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RELIGION'S HERITAGE TO SCIENCE*

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The quantitative exactness of sociometry can be equal, if not superior, to the quantitative exactness of the natural sciences.

Looking for a model for a scientifically sound social system man has tried in vain to imitate the physical and biological sciences. Stars and planets, rats and guinea pigs, are not equivalents of man. Man has tried to look for a model among the "automatic" sciences. But cultural conserves, calculating machines and robots are also not equivalents of man. The only approaches which he has neglected to use are the *models derived from religious systems,* perhaps because science owes its own existence and power to their decadence and disappearance; it is fearful of looking back. But it is from religious systems that sociometry has drawn its chief inspiration.

We are rarely conscious that the role of the objective scientist has been modeled after the idea of the impartial Godhead. As God's pronouncements are expected to have superpersonal validity, also the scientist's pronouncements are expected to be impersonal. He must not wish the sun to gravitate around the earth nor the earth around the moon; he must not wish the universe to last forever or to perish by sundown. He must not wish only such people to be born who will be kind and just, he must not wish only such people to be born who will be ugly and stupid. He must not wish some races to multiply themselves and to live in comfort, and others to live in distress and perish. He is objective, neutral, uninvolved, he is the impartial recorder of events as they emerge.

This all embracing and impartial Godhead, the God of Spinoza, has stood model for the physical scientist and stood well, but he has not been adequate for the needs of the social scientist, at least not entirely. As long as the social scientist was a pedantic actuarist and demographer, a vital statistician and naive economist, the model passed. But as soon as he became concerned with the We's and collectivities of actors the model needed an extension. It is significant, it seems to me, that the need for this extension appeared first on the religious level, long before the scientific operators became aware of it. It was in my philosophical *Dialogues of the Here and Now* and later in my *Words of the Father* that I added a new dimension to the Godhead, a dimension which unconsciously was always there but which has never been properly spelled out, theoretically the dimension of the "I" or God in the *"first"* person (in contrast to the "Thou" God of the Christian, and to the "He" God of the Mosaic tradition), the dimension of subjectivity does not deprive the Godhead of the objectivity, neutrality and

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impartiality of the old model but it makes the path free for the exercise of cosmic empathy, love and intimate participation, in other words, for the psychodrama of God.

In the Christian dogma the tendency has been to relegate the subjectivity to the Son and the objectivity to the Father but from the point of view of ontological speculations this division has made endless trouble; ever since it was introduced it has been the cause and excuse for anthropomorphizing the divinity and the masquerading of man as God.

Well, it is this new model of an "operational" Godhead announced in the *Words of the Father* (1920) which was my stairway to the sociometric system, developed for an apparently entirely different objective—the search for a model of scientific objectivity in the social sciences.

The greatest model of "objectivity" man has ever conceived was the idea of the Godhead, a being who knows and feels with the universe because he created it, a being unlimited in his ability to penetrate all facets of the universe and still entirely free of "bias".

Social and Organic Unity of Mankind

A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind. But no adequate therapy can be prescribed as long as mankind is not a unity in some fashion and as long as its organization remains unknown. It helped us in the beginning to think, although we had no definite proof for it, that mankind is a social and organic unity. Once we had chosen this principle as our guide another idea developed of necessity. If this whole of mankind is a unity, then tendencies must emerge between the different parts of this unity drawing them at one time apart and drawing them at another time together. These tendencies may be sometimes advantageous for the parts and disadvantageous for the whole or advantageous for some parts and disadvantageous for other parts. These tendencies may become apparent on the surface in the relation of individuals or of groups of individuals as affinities or disaffinities, as attractions and repulsions. These attractions and repulsions must be related to an index of biological, social, and psychological facts, and this index must be detectable. These attractions and repulsions or their derivatives may have a near or distant effect not only upon the immediate participants in the relation but also upon all other parts of that unity which we call mankind. The relations which exist between the different parts may disclose an order of relationships as highly differentiated as any order found in the rest of the universe. A number of scant proofs have been uncovered which indicate that such a unity of mankind does exist. Its organization develops and distributes itself in space apparently according to a *law of social gravity* which seems to be valid for every kind of grouping irrespective of the membership.

Once the unity of mankind had come within the possibility of proof the next question which by necessity arose was how this unity originated. A closer relationship must have existed between individuals in the earlier stages of development; in the absence of social organs, such as language, the interactions between the members of a group were physically more intimate that in levels of a later date. A predominantly psycho-organic level of society must have preceded the predominantly psycho-social level in which we live. A process of increased individualization must have gone parallel with increased differentiation of the groups the individuals formed, a gradual evolution from simpler to more complex patterns according to a *sociogenetic law*. Something must have happened which drew individuals more and more apart than they were before,—the source of differentiation may have been one time a new climate, another time the crossing of different racial groups, — but however far apart they were drawn by these differences something evidently was left to fill the gap between them, like a remainder from more primitive days, a certain mold of interrelations into which their social impulses craved to be fitted and upon which social organs as language were drafted. We are used to reckon with a strict determination of our physical organism. We are gradually learning that also our mental organism develops as a unit step by step. But we are not yet used to reckon with the idea that also the whole of mankind develops in accord with definite laws. But if such laws exist and can be ascertained then the adjustment of man to them is a logical consequence and therapeutic procedures have to be constructed accordingly.

Christianity can be looked at as the greatest and most ingenious psychotherapeutic procedure man has ever invented compared with which medical psychotherapy has been of practically negligible effect. It can be said that the goal of Christianity was from its very beginnings the treatment of the whole of mankind and not of this or that individual and not of this or that group of people. An attack against its foundations has been attempted many times during its existence but none has been so persuasive and aggressive as the concentrated efforts against it during the last hundred years. The one line of attack as led by Marx asserted that Christianity is a tool in the hand of the capitalistic class, a narcosis of the people to keep them under suppression. The other line of attack as led by Nietzsche asserted that Christianity has brought into the world a subtle technique of sublimation with which it tried to keep the instinctual drives of man in submission but that this process of sublimation has never changed more than the surface and that the human beast breaks out of these chains whenever it has an occasion. Marx thought little of psycho-therapeutics of any sort. He thought the psyche a private matter and expected a solution from economics. But Nietzsche suggested, and Freud did that later in fuller measure, a form of negative sublimation, a reversal of the active form of Christian sublimation, attained through analysis of psychological development, unaware that they didn't do else but continue on a side line the very doctrine of Christianity they thought to have overcome.

In considering this we began to speculate over the possibility of a therapeutic procedure which does not center primarily in the idea of sublimation but which leaves man in the state in which he is spontaneously inclined to be and to join the groups he is spontaneously inclined to join; which does not appeal to man either through suggestion or through confessional analysis but which encourages him to stay on the level towards which he naturally tends; which does not forcibly transgress the development of individuals and groups beyond their spontaneous striving as has often been attempted by sublimating agencies. We were developing a therapeutic procedure which leaves the individuals on an unsublimated level, that is on a level which is as near as possible to the level of their natural growth and as free as possible from indoctrination. It is based upon the affinities among them and the patterns resulting from their spontaneous interactions. The patterns are used as a guide in the classification, the construction, and , when necessary, for the reconstruction of groupings. This concept carried us away from such forms of psycho-therapy as center in the idea of changing the individual or of restoring him to normalcy through direct attack and towards a therapy which centers in the idea of leaving the individual unchanged, changed only so far as this is bound to occur through the reorganization of groupings. But it appeared to us in a final conclusion that if an individual had once found his place in the community in accord with laws which appear to control the psychological properties of population, the laws of sociogenetics, of sociodynamics and of social gravitation, he would be safeguarded against trespassing the limits of his natural growth and expansion and that sublimation in a modified form could then be called back to function again as agent. It is a form of *active* sublimation, productive as well as curative, productive of individuality, a form of sublimation which does not arise through analysis backward towards the past trauma but through the training of the individual's spontaneity based on the analysis of present performance.

The Problem of Natural Selection Within The Framework of Sociometry

After a community was analyzed throughout, down to its "social atoms," more general questions arose in face of the imbalances found within its entire structure. 1) Do we have to retreat to a less differentiated form of society in order to reach a stage from which a fresh start can be made, and, if this is so, how far back do we have to go? 2) Or can we overcome the imbalances as we advance without halting the present flow of progress? 3) What type of society can, then, and which shall survive?

Darwin's hypothesis of natural selection contends that the organisms best adapted to the environment survive; variations favorable to adaptation tend to be preserved, those unfavorable to adaptation tend to be destroyed. Who Shall Survive? is a question which has been asked thus far from the point of view of the biologist. We are raising this question again, but it is from the point of view of the sociologist, more precisely, that of the sociometrist. Which are the "social" laws of natural selection? Who shall survive? The question could be asked only in a society which is, as sociometry has proven with overwhelming evidence, satisfied with wasting a very considerable part of its human element. In contrast, it would lose meaning in a sociometric society where no one would be cast out and all be given an opportunity to participate to the best of their abilities, in other words, to survive.

For the gross manifestations of natural selection of the species which Darwin described, direct evidence is impossible or difficult to obtain, whereas by means of sociometric methods we are able to gain direct evidence as to how natural selection takes place continuously in the very society of which we are a part, every second, in millions of places. Individuals and groups are pushed out from the anchorages in social aggregates to which they belong, from material resources which they need, from love and reproduction, from jobs and homes. It is in billions of small groups, therefore, in which the process of natural, social selection comes to the awareness of the sociometrist. It is in sociograms that these minute processes are brought to visibliity. How the microscopic social laws which we have discovered may correlate with the gross evolutionary laws of the biologist is secondary at this point. However, one cannot help but think that if these minute social forces are given long and continuous range of influence into the remote recesses of the past and future, the gross developments which evolutionary theory postulates might result from them.

Therefore, it is important to know whether the construction of a community is possible in which each of it's members is to the utmost degree a free agent in the making of the collectives of which he is a part and in which the different groups of which it consists are so organized and fitted to each other that an enduring and harmonious commonwealth is the result. But when we began to let loose each individual and each group against one another, each in full pursuit of his happiness, each striving to see his particular wishes or the wishes of his group fulfilled, then we recognize the origin of different psychological currents which pervade the population of the community and divide it into different sections. In the face of the clash of the spontaneous forces we reconsidered the problem of freedom.

Looking for a solution we turned our mind back to a similar dilemma in which we found ourselves when we attempted years ago to adjust men's mental and nervous equipment to impromptu situations. The occasion was the organization of play groups to whose participants nothing but spontaneous expression was permitted. However brilliant the spontaneous, creative ability of an individual appeared as long as he acted alone, as soon as he had to act together with a group of individuals who had to release also only spontaneous expression the product often lacked in unity and harmony. In the face of this difficulty we re-

sed to turn back to the dogmatic patterns in play. We decided to stick by all eans to the *principle of spontaneity* for the individuals participating in the oup training. To meet it we devised a technique to support individuals in the tempt at spontaneous group production.

When we faced a community we realized the similarity of the problem. We d only to substitute for the play groups social groups. As in the one case we nted to keep the principle of spontaneity pure, in this case we wanted by means to keep the principle of freedom, for the individual and for the collec-e, as far as possible unrestrained and uncensored; and just as in the first in-nce every participant takes direct part in the authorship, direction, and per-rmance of the production, in the second instance every individual is permitted impress his intentions upon every activity of which he is a part. And in the e of the contradicting and combating psychological currents, which are the re powerful and complicated the larger the populations are, again we did not n back to dogmatic, out-lived forms. We sought a *"technique of freedom,"* a hnique of balancing the spontaneous social forces to the greatest possible har-ny and unity of all.