THE MANY FACES OF CHANGE

Explorations in the Theory of Social Change

by

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"When men live at all,
they live in their imagination."
— ROBERT E. PARK

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To
My Friends and Colleagues
of the Nebraska days
JOYCE O. HERTZLER,
Distinguished Social Theorist
and
JAMES M. REINHARDT,
Wise and Humane Criminologist

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be developed, the basic reference is the organization of responses in some desired direction. The behavioral utility of the institutional contexts of social life was not brought into question; this is in fact a universal of behavioral theory.

But power as a desideratum of theory is also a desideratum of policy. For "power" or "control" underlines an asymmetry of human conditions, a differential capacity of human beings to choose and thus to act. The problem of choice and action is a problem of values —of the norms of the behaviors of choice and action. Western thought has been presented with two polar normative options—the *Platonic* theory of a just and therefore good society in which justice is the bond between man and his "self" ("to each his own"), and an *Aristotelian* theory in which justice is the bond between a man and his society ("for each society its own"). Thus, in an individualistic normative theory the *self* shapes the frame of acceptance—and rejection; in collectivistic or societal normation, the *society* shapes the frame of expectations. It is possible to move from either polar extreme toward the middle ground, in which 1) self acceptancces are a function of collective demands, and 2) societal expectations are function of self capacities to accept. At any point along this continuum of behavioral prescriptions and proscriptions social theorists have formulated their generalizations of behavioral development and uniformity, with implicit ideological flags heralding at each point desired behaviors of the "socialized" human being. Institutional theory has always carried a heavy luggage of ethicizing comment; there has seldom been any serious logicizing difficulty in acclaiming any given institutional behavior as just, good, true or even beautiful. The institutional contexts of social behavior seem always to have provided ultimately some sufficient grounds for the tasks of legitimacy. The angry and hostile rejection of institutional behavior clothes itself in the garments of justice with the same facility with which the stirring pleas for its acceptance are made. The crucial question is not the fact of a behavioral bond but of the value-orientation of the bond. For institutional behavior is inherently normative: in this sense, therefore, one can assert that although there may often be alienation, there is seldom anomie. The possibility rests upon the premise of non-institutional contexts of behavior, a situation that may exist in some extreme forms of pschopathy but never in any form of sociopathy: institutional contexts are there, even if only ambiguous or ambivalent or diffused.

Each institutional system organizes its own pattern of expectations and acceptances. Moreover, each stylized role within the institutional

system must of necessity evolve and crystallize its own particular set of norms. In both instances conflictive tensions arising from the loyalties to self and non-self must be stipulated as an inherent property of the system and of its differentiated roles. The possibilities for both rationalizing (in the functional sense) and ethicizing (in the normative sense) the institutional system or the institutional roles as intrinsically meritorious and as instrumentally good, or relevant and just beyond the behavioral desiderata of the institutional system or role are endless. This may be done in terms of expectations beyond the self, the system or the role, and it may just as easily be accomplished in terms of the possibilities or limitations of private acceptances. In either direction the rationalizing or ethicizing activity seems to be a function of scope, such that the wider or even more distant the scope the more cogent the appeal. This suggests why trans-institutional system norms, or trans-cultural norms, can be even more satisfying than institutional system norms themselves. Cogency is a function of the span of appeal, which is why cosmological norms have historically maintained such behavioral superiority over those of a particular network, why network norms tend to dominate system norms, and system norms to dominate role norms. Indeed, such wide-scoped appeals develop into eschatons of reality, which, codified and internalized, as in religious or economic or political ideology, become almost impregnable and invariably zealous. They become the environment of "the true believer," that institutional protagonist whose virtues are variously intoned as heroic, messianic, filial or even professional. Integrity is ultimately, in this ideological strait-lacing of behavior, an institutional word, a condition which, however, is vigorously assailed by the current camps of existentialists.

e. *The Instrumental Dimension.*—It was the industrial revolution, that memorable synechdoche of institutional transformation, which made modern man reflectively and systematically aware of the technological component of institutional existence. Yet, as archaeologists have shown and historians have testified, institutional behavior has never been separated from the technics and techniques and technology of the meaningful object. Whether as an extension of his action-system, as a vehicle of his will, or as an object of his pleasure or as the image of his universe, the tool as recorder of information and the machine as prober of his curiosity and thrust have been an intimate part of all man's institutional systems, of religion no less than industry. Both a residuum of familiarity and as a vehicle of novelty, instrumentation has always been a "member" of the institu-

tional "family." Institutional alienation can bring instrumental alienation, just as instrumental alienation (as in Pre-Raphaelite "hatred of the machine") can serve as a symbol of, or convenient occasion for, rejection of the institution.

The institutional network of every human society has its own quantum of instrumentations belonging to the network of a given time and place. But institutional systems within a network evolve or borrow instrumentation systems both congruous with and in contradiction of the institutional network: for example, one might cite the exploitation of science-technology by business and industry in the nineteenth century in almost ideological defiance of the entire institutional network of a nineteenth century society. A recent case in point is the rapid acceptance of industrial instrumentation systems by under-developed cultures. This latter may be designated as an instance of social development by institutional imbalance, and much debate still goes on as to whether or not this is in actuality the only way in which deliberate social change can occur. It should be noted that even in more mature industrial cultures planning is seldom, if at all, the art of simultaneous comprehensive options.

Institutional theorists have on occasion been much preoccupied with what may be termed the institutional psychology of instrumentation. This concern has taken many forms. Sometimes emphasis is placed on the tropological character of the tool, as suggested in the phrases "Stone Age Man," "the Cross," "The Age of Automation," "The Industrial Revolution." Sometimes institutional theorists have been impressed with the rhetoric of the machine: the revolver was called the great equalizer; armanents are hailed as weapons of peace. Sometimes instrumentation has been viewed esthetically, as in the high fashion of this year's automobiles, or the elegance of a Moroccan water-clock. Sometimes it is seen as the absolute existential condition for an institution, as in home ownership for the family, laboratories for science, church buildings for religion, factories for industry. Sometimes it is seen, as in the language of biological metaphor, as having a symbiotic relationship with science (as in the case of the tandem accelerator) or with religion (as in the crucifix or rosary) or crime detection (as in finger-printing) or medicine (as in electric shock therapy). Sometimes it is spurned as the enemy of taste, the death of humanism, the evil genius of art, the source of psychic perturbation in modern man. It has been acclaimed with metaphysical reverence as the source of all social change, the cause of cultural lag, and the metaphoric model for economies, polities, personalities, and even the cosmos. It has been described as the sur-

render of Renaissance humanism to a deterministic and collectivistic rationalism. And, with enthusiastic anthropomorphism, it has been said to have an *élan vital* of its own, breeding its own kind, generating its own variations,—a genetic process denoted as immanent, irreversible and exponential.

Instrumentation, so empirically obvious for the continuation and welfare of an institutional network or system, has, in warfare or invidious national rivalry or installment credit, consumed an unconscionable proportion of the economic surplus of a given society: the path to institutional hell has been paved by budgetary over-commitments to instrumentation, it is said. Institutional instrumentation has unquestionably fathered the growing family of accommodaive accounting systems without which a modern industrial economy could not operate; indeed, one might easily observe that the symbolic trans-substantiation of institutional reality at the hands of corporate or public accounting systems matches or even outshines in elegance, casuistry and conceptual elasticity any comparable feats in the history of theology or philosophy. Moreover, so intimate is instrumentation with the institution that one may argue that possession of the instrumentation is possession of he institution: to this palace guard revolutions testify, as does national sovereignty theory.

f. *The Communication Dimension.*—Like all human behavioral phenomena, institutions in point of daily fact exist only in and through the actions and transactions of communication. Human relations are symbol-mediated, symbol-clothed, symbol-charged. The "social world" is intrinsically a psycho-social phenomenon: the human being in his own self-world no less than in his inter-personal world and indeed in the range of his interactions with physical environment lives in a world of human creation, that of meanings. Meanings cover a wide span of overtness and covertness, of degree of externalization and internalization, of object orientation, of personal reference, of historic depth, of empirical and analytic structure. It is the existence of these various and variable symbolic structures which makes possible the communicative act, the learning behavior, the transactional patterns. Learning the infra-structure of the symbol system as laid down in the language of the society is the accelerator not only of linguistic mastery but of cultural mastery. Socialization describes—and evaluates—the growing mastery of the culture system as a symbolic structure; without it one is an alien in an uncodified environment.

Just as human social life is in fact patterned communicative behavior, so likewise communication is patterned symbolic behavior,

occurring and formed in symbolic structures,—language, etiquette and ethics, myths and rituals, codes and functions, roles and satuses, and so on. The structuralization of symbolic behavior ranges from the proto-formed (Mead's "incipient act"), through the informal to the formalized modes: from the significant impulse to the significant mathematical or logical system. Moreover, just as institutional systems are linked at great knotting points or nodes by interdependent functions, so likewise the symbol structures of a society are networked by rules and usages of its symbol structures which meet and are articulated at great nodes of institutionalized meanings,—those memorialized in religion, government, education, the sciences, and so on. Moreover, just as a society or institutional network must have a quantum of these master nodalities of significance, so likewise a given institutional system must have its integrative nodalities of behavioral significance. Although each behavioral sector of an institution has its own specialized symbols, the institutional system itself has its regnant symbols and symbol structures performing guidance, informational, regulative, decisional and other functions for the system.

In any given society there occur institutional crystallizations of the symbolic structures of that society. Crystallization takes the form, follows the functional imperatives, and serves the instrumental and expressive demands of the institutional system; each such crystallization takes on an individual institutional shape, differentiated from that of any other institution. Moreover, crystallization will reflect the developmental maturity of the institution: the older the institution the more formalized and codified its symbolic crystallization. Science appears at first to be an exception—until one recalls that science as a young institution has experienced a pronounced developmental acceleration precisely because it is in fact a structuralization of change itself.

Again: in any institutional crystallization of symbolic structures there is a dichotomous or two-valued orientation: a covert pattern of meanings for insiders, a code of meanings for outsiders, a code that invariably filters out some communicable content of the institutional system. Whatever other function it may have, an institutional crystallization of its symbol structures is also a security system. Moreover, these symbol structures may be arranged along a gradient of primariness to secondariness: those which define, express, and mediate primary-expressive relations as against secondary-instrumental relations. Further, institutional crystallizations of symbol structures are capable of many strategies of interpretation. They may be seen