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DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

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How can psychoanalysis help to understand society? What can a psychoanalyst add to the analyses of the economist, the sociologist, and the political scientist? The psychoanalyst approaches social research with a particular purpose and a unique methodology. The purpose is one of discovering truths that liberate creative energies in people, so that they can overcome crippling illusions. The method serves to uncover unconscious feelings and attitudes which, if understood, may contradict conscious beliefs and clarify the human costs and benefits of social arrangements. Even without more complex social psychoanalytic investigation, a single case history can deepen knowledge about society by illuminating the relationship between work, family, and individual dynamics. (Unfortunately, analysts often do not make use of this rich source of knowledge about society. Overly oriented to trans-ferential factors, they underestimate the causal relationship between individual dynamics and social factors, particularly work.) Even the psychoanalysis of a single dream may tell more about human consequences of social organization than do elaborate studies of opinions. The following two dreams, taken from sociopschoanalytic studies in Mexico and the U.S., illustrate the point.

The first dream is that of an automobile worker in Mexico. He tells the interviewer, Dr. Alejandro Córdoba, that he is satisfied with his work which consists of mounting the suspension of the car; this means tightening the same screws hundreds of times a day. Although he was a craftsman before becoming an auto worker, he even maintains that fractionating improves the work, and he offers no criticism of his job, at least consciously. Despite these opinions, there are other indications that he is far from happy with his work. He complains that he often feels



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nervous at the factory and tends to take it out on other workers. When he gets home, he feels exhausted and often in a bad humor. He also reports that since he began to work in the factory, he has been suffering from constant headaches, frequent colds, and colitis. In contrast to his statement that he is satisfied with his work, these symptoms suggest a deep conflict between what he thinks, i.e. that the work is satisfying, and what he knows in his body and spirit, that the work is infuriating. This conflict appears to be expressed in a repetitive dream which he tells Dr. Córdoba. "I dream that at my work there is a man who is a stranger and we are arguing. I don't know who he is, and I don't remember what I am arguing with him about." This dream helps clarify why this worker does not connect his anger and symptoms to his experience at work. What a precise symbolization of alienation! Unconsciously, this worker is two people. One is the conscious self who is satisfied at work. The other is the unconscious "stranger" who has a different point of view. These two aspects of the self are constantly arguing with each other. What are they arguing about? The dreamer cannot remember. What the evidence of the interview points to is that the unconscious stranger is telling the dreamer that he must leave the workplace, if he is to become whole and remain sane. That this knowledge remains repressed is understandable, when we consider that the worker needs this job to support his family, and he can imagine no way of changing the production technology or organization to improve the quality of his work.

The second dream comes from an interview with a woman who has reached a top executive position in a large multi-national corporation. In her interview with Cynthia Elliott, she continually emphasizes that her job is an interesting challenge for her, one which gives her the opportunity for a great deal of independence and self-development. She says, "I really enjoy my work. I moan and groan but I've had



some fantastic opportunities and challenges." The interview makes it clear that the major challenge is the competition with other executives for top positions in the corporation. What she claims to value -- challenge and independence -- appear to be anxious struggle and lonely careerism. As she says, "The main thing is the ability to survive in this environment." Although she talks about being open and trusting and emphasizes the importance of cooperation to get the work done, what she describes is a suspicious and unfriendly environment. Despite her conscious enthusiasm and satisfaction with her work, on the symptom list given her to check, she reports troublesome anxiety and severe headaches. She also checks that she lacks hope, feels she does not know what she wants, and that it is often too necessary for her to give in to circumstances. Like the auto worker, this successful executive also has a recurring dream, which seems to express her unconscious experience of work. She dreams that she is buried alive and all she wants is a telephone in her casket. It sounds like a joke, but it is all too serious. This dream symbolizes the experience of emotional deadness in her work, and her acceptance of her fate (as long as she can continue to stay in the executive competition). Rather than rebel at being buried alive and fighting to be free, she only asks for a telephone so she can communicate with others, presumably in their own individual casket-offices. ¹

By illuminating the contradiction between conscious beliefs and unconscious experience, dreams help us to understand the complex relationship between social factors and the individual who may be consciously satisfied while unconsciously he "knows" the social situation, in this case, the workplace, is unhealthy for him.² The question

¹Another not-inconsistent interpretation of the dream is that it symbolizes a mechanical regression to the coffin - womb where the telephone line is an electronic umbilical cord. This interpretation implies a deeply dependent and extremely alienated individual who has transferred her mother fixation to the corporation.

²Dr. Ignacio T. Millan has analyzed dreams of Mexican executives showing that their adaptation to the corporation has caused profound self-betrayal. See Millan, "The Dreams of Mexican Executives", *American Anthropological Assoc.*, November 1971.



then arises: How common are these dreams? Do most workers and executives suffer because of their work, or are these the dreams of exceptionally sensitive people who might be happier in some other kind of job? After all, one might say, this auto worker used to be an independent craftsman. If he had been brought up to be a worker and socialized correctly, perhaps he would not suffer from his work. And the female executive, perhaps women were not meant to be executives. Maybe men are better equipped for continual competitive struggle. It is not so easy to answer these objections. Not everyone in these jobs has such vivid dreams, or if they do, they are not always remembered.

Such a skeptical attitude would be especially appropriate if these dreams had been given by patients. The psychoanalyst who treats relatively few patients may generalize about society from one or two cases of people who have come to him exactly because they cannot adapt. Our studies show that many such people are characterologically different from those whose character fits their work. However, the two dreams I have mentioned are not samples from patients, since neither of the two individuals have asked for treatment. Even so, the question remains, how do we judge the significance of the experiences they express?¹

To answer this question, we employ a methodology to investigate the psychodynamics or emotional attitudes common to large social groups, i.e. the "social character". This methodology includes both the theory of social character developed by Erich Fromm and techniques to study character in relationship to cultural and socio-economic factors. In the pages that follow, I shall present an overview of the sociopsychanalytic investigation that has grown out of Fromm's approach.

¹ Without going more deeply into this question, we can report that the relationship between work and emotional health is mediated by character. When character fits work, the result is satisfying for both the individual and the organization. However, one must add that even "satisfying" work may not stimulate the healthiest human development, e.g. a sadist in a position of power.



The Authoritarian Character

In 1932, Fromm saw the possibilities of combining psychoanalytic theory with survey research methodology to answer an important social question. At that time, although German workers almost unanimously held anti-Nazi views and many people felt they would topple Hitler, Fromm questioned whether these opinions were reliable; he wanted to know how many workers and employees would resist the Nazis if they came to power. This would be the case, he reasoned, only if the anti-Nazi opinions were rooted in a democratic, anti-authoritarian character structure. On the other hand, authoritarian individuals who were presently anti-Nazi might become attracted to the Nazis once they gained power. Fromm had defined the authoritarian as a sadomasochistic individual whose sense of strength and identity is based on a symbiotic subordination to authorities and at the same time a symbiotic domination of those submitting to his authority. The authoritarian character feels himself strong when he can submit and be part of a powerful authority. By being part of what is powerful, he becomes powerful; alone by himself he shrinks to nothing. For this reason, a threat to authority is for the authoritarian character a threat to himself -- a threat to his sense of identity and ultimately to his sanity.

Fromm then asked to what degree was the German working class authoritarian, despite its conscious view of itself as representing values of socialism and democracy. (If the working class were authoritarian it would imply that many workers supported communism only because they believed it the inevitable victor in the class struggle, the embodiment of working class power, etc.). To discover the distribution of emotional attitudes in this group, Fromm developed a new method, the interpretative



questionnaire, asking questions which could be scored in terms of character as well as conscious opinions. The result of this study was to discover that while only a small minority of the workers were authoritarian (10%), the percent with deep-rooted democratic convictions was also small (15%). This implied that although no more than 10 percent of the workers were likely to become ardent Nazis, only fifteen percent could be expected to resist the Nazis wholeheartedly. The majority of the workers (75%) showed a mixed character, with enough authoritarian tendencies for Fromm to predict that they would not fight against Nazism.¹

Mexican Villagers

Twenty-five years later, in Mexico, Fromm organized a second socio-psychoanalytic study, more complex than the first. (Shortly after, I joined the project.) Starting with evidence of social pathology in a peasant village, such as the high incidence of violence and prevalence of alcoholism, Fromm asked if one could determine whether these symptoms were reactive to social conditions, or whether they were rooted in negative character traits shared by a social class.

This large general question was broken down into a number of smaller questions. For example, is alcoholism the result of hopelessness, the inability of the peasant to find any productive work, and his experience of being crushed by those more powerful than he, or is it due to an unproductive, regressive character implying that even if conditions changed so that there was a chance to better his life, the peasant would be unable to take advantage of it? To answer questions such as this one, it was necessary to study systematically character traits, and socio-economic and cultural factors for the whole population of the village.

¹ See Autoritat und Familie, Paris, Alcan, 1936.



The findings of this study showed three main social character types in the village, corresponding in large part to different social classes. One group was comprised of receptive - unproductive men who fell into the poorest class.¹ This social character was the descendent of the landless peon who worked in the large haciendas. A second type was the more productive-hoarding small land-holder, the descendant of free, independent peasants. The third type, the exploitative-entrepreneur, comprised a small group, but one that had been gaining ascendancy in the village economy.

By exploring the interrelationships between character and socio-economic variables, we were able to seek answers to some of the original questions such as the causes of alcoholism. Here we learned that an unproductive receptive character makes a man vulnerable to alcoholism, but economic and cultural factors increase this vulnerability decisively.

The findings also helped illuminate the negative human effects of modernization which have been observed by some sociologists and economists in Latin America. For example, we found that villagers with exploitative entrepreneurial character traits were better able than others to take advantage of opportunities to use new methods and technologies. Educational and technical programs meant to benefit the whole community in fact strengthened the position of these people with the "right attitudes" who were more easily able to break away from traditional patterns. The others -- particularly the receptive villagers -- found themselves at a growing economic disadvantage in a culture increasingly oriented to material gain. The old sources of cultural enjoyment and meaning unable to compete with the seductions of the modern world were disappearing. Thus, the majority of the villagers ended up both poorer economically and culturally

¹ For the purpose of this brief summary, we refer to the men only. The wives of these men are different in some respects. For the full results of the study, see E. Fromm and M. Maccoby, Social Character in a Mexican Village, Prentice-Hall, 1970.



and because they lacked money, they were frustrated in their new needs for consumer goods.

Is it possible to avoid this result and still have economic development? This question is too complex to be considered here, but it should be pointed out that new programs which might benefit a larger number of villagers fail if they do not take social character into account. For example, the productive - hoarding peasants are not likely to participate in cooperative programs, even those which would strengthen them in relation to entrepreneurs, unless safeguards are built in to take account of their characterological mistrust of each other. The receptive peasants on the other hand, require programs which overcome fatalism and despair and stimulate hope.

During the study, experiments were begun in the village to try to create conditions which would allow more healthy character development. As these experiments progressed, we found it necessary to carry the social psychoanalytic process a step further, to enter into a joint inquiry with some villagers in order to develop a new consciousness which would motivate them to change their behavior. This new form of education involved discussing the results of the study with the participants and together with them, applying this knowledge to the experimental situation. By becoming aware of how their behavior fit a general cultural pattern, some individuals felt liberated enough to try out new ways and to frustrate old and irrational impulses.

Three other social psychoanalytic projects were begun after the village study.



Corporate Managers

The first was a study initiated to try to understand the character of individuals in large corporations. (This study was stimulated by what we learned from the village study. In the long run, what most effects the lives of the villagers are decisions made by large corporations in the highly industrialized world.) The people we studied are the executives and managers responsible for creating new technology that most effects the mode of work and eventually the mode of life of people throughout the world.¹ (The dream of the executive previously mentioned is one of many collected as a part of this study.)

This study has since developed into a long-range project to explore relationships between technology, work, and character.² By understanding those people who have played a key role in developing new technology, we may be able to dissolve some of the mystifying fog that surrounds technology, and gain insight into the possible shapes of the future. Because of their increasing power and influence, the executives of high technology corporations are becoming models for people in advanced industrial society. By understanding them, we gain knowledge about what the emerging social character is likely to be, provided the prevailing social forces remain dominant. A second project directed by Dr. Ignacio Millan has been studying similar individuals in multi-national and national corporations in Mexico.

A major finding of the study of U.S. corporate managers is that the relationship between character and work can be conceptualized in terms of what we call a "psychostructure", i.e. an organizational structure

¹ M. Maccoby, "'Winning' and 'Losing' at Work", IEEE Spectrum, July 1973, pp.39 - 48, and M.Maccoby reports to the Harvard University Program on Technology and Society, 1971 and 1972.

² M. Maccoby and K.A. Terzi, "Character and Work in America", forthcoming in Philip Brenner, Robert Borosage, Bethany Weidner, eds., Exploring Contradictions: Political Economy in the Corporate State (New York, David McKay Co., 1974).



defined in terms of the character types required for it to function. The psychostructure crystallizes as the corporation selects individuals according to their character as much as for their talents and intellectual abilities. Some character types can rise only to a certain level, while others can go further. At the highest levels, individuals must be highly motivated to do what the organization requires of them. These are people with no serious conflict; their energy is directed to a single goal, that of increasing corporate growth and profit. In the process of reaching the top, managerial character is molded by organizational requirements so that "useful" impulses are reinforced while non-useful ones are frustrated and gradually weakened. One might say that a double selection process, both external and internal, is at work in creating a viable psychostructure. The corporation selects according to character, and the individual selects the internal traits that are adaptive to his role.

This process results in top corporate managers who are brilliant, extremely energetic, incisively efficient, open-minded, cooperative, and able to communicate well. They are neither destructive, overly dependent, nor grandiose. To the contrary, they are fair according to the rules of the game and modest about their own role in the giant companies. However, they have little concern about the social consequences of what they produce. Their over-riding interest is the profit and growth of their organizations, and people are seen mainly as objects to that end. They are neither compassionate nor generous people, since these traits are not useful to the corporation. For all their intellectual brilliance, they have underdeveloped hearts. Some of them tell us that they feel as though there is a shell around their emotions; that although they are successes in the world of work, they are incapable of profound love. The causes and consequences of this adaptation will be analyzed more fully in our forthcoming reports.

In contrast, we find other corporate individuals with strong non-adaptive tendencies who experience (consciously or unconsciously) profound conflicts.



Sometimes these conflicts involve regressive or destructive tendencies that interfere with work. But the conflict may also be rooted in the individual's unwillingness to sacrifice creative and compassionate elements of the self that don't fit the requirements of the corporation. (Only by studying the requirements and costs of successful adaptation to the corporation -- or to any other workplace -- can the psychoanalyst understand those individuals who do not adapt and who seek treatment.)

The Factory Workers

A year ago, the Harvard Project began a third study where the goal is explicitly education as well as investigation. The goal is to educate all the managers and workers in a U.S. auto parts factory about themselves and their needs, so that they can redesign their work to stimulate optimal well-being. This project comes closer to employing a form of education which might be called social psychoanalysis; the participants from the start have asked the investigators to help them to change their conditions, to decrease emotional and psychosomatic symptoms due to dehumanized work and to increase work satisfaction. (Besides knowledge about themselves, socio-technical knowledge is also required by the participants to redesign work organization and technology. To carry out this kind of project, the social psychoanalyst must work together with other specialists, and he many need to learn new skills.) Central to the project is the assumption that by deepening understanding about the different social characters in the factory, with their different needs and goals, the participants will be better able to choose the most rational alternatives, i.e those which best stimulate the development of their productive interests. Of course, if such an experiment is to be more than academic, it must be carried out according to principles of industrial democracy which both allow and stimulate the workers and managers to redesign their work.¹

¹This project has the support of both the enlightened management of Harman International Industries and the progressive leadership of the United Automobile Workers International.

Maccoby, M., 1974: Developments in Social Psychoanalysis. Paper to be Presented at the Vth International Forum of Psychoanalysis at Zürich 1974, 20 pp. (Typescript).



Regrettably, we do not have time enough to describe more than a sample of the preliminary findings of this project, the results of the first year and one-half. The following shows how the analysis of social character enlightens us as to the differential meaning of worker dissatisfaction.

Most people in this Southern rural factory are dominantly emotionally controlled and self-reliant, hardworking, family-oriented, and cautiously conservative. Their values and attitudes are those of traditional craftsmen or farmers. They believe in fair play and a kind of democracy based on each to his own. Although the self-contained (hoarding) character is dominant, the majority also express receptive-sociable traits and tend to be submissive to traditional authorities (parents, preachers, benevolent bosses, and political leaders). Two of the social character types in the factory were named the "Ambitious Worker" and the "Farmer-Worker".¹ These two types were among the most dissatisfied workers in the plant, but for different reasons. The Ambitious workers are more modern, less religious and family-oriented than most of the workers from this rural area. Since they are ambitious, they resent the mechanized factory structure because it does not allow them a chance to get ahead and to develop their skills and abilities. They want more learning, to gain authority and advancement. In contrast, the Farmer-Workers are still rooted in family and farm, with the traditional character traits of productive small farmers throughout the world. This group is more concerned with individual dignity than with career opportunity, and what they resent most in the factory is the lack of respect shown to them by supervisors. They also dislike machine-pacing which limits their autonomy. In other words, they are people with an independent character who dislike having to fit into a mechanistic - hierarchical structure where there is little respect for individuals. Although more alienated from

¹The six types were: unionists, dutiful, receptive, sociable, ambitious, and farmer-workers.



society than many workers, this group is much less alienated from themselves than are the Ambitious workers.

Although both the Ambitious and the Farmer - Workers dislike monotonous work, the sociopsychanalytic study reveals that these two types of workers have different goals. Some changes in work which would be satisfying to one group would not be for the other. Further analysis also shows that both character types suffer psychological and psychosomatic symptoms which can be understood in terms of the conflicts generated by work.¹

Questions of Method

To conclude, I would like to consider the three general questions most commonly asked about sociopsychanalytic methodology.

The first question is how can character be diagnosed without lengthy psychoanalysis? The diagnosis of social character is made essentially from interview responses to the interpretative questionnaire which in each case is developed for the particular problems and culture being studied.

Dreams, Rorschachs, and Thematic Apperception

Tests are also used, both to supplement the interview and as an instrument to check reliability of interpretation. The interview takes a minimum of three hours and includes questions about the individual's relationship to family, work, community, political attitudes, views of love, religious attitudes, etc. Responses are analyzed in order to arrive at a differential diagnosis of character traits.²

Although the information in such an interview may seem very little in comparison with the hours of analytic work often needed to understand character, it is usually sufficient for sociopsychanalytic purposes. Fromm and I have dismissed

¹ The Ambitious workers tend to suffer from feelings of rage and resentment; the Farmer - Workers feel beaten down and demoralized, made into "parts of the machine".

² This method is used at the Mexican Institute of Psychoanalysis in analyzing intake interviews for the purpose of prognosis.



this question at length elsewhere,¹ but a few points need to be emphasized. After a few hours, the psychoanalyst generally has all the material needed to describe the broad outlines of a patient's character. The interpretation of social character usually requires even less time since we are looking for neither the unique elements of individual character, nor life history. In analyzing the social character, we are looking for the traits which are common to a social group or class. Providing the responses are taken down verbatim, including slips of the tongue and emotional emphases, the results of the three- to five-hour interview can be interpreted in terms of the modes of relatedness and assimilation, quality of productiveness in love and work, narcissism, authoritarianism, etc. This is not to understate the difficulty of the process. It requires knowledge of psychoanalytic theory and therapy (including the experience of one's own analysis) and, as in everything else, skill and talent. In addition, it requires considerable knowledge of the cultural background of the people. The psychoanalyst invariably uses his clinical experience to understand the interview responses. If he is not familiar with the culture of the people being studied, their symbols, cognitive style, religion and history, this clinical experience is much less relevant and must be supplemented by anthropological study.

In practice, we find that the first fifty or sixty interviews in a population require at least six hours of study each, in order to arrive at a satisfactory interpretation. These first interviews must be interpreted with the help of a highly experienced psychoanalyst who has skill at this sort of differential diagnosis of character, and who also understands the culture. This preliminary analysis generally establishes the dominant character types and makes it much easier to analyze subsequent interviews, which can often be done by students with less experience.

¹E. Fromm and M. Maccoby, Social Character in a Mexican Village, op. cit.



One of the difficulties of sociopsychanalytic investigation is the amount of time it takes to interpret the character structure from the questionnaire responses. In the recent study of factory workers in the United States, we tried out a new two-step method which sacrifices some accuracy of interpretation for great savings in time and cost. In this study, we started out with a sample of sixty workers and supervisors, administering a four-hour questionnaire-interview. These questionnaires emphasized attitudes to work, since the reason for the study is to learn how to improve the work so as to further healthy human development. These sixty interviews were then analyzed and interpreted.

On the basis of the findings we distinguished the six social character types referred to above which were named in terms of differential relationships to work. (In contrast, social character types might be divided so as to emphasize political or other orientations.) In the second stage of the study, we designed a new questionnaire in which each of these types was described briefly. The worker was asked to choose the type which best fit his attitudes and values. Taking a sample of cases, we found the agreement between the worker's self-selection and our diagnosis was about seventy percent. Although this is less satisfactory than scoring an interpretative questionnaire, the method of self-selection serves for statistical purposes, since the self-selected types are correlated with attitudes toward work, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and psychological symptoms in the same way as the types based on interpretative scoring. It should be noted that this two-step method must be repeated in each study, since the types that emerge from the first step may serve for a particular culture only.

¹ See Final Technical Report of the Bolivar Project to the National Commission on Productivity, February 15, 1974.



The second question is: Why are people willing to participate in a sociopsychanalytic investigation? Not only must they give their time, but they must also be willing to answer many personal questions. It appears to us that the main reason is that people are hopeful that the investigation can in some way help them to better understand themselves and to improve their social conditions. Both the peasant villagers and factory workers could see the connection between their suffering and social conditions; the possibility of change stimulated hope.

The case of the industrial managers is both similar and different. Some of them were conscious of connections between their anxiety and work which fosters intense competition, and they hoped the findings of the study might in some way help them to improve the organization to minimize anxiety. In this vein, some managers also stated that corporate life has been responsible for their failure to develop their capacity as husbands and fathers for intimacy and love. They hoped by talking to the interviewer, to learn why. In contrast, other managers saw the study solely as an opportunity to gain greater knowledge about themselves which they could use either in being more effective managers or in bettering their position in the competition, and they agreed to cooperate in the study only if the sociopsychanalytic investigator promised to point out character "flaws" which effected their work and their chances for advancement.

Whatever the motive, most individuals become interested by the interview questions which stimulate them to consider their experience critically. They welcome the chance to talk with a sympathetic listener about their emotional attitudes. Indeed, many people we interviewed have told us they have never talked about these matters with anyone. Quite a few have never even considered what the concept of love means to them.



The interviewer's attitude is also essential to the methodology. Unlike many interviewers in the social sciences, the sociopschoanalytic investigator does not claim to be a "detached - objective" observer; rather he must be compassionate and non-judgmental in a moralistic sense. Above all, he must be genuinely interested in the person being interviewed. He must also be sensitive to the individual's anxiety and resistance, and refrain from asking questions, if the individual is threatened by them. However, he must not be so fearful and conventional that he holds back from asking embarrassing questions that the individual is perfectly willing to grapple with. The clinical experience of a psychoanalyst helps one to carry out these interviews more effectively, although it is possible for a sensitive student without a great deal of clinical experience to learn how to give a satisfactory interview.

We believe that people cooperate more fully with a sociopschoanalytic investigator who makes his own values and goals explicit. When we are asked about our goals and values, we describe them. Most people are naturally suspicious about investigators who come around asking questions. They want to know what the information is going to be used for, since they fear that we may have been sent by management to evaluate their loyalty. When the interviewer states that he seeks to understand the worker and his work as a basis for improving work to make it more satisfying, the employee, worker, or manager is more likely to want to cooperate in the study.

The third question is: when and how do we communicate the results of sociopschoanalytic investigation back to the individuals we interview? How do we make sociopschoanalysis into a dialogue? The participants are most interested in the results when they are relevant to solving a problem that is important to them. The group of Mexican villagers that were most interested in understanding their social



character were the adolescent boys who were trying to develop an experimental farming project. At first, they were not interested in learning about themselves. But when they realized that despite new opportunities, they could not cooperate, they began to ask why. Once conscious of their wish to be directed by authorities, they wanted help in changing this attitude; they wanted to know more about themselves. By becoming aware of the relationships between submissive, fatalistic, uncooperative attitudes on the one hand, and their family experiences on the other, they were moved to see their behavior in a new light and to take new responsibility for themselves. They questioned the traditional views and decided that they could create a cooperative work organization.

The factory project has from the start assumed that progressive change depends on developing greater awareness of these relationships. We have begun the educative process by writing up the sociopschoanalytic findings from the interview study and holding regular meetings with workers and managers to discuss them. At the present time, experimental projects have just gotten under way, and it is too early to tell how this material will be used by the participants.

Essential to this process of education is the language we use to describe character, which must not stray too far from the language of the people themselves. For example, the categories of Ambitious Worker and Farmer - Worker are names the workers themselves recognize and accept as self-descriptions. When we go deeper and talk about more emotionally charged character traits such as extreme hostility or dependency, or narcissism, these terms must be stated in language that describes their experience to them, rather than the often bureaucratic language that specialists use to talk with each other. In fact, naming can be the fruit of a dialogue between the scientist and those he studies.



A natural question to ask here is: What about the resistances?

Can people accept penetrating psychodynamic interpretations about themselves outside of psychoanalysis? To answer this question, we must distinguish between two types of resistance often encountered in psychoanalysis. The first resistance can be termed rational self-defense against the psychoanalyst's mystification or incorrect interpretation.

One can expect such resistance when interpretations are off the mark. (In this regard, knowledge of the individual's worklife informs the interpretation.)

The second kind of resistance is a true character resistance against becoming aware of emotional attitudes or strivings that are unconscious. We find less of this kind of resistance than we expected. When analyses of social character are penetrating, even if unflattering, people often welcome them as education which increases their knowledge about themselves and others. In some cases where we have given an individual feedback of findings based on interpretative questionnaires and the Rorschach, we have been surprised how little resistance there is to very penetrating interpretations of apparently threatening ideas, which most psychoanalysts would consider as requiring a long period of analysis, the establishment of a positive transference, etc. The reason for this is that most of these people are not defending deeply regressive or irrational impulses. Rather, they are uneducated about emotional life, in some cases "emotionally illiterate".

Thoughts may be unconscious not because they are repressed, but because they are unconventional, i.e. no one in the group talks about love, humiliation, shame, guilt, or other strong emotions. In the context of the study, where the possibility of progressive change generates hope, people are especially receptive to penetrating knowledge about themselves.



To conclude, the social psychoanalytic method not only develops socially useful knowledge, but it also enriches the psychoanalyst's education, particularly his understanding of the social forces which shape character and which contribute to neurosis. Particularly, our studies have traced the central role of work in the development of character and causation of neurosis. In some cases, internal conflict is directly provoked by work demands that clash with deep-rooted strivings. An example is the farmer or artisan forced into mechanized factory work. In other cases, the result of successful adaptation to the psychostructure may be crippled emotional development; an example is the corporate manager whose inability to love adversely effects not only his own self-development, but also that of his wife and children.

Not all psychoanalysts will have the inclination for sociopsychanalytic research, which requires interest in and knowledge of social, political, and economic factors, as well as psychoanalysis. However, I believe that participation in a social psychoanalytic project would contribute to the education of all students in psychoanalytic institutes and help to dislodge psychoanalysis from its fixation at the Oedipal stage so that psychoanalysts can relate themselves more maturely to social problems.

