality. What we, more modestly, propose to do is merely to try to clarify certain difficulties for ourselves, to learn from the reactions to which this rapid sketch will give rise—at least, we hope it will provoke such reactions—and, who knows, perhaps to promote that cooperation, in well-defined and limited fields, which we believe to be more and more necessary.

Far from presuming to provide a complete exposition here, we will content ourselves with recalling, to begin with, a few of the classical theses of Freudianism as sociologists see them, and then their modification, particularly during the last fifteen years, thanks to the “socialization” of psychoanalysis—a process influenced by English, French and, above all, American works. Finally, we will indicate, by way of illustration, a few concrete examples in regard to which collaboration between these two methods of investigation could, in our opinion, prove fruitful.

## I

In recalling the Freudian themes which are of particular interest to sociologists, we will omit, of course, certain incomprehensible and sometimes even brutally negative reactions (because they were inadequately understood) which resulted, until very recently, in the actual isolation of psychoanalysis. We place ourselves in the position of investigators who have ac-

1. Cf. J. Lacan and M. Cénac, “Introduction théorique aux fonctions de la psychanalyse en criminologie,” *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, Jan.-March 1951, pp. 13-14.

knowledge not only Freud's genius and his admirable contributions to the knowledge of man, but also the enormous value that the application of psychoanalysis to the study of collective behavior could have for them.

All sociological research assumes—this is one of its main hypotheses—that the behavior of the members of a collectivity is, with an intensity and to an extent that vary according to the structures and the size of the group, oriented by motivations that originate within this group. We know the rigidity and even the dogmatism with which Durkheim affirmed the existence of those forces *sui generis* that are inseparable from collective representations, and the fundamental role that he attributed to them in determining individual reactions. In Marx and Engels, “class consciousness” feeds and concentrates on these collective imperatives.

Classical psychology before Freud's time did not permit interpretation of the complexity and diversity of individual responses to these pressures of the group. Even though he remains apart from a preconceived and definitive system, the sociologist must, in order to interpret his observations and further his researches, perceive the variety and complexity of the relationships that exist between human groupings (from global societies to small associations) and the individual who is part of them. He might then expect a new concept of the psyche from Freudianism, one that would enable him to move forward in this direction. But difficulties inherent in the doctrines of the founder of psychoanalysis hindered (and, we might as well speak frankly, to a large extent still hinder) this applicability in the domain of social data.

First of all, Freud reduces to the minimum the role of social reality. With the exception of the family, the diverse collectivities—economic, political, professional, and religious—are rarely mentioned in the works of classical psychoanalysis, and when they are, they appear as mere epiphenomena. The evolution of the individual psyche stems principally from biological causes: the drives (*Triebe*) through which the libido manifests itself, variable as regards its energy and its components—narcissistic, aggressive, erotic—and the conflicts between impulses. Biological tendencies can be sublimated, for example, in religion, spiritual life, art, when the self offers substitutive and satisfying objects to the instincts. But in both cases, they are for Freud universal, the universality of biological determinants being one of the principal “disputed questions” among psychoanalysts today.

The universality and the fixity of the complexes postulated by Freud weakened in advance any sociological ventures by breaking off the contact

of classical psychoanalysis with the experimental attitude of the social sciences, as, for example, when he “explains” (*Totem and Taboo*) the society and the so-called primitive mentality by an analogy between the neurotic and the primitive “fixed” at an infantile level; or when, despite the unquestionable value of these comparisons, he claims to interpret the myth by likening it to the dream, an explanation based upon the purely gratuitous affirmation of a collective unconscious and of an “archaic heredity” (*Moses and Monotheism*). Similarly, to subsume tradition in the Freudian system by explaining it in terms of repression was to affirm that it is necessarily beyond the grasp of logical thought. Here, too, Freudianism collided with many contemporaneous studies assembled by sociologists and ethnographers.<sup>2</sup>

Speaking more generally, neither the one group nor the other could find satisfaction in the concept of social life that classical psychoanalysis contains. According to it, the dynamics of the psyche are identified with the conflicts between libidinal impulses, which correspond to the biological needs of a person, and the sociocultural forces which tend to repress them. It follows that social life is limited by that which represses and restricts instinctual satisfactions. Moreover, doesn't Freud's doctrine imply a perpetual dissatisfaction on the part of the individual, an *a priori* impossibility for him to reconcile the social order with the full flowering of his personality? Again, these are views and ways of thinking which are alien to contemporary sociology.

This pessimistic rejection of any harmony between the individual and his social life concurs with a fatalism to which the very formation of the personality is subject. We encounter here the famous thesis stated so many times by Freud throughout all his work and up to the very end of his career: “The events of the first five years of infancy exert upon our lives a decisive influence which is altered by nothing that happens afterward. . . .”<sup>3</sup> And also: “Precocious experiences resist in the end all efforts to modify them. . . .”<sup>4</sup> The data adduced by Freud for this decisive period comprise essentially the individual's instinctual equipment, the structure of his family environment, the mechanism of parental influences, and the

2. In a study which, in other respects, is suggestive and illustrated by personal memoirs, it is this factor that seems to us to misconstrue the thinking of Heinrich Meng: “Sigmund Freud und die Soziologie,” *Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, Band I, *Mélanges Max Horkheimer* (Frankfurt, 1955), pp. 67–76.

3. *Moses and Monotheism* (New York, Knopf, 1939), p. 188.

4. *Ibid.*

interplay of complexes to which they give rise. So that the family and the parental conflicts, as they emerge from Freud's writings, seem to the sociologist a kind of entity, and even an absolute. His hope of understanding through psychoanalysis how the collective imperatives, the socio-economic motivations become diversified and individualized within the family environment has been, until now, thwarted. He is ready to acknowledge the considerable importance of infantile traumas and parental conflicts. But, in his opinion, which is based on studies of groups of apprentices and students, and on investigations into industrial and professional milieus, *their* traumas and conflicts *also* have a meaning; their particular and individual determining factors are influenced by the complex situation that stems from the family milieu. These are expressed in a whole series of structures and social groupings which condition and shape them.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the developments which followed psychoanalysis indicated on their own that Freud had misunderstood, among other important factors of a sociological nature, the insecurity of individual status in the modern world, which expresses itself through a specific "culture"; the structural influence of capitalist society (Karen Horney); and also the individual's frustration in communities that are divided into classes and castes, which the works of John Dollard have stressed.<sup>6</sup>

While thus rapidly confronting the sociologist with some of the themes of classical psychoanalysis we can hardly fail to mention his perplexity in the very face of Freud's doctrine—one of the most fully-rounded and complete doctrines ever conceived by human brain, a total, exhaustive *Weltanschauung* which, from this point of view, yields nothing to the most self-contained philosophical systems, such as those of Leibniz or Malebranche. It is very difficult and often impossible for the sciences of man, and especially for the social sciences, which function by testing their methods and concepts through the trial and error of empirical research, to harmonize their attempts with a system in which certain disciples, encouraged by the boldness of a master, have sought to use them as one would a collection of passkeys.

In fact, examples of the "absorption" of social realities by Freud himself abound. We have already mentioned primitive society, tradition, the

5. An interesting empirical documentation on this subject can be found in the collection of "Communications made to the International Seminar" on *L'entrée des jeunes dans la vie de travail et la communauté*, organized by the UNESCO Institute of Social Sciences (Cologne, Jan. 3-11, 1954).

6. Cf. particularly *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, 2d ed. (New York, Harper Bros., 1949).

myth. He likens religion to a collective neurosis; art, from the standpoint of the artist, to a sublimation, from the point of view of its usage, to a "mild narcotic," but "not strong enough to make us forget real misery."<sup>7</sup> As for work, it scarcely occupied Freud's thought; nonetheless he devoted to it an interesting and profound page to which we will return, noting here, however, that it stresses mainly the interest and value of work for the individual, "from the point of view of the economy of the libido."<sup>8</sup>

## II

As early as 1924, in his famous essays on the "Rapports réels et pratiques de la psychologie et de la sociologie," Marcel Mauss criticized what he discreetly called "the excesses of psychoanalysis."<sup>9</sup> Based on the progress of sociological theory beginning with Durkheimianism (to which the works of Georges Gurvitch have made an effective contribution), Mauss's view assumes fresh significance, in 1955, in the light of the evolution of the human sciences during the last thirty years, ethnology, demography, economic, and industrial sociology in particular. And it has been clarified in the very evolution of psychoanalysis which, little by little, has given rise to a "new psychoanalysis,"<sup>10</sup> to quote an expression of Roger Bastide to which we will revert; this corresponds to what we have termed a "process of socialization" in Freud's classical psychoanalysis. In reading recent psychoanalytical publications in Europe as well as in the United States, one frequently observes a modification and even abandonment of many of Freud's principles and postulates.<sup>11</sup> At the same time the activity of many reviews and psychoanalytical societies seems to evidence a kind of "father complex" in regard to the Master of Vienna, revealing as well a vigilant censorship which tends to repress as "deviations" any new elaboration that leads away from Freud's theories or any thought that constitutes a challenging innovation. But it would doubtless be presumptuous to suggest in this regard that an application of the psychoanalytical categories to the ac-

7. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York, Cape & Smith, 1930), p. 35.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 18, footnote 1.

9. Communication of the 10th of Jan. 1924 to La Société de Psychologie, cf. *Anthropologie et Sociologie* (Paris, P.U.F., 1950), p. 293.

10. Roger Bastide, *Sociologie et Psychanalyse* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), p. 109 ff.

11. As is evident from Roger Bastide's fine exposition, *op. cit.*, and particularly chapters V and VI. Since then, the publication of the important work of Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York, Rinehart, 1955), has shown that this evolution is far from being completed.

tivity of official psychoanalytical societies might, at least in certain instances, prove rather fruitful.

We shall confine ourselves here to designating those features which most interest the sociologist in what appears, from its external aspects, to be a “new psychoanalysis.”

To begin with, as early as 1938, the social aspect of the relations between the patient and the analyst was clearly outlined by H. S. Sullivan, to our mind one of the most penetrating of contemporary psychiatrists. Neuroses, for him, are less disorders of the personality than the patient’s disturbance in regard to his individual relationships and to his environment. Just as mental health can be defined as the person’s adjustment to his relations with others, to the norms of behavior imposed by the group, so a patient’s recovery is assured by his social readjustment.<sup>12</sup> In this kind of therapeutics, the reciprocal bond which unites the analyst and the patient has a real sociological value. An analogous position today is that of Daniel Lagache, who defines psychoanalysis as “psychotherapy,” as therapy based upon the interpersonal relationship of the patient and the doctor. And he adds: “An important aspect of the theory of cure is its conception in terms of a social group of which the two members constitute a continuous interaction.”<sup>13</sup>

We must now mention the new interpretation of the “objective” stages, that is to say, those concerned with the relations of the subject and the object, from the sociological point of view. In Freud, the theory of instincts, *Trieb*e, is considered mainly from the biological standpoint. To-

12. Harry Stack Sullivan has stressed over and over again the analysis of interpersonal relations in illness, treatment and recovery. We must cite, among his publications, “Psychiatry: Introduction to the Study of Interpersonal Relations” (*Psychiatry*, I, 1938); “A Role in Formulating the Relationship of the Individual and the Group” (*American Journal of Sociology*, 1939) and, mainly, the book which, in the light of his long clinical experience, contains the final expression of his thought: *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (New York, Norton, 1953).

13. D. Lagache, “Définition et aspects de la psychanalyse,” *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, July–Sept. 1950, p. 407. Having himself observed that in the psychoanalytical treatment social factors intervene at first only in the form of the interpersonal relationship between the analyst and the patient, S. A. Shentoub (“Remarques méthodologiques sur l’analyse psycho-sociale” *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, July–Sept., 1950, p. 438), remarks quite correctly that “the psychoanalytical technique tends to place the social situations in which the patient finds himself on a concrete and real footing.” The psychoanalyst observes the social data “as a real and living fact within the experimental framework of the cure. In contrast to the sociologist, who tries to apprehend the collective experience of the social fact, the psychoanalyst looks upon it from the standpoint of the individual’s experience of it.” Here again we see how the individual’s psychic experience can be expressed with a study of collective facts from this point of view and the contribution that the psychoanalyst’s clinical observation can make to sociological research. To know how the social data, for example, how the individual conscience—even the so-called “morbid” one—reacts to being part of an economic, political or religious collectivity, is surely not a matter of indifference to the sociologist.

day, these instincts, particularly sexuality and aggression, are presented as tendencies that establish links with others and imply interpersonal relationships—a very significant example of the “process of socialization” of which we spoke earlier.

In the genetics of personality, the family is stressed as the transmitting agency of a specific culture, consequently as the agency which “opens up” the personality to the determining economic and social factors. This orientation is distinguished by various modalities, among the “new psychoanalysts” as well as among cultural anthropologists like Kardiner and Linton.<sup>14</sup> Lagache, assessing recent psychoanalytical theses in this domain, sums up its modifications when he points out that following Freud’s or Jung’s first systematizations “in which the biological tendency predominates,” “one became more sensitive to the complexity of interactions between biological maturity and the environment. On the whole, the formation of the personality appears as a progressive socialization, in the course of whose development psychoanalysis has called attention to the interplay of successive and multiple identifications.”<sup>15</sup>

But it was difficult to push this evolution of psychoanalysis very far so long as the concept of the superego continued, as in Freud, to be exclusively structured by the fluctuations of the Oedipal conflict, particularly by identifications; the superego is therefore essentially characterized by the memory of categorical interdictions addressed to the little child or, more generally, by the interiorization of repressive forces that the child has encountered in the course of his development. Such a conception is obviously not suited for articulation with determinants of a social nature. From then on, and this has been very strongly emphasized by Erich Fromm and Karen Horney, the superego tends toward interiorization of the cultural norms suggested by the milieu, apprehended, as we shall see, in both a precise and an extensive manner, which takes into account social structures and the technical environment. It therefore interprets the modifications of the personality under their influence. However, this “socialization” of the superego has not been acknowledged by the representatives of classical psychoanalysis; they look upon it as a “culturalist” or “sociological deviation.”

Finally, the “new psychoanalysis” refuses to see in infantile experiences a quasi-exhaustive explanation of the personality and of behavior. On the

14. Thus Erich Fromm considers the family as the “psychic agency of society, the institution whose function it is to transmit the demands of society to the child during the course of his growth (*The Sane Society*, p. 82).

15. D. Lagache, *La Psychanalyse*, “Collection Que Sais-Je?” (Paris, P.U.F., 1955), p. 37.

other hand, it accepts the intervention of specific and irreducible social situations in the etiology of the neuroses. Thus, the neo-Freudians appear to recognize, as authentic realities that play an efficacious role in determining behavior, a whole scale of social groupings altogether beyond the scope of the family unit, up to and including global society. This orientation is to be found, in varying formulas but with a common foundation, in the works of Dollard and Fromm as well as in those of Sullivan and Horney. The latter two authors define neuroses finally as a disturbance of the patient's individual relationships to his environment.

Karen Horney's culturalist relativism is particularly clear and interesting for the sociologist. Long clinical experience with neuroses in the United States demonstrates, according to this writer, the influence of the structural characteristics of American society on their genetics and their development; in particular, the impact of the forms which bitter personal competition for economic success and the need for social approval have assumed in this society. Let us reread the last paragraph of her well-known work, *The Neurotic Personality of our Time*; it offers a characteristic example of the synthesis which the neo-Freudians have attempted and from which effective cooperation with the concrete sociology of our times would develop, if it were interpreted by collaborative research. "It seems that the person who is likely to become neurotic is one who has experienced the culturally determined difficulties in an accentuated form, mostly through the medium of childhood experiences, and who has consequently been unable to solve them, or has solved them only at great cost to his personality. We might call him a stepchild of our culture."<sup>16</sup> (It would not be unfaithful to the context to use the word "society" in the place of *culture*.)

I would like to underline the work of Erich Fromm, in particular *Man for Himself* and *The Sane Society*, his recent and fascinating book. In it, man no longer constitutes a closed system, endowed by nature with conditioned biological tendencies, as in Freud. In order to understand the genetics of his personality, one must take into account the individual's relationships not only with himself, but also with others, with nature and society. Among Fromm's principal hypotheses Bastide emphasizes, and rightly so, "the social character" and the "dynamic adaptation." The social character is the "central part which the structure of the character among the majority of the members of the group comprises, a part that was shaped as a

16. *The Neurotic Personality of our Time* (London, Kegan Paul, 1937), p. 290.

result of basic experiences and ways of life common to the group itself.”<sup>17</sup> We see how much this concept is related to corresponding ones in Linton and Kardiner respectively. As for dynamic adaptation, it is the specific form imprinted upon the energy of men by the adaptation of their needs to the particular way of life of a given society.<sup>18</sup> “In short,” Bastide comments, “it is the libido of Freud viewed not as an autonomous impulse but as a reaction to certain social situations to which we must adapt ourselves in order to live.”<sup>19</sup> According to Fromm, as well as to Horney and other “new psychoanalysts,” society ceases to be exclusively an organ of repression and becomes a veritable *institution*, whose influence on the human personality is not solely negative and inhibiting, but positive and creative. Freud’s biological impulses become, in Fromm’s reevaluation, tendencies that are molded by society. It is this which, far from being a mere Marxist “vener” superimposed upon psychoanalysis, makes his endeavor so fecund for contemporary sociology: the revision of a concept of society in which the individual and the collectivity react upon one another in a psychoanalysis that maintains, it seems to us, the essential of its explanatory powers and its richness. In particular, Fromm has opened up a new avenue which can lead to a concrete solution, by empirical research, of the problem of the articulation of individual and collective motivations.

These are some of the principal features of this “new psychoanalysis” whose evolution away from Freudianism and whose scientific reverberations seem very significant to us. But we must point out at this juncture that it is far from being acceptable, however, to all of the members of the International Association of Psychoanalysis, many of whom consider it a “culturalist” or “sociological deviation,” to be avoided as much as the “biological deviation” of which Melanie Klein, and, above all, Jung, have been accused.

In France, Daniel Lagache’s work is particularly interesting as regards the confrontation that we have touched upon here, because he occupies a middle position. Respectful of Freud’s doctrines, he is anxious to avoid

17. Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York, Rinehart, 1941), p. 277. In *The Sane Society* (pp. 81–82), Fromm stresses the necessity of distinguishing between factors that explain the particular *content* of the social character and the *methods* by which the latter is produced. “The structure of society and the function of the individual in the social structure may be considered to determine the content of the social character.” The family, the “psychic agency of society,” has a preponderant influence on the manner in which the social character is produced.

18. *Escape from Freedom*, p. 278.

19. *Op. cit.*, p. 109.

both deviations, but he points out on occasion those features which have been revised and to what extent. He is certainly interested in the neo-Freudian writings, although he by no means accepts all their theses.

Nevertheless, in the path of this sincere and vigorous attempt to maintain the essentials of the doctrine and at the same time to remove it from the proud and mistrustful isolation in which the united attitude of many of its admirers and disciples have kept it for so long, to place it among the other sciences of man and to "open it up" to fruitful exchanges and true collaboration, lie certain difficulties which, for the sake of what follows, we must point out here.

1. In spite of complementary explanations which depict the genetics of the personality as the result of an interaction between biological and psycho-sociological determinants, the vital period of formation remains, for him, the first five years of life; he attributes to it "a decisive importance."<sup>20</sup> "In all that is essential, the personality is organized in the course of the first five years of life through the interactions of the child with the family environment," he writes in his fine essay "D finition et aspect de la psychanalyse."<sup>21</sup> This position is hardly compatible with the scientific study of social data, of cultures, of their incidence upon the psyche, and upon individual behavior. To accept such a postulate is to gravely compromise in advance the possibility of cooperation in the field of disciplines and of interpretations. A sociologist, constantly called upon to observe the variety and the wealth of social data, of structures, of educative and professional experiences, of the relationships of camaraderie and of friendship, the impact of certain milieus, the *Lehrjahre* when so much is accomplished, the "years of apprenticeship" of so many individuals, has no reason to underestimate the influence of the years that follow infancy and adolescence in the molding of the personality. Moreover, it is difficult to see how Lagache can admit elsewhere that the personality evolves not only in its function of maturation but also in its function of apprenticeship, necessarily followed by contact with new social groups; nor can one understand how he can conceive of the determination of behavior by "specific and irreducible social situations."<sup>22</sup>

2. Faithfulness to the "postulate of the five years" doubtless stems, in Lagache's thinking, as in that of his colleagues, from a certain confusion that subsists on the nature of what he understands by the "social."

20. *La Psychanalyse*, p. 37.

21. *Art. cit.*, 407-8.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 407 and 409.

For Freud, the social is actually merely an epiphenomenon, the term given to the ensemble of causes which limit or repress satisfaction of the instinctual impulses. The individual's only *real* environment is the family. And we are not even speaking of the family as it appears in the sociological field of observation, with its geographic, historic, ethnic, and economic determinants. The family, from the purely Freudian standpoint, is exclusively a complex of affective relationships, and the dynamics of the individual psyche tends to pick out of their interplay the fundamental causes, which are biological and universal.

Lagache realizes that one can discern in the evolution of Freud's thought and in the psychoanalytical movement a propensity toward "biologism," "meaning an exaggerated tendency to explain conduct and personality by biological determinants."<sup>23</sup> But, in breaking away from culturalism and in varying his thought, doesn't he himself reproach Freud for "underestimating the quasi-universality of biological determinants, of fundamental needs, for example"? How far, then, in his opinion, do these biological determinants extend? In what way does their quasi-universal field of action differ from the enormous, totalitarian one that Freud attributes to them? And, if it is so important, how can we understand the interaction of biological maturation and environment, on the one hand, and apprenticeship through the intervention of social groups, on the other?

Elsewhere, when he discusses the "psychology of extensive populations," Lagache rejects "society," which he considers a kind of "social vacuum." In fact, this abstract concept has been further developed by all the positive researches of contemporary sociology in the domain of rural, industrial, religious, juridical and economic life, as well as by the study of technical or demographical data. One can readily agree with him that "society" is but a fiction. But he goes even further: "Concretely, only populations exist: a population is an articulation and a stratification of groups composed of individuals, just as the individual is at the intersection of a multiplicity of groups."<sup>24</sup>

The concept of "population," seen thus, seems to us very thin, vague, and despite Lagache's opinion to the contrary, not at all "concrete." He seems to feel that the reality and effectiveness of small groups alone are justifiable. This is the current trend of many social psychologists in the United States, and, in our opinion, it is a misguided as well as a somewhat dangerous one from the standpoint of progress in research.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 406.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 414.

Surely there is not *one* society, but some societies. However, the definition mentioned above does not take into account the fact that these societies embrace specific stratifications, "classes," relations with production, structures differentiated by special modes of work and of distribution, characteristic institutions such as systems of education, of promotion, of social insurance, of pensions, etc.

3. Let us recall at this juncture the criticisms directed against the universality of the Oedipal complex. According to these critics, a "cooperative," "socialized" psychoanalysis, should, contrary to Freud's principles, clearly admit the historical and geographic relativity, that is to say in time and space, of the great psychoanalytical categories and theses.<sup>25</sup>

4. This definition should also take into account, in the etiology of pathological behavior and in certain concrete cases, the possibility of a preponderant influence on the part of the socioeconomic determinants.

Let us take the example suggested by Lagache and drawn from the classical works of John Bowlby on theft among the young. These are clinical and statistical researches from which significant correlations emerge between such behavior and, on the one hand, traits of character termed "indifferent," on the other, precocious disturbances in the relations of the infant with the mother.<sup>26</sup> This "classical" psychoanalytical interpretation, to which Lagache adheres, makes it possible to explain the appearance of aberrational behavior not only among children and adolescents who live in an atmosphere of poverty and in slums, but also among those who are reared in a comfortable, even a luxurious environment. But it does not explain why aberrational conduct is so frequent and so much more preponderant among children of the first category.

Professor G. Heuyer has addressed the Académie de Médecine on this subject at various times. His communications were based upon studies made in his service at the Hôpital des Enfants Malades, and his pupils published, under his direction, works that do not permit us to accept Bowlby's unilateral explanation, which represents, in our opinion, an example of the "biological" exaggeration in the application of psychoanalytical concepts. Thus, using as a guide 839 observed cases, G. C. Menut studied the effects of family dissociation on the character disturbances of the child, stealing

25. Besides the "new psychoanalysts" (cf. particularly K. Horney, *op. cit.*, and E. Fromm, "Individual and Social Origin of Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, 1944, pp. 380 ff.), Otto Fenichel has stressed the importance of the problem in his classical work, *The Psychoanalytical Theory of Neurosis* (New York, Norton, 1945).

26. John Bowlby, *Forty-four Juvenile Thieves: Their Characters and Home-Life* (London, Baillière, Tindal and Cox, 1946).

being the most prevalent.<sup>27</sup> What this study shows is that the ensemble of causes grouped under the heading of "family dissociation" far exceeds the incidence of precocious disturbances in the mother-infant relationship. Carmen Khouri, in her thesis (1950) reporting on studies of 86 children, 31 of whom were "thieves," does not deny that among the latter important affective causes were operative (family deficiencies); but she also shows that economic and social factors (especially the size of the home, promiscuity) seem to nurture these affective disturbances, aggravate them, and lead the victims of such deprivation into delinquency.<sup>28</sup> Odette Philippon, in a much more solid study than its title would suggest, has delineated, with the aid of documentation drawn from international sources, "the repercussions of slum-living on the moral health of young people."<sup>29</sup>

In any case, how can one fail to see that the factor of family dissociation, far from being exclusively caused by parental conflicts and biological determinants, must itself be related to economic and social conditions? Thanks to Heuyer's kindness, we were able, in 1953, to consult the records kept in his service. They represent a sampling of 61 children who presented character disturbances. After being released from the hospital, 32 of these children (more than 50%) were not taken back by their families. A study of the latter group shows that the housing factor alone (number of people per room, promiscuity, lack of comfort) was bad in 10 instances, that is to say in 31.3% of the cases; housing and family dissociation together were factors in 14 cases, or 43.7% of the group; and family dissociation where housing conditions were favorable was a factor in only 8, or 25% of the cases. Following many studies of families living in overcrowded homes, in "furnished" or unfurnished rooming-houses, all equally sordid, equipped with only one wash basin or toilet to be shared with those occupying one or even two floors of an overcrowded dwelling, it is not very rash to assume that family dissociation is, in quite a few cases, hastened and even created by socio-economic factors.<sup>30</sup> The extreme nervousness of women

27. *La dissociation familiale et les troubles du caractère chez l'enfant* (Paris, Edit. Familiales de France, 1944).

28. Carmen Khouri, *Les facteurs sociaux, économiques et familiaux des troubles du caractère chez l'enfant* (Paris, Vigué, 1950).

29. *La jeunesse coupable vous accuse* (Paris, Recueil Sirey, 1950, pp. 97 ff.).

30. Cf. the works of Andrée Vieille: "La population vivant en meublé: quelques données sur le département de la Seine," *Population*, 1954, No. 2; "Relations parentales et relations de voisinage chez les ménages ouvriers de la Seine," *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, Vol. XVIII, 1954; "L'enfant, victime de la chambre meublée," *C.I.L., Revue de l'Habitat populaire*, No. 71, March, 1955.

especially, under circumstances such as these, is a phenomenon familiar to social workers and to judges familiar with divorce cases. We believe that the collaboration of sociologists with psychiatrists and psychoanalysts for the purpose of studying family dissociations, their causes and effects, would be both indispensable and fruitful.

### III

In conclusion, we would like to give a few examples of other investigations, taken from our own studies and inquiries. Such researches might be conducted in liaison with a "socialized" psychoanalysis, which itself could be equipped conceptually to cooperate with the social sciences.

Contemporary research in industrial sociology has quite naturally tended to concern itself with the psychological effects of the repetitive tasks and piece-work of large-scale industry on certain categories of workers. I, for my part, have called attention to unstable conduct in assembly-line jobs.<sup>31</sup> This instability is particularly evident during the course of the first six months of work. It is expressed by voluntary departure or dismissal, or by internal transfer within the factory (transfer to another shop, to a different kind of job, to individualized machines, what the Americans call non-conveyorized jobs), or finally, for those who keep the job and accustom themselves to it, by "habit" phenomena, accompanied by a kind of wearing down of the personality which calls for psychoanalytical observation. Elsewhere, recent investigations conducted mainly in the United States and in England have shown that indications of satisfaction obtain for an important number of workers. This sense of satisfaction is experienced when work is extended, when the number of tasks in the cycle of operation is increased, and also when the length of the operation is increased. In this connection, experiments made in the United States since 1943 by "International Business Machines" in its factories at Endicott and at Poughkeepsie, New York, and analyzed by C. M. Walker, have been particularly suggestive. The same is true of the experiments made under the direction of David Cox by the "National Institute of Industrial Psychology" of London.<sup>32</sup> We also cite the behavior of individuals en-

31. Cf. *Où va le travail humain?* New ed. (Paris, Gallimard, 1954), pp. 150-51, 235-36, 343-48.

32. C. R. Walker, "The Problem of the Repetitive Job," *Harvard Business Review*, May, 1950; D. Cox and K. M. Dyce Sharp, "Research on the Unit of Work," *Occupational Psychology*, April, 1951; D. Cox, assisted by D. H. Irvine, "Women's Reaction to Repetitive Work," National Institute of Industrial Psychology, Report No. 9, Oct., 1953.

dowed with a strong personality, who seek, outside of their jobs, occupations requiring initiative, responsibility, motivations of longer duration, not demanded by their work, whether factory or office, rationalized or mechanized.

Thus one sees, in most collectivities of workers and employees, some who, impelled by ideological or political determinants stemming not only from collective representations, which we certainly understand, but also from individual needs, seek and find satisfactions and doubtless compensations in the creation, development, and administration of athletic or artistic clubs and circles, in trade-union or even political responsibilities. A comprehensive study of leisure activities, "*dadass*," hobbies and all sorts of "lateral activities" has never, to my knowledge, been attempted by sociologists and psychoanalysts working together and pooling their methods and their interpretations.

Yet an important treatise of Freud's, the only one, to be exact, that he devoted to professional work, should encourage scholars in both disciplines to ponder the forms and effects of the latter in our industrial civilization:<sup>33</sup> "No other vital technique of behavior attaches the individual more solidly to reality, or at least to that fraction of reality which society constitutes. . . . The possibility of transferring the narcissistic, aggressive or even erotic components of the libido to professional work and the social relations it entails, gives it a value which is in no way inferior to that which the fact of being indispensable confers upon the individual for the purpose of maintaining him and justifying his existence in society. Any occupation becomes the source of special joys if it is freely chosen and insofar as it makes it possible to exploit, in their sublimated forms, affective inclinations and instinctual energies already developed or reinforced by the constitutional factor."

But the conditions which, according to Freud, enable the occupation to develop the personality (and especially free choice)<sup>34</sup> are not fulfilled in a very large number of cases, as observed in the daily life of workers employed in factories, offices, mines, fields, etc. Millions, tens of millions of men and women earn their living in these establishments by performing, under a double constraint—economic and technical—very minute tasks

33. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

34. We must note in passing that C. J. Jung, for his part, in his *Psychology of the Unconscious* (New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1923), having asserted that "the best liberation is insured by regular work," adds: "Nevertheless, work is salutary only if it is a free action and contains nothing of infantile constraint."

which are repeated at intervals of from thirty seconds to three minutes, which are imposed “from above” by the increasingly radical dichotomy between the idea and the execution of work (Taylorian and post-Taylorian rationalization of the Bedaux type), which have no intellectual meaning for the workers, and are always partial, incomplete.

I would like to emphasize here the importance of this last feature: incompleteness. Between the two World Wars some remarkable works in the field of experimental psychology were begun on the incompleteness of tasks by disciples of Kurt Lewin, Zeigarnik and Ovsiankina. They demonstrate that incompleteness continues to prey upon the mind and that a latent tension in regard to completion exists within the worker. This tension is what Gordon W. Allport calls *conative perseverance*.<sup>35</sup> It seems to me that their conclusions partially clarify the phenomenon of dissatisfaction, boredom, and instability connected with certain repetitive and piece-work jobs and the satisfaction experienced when these jobs are extended. In other respects they seem to be not unrelated to the need for compensatory leisure whose frequency and strength we have observed. This is shown, for example, in catalogues of hobby exhibitions, organized by businesses, which contain numerous advertisements of “small-scale models” of all kinds. The creators of these models are thus enabled to fashion *finished* and meaningful objects.

Systematic studies and researches are not yet numerous enough to permit us to present these ideas as other than working hypotheses. Nevertheless, there is every indication that the condition and structure of many bread-winning jobs, in the shops and in the offices of our industrial collectivities, create frustration; and when people are not working, their search for compensation, sometimes accompanied (according to certain observers) by a need to assert their egos, expresses itself in aggressive tendencies.<sup>36</sup> The role of work in connection with the individual, the possibility, which is more or less achieved, depending upon the context in which it occurs, of playing the beneficent role that Freud attributes to it in regard to the normal balance and development of the personality, the imputed “compensatory” value of active leisure occupations—could not all these be studied as concrete problems by teams of sociologists with the help and the advice of psychoanalysts?

35. Cf. the memoirs of B. Zeigarnik and M. Ovsiankina in *Psychologische Forschungen*, 1927, pp. 1–85, and 1928, pp. 203–379, and G. W. Allport, *Personality* (New York, Henry Holt, 1937), p. 198.

36. On the subject of the behavior of workers employed in assembly-line jobs in the large automobile industries of Detroit, cf. *Où va le travail?* pp. 148–150.

On the other hand, we now possess abundant statistical material on the expression of “satisfaction” in work of various socio-professional levels. The number of dissatisfied persons is, as we might expect, plainly higher among non-skilled workers than among qualified professionals—the officers and the leaders.<sup>37</sup> But of those who declare themselves satisfied and even believe that they are, how many actually show psychosomatic symptoms of a pathological nature, such as hypertension, ulcers, nervous tension, general fatigue, insomnia? Psychoanalysis shows that, in fact, a sense of dissatisfaction or unhappiness is frequently and profoundly repressed in competitive societies like ours where the maladjusted person is looked upon by many people as a “failure,” the jovial, well-adjusted conformist as “the successful type.”<sup>38</sup> Valuable studies of “habit” in connection with assembly-line jobs, which we mentioned earlier, and more generally, investigations into the *real* significance of psychological reactions to piece-work and to intellectual work cannot be usefully made, I repeat, unless psychoanalysts join forces with sociologists.

However, if this collaboration is to be a fruitful one, it is important not to overlook an obstacle that we pointed out at the very beginning of this article. And without being pessimistic or unfair, we must admit that the present state of knowledge in regard to the human sciences has rarely made possible an explanation of the singularity of individual behavior that is observable in groups. One of the hardest and most obscure problems that scholars run up against is, in fact, as Erich Fromm realized, the expression of individual and collective motivations, their interaction, their distribution, their mode of effectiveness. For example, men and women work in a shop where they constitute a group. Some of them do not come to work, and the personnel service keeps a record of the periodic fluctuations of the “toll of absenteeism.” Various causes are suggested; some seem physical and physiological: illness, accidents, distance between place of work and home which creates cumulative fatigue, etc. Other factors are social: the collective “atmosphere” of the shop, more or less agreeable or tense, relationships with fellow-workers, the officers, the technicians, the administration, the salary system, the working conditions in each department. Other factors are individual or affective ones: relationships with family, wife or companion, children—in short, family tensions and various conflicts which a psychoanalyst would have to interpret. What is the expression of these

37. Cf. for example the figures that C. Wright Mills gives, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 229.

38. E. Fromm, *The Sane Society*, pp. 296–97.

motivations that are so different in nature? What are their interactions, and in what instances of one kind or another, isolated or joint, do they cause absence from work? Here again the psychoanalyst's cooperation with the sociologist would be valuable.

This exposition does not call for dogmatic conclusions. It merely attempts, as we said in the beginning, to present some of the concrete problems created by the relations between psychoanalysis and sociology. We have mentioned certain features of classical psychoanalysis which, in our opinion, cannot be assimilated by sociologists, even by those who are motivated by an unequivocal desire for complete cooperation. But these features seem to be attenuated today thanks to the pliancy and fresh outlook of the Freudian doctrines. Are we merely indulging in "wishful thinking" when we look forward to benefit and enrichment for both of these disciplines?