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# Ideology & Sociology: The Predisposition to Believe

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Stryker,

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1970



IDEOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY:  
THE PREDISPOSITION TO BELIEVE

A Thesis  
Presented to  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
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Master of Arts

by  
W. Miles Stryker

July 1970

IDEOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY:  
THE PREDISPOSITION TO BELIEVE

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This one is for those who are willing to storm the Ivory Tower.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

It is necessary, when viewing a particular perspective of the world, to define the limits of that perspective in terms of some sort of finite base. The choice of that base is arbitrary. Sociology, as both a method of perception and a collection of perceived data, has attempted, and is attempting, to define the limits and boundaries of its concern. These boundaries are arbitrary constructs which have grown from the historical and socio-cultural backgrounds of the individuals who have sought to define phenomena from the stability of a finite base. The choice of a system of patterned thought, manifest in, and generated by, symbols, necessarily entails the acceptance of a particular set of boundaries, within which communication and perception is possible. The sociologist must work within, and from, this arbitrary system of thought and symbol in order to limit the boundaries of his concern to the realm of the finite. The limits which the sociologist constructs for himself, the values upon which such defining is based, and the consequences of the boundary definitions serve as the broad area of interest within which this

presentation will find its emphasis of concern.

The sociologist who claims to be value-free has for too long either ignored or denied the significance of the value assumptions upon which his particular view of the world is based. The internalization of the notions of "scientism"<sup>1</sup> has transformed, for many sociologists, a value based discipline, which finds its relevancy within a particular historical and socio-cultural frame, to a perception of reality felt to be both immanent and transcendent. The adoption of the notion of "scientism" as a value base, with the parallel pretense of value-free sociology, has served, ironically, to hinder the study of the value frame of sociology, to limit the methods of perception and interpretation to a few accepted procedures and concepts, and to isolate the discipline from its historical and socio-cultural environment.

Sociology has become in many respects, a perspective which has tried to insulate itself against the necessity of value choice and ideology. In the very process of stating its values so emphatically ("scientism" for example), it has tended to deny the influence of values upon its own

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<sup>1</sup>Helmut Schoeck and James Wiggins (ed.), Scientism and Values (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1960), p. ix. Schoeck and Wiggins present scientism by stating that "the word scientism conventionally describes a type of scholarly trespassing, of pseudo exactitude, of embracing incongruous models of scientific method and conceptualization. Scientism fosters not only the 'fads and foibles' of contemporary sociology, but is also in itself a symptom of an insecure world view, of a negative social philosophy."



perspective. By this denial, the discipline has incorporated the notion of value-free sociology and ethical neutrality to the point that they have become, in many respects two of the major value bases upon which modern mainstream sociology is founded.

Broadly viewed this presentation has grown as a reaction against sociological insulation, and is a basic statement and analysis of the relationship between ideology and sociology. It finds its immediate roots in the rejection of the notions of "scientism," and posits the necessity of ideological choice as the base from which both action and perception are derived. Philosophically, the posited relationship which exists between facts and values (as related to sociology) has been drawn from the generalized notion of the social construction of reality, which serves as a prime postulate from which this presentation is extended.

The immediate need of a discipline to establish some set of arbitrary finite boundaries should not be divorced from the need to examine and analyze those particular boundary constructs. In establishing the limits of interest and action of a particular discipline, we necessarily include various phenomena within our realm of concern and exclude others. The boundaries which limit those concerns are the constructs of our peculiar perspective (discipline) and are the basic foundations within which our realm of perception must fall. It is essential that we who accept the basic area and tenets of concern of each of the

respective and varying disciplines (in this case sociology) must constantly evaluate the boundary constructs that we, ourselves, have constructed, along with their accompanying limitations. The question is not that the boundaries exist, but that they exist so often without question.

It seems reasonable to state (at least from the author's ideological bias) that as the nature of what is being studied changes, the boundaries established for analysis must also be flexible enough to change in order to include new and significant phenomena within the constructs of concern. It should be noted that the extension or limiting of such boundaries of interest are dependent upon decisions which follow from arbitrarily accepted ideological positions. It is one of the main contentions of this presentation that a discipline such as sociology must constantly refer to the socio-cultural circumstances within which it operates, in order to make decisions concerning the expansion or contraction of the area of phenomena it is attempting to analyze and study. Relevancy, admittedly, is a value based on an ideological assumption, but within the confines of this presentation remains a very important one; one which establishes both a direction toward which it is felt sociology must move as well as a base from which it must be extended.

This constant evaluation and reappraisal of the boundary constructs of our discipline is an area which has long been either blatantly neglected or somehow



"transcended" by the Platonic notions of "scientism." The analysis of boundary constructs is closely related to the concept that relevancy is found within a particular historical and socio-cultural range of phenomena, and is viewed as being based upon various ideological assumptions concerning the nature of reality (and more specifically the nature of human interaction and society.)

In order for alternative systems of thought to exist within the same discipline the boundaries of concern must be open and dynamic enough to allow for at least the possibility of alternative conceptualization and perception. The notion that sociology is the study of concensus,<sup>2</sup> for example, necessarily excludes an approach within sociology which tends to find its major emphasis in the study of conflict. The existence of varying scopes and emphases of perception, as well as the possibility of conflicting or contradictory analysis, concerning the same or like phenomena, exists only within a discipline whose boundaries are broad enough to allow for the flowering of many schools of thought.<sup>3</sup> This emphasis on openness, however, is often threatening to the individual who is not able to cope with high degrees of freedom or to the discipline which is so

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<sup>2</sup>Louis Wirth, "Consensus and Mass Communication," American Sociological Review, Vol. 13, 1948, pp. 1-5. Wirth stated, "I regard the study of consensus as the central task of sociology."

<sup>3</sup>Mao Tse-Tung, Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1966), p. 302.

insecure as to rely upon static boundaries to assure its existence.

It is with these reactions in mind that the following postulates are presented as a statement of relationship between ideology and sociology. Included, as well, is a corresponding analysis of the conservative bias of both structural-functionalism and present day conflict theory (represented by Lewis Coser and Ralf Dahrendorf) as major ideological perspectives within sociology. The examination of the boundary constructs of sociology is an essential task in establishing priorities for research, theory, and methodology. The acceptance of existing boundaries as a priori, unquestionable, limits of concern, is one of the prime elements in the development of an irrelevant, static discipline. The constriction of alternative methods of perception and conceptualization is a result of insulation and the "scientism" prevalent in sociology. The following postulates, hopefully, lay the ground work for a more comprehensive examination of the boundary constructs of sociology, specifically in the relationship between facts and values within an ideological frame.

There are several major tenets upon which this presentation is grounded. These postulates serve as the immediate value base from which the writing of this paper is extended. First, and perhaps most important, is the acceptance of the notion of the social construction of reality (and perception). This concept is presented from a predominantly



Mannheimian perspective and is the prime postulate upon which the relationship between fact and value is established.

Secondly, it will be held that the presented relationship between fact and value necessarily establishes an immediate and important relationship between the boundary constructs of a discipline and the values upon which such constructions are based. This relationship is seen, and is applicable, to the relationship between ideology and sociology. Within this immediate framework, concepts are seen as manifestations of ideology as well as generators and maintainers of existing perceptualization and ideological perspective.

The third proposition holds that there are two major ideological strains of thought and perception within contemporary American sociology. These two ideological perspectives are as follows:

- (1) structural-functionalism (structural-functionalist theory)
- (2) present day conflict theory<sup>4</sup>

Finally it is posited that these two basic ideological perspectives (structural-functionalism and conflict theory) are "conservative" in nature. This conservatism is not only a logical extension of historically conservative social

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<sup>4</sup>It is necessary to note that this presentation draws an immediate and necessary distinction between present day conflict theory ala Coser and Dahrendorf and the "classical" conflict theory of Hobbs, Darwin, and Marx.

thought<sup>5</sup> but is manifest in the predominantly accepted definitions of society and their logical perceptual consequences.

The generally conservative ideological base of sociological theory tends to manifest itself both in approach and theoretical direction per se. The concept of social equilibrium often becomes, in respect to the theory and study of society, an a priori assumption from which and toward which most theory and study is derived and directed. The very definitions of society accepted by most sociologists limits or excludes the concept of a society whose existence is based upon extended and continuous conflict. Most definitions of society can be viewed as derivatives based on the generally accepted concept of equilibrium; a notion which itself stems from traditionalist ideas of "harmony," "consensus," "like interests," etc. The concept of functional unity found within many definitions of society leaves little, if any, room for a permanently dysfunctional set of categories. The notion that society is comprised of a number of interacting functional units, which necessarily maintain the whole, excludes the very concept of a society in which units may exist for the destruction of the whole. The importance of ideology in relation to the development of a particular discipline cannot be divorced from the conceptual

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<sup>5</sup>Robert Nisbet, The Sociological Tradition (New York: Basic Books, 1966).



apparatus and methodological manifestations of that discipline. It should be made clear, that the immediate purpose of this paper is not the presentation of a new ideological base from which the study of society may be directed, but rather an analysis of the existing discipline in terms of categories of equilibrium and conflict as related to its ideological base.

## CHAPTER II

### VALUE AND IDEOLOGY

The necessity of value commitment within a historical and social context cannot be isolated from the relationship between knowledge and its social base. Everyday individuals are faced with decisions; decisions which are dependent upon the values and definitions which are labeled as facts. The reality that is perceived and the manner in which it is perceived are both products of the social environment into which one is socialized. It is amazing that a discipline as sophisticated as sociology has either largely neglected the study of its own ideological base or has systematically denied the relationship between values and facts as an intervening variable in the study of human interaction.

The non-pejorative use of ideology found within the context of this presentation has grown basically from the rejection of the notion that ideology is counterposed to science.<sup>6</sup> This usage is based upon the concept that science

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<sup>6</sup>Nathan Glazer presents three historical uses of the term ideology: (1) ideology as counterposed to science; (2) ideology as the screen for the status quo; (3) ideology as that element in all thought that mobilizes the forces of social change for the positive transformation of society. Glazer's article is found in The Uses of Sociology edited by P. Lazarsfeld, W. H. Sewell and H. L. Wilensky, (New York: Basic Books), pp. 63-77.



itself is an ideology. It is quite difficult to divorce the concept of ideology from previous historical misapplication and to apply it differently to similar situations. Marx, for the most part has been the base from which the sociology of knowledge has been extended and in many ways provides the concept of the social construction of reality upon which this paper is grounded. A strict Marxist definition of ideology, resplendent with orthodox class analysis, has been rejected for this presentation, however, with the use of the term ideology becoming closely aligned with Mannheim's concept of "perspective" found in Ideology and Utopia. In referring to one's perspective Mannheim speaks of a Weltanschauung or total outlook which is brought to any situation where there exists the necessity of interpretation. A perspective, thus, is a whole mode of conceiving things which is determined by the social settings and determines the manner in which one views an object, what one perceives in it, and how one construes it in his thinking.<sup>7</sup> Following Mannheim, an ideology will be posited as an integrated set of beliefs with corresponding sets of values which connotes assumptions about the nature of reality. This definition of ideology differs from the traditional concept of a rigid dogmatism often associated with the term, and is a composite of definitions presented by Murry

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<sup>7</sup>Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936), pp. 266-272.

Hausknecht<sup>8</sup> and William E. Connolly.<sup>9</sup>

The relationship between values and facts as related to a specific historical and social environment serve as the base for assumptions concerning the nature of a perceived reality. From this view of ideology there is an immediate and necessary relationship between values and perceived empirical facts; a relationship which is contingent upon the social construction of perception. The notion that facts exist in a system of "Platonic reality," devoid of their necessary relationship with values, yet able to be interpreted within the context of a social environment, has in many ways become an assumption held by a large number of social scientists. The notion of a value free sociology has itself become a predominant ideological assumption (value) which serves as a base for modern mainstream sociology.

The image of a value free sociology is more than a neat intellectual theorem demanded as a sacrifice to reason; it is also, a felt conception of a role and a set of (more or less) shared sentiments as to how sociologists should live.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Murry Hausknecht, "Values and Mainstream Sociology: Some Functions of Ideology for Theory," American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 9 (Feb. 1966), p. 30. "Ideology connotes a set of values, i.e., assumptions about the nature of man and society."

<sup>9</sup>William E. Connolly, Political Science and Ideology, (New York: Atherton Press, 1967), p. 2. "Ideology is an integrated set of beliefs about the social and political environment."

<sup>10</sup>Alvin Gouldner, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of Value Free Sociology," Social Problems, Vol. 9 (Winter 1962), p. 202.



This disjunction between facts and values present in the concept of value free sociology discounts the idea of the social construction of reality and perception when applied to sociology and science per se. Implicit in the notion of a value free science is the necessity for the scientist to interpret perceived reality without the influence of his social and cultural relationships which may in some way color or bias his judgment. The problem of many sociologists is not that ideology plays an important role in determining what may or may not be labeled as significant or factual, but that the denial of ideology as an influential intervening variable in the study of human relationships obviates the necessity of examining the role of ideology within his own discipline. This lack of concern involving the relationship of fact to value within the discipline of sociology provides little if no support for the discovery of what values best affirm the collection and arrangement of relevant data within a particular social and cultural context.

The concept of relevancy is in itself based on value judgments stemming from perception and the ordering of data already perceived. From a particular value base certain phenomena are considered worthy of study (judged significant) while other areas of activity may be excluded (judged as being insignificant). What may or may not be viewed as relevant to a particular study area is dependent on the values upon which that area is founded, and their

relation to a particular socio-cultural environment. The affirmation of a particular value has within it an inherent scope of perception derived from the framework of the value itself. The areas that are to be studied find their origin in the values which form the base of a particular perspective or ideology.

The predisposition to believe or label a particular phenomenon as fact is based on ideological assumptions which are the products of the social and historical environments, and are the value bases which intervene in the perception and interpretation of reality. Within this perspective we are able to view two different levels of relationship between facts and values which intervene in and influence perception:

- (1) Values that are derived from facts based on an immediate a priori acceptance of beliefs
- (2) Beliefs (facts) derived from values which have grown from the prior acceptance of other beliefs.

Both of these levels of relationship serve as the value bases which become intervening influences in the interpretation and communication of perceived data.

The notion of value free sociology draws a distinction between the value position of the sociologist outside of the role of the sociologist and the detached professionalism posited as a requirement contained within the role of the scientist. Irving L. Horowitz has made an interesting point in stating, "The truth of course is not that values have



actually disappeared from the social sciences, rather that the social scientist has become so identified with the going value system." The social scientist does not leave his values behind when he steps into the role of the professional. Many of the overt manifestations of political affiliation and religion may be outwardly rejected, but the assumptions upon which the outward manifestations of belief are founded are brought to inquiry.

The social scientist at work is not suddenly confronted with the need to choose values. He is already working on the basis of certain values. The values that these disciplines now embody have been selected from the values created in Western society; elsewhere social science is an import. Of course some do talk as if the values they have selected 'transcend' Western or any other society; others speak of their standards as if they were 'immanent' within some existing society, as a sort of unrealized potential. But surely it will now be widely agreed that the values inherent in the traditions of social science are neither transcendent nor immanent. They are simply values proclaimed by many and within limits practiced in small circles. What a man calls moral judgement is merely his desire to generalize, and so make available for others, those values he has come to choose.<sup>11</sup>

The social scientist is not an isolate, immune to the influences of his particular culture and society. The concept of value free sociology alienates the scientist from the resource he is studying and divorces him further from the surrounding world. The scientist as a social person participates in the selection of the problems of science

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<sup>11</sup>C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 178.

and is responsive to what Znaniecki has termed his social circle. Whether he considers himself a successful individual in the treatment of a particular problem is dependent upon the reaction received from not only the immediate social circle but from the larger social forces and cultural goals of his society per se. The techniques used by the social scientist and the data retrieved are judged by an already existing ideological base as either an acceptable method, an operative value which predominates as a professional standard, or as a non-acceptable method with invalid data stemming from a misuse or rejection of the existing predominate ideological base.

There is evidence that the so-called laws of proof may be merely the conventional abstract rules governing what are accepted as valid conversational extensions. What we call illogicality is similar to immorality in that both are deviations from norms. . . . Criteria, or observational and verificatory models, are not transcendental. . . . Nor are they part of an a priori or innate equipment of the "mind" conceived to be intrinsically logical.<sup>12</sup>

The techniques, a complex of standardized procedures, serve to make operative the predominant theoretical ideological base. The methods, which correspond to the theoretical assumptions are in themselves based on the assumptions generated by the theory and thus may tend to lead to predetermined results. Such a myopic methodology serves as a supportive structure for the ideological base from which it grew, helping to maintain the accepted structured view of

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<sup>12</sup>Op. cit., Connelly; p. 84.



reality.

The posited relationship between facts and values presented in this paper is based on the acceptance of a general Mannheimian view of the social construction of reality, leading to the conclusion that the disjunction between facts and values present in the notion of value free sociology is, at least, improbable. The concept of ideology as a necessary base of perception is extended from the idea of the social construction of reality, and is in itself, from this perspective, a by-product of a particular ideology which has been shaped by various socio-cultural and historical circumstances. Ideology is, thus, reflected and manifest in the arrangement of perceptions we label as knowledge and the manner in which that knowledge is collected.

The concepts upon which theory and research are based and from which both are generated are subject to the immediate influence of the relationship between facts and values. The very concepts we use are colored, necessarily, by the ideological predisposition to view a particular subject area in a particular way.

We will begin with the fact that the same word or concept in most cases, means different things when used by differently situated persons. . . even in the formulation of concepts, the angle of vision is guided by the observer's interests . . . every concept combines within itself only that which, in the light of the investigator's interests, it is essential to grasp and to incorporate.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Op. cit., Mannheim, p. 273.

The sociologist, as dependent upon, and creator of, the concepts used as a base for viewing reality is necessarily dependent upon his social and cultural environment. The ideology of the sociologist is manifest in the development of the concepts he uses to interpret his perception of reality. Such concepts serve as a supportive structure for the generation and maintenance of what will be presented as accepted ideological assumptions.

Within each word (concept) used to describe a perceived phenomenon are various connotations and denotations about this phenomenon. Each word serves as a modifier and definer, enabling the reader to grasp, through symbolic interaction and interpretation, the perceived data. The translation of the perception into symbols of communication is related to the ideological biases which not only influence the perception, but the description of the perception as well. "In time, assumptions are built in on older assumptions so that we have verbal cliches standing for clusters of underlying assumptions."<sup>14</sup>

Within a particular historical frame various vocabularies of explanation are formed, composed of concepts, word phrases, etc., which are used to analyze and interpret the perception of phenomena perceived during that historical moment. These words are value based and can be seen as

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<sup>14</sup>Robert S. Lynd, Knowledge for What (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1939), p. 58.



"vocabularies of motive"<sup>15</sup> expressing an interpretation of situated actions, maintaining a scope of perception for the interpretation and relating of various phenomena, and generating a particular perceptual frame. The value base of perception is related to the value base of symbolic communication by the simple activity of choosing a word to describe and/or explain a particular perception. The communication of ideological perspectives is necessarily related to vocabularies of explanation and "motive" and is dependent upon social nature of perception and symbolic interaction.

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<sup>15</sup>C. Wright Mills, "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive," American Sociological Review, Vol. 5 (December, 1940) pp. 904-13.

### CHAPTER III

#### SCIENTIFIC REIFICATION: THE ALIENATION OF PROCESS

The categorization of perceived phenomenon into various niches of criteria necessarily entails the standardization of characteristics by which such groupings can be made. The methodologies of classification and consequent categorization are important elements in the scientific process. The base for the process is dependent upon definitional and labeling procedures and is intimately related to the ideological biases of the definer and the individual involved in the labeling process. The entire process of classification and categorization is based upon the construction of definitions and groups of defined objects to be related in criteria of similarity. These criteria are themselves arbitrary constructs and are oriented toward the classification of like elements between separate entities.

It is F. A. Hayek's contention<sup>16</sup> that the process of creating new criteria of classification and redefining already defined perceptions is in itself an alienating factor further separating the "reality" of knowledge from human

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<sup>16</sup>F. A. Hayek, The Counter-Revolution of Science (New York: The Free Press, 1955).



experience. In a sense Hayek is applying a basic Marxist concept of reification (explained at length in Capital) to the very process of scientific investigation. Through the process of definition and classification a new "reality" is created; a reality separate from experience. The new scientific "reality" is one composed of abstracted definitions and constructs which at one time were closely aligned to the "reality" of experience but became consistently separated via the scientific process of classification and redefinition. The idea of scientific reification is further complicated by what Hayek terms the collectivism of the scientific approach, and serves as one of the elements of scientific alienation (the disjunction between knowledge and experience).

What we group together as instances of the same collective or whole are different complexes of individual events, by themselves perhaps quite dissimilar, but believed by us to be related to each other in a similar manner; they are selections of certain elements of a complex picture on the basis of a theory about their coherence. They do not stand for definite things or classes of things (if we understand the term "thing" in any material or concrete sense) but for a pattern or order in which different things may be related to each other--an order which is not a spatial or temporal order but can be defined only in terms of relations which are intelligible human attitudes.<sup>17</sup>

The notion of this collectivism of the scientific approach is based on science's preoccupation with the discovery or

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

construction of similarities between separate entities, and is one of the main processes involved in the construction of a separate "reality" of science.

The concepts used in establishing and classifying the various perceived characteristics are in themselves felt to be "real" in the sense of being synonymous with experience.

The naive realism which uncritically assumes that where there are commonly used concepts there must also be definite "given" things which they describe is so deeply embedded in current thought about social phenomena that it requires a deliberate effort of will to free oneself from it.<sup>18</sup>

The creation of a "scientific reality" is dependent upon the identification of the model construct with experience, and is representative of what Alfred N. Whitehead calls the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness."

There are several levels of scientific reification related to the fallacy of misplaced concreteness with which this presentation will deal. Richard M. Weaver presents two types of vocabularies which the individual (including the scientist) uses in the process of labeling and classification of perception.<sup>19</sup> These types of vocabularies are related to the levels and degrees of scientific reification as well as to the broad relationship between "reality" and language en toto.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>19</sup> Helmut Schoeck and James Wiggins, eds., Scientism and Values (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc., 1960), 83-99.



"Positive" terms, as Weaver presents them, stand for perceived objects which are material entities, capable of physical identification and measurement. In general language construction "positive" terms are usually nouns with the degree of disjunction between the symbol and the referent (the entity to which the symbol refers) though arbitrary, being minimal. "Dialectical" terms, on the other hand, originate and derive meaning on a higher level of abstraction. They emerge from the "world of ideas" and consist of a meaning which is reached not through (normal) sensory perception, but through the processes of definition, inclusion, exclusion, and implication.<sup>20</sup>

Weaver tends to posit (at least through implication) that the closer the symbol is to the referent, in terms of lesser degrees of abstraction, the more representative that symbol is to the "reality" of experience. The higher the level of abstraction the wider the disjunction between experience and symbol construct. "Positive" terms therefore tend to be more representative of the reality of experience since they are on a low level of abstraction while "dialectical" terms become more divorced from experience through the complexities of higher degrees of abstraction.

The complexities of symbolic construction and its necessary relationship with the entire process of scientific reification is an essential element in the increased

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 88.



disjunction between "scientific reality" and the "reality of experience." The collectivism of the scientific approach further complicates and multiplies the inherent isolation between symbol construct and experience (perception).

The sociologist is not immune to these basic ontological and epistemological problems concerning the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. The very process of developing a particular disciplinary jargon and creating a perspective for the interpretation of reality (the reality of experience) necessarily entails a sociological process of reification. Sociology, as all other perspectives which interpret and define perception, constructs a sociological reality abstracted from experience and dependent upon symbols and concepts for its existence. The reality of sociology is an abstracted reality in a dialectical sense (Weaver's dialectic) which often mistakes its own creations for the reality of experience. The concepts which are constructed are often viewed as positive terms while actually, according to Weaver, they are dialectical terms which have been mistaken for the positive representation of experience. Too often the models which the scientists (sociologists) in a sort of theoretical game are transformed into what is considered to be a "real" representation of perception. In a Weaverian sense we move from positive to dialectical terms with the two realities becoming confused.

The entire sociological reification process is based on the transformation and movement from the "world" of human

experience through interpretation and categorization, to the reality of sociology.

. . .the world in which science is interested is not that of our given concepts or even sensations. Its aim is to produce a new organization of all our experience of the external world, and in doing so it has not only to remodel our concepts but also to get away from the sense qualities and to replace them by a different classification of events.<sup>21</sup>

The elements of the reality of sociology are the definitions and concepts which are used to structure and interpret perception, and the perspectives which serve as referent points for viewing the world of human interaction. The construction of models of human interrelationships and experience replace the actual process of experience and become the object of study. The raison d'etre for the new world of sociology is generally the maintenance of the sociological reality.

The general creation of realities separate, but supposedly reflective, of human experience is a part of an alienation process created by the necessity of symbolic interaction (though complicated and multiplied by the fallacy of misplaced concreteness and the collectivism of the scientific approach). The self-isolating perspective of the objective, value-free observer is but one of the impossibilities (accepting the social nature of perception) with which the scientist creates a disjunction between knowledge and experience.

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<sup>21</sup>F. A. Hayek, op. cit., p. 23.



It is necessary when dealing on an ontological level with epistemological concerns (especially from a meta-sociological perspective) to deal in dialectical terms while analyzing a construction of abstract realities. It is within this framework that this presentation will continue to analyze the reality and perspective of sociology and its consequent conceptual manifestations as an ideology.



## CHAPTER IV

### IDEOLOGY AND REACTION

There are two major sociological perspectives (ideologies) with corresponding terminologies with which this presentation will be immediately concerned. Both of these perspectives may be viewed as major directions within the same sociological reality. Both are subject to the same limitations of reification, collectivism, and the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Both are arbitrary conceptual models, separate from the reality of experience.

It is the major contention of this paper that general equilibrium or consensus theory is the predominant sociological perspective from which observed phenomena are defined and categorized. Present day conflict theory on the other hand serves as the subordinant secondary factor of ideology used as a referent point for classification of perceptions.

Historically the role of equilibrium theory may be traced through a broad range of disciplines and general social theory. Developing in the physical sciences prior to the rise of the social, the concept of equilibrium became increasingly important in the establishment of determinate conditions. The equilibrium construct served as a finite base for the deduction of logical extensions (or exclusions)

of the unknown properties. Equilibrium became the methodological process of imposing order and structure on an apparently chaotic universal condition. The natural and physical sciences became increasingly based on postulates of equilibrium and developed complex theorems and axioms from which logical patterns and deductions could be projected. The desired emulation of the natural (and physical) sciences by the social also included the adaptation of the existing "scientific" methodology, as well as the general frame of reference of the equilibrium perspective. According to Cynthia Russett, "The rise and dissemination of the concept of equilibrium is part of the growth in scientific method which did not pattern itself along disciplinary lines."<sup>25</sup>

The general trend toward the discovery of a monistic explanation of a perceived universal system developed as the intellectual atmosphere from which the social sciences were born. The broad operational processes and harmony of the universal order were felt to be within the reach of human understanding only if the methods of scientific classification and categorization were employed. Perhaps one of the major intellectual transformations which grew out of the development of the physical sciences related to the broad aspects of a monistic orientation was the identification of the concept of equilibrium with the monism of

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<sup>25</sup> Cynthia Eagle Russett, The Concept of Equilibrium in American Social Thought (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 14.



universal laws of order. The reduction of practically all of the scientific orientations to a monistic base began the widespread acceptance of the general notion of equilibrium which would greatly effect the scope and direction of the development of the social sciences.

In whatever form it might take, the doctrine was clearly favorable to the sharing of concepts, methods, and principles among diverse areas of knowledge. Asserting that the same laws operated in every sphere of reality, it encouraged employment of identical methods of analysis and of identical theories in every sphere. . . . Because the natural sciences developed earlier than the social sciences, this borrowing of ideas perforce proceeded from the former to the latter, rather than the other way around. In extreme cases. . . such borrowing amounted very nearly to a reduction of social science to physics; in other cases the conceptual framework of physics was altered to accommodate social data.<sup>26</sup>

The idea of scientific classification and methodology had become ingrained thoughtways within which the social scientist began to work. With the acceptance of the broad perspective of monism and consequent notions of equilibrium and order, the traditional conceptual apparatus and methodology of the physical and natural sciences were adopted as tools of the newer social sciences. The collectivism of the scientific approach per se was (and is) easily reconcilable with the broad monistic perspective and consequent concept of equilibrium, to which the major body of science held. The establishment of criteria of similarity could easily be justified within the sciences by the immediate philosophical

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 26.



base of monism. Following from the monistic base it is quite logical and "natural" to look for the essential qualities of likeness between all entities through the establishment of criteria of similarity and categorization.

The social sciences readily adopted the general perspective of the natural and physical, their philosophical base and outlook, and the inherent problems of reification and collectivism. For the social sciences the adoption of the general ideological orientation of the natural sciences not only meant the adoption of the stability of an accepted system of theory and method, but the adoption of perspective without the creation of a viable alternative. The social sciences readily limited themselves to the same scope and "reality" of the natural sciences. The development of a different perspective and methodology, of an alternative base for theory and method, did not take place.

Tracing the rise of sociology, Comte, Spencer, and Ward will be used as immediate examples in the analysis of the development of an ideology. For August Comte the mathematician, for Herbert Spencer the engineer, for Lester Ward the paleobotanist, scientific categories had become central ways of perceiving and classifying the input perceptions. They did not divest themselves of their traditional methods of conceptualization and categorization, even when the data was novel.

For Comte the creation of a science of society became the emulation of the natural and physical sciences (especially

physical), based on the general perspective of a positivistic monism and equilibrium. The collectivism of the scientific approach as related to the concept of equilibrium can be seen in Comte's notion of endeavoring to grasp social phenomena as "wholes," as well as his idea of the unity of unvarying natural laws.

The notion of equilibrium was a concept and perspective which was accepted as a base for viewing and categorizing perception which through widespread dissemination, became an ideology from which and toward which the theory and method of sociology grew. It would have been extremely difficult, however, given the pervasive intellectual acceptance of monism, for sociology and the general social sciences to have grown in any other direction. Though a tradition of radical critical philosophy did exist it was certainly not in the mainstream of the intellectual vogue nor was it the base from which the natural and physical sciences could logically be extended.

Comte reacted strongly against the Enlightenment and the French Revolution and posited that his "social physics" (though he drew chiefly from a biological model) would help to bring order out of chaos.<sup>27</sup> His basic conservative interests enabled him to readily accept the stability of the existant scientific system and the general concept of equilibrium. The constant referal to the extension of human

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<sup>27</sup>Irving M. Zietlin, Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 75.



freedom and potentiality found within the broad revolutionary views to which Comte was reacting prompted him to view true liberty as "nothing else than a rational submission to the preponderance of the laws of nature."<sup>28</sup>

The biological model from which Comte drew his perspective of sociology enabled him to view the relationship between two entities (the living thing and its environment) as the primary base for societal study. The biological perspective of the homeostatic theory of organisms was easily transferred to the social, finding a parallel theory in Comte's idea of equilibrium.

Comte epitomized the relationship between living things and the world in which they lived in a single phrase; it was an "equilibrium between two independent forces," upon which life depended. . . . Comteian social statics concerned itself, by definition, with the conditions of social equilibrium.<sup>29</sup>

Comte's primary perspective of human society was based on the central notion of order, unity, and harmony. The creation of human laws merely reinforced the laws of order which were already present.

All artificial and voluntary order is simply a prolongation of the natural and involuntary order to which all human society tends.<sup>30</sup>

The organic model which so fascinated Comte was further

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<sup>28</sup>Auguste Comte, The Positive Philosophy, 2 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, 1895), p. 39.

<sup>29</sup>Russett, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

<sup>30</sup>Comte, op. cit., p. 461.



expanded and transformed into sociological theory by Herbert Spencer. The basic equilibrium view was upheld and systematically dealt with in relation to the evolution and existence of human society. Though quite similar in content, Spencer's physical and natural science referent was physics rather than biology. Evolution (progress), however, remained a vital part of his general schemata and became the central principle within which the concept of equilibrium found a major role.

Equilibrium within Spencer's sociological perspective had a twofold role. First, it was the force through which society was constantly progressing (evolving): constantly moving to resolve the contradictions and extremes which arose. And secondly, it was the goal of that movement. Equilibrium became not only the mechanism of progress but the goal of that particular movement of societal evolution. Society, therefore as an organic and dynamic equilibrium was perceived as a "system of mutually dependent parts severally performing subserving maintenance of the combination."<sup>31</sup> Given the perceived nature of the physical and natural universe it became necessary for Spencer to broaden the scope of equilibrium. By adding the relationship of evolution and progress, an aspect of functional unity of elemental parts to the notion of equilibrium, he constructed a societal parallel to compliment the physical and organic

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<sup>31</sup>Russett, op. cit., p. 38.

models from which he drew.

The movement involved in the idea of progressive or evolutionary equilibrium added a new dimension to the general applicability of equilibrium theory to sociology. In the same sense that monism became the base for the projection of scientific possibilities for the natural and physical sciences, equilibrium became the base and general ideology within which the social sciences could logically operate.

While so quickly criticizing the negativism of radical philosophy for its supposed determinism, the determinism inherent in any conceptual monistic frame was ignored. The very notion of universal laws necessarily limits the idea of infinite freedom and chance and imposes upon a universe of chaos, direction and pre-determined predictability. Science is based on the necessary acceptance of imposed order, if only in theory, if any system of logic is to be extended and for any creation of symbols to exist.

The arrival of equilibrium theory on the American sociological scene can be examined in relation to the development of the sociological perspective of Lester F. Ward. Ward, emerging from a natural science background into the social sciences, held to a strict monism and soon began to develop a concept of equilibrium central to his sociological perspective. Society and progress, for Ward, were based on the stability of interacting societal parts, and on equilibrium; an equilibrium which was flexible enough to adapt and change when confronted with varying circumstances. The Spencerian



Idea of dynamic equilibrium was divided further by Ward into "static" or "partial" equilibrium and "moving" equilibrium.

Progress consists in setting up dynamic activities in the social structures themselves. A structure represents a state of equilibrium, but it is never a perfect equilibrium, and the conversion of the partial equilibrium into a moving equilibrium provided it moves in the right direction, is social progress.<sup>32</sup>

The strong development of an equilibrium ideology (perspective) from which to categorize perception, from the beginning of the rise of sociology established a course and framework which has become the major perspective and trend in American sociology. The conservatism inherent in the general perspective of equilibrium theory (which is generally based on consensus) was reflected in the works of the 'trinity of founders' of the sociological discipline. "Equilibrium for all three [Comte, Spencer, and Ward] was rather a convenient scientific symbol for cherished social values rather than a serious description of reality."<sup>33</sup>

Today's manifestations of the strongly entrenched equilibrium perspective can be seen in the prevalence of the structural-functional approach in American sociology and the widespread base of consensus theory. The concept of dynamic equilibrium remains a central idea from which structural-functionalism is extended and is one of the basic ideological

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<sup>32</sup>Frank L. Ward, "Evolution of Social Structures," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 10 (1904-05), p. 605.

<sup>33</sup>Russett, op. cit., p. 52.



perspectives within which sociological theory and research is conducted.<sup>34</sup>

One remarkable feature of the contemporary state of sociology is its overwhelming adherence to one doctrine. That doctrine is the "structural-functional" approach.<sup>35</sup>

Consensus, which has become little more than a synonym for a broader equilibrium perspective<sup>36</sup> (equilibrium being maintained via consensus) is a major conceptual element found within the general structural-functionalist approach, and is the base from which many accepted definitions of society are derived.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Willbert Moore, "The Whole State of Sociology," American Sociological Review, Vol. 24 (1959), p. 710.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Irving L. Horowitz, "Consensus, Conflict and Cooperation: A Sociological Inventory," Social Forces, 41 (December, 1962), p. 178.

<sup>37</sup>As an example of some of the elements found within various definitions of society the following brief analysis is presented. Out of a survey of some twenty definitions found within selected introductory sociology texts several major categories are presented. These categories can be labeled as cooperation, system, self sufficient, common interest. Of these definitions eight included the concept of cooperation; seven of systems; four of self sufficient; and seven of common interest. There were overlaps of inclusions and some of the definitions contained more than one of the conceptual element.

Conceptual elements mentioned in the definitions of society surveyed	Number of definitions	Authors*
1. Cooperation	8	Green; Anderson, Parker; Mead (Eugene and Fanchon); Bell, Sirjamaki;

\*For Bibliographic references to authors refer to Appendix A.

. . . From the standpoint of collective behavior cultural traits may all be reduced to the one term "consensus." Society viewed abstractly is an organization of individuals; considered concretely it is a complex of organized habits, sentiments, and social attitudes--in short, consensus.<sup>38</sup>

Lewis Wirth has also maintained that the central focus of sociology is the study of consensus.<sup>39</sup> This tremendous emphasis on the consensual frame extended from the broad notion of equilibrium has become the theoretical and methodological base for the predominance of structural-functionalist theory in contemporary sociology.

Structural-functionalism appears to be the logical extension and parallel of the general equilibrium frame of reference established in the early development of sociology. Exemplified by Talcott Parsons, the structural-functionalist extends the notion of dynamic equilibrium and consensus to the point of creating an almost monistic preoccupation with

Conceptual elements mentioned in the definitions of society surveyed	Number of definitions	Authors
2. System	7	Fichter; Bertrand; Bogardus; Cuber; Levy; Landis; Johnson; Woods; Biesanz; Hines; Mead (Eugene and Fanchon)
3. Self Sufficient	4	Lundberg, Schrag, Larsen; Vander Zanden; Hines; Woods
4. Common Interests	7	Rose; Merrill; Wilson; Green; Fichter; Biesanz; Woods

<sup>38</sup>R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 163.

<sup>39</sup>Wirth, op. cit., pp. 1-15.



order and stability. In observing the extreme role that equilibrium plays as a base for sociological analysis, as well as the many other social sciences, David Easton remarked (referring to equilibrium),

. . . it represents perhaps one of the few analytical orientations common to all social research. . . the idea of equilibrium stands as the closest approximation to general theory that can be found in the whole field of social science<sup>40</sup>

The limited monistic base from which present day equilibrium and consensus theory is extended is manifest markedly in the scope and tradition of the structural-functionalist approach. Pierre van den Berghe has stated while examining the relationship between the elements of functionalism and their historical intellectual base, that:

. . . two basic postulates, those of consensus and of dynamic equilibrium or integration. Both of these assumptions can be traced back to Comte, and have permeated much of British and American sociology and anthropology. . . acquiring the sanctity of traditions.<sup>41</sup>

The basic collectivism of the monistic perspective is evident in structural-functionalism's reductionist tendencies toward the integral unity of functional elements. This collectivism coupled with the monistic equilibrium outlook gives the structural-functionalist approach characteristics common to the latter eighteenth century sciences. The

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<sup>40</sup>David Easton, "Limits of the Equilibrium Model in Social Science," Behavioral Science (April, 1956), pp. 96-104.

<sup>41</sup>Pierre van den Berghe, "Dialectic and Functionalism: Toward a Synthesis," American Sociological Review, 28 (October, 1963), p. 696.



present day equilibrium-consensus perspective (manifest in structural-functionalism) in a similar manner maintains the conservatism of the early disciplinary development and perpetuates a similar systematic preoccupation with order.<sup>42</sup>

While trying to maintain a professed standard of objectivity the structural-functionalist often regards rapid change as being dysfunctional.<sup>43</sup> With function as a major element of equilibrium and stability, dysfunction necessarily assumes a negative connotation with its logical consequence being instability and disunity. It is necessary for the structural-functionalist to make value judgments if they are to describe any categorization of perceived phenomena. Perceptions are not always considered as positive from an individual's ideological base, or for that matter even neutral. Stability for the structural-functionalist is a major concept with extremely favorable connotations, whereas dysfunction and instability receive negative perceptual judgment and within the broad range of the perspective are negative terms (values).

The structural-functionalist ideology was spawned from a conservative reaction to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Its roots lie in a conservative equilibrium tradition based on the collectivism and monism of eighteenth

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<sup>42</sup>Robert A. Nisbet, "Conservatism and Sociology," American Journal of Sociology (September, 1952), pp. 169-175.

<sup>43</sup>Talcot Parsons, "Some Considerations on the Theory of Social Change," Rural Sociology, Vol. 26 (September, 1961), pp. 219-239 and Van den Berghe, op. cit., p. 698.

century science. Though adjusting, somewhat, to deal more convincingly with the notion of change, the basic emphasis on the equilibrium of society and the maintenance of order remains the base for most all structural-functional theory and research. This "Utopian" notion of stability<sup>44</sup> manifests itself in the major conceptual tools of sociology. The very concept of mutual dependence, with an extreme emphasis on systems analysis, has become associated quite regularly with the equilibrium approach.

The historical development of the structural-functionalist approach is in actuality the history of an ideology with consequent conceptual tools and perspective, applicable to both research and theory. In many respects much of the development of sociology reflects the conservatism of eighteenth century scientific collectivism and monism which found its most immediate expression in the equilibrium and consensus theories so vital to structural-functionalism. As Robert Nisbet remarks,

The paradox of sociology. . . lies in the fact that although it fails, in its objectives and in the political and scientific values of its principal figures, in the mainstream of modernism, its essential concepts and its implicit perspective places it much closer, generally speaking, to philosophical conservatism.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Ralf Dahrendorf, "Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 64 (September, 1958), pp. 115-127.

<sup>45</sup>Robert Nisbet, The Sociological Tradition (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p.97.



## CHAPTER V

### THE MYTH OF CONFLICT FUNCTIONALISM

It is interesting to note that the sociological tradition (via Comte, Spencer, and Ward) as a conservative reaction to two manifestations of revolution, The Enlightenment and The French Revolution, does not negate the radical tradition of critical philosophy and social science. It is but one path which could have been followed. Sociology to some extent must also be seen as broadly emerging from the humanistic radical tradition which spawned both The Enlightenment and The French Revolution and the consequent reactions from which sociology most immediately grew.

There is a radical sociological tradition from which to draw a different perspective of societal arrangement and from which the possibilities of creating an alternative to the existing conservative sociology emerges. It is generally held that this alternative tradition is presently manifest in contemporary sociology via current conflict theory. It is the contention, however, of this author that present day conflict theory represented for the most part by Ralf Dahrendorf and Lewis Coser, though reflective of the radical critical tradition in sociology in many ways, retains the conservative orientations of equilibrium and



structural-functionalist ideology. Though present day conflict theory does offer a varying set of conceptual tools with different connotations and denotations, its base is still built upon the static traditions of eighteenth century science.

The historical forms of conflict theory are not simple historical curiosities, they form a developing tradition. . . . Conflict theory arose in the general ideological atmosphere that gave birth to positive organicism.<sup>46</sup>

Forming within the same intellectual atmosphere, much of the radical critical philosophy of the latter eighteenth and early nineteenth century took on the monistic characteristics from which equilibrium theory emerged. The general Hegelian dialectic was based on the "absolute" evolutionary (progressive) movement toward what Hegel termed as Spirit. Even in the general transformation of the Hegelian dialectic into dialectic materialism by Marx, the basic monistic frame of science became translated into the inevitability of history.

At the end of all the dialectic movement (both Hegelian and Marxian) is stability. The progressive evolutionary characteristics of negation were arbitrary stopped by both theorist; Hegel with Spirit and Marx by communism and the withering away of the state. Marx, however, did modify the causation of his dialectical process so that logically the process of negation could cease with the development of a

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<sup>46</sup>Don Martindale, The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1960), p. 176.

classless society. Even through the negation processes of the necessity of revolution found within Marx, the conservative intellectual and societal frame within which he was working did necessarily influence his perspective.

By and large sociological conflict theory has found its lodestar in stability. Precisely because of its acceptance of the universality of conflict, the vindication of society is found in achieved order.<sup>47</sup>

Given the inherent conservatism of a broad Hegelian and Marxist frame, the extension and development of a revolutionary dialectical perspective did offer the possibilities of an alternative sociological ideology from which to classify perceived phenomena. The radical critical philosophy of negation did offer as viable a philosophic base as did positivist equilibrium theory. Though the focus of science would necessarily have changed, the possibility of creating an alternative scientific method based upon inherent developmental processes of negation of organisms (entities) rather than collectivism did (does) exist. Sociology, however, paralleling its predecessors did not develop along those particular ideological lines. There is within the discipline though a partial view of the ideological perspective which could have become the predominant ideological frame of sociology if more fully developed from a different philosophical ground.

If as Kingsley Davis asserts, sociology is actually

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 206.



functionalism disguising itself through merely the guise of a different label as has been asserted<sup>48</sup> then all interdisciplinary approaches are logically the consequent of the functional ideology. Even if, however, the assertion of the synonymous relationship between sociology and functionalism is rejected, the negation of the immediacy of the relationship does not necessarily follow. The base of much of sociology is grounded deeply in the functionalist approach. The question that must be answered if some understanding of the relationship between functionalism and its related parts (consensus and equilibrium) is to be derived may be stated as follows: Is the relationship between the functionalist base of sociology and equilibrium a necessary one if sociology is to maintain even the acceptance of what it traditionally interprets as the scientific outlook? In other words, does sociology necessarily have to preserve its equilibrium outlook even if it maintains the traditional functionalist base?

There are several possibilities which arise that may serve as answers to the above questions. Conflict theory as it now stands works primarily from the same type of ideological scientific base as does structural functionalism. Though immediately grounded in the same (or similar) philosophical process the emphasis tends to become somehow different.

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<sup>48</sup>Bert Adams, "Coercion and Consensus Theories: Some Unresolved Issues," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 71, p. 715; and Kingsley Davis, "The Myth of Functional Analysis as a Special Method in Sociology and Anthropology," American Sociological Review, XXIV (December, 1959), p. 771.

The conceptual tools may take on varying connotations even when referring to similar perceived phenomena, and though order and stability are major symbolic apparatus for both inner ideological views, they receive different treatment. Though both perspectives are conservative their conservatism is manifest in different ways (this does not negate the likeness of their conservatism).

En toto both perspectives share the same monistic orientation and are oriented toward the general collectivism of the scientific approach. The broad process of reification is evident in the construction of both theoretical views and the same process of abstraction is prominent. The immediate relationship between functionalism, equilibrium, and sociology is an arbitrary, posited relationship which has been imposed by tradition, not necessity.

Functionalism has become so identified with the consensual equilibrium outlook that the relationship has grown into a paracritical relationship which does not out of necessity have to exist. Both concepts are viable and useful in the interpretation of perceived phenomena. They, however, are not inseparable or sufficient. Functionalism does not have to be dependent upon the general notion of equilibrium. Lewis Coser, while maintaining the conservatism which sociology so stringently feels it needs, is able to interpret conflict as functional. Though equilibrium does play a large part in Coser's basic perspective the existence of equilibrium does not necessarily exclude or



limit a functionalism based also on conflict. Coser has negated the necessity of equilibrium from the general functionalist perspective, as Marx was able to do prior to the rise of the identification of functionalism with equilibrium. The relationship between functionalism and the concept of conflict is as valid as the overly propagated notion of the identity between equilibrium and functionalism.

Coser elaborates from a Simmelian frame upon the functional aspects of conflict in his book The Functions of Social Conflict. Though he is trying to develop a viable intra-disciplinary approach for the classification of perceived phenomena, he is still working from a conservative base. Coser's notions of equilibrium as well as conflict are primarily centered around a structural-functionalist perspective. Coser works from the assumption that conflict can be justified (as if it had to be) if it contributes to the functional aspects of an existant society. The negative connotations of the relationship between dysfunction and conflict are very much evident. Coser constantly tends to base the "positive" aspects of conflict on function. In a sense he is saying, if conflict has a social function then it can't be all bad; dysfunction is positive only when it has function. The negative value ascribed to conflict and consequent dysfunction is maintained and transferred from the traditional structural-functionalist equilibrium approach to what is presented as present day conflict theory. The same conservative preoccupations with stability and order is

maintained throughout Coser's (Simmel's) view of conflict.

The manner in which Coser deals with conflict could easily serve as an elaboration on the notion of dynamic equilibrium. The biological theory of homeostatis relationships translated into sociology by Comte and Spencer is similar to dynamic equilibrium in many respects. The major factor of dysfunction within the bio-system is the over development of one particular force in relation to another. A disequilibrium or conflict arises. The entire process of conflict is actually a process of movement toward a renewed state of equilibrium.

For Coser, in the same manner, conflict arises out of a disequilibrium and is a process of adaptation to a renewed state of equilibrium (latent conflict). Conflict is therefore seen as beneficial when related to internal adaptation directed toward equilibrium;<sup>49</sup> an equilibrium similar to a Parsonian perspective.

One safeguard against conflict disrupting the consensual basis of the relationship, however, is contained in the social structure itself; it is provided by the institutionalization and tolerance of conflict.<sup>50</sup>

The various aspects of conflict which are perceived as disruptive are for Coser, as the structural-functionalists, maladaptive elements within the entire social system. The difference however, between conflict theory (ala Coser) and

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<sup>49</sup>Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (New York: The Free Press, 1956), p. 151.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 152.



structural-functionalism is the consequent positive aspects of the maladaptation (conflict) as viewed by Coser. In a similar manner what may normally be labeled as a major functional element by structural-functionalists is presented by Coser as having dysfunctional consequences for the total social system in the long run.

Institutions which offer substitute channels for the release of aggressiveness may be dysfunctional for the social system in the same way as neurotic symptoms are dysfunctional for the personality system.<sup>51</sup>

This juxtaposition of the functional elements of conflict and the dysfunctional aspects of functional elements can be translated into the simple, though not profound, statement that functional elements are functional and dysfunctional elements are dysfunctional. The point that Coser is trying to make simply is that what was perceived and labeled as usually functional elements are not necessarily static in those functional qualities. What we label as dysfunctional usually may, likewise, also have functional aspects at times (more often than not in the long run). The base for his qualitative judgement of function, however, retains the same criteria of societal stability and maintenance as the traditional equilibrium perspective.

. . . conflict tends to be dysfunctional for a social structure in which there is no or insufficient toleration and institutionalization of conflict. The intensity of a conflict which threatens to 'tear apart,' which attacks the

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<sup>51</sup> ibid., p. 46.

consensual basis of a social system, is related to the rigidity of the structure. What threatens the equilibrium of such a structure is not conflict as such, but the rigidity itself which permits hostilities to accumulate and to be channeled along one major line of cleavage once they break out in conflict.<sup>52</sup>

It is evident that the concerns of the structural-functionalists, the preoccupation with the sanctity of equilibrium, is also a major concern for Coser. Equilibrium is a state of being which is threatened by dysfunction, it is not the state of being which adversely affects the general process of conflict. His priorities are established. His conceptual tools are reflective of the general notions and emphasis of the structural-functionalists. Though Coser removed the necessity of the relationship between functionalism and equilibrium, he still is strongly influenced by its broad operational scheme. Conflict and equilibrium tend to become elements in a dynamic equilibrium maintained within the general tradition of the structural-functionalist ideology.

Coser in many ways has dealt more effectively with the process of dynamic equilibrium as related to conflict than have many of his forebearers. Though not presenting very much of an alternative to conservative consensual based sociology, he has attempted to deal more convincingly with various aspects of function and dysfunction in relation to the broad notion of conflict. As a conflict functionalist,

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 52.



Coser has demythicalized the constructed necessary relationship between function and equilibrium and has added at least another dimension to the predominant ideological base of sociology.

In the emergence of what is held to be present day conflict theory Ralf Dahrendorf has arisen as one of the leading conflict theorists, presenting a revitalized "theory" of class and class conflict in industrial society. In his article "Out of Utopia: Towards a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis," Dahrendorf calls for a re-examination of the predominance of equilibrium theory and a new effort to reconstitute sociology through a more convincing analysis of change and conflict. The homeostasis of dynamic equilibrium theory is outwardly rejected for its inability to handle the concept of change and for its static notions concerning conflict. For Dahrendorf a more realistic view of change and conflict, can be found in the expansion and modification of a basic Marxist analysis of class and process.

Though outwardly rejecting a Marxist approach in the conceptualization of societal (class) structure and change, in Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Societies, Dahrendorf in essence tends to present a modification not rejection of Marxist class theory. His analysis of Marxist tenets of class in relation to newly arisen modifications in industrial society is well grounded. The needed emphasis on roots of power and authority as related to control versus ownership

of the means of production becomes inclusive of a new development within contemporary industrial society, the rise of the managerial class. The concept of a managerial elite with consequent power through control not ownership was dealt with in Mill's Power Elite and White Collar (especially in the latter) but is related more thoroughly to basic Marxist tenets by Dahrendorf.

Throughout his work Dahrendorf concerns himself with the new developments of class structure and industrialization in relation to more traditional interpretations of class. His modifications or additions of the outgrowths of the rise of the managerial "elite" in relation to the notion of the control of the means of production is the logical extension and treatment of the expansive development of the middle class en toto.

Though Dahrendorf does deal much more effectively with the notion of conflict (class conflict at that) and recognizes the basic radical critical tradition of Marx and Hegel, there are several major problems with which he is confronted and does not resolve.

The ground from which Marx drew his notion of the inevitability of class conflict and change was the necessity of the dialectic. The inherent negation of existing particulars of a historical moment is the logical outgrowth of the process of the dialectical "law." The notion of class conflict was merely the extension of the logicity of the dialectic. The ground for Marxist class analysis can be



found in its philosophic base--the process of inherent negation and "going beyond" the existant to its negation. Through the ideological acceptance of the dialectic a base for an intra-ideological logic and categorization was founded. Dahrendorf through his rejection of the dialectic discards the base from which the logic of class analysis is extended. Without the construction of a new philosophic base the logicality of class conflict becomes a part of a non-existent theoretical system and becomes acceptable as an a priori particular. Dahrendorf needed a system of thought in which his modified class analysis would fit. He turned readily to the existant structural-functionalist frame. Through the alteration of the Marxist class tenets and the rejection of the Marxist philosophic base, he modified class conflict and analysis to the point that it could easily fit into a functionalist frame provided that there was not the immediate necessity of an equilibrium base. The role of inherent conflict was borrowed from Marx and adapted to the notion of dynamic equilibrium so that total equilibrium or balance would be impossible. Dahrendorf's concept of the adaptation and institutionalization of conflict was integrated into a general functionalist frame and became similar to Coser's categorization of conflict functionalism.

. . . a strong case can be made for group conflict having consequences which, if not "functional" are utterly necessary for the social process. This case rests on the distinction between the two faces of society--a distinction which underlies our discussions throughout this study [Class and Conflict in Industrial Society]. It is perhaps

the ultimate proof of the necessity of distinguishing these two faces that conflict itself, the crucial category in terms of the coercion model, has two faces, i.e., that of contributing to the integration of social "systems" and that of making change.

Though Dahrendorf have been admirably expressed by L. Coser. . .<sup>53</sup>

Though Dahrendorf is not as preoccupied with the notion of equilibrium (even inclusive of conflict as Coser) he still regards the regulation of conflict as a function of institutions. He deals primarily in the legitimization of conflict behavior which becomes an accepted (adaptive) function of the social system, and relates it to the notion of "democratic process" and mobility. The more flexible (democratic) a social structure is and the higher the chance for upward mobility, the less likely is conflict to become manifest in overt revolutionary behavior. Dahrendorf's idea of conflict can be related to the notion of dynamic disequilibrium or imbalance in the structural-functionalist approach though unlike equilibrium theory conflict cannot be resolved, just regulated.

From a functionalist perspective a major function of the dynamic processes of equilibrium is the resolution of conflict situations (disequilibrium) which might arise. Various processes of internal adaptation do take place between the forces in conflict (in disequilibrium) and some changes in the structural manifestations of the social

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<sup>53</sup>Ralf Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 206-207.



system do take place. The notion of internal resolvment of dysfunction and conflict is a prime element in many theories of equilibrium, organicism, and structural-functionalism.

Dahrendorf deals in a similar manner with the role of institutionalized conflict as an example of internal conflict regulation.

The place of legal institutions in conflict regulation is more accurately described, however, <sup>54</sup> by what in industry is usually called arbitration.

This example, as well as all of the three forms of conflict regulation which Dahrendorf presents tend to work from the intra-conflictual notions of the structural-functionalist perspective. The contradictions which arise as to whether change is of the system or within the system is resolved by identifying both categorizations of change as the same. <sup>55</sup>

The internal regulation of conflict for Dahrendorf is manifest in the structure's ability to adapt and control the extent and intensity of the conflict. Though Dahrendorf does not present the notion of the possibility of resolvment, the reasons for the inherent conflict between elemental forces within the system is not presented. The necessity of conflict found within the Marxist philosophic base is not to be found in the philosophic ground of structural-functionalism. Though conflict can be readily justified and explained within

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 210.

the structural-functionalist perspective, the reasons for its existence are not inherent within the schema. Dahrendorf is faced with the question that confronts most structural-functionalist perspectives of the system: where does it come from? If the conflict between elements of a system is inherent in the existence of the system, where does the necessity of the conflict arise. For Marx simply the inherent conflict and subsequent negation of the existant particular moment was a vital part of the dialectical process from which his theory of class was extended. Dahrendorf unfortunately by rejecting the dialectic is left with the problem of explanation, the lack of necessity within his ideological perspective, and the nonexistence of a philosophical ground from which some system of logicity may be extended.

Though Dahrendorf does present valid criticisms of the applicability of a Marxist analysis of class to the complexities of today's industrial society, he does not present a theory which in any way negates the bases of Marxist analysis via the dialectic. The a priori rejection of the philosophical and ideological basis of the dialectic may be regarded as a primary step in the construction of another non-dialectical ideology from which to classify perceived phenomena. Dahrendorf states his rejection but fails to construct or offer an alternative totality of ideology from which a system of logic and symbol construct can be derived.

Working from his modifications of both structural



functionalism and Marxist social thought, Dahrendorf is left in the predicament of explanation without necessity. The conservatism he rejects in the functionalist approach he reconstructs in his new conflict functionalism via the institutionalization of conflict and the intra-structural systemization of conflict regulation. The radical critical ideology from which Dahrendorf works to extend his basic class analysis (Marxism) becomes lost in the legitimation of conflict through arbitration, conciliation, and mediation. The revolutionary character of Marxist analysis (in spite of its many conservative elements) has been transformed by Dahrendorf into the ideology of "liberal" sociology. Order and stability remain the lodestar of conflict regulation. For Dahrendorf conflict may not be resolved, it may still remain a latent inherent tension within the existence of the social system, though the overt manifestations of disequilibrium and conflict must be regulated. The conservatism of the structural-functionalists and of the theories of equilibrium have been transformed by Dahrendorf into the liberal ideology of contemporary sociology; a liberalism based on a conservative reaction to the development of a revolutionary perspective.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

From a broad perspective the purpose of this presentation has been twofold:

1. To examine, in part, sociology as a discipline and as an ideology;
2. To examine some of the processes involved in the formation of an ideology in relation to the classification and arrangement of perceived phenomena (especially within the sociological perspective).

In order to analyze more fully the role of sociology as an ideology some of the processes of ideological formation were presented in Chapters II and III. The content of these chapters laid the foundation from which the more immediate task of examining the development of the discipline of sociology could take place.

In Chapter II the improbability of making operative the notion of value-free sociology was examined as a logical extension of the acceptance of the general idea of the social construction of reality and perception. The consequence of rejecting the concept of a value-free base for categorizing and classifying perception became the necessity of ideological choice. The a priori acceptance of a frame



of reference, with corresponding conceptual manifestations and value connotations, was presented as the ground upon which ideologies are founded. The necessity of choice and perceptual classification became the base for the necessity of ideology.

Chapter III, as the immediate extension of Chapter II, further concerned itself with the elements of ideological formation and process. Various factors which intervene in the development of an ideological base were examined as inherent tendencies within the process of concept construction and categorization. Scientific collectivism, the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, and the Weaverian notions of "positive" and "dialectical" terms in the creation of an abstract sociological reality, were discussed as elements in the development of ideology and the general process toward sociological and scientific reification. It was from this framework (noting the processes described and mentioned in Chapters II and III) that the following chapters, Chapters IV and V, were presented.

Tracing the development of an ideology, Chapter IV presented sociology as a conservative reaction to the French Revolution. The monism and organicistic notions of that reaction served as the base from which the concept of equilibrium was transferred from the natural and physical sciences to the social. Following from Comte to Spencer to Ward, and to the general view of the structural-functional approach, the conservatism inherent in the equilibrium perspective

became a central concept around which much of sociology came to rotate.

The prevalence of the equilibrium perspective within the broad discipline of sociology was shown in Chapter V to manifest itself in the "liberal" conflict perspectives of Lewis Coser and Ralf Dahrendorf. The role of equilibrium in the conflict analysis of Coser was presented and viewed as a significant element in his general conflict functionalism. Though the equilibrium approach found within the structural-functionalist perspective was expanded and became more inclusive and related to conflict, it retained its basic conservative characteristics.

Dahrendorf, in a similar manner, broadened and clarified the relationship between conflict and equilibrium. Modifying a general Marxist schema, he relied heavily upon a conflict analysis though presenting it within an equilibrium frame. For both Coser and Dahrendorf the role of conflict becomes vital in relation to equilibrium and order. "Latent" conflict, for both, may never be resolved as inherent within the existence of a social system, but overt conflict must be regulated. The conservatism from which much of sociology grew, the tradition developed by Comte and accepted by Spencer, and Ward, has become a major element of both interdisciplinary approaches, structural-functionalism and present day conflict analysis.

As a broad ideological perspective sociology has maintained the basic reactions from which it grew. Though



modifications have taken place and a new concern for meta-disciplinary examination has arisen, the mainstream of contemporary sociology continues to find its ideological base in the roots of reaction.

## APPENDIX A

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