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The Production and Reproduction of Social Life

Order, power, conflict: Durkheim and Parsons

Durkheim's treatment of the 'externality' of social facts, and the 'constraint' which they exert over actors' conduct, was an attempt to provide a theory of the relation between action and the properties of social collectivities. When he first introduced the notions of externality and constraint, in *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim failed to separate out the general ontological sense in which the physical world has an existence independent of the knowing subject, and may causally influence his or her conduct, from the constraining properties of social organization. Later, however, he came to clarify the assumption, in fact already strongly developed even in his very first writings, that social phenomena are, in their very essence, *moral* phenomena. 'Utilitarian' sanctions, which influence human conduct in a 'mechanical' way, are distinguished from moral sanctions, whose content is specific to the moral universe to which they relate (the *conscience collective*); he came to hold that attachment to moral ideals is not merely constraining but is the very *source* of purposive conduct. In this latter aspect, a threefold connection is drawn: *social–moral–purposive*. This is the key to Durkheimian sociology, although it remains confused with a tendency to see some purposes as 'egocentric', based upon organic impulses, and as resistant to incorporation within the social universe of moral imperatives.[1]

Yet the view that purposes can be treated as 'introjected values' is by no means unique to Durkheim's writings; on the contrary, it appears in very many different places, and often in the works of those whose views are apparently quite distinct from, and indeed directly opposed to, those of Durkheim. The core axioms involved may be expressed as follows. The social world is differentiated from the world of nature essentially because of its moral ('normative') character. This is a very radical disjunction, because moral imperatives stand in no relation of symmetry to those of nature, and can hence in no way be derived from them; 'action', it is then declared, may be regarded as conduct which is oriented towards norms or conventions. This theorem can then lead in divergent directions, depending upon whether the analysis concentrates upon actors' purposes or motives, or whether the emphasis is placed, as by Durkheim, upon norms themselves as properties of collectivities. The post-Wittgensteinian philosophers have inevitably followed the first of these routes, approaching the study of purposive conduct via the assimilation of 'meaningful' with 'rule-governed' behaviour, leaving unexplained the origins of the rules to which they refer (as well as ignoring their character as *sanctioned*). The same course has been followed by numerous other recent writers who, although they are not themselves philosophers, have been influenced by the views of the professed followers of Wittgenstein. Thus in one such text we are told: 'Motives [by which the author means, in my terminology, "purposes"] are a way for an observer to assign relevance to behaviour in order that it may be recognized as another instance of *normatively ordered action*', or again: 'motive is a rule which depicts the social character of the act itself'.[2]

I have already indicated some of the flaws inherent in this sort of reasoning, and it is appropriate at this point to try to connect these up with the weaknesses involved in the one which is nominally its contrary: that is, that proposed by Durkheim – and followed in important respects more latterly by Parsons. Parsons's indebtedness to Durkheim in the formulation of his 'action frame of reference' is explicit and acknowledged. The main theme of *The Structure of Social Action* is that of an imminent convergence of thought between Alfred Marshall, Pareto,

Durkheim and Weber. Parsons discerns a parallel between Weber's treatment of action and Durkheim's concern with (internalized) moral obligation, which he then applies to provide a general resolution of 'Hobbes' problem of order'. The manner in which Parsons poses and seeks to resolve the Hobbesian problem' has two major sets of consequences whose implications I wish to discuss, involving: (1) the thesis that 'voluntarism' can be incorporated into social theory through the axiom that 'values' form both the motivational components of action and the core elements of the *consensus universel* which is the condition of social stability; (2) the assumption that conflict of interest in social life centres upon the relation between the 'individual' (abstract actor) and 'society' (global moral community) – a beginning-point which leads, as it did in Durkheim, straight to the view that dissent (crime, rebellion, revolution) is to be conceptualized as 'deviance', seen as lack of motivational commitment to consensual norms.

'Voluntarism'

Parsons's early work was directed towards reconciling the 'voluntarism' supposedly inherent in the methodological approach of Weber (and, from a different angle, foreshadowed in Pareto) with the idea of the functional exigency of moral consensus.[3] The notion of 'value', as it is represented in Parsons's writings, plays a key part in the 'action frame of reference' because it is the basic concept linking the need-dispositions of personality (introjected values) and (via normative role-expectations on the level of the social system) cultural consensus. 'A concrete action system', Parsons says, 'is an integrated structure of action elements in relation to a situation. *This means essentially integration of motivational and cultural or symbolic elements*, brought together in a certain kind of ordered system.'[4]

Once the significance of this idea is appreciated, it is not difficult to see why, as some have pointed out, the 'voluntarism' which appears prominent in Parsons's early work, *The Structure of Social Action*, seems to disappear from his mature position as described in *The Social System* and subsequent writings. As

Parsons represents it in the first work, voluntarism is counter-posed to 'positivism', the latter referring to nineteenth-century forms of social theory which sought to discard all reference to the acting subject as a moral actor, the former to those in which the acting subject is placed in the forefront. The use of the term 'voluntarism' suggests that Parsons wished to try to build into his own approach a conception of the actor as a creative, innovative agent. For Parsons the very same values that compose the *consensus universel*, as 'introjected' by actors, are the motiv-ating elements of personality. If these are the 'same' values, however, what leverage can there possibly be for the creative character of human action as nominally presupposed by the term 'voluntarism'? Parsons interprets the latter concept as referring simply to 'elements of a normative character';[5] *the 'freedom of the acting subject' then becomes reduced – and very clearly so in Parsons's mature theory – to the need-dispositions of personality.* In the 'action frame of reference', 'action' itself enters the picture only within the context of an emphasis that sociological accounts of conduct need to be complemented with psycho-logical accounts of 'the mechanisms of personality'. The system is a deterministic one.[6] Just as there is no room here for the creative capacity of the subject on the level of the actor, so there is a major source of difficulty in explaining the origins of transformations of institutionalized value-standards themselves – a problem which Parsons's system of theory (and that of Durkheim) shares with Winch's otherwise very different views about the philosophy of action, since both have to treat value-standards ('rules') as givens.

The individual in society

Parsons's resolution of the problem of order does of course recognize the existence of tensions or conflicts in social life. These derive from three possible sets of circumstances, each of which in some sense centres upon the notion of *anomie* – which is as integral to Parsons's thinking as it was to Durkheim's. One is the absence of 'binding value-standards' in some sphere of social life; the second is a lack of 'articulation', as Parsons puts it,

between actors' need-dispositions and a given 'value-orientation pattern'; the third is where the 'conditional' elements of action, as perceived by an actor, are mistakenly specified. It has been said often enough that Parsons's theoretical scheme offers no place for interest-conflicts. In fact his very starting-point is the existence of interest-conflict, since the theorem of the integration of purposes and values is the main basis of his proposed resolution of 'Hobbes' problem of order', defined precisely in terms of the reconciliation of diverse and divergent interests. I have argued elsewhere that the 'Hobbesian problem' does not have the significance in the history of social thought which Parsons has claimed for it,[7] but it is important here to examine its analytical weaknesses. The point is not that Parsons's system (and that of Durkheim) allows no role to interest-conflict, but that it offers a specific, and flawed, theory of it, according to which clash of interests exists in so far as, and only in so far as, a social order fails approximately to match the purposes of the various members of a collectivity with the integration of value-standards into an internally symmetrical consensus. 'Conflict of interest', in this conception, never becomes anything more than a clash between the purposes of individual actors and the 'interests' of the collectivity. In such a perspective, power cannot become treated as a problematic component of divergent group interests embodied in social action, since the meshing of interests is treated first and foremost as a question of the relation between 'the individual' and 'society'.

Durkheim's views in this respect are more complex than those embodied in *The Social System* in at least one important way. Durkheim held that there are two primary modes in which the interests of actors may lead them to diverge from the moral imperatives of the *conscience collective*, although he did not manage fully to clarify the relation between these in his thought. One is based upon the role of organically given, egocentric impulses, which are conceived to be in constant tension with the moral demands of society, or the socialized segment of the dualistic personality of the actor. The other is the familiar scheme of the anomic lack of conjunction of actors' purposes with established moral norms. Durkheim's treatment of anomie offers some recognition of interest-conflict in so far as anomic 'deregulation'

derives from a situation in which actors have definite aspirations which are not 'realizable' (an avenue later developed by Merton), rather than from a moral vacuum, an absence of moral norms which are binding upon actions.[8] But this possibility, which could have been linked to the analysis of what Durkheim referred to as the 'forced division of labour', and thereby to the analysis of class conflict, remained largely unexplored in Durkheim's writings, and disappears from view in Parsons's theoretical scheme altogether, since Parsons defines anomie as 'the polar antithesis of full institutionalization' or 'the complete breakdown of normative order'. Although Parsons's interpretation of the drift of Durkheim's thought offered in *The Structure of Social Action* is to my mind definitely a misleading one,[9] the above emphasis undoubtedly ties together the work of Durkheim and Parsons, thereby unifying one dominant tradition in sociology. The 'problem of order', from this angle, depends upon the centrality of a tension which is conceived to exist between 'egoism' and 'altruism': a problem of reconciling the sectional interests of individual actors with social morality, the *conscience collective* or 'common value system'. Given such an orientation to social theory, it is impossible satisfactorily to analyse the interests which intervene between the actions of individuals and the overall global community, the conflicts that are predicated upon these, and the power alignments with which they are interlaced.

The characteristic interpretation of 'order' as moral consensus appears very early in Parsons's work, and is attributed to Weber as well as Durkheim. Thus in commenting on his translation of Weber's discussion of legitimate order (*Ordnung*) Parsons remarks, 'it is clear that by "order" Weber here means a *normative* system. The pattern for the concept of "order" is not, as in the law of gravitation, the "order of nature".'[10] Whether Weber meant this or not, the 'problem of order' for Parsons is certainly one of normative regulation, a problem of *control*. The puzzle to which Parsons's formulations are offered as a solution is not equivalent in generality to Simmel's famous query: 'How is society possible?', which retains its significance if Parsons's presentation of the 'problem of order' is abandoned, as I hold it must be. If the term 'order' is to be used, I think, it should be in the

sense which, in Parsons's comments on Weber mentioned above, it is implied is inappropriate to social science – as a loose synonym for 'pattern' or the antithesis of 'chaos'.

Order, power, conflict: Marx

In looking for an alternative to this type of theory, one tends to turn towards Marxism, with its apparently ubiquitous stress upon process, conflict and change. Two forms of dialectical relation in the movement of history may be distinguished in Marx's writings. One is a dialectic between humanity and nature; the other is a dialectic of classes. Both are linked to the transformation of history and culture. Human beings, unlike the lower animals, are not able to exist in a state of mere adaptation to the material world. The fact that the former do not possess an in-built apparatus of instinctual responses forces them into a creative interplay with their surroundings, such that they must seek to master their environment rather than simply adjust to it as a given; thus human beings change themselves through changing the world around them in a continual and reciprocal process. But this general 'philosophical anthropology' (which was not original to Marx and, in the form in which it was stated in the early writings in particular, does little more than to interject the 'Feuerbachian inversion' into Hegel's scheme) remains latent in Marx's subsequent works (with the partial exception of the *Grundrisse*, in which the reworking of these ideas is still fragmentary). Consequently there is little to be found in Marx in the way of a systematic analysis or elaboration of the basic notion of *Praxis*. We find statements like 'Consciousness is . . . from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all' and, more specifically, 'Language is as old as consciousness, language *is* practical consciousness that exists also for other men . . . language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men.'[11] Rather than exploring the implications of such propositions, Marx was principally interested in moving directly to the task of the historical interpretation of the development of particular types of society via the concepts of modes of production, division of

labour, private property and classes, concentrating of course upon the critique of political economy and the optative transformation of capitalism by socialism.

Marx's discussions of material interest, conflict and power were worked out in this context, and reflect some of the ambiguities in the intellectual resources upon which they drew. It is clear enough that, within the capitalist order, the two major classes, capital and wage-labour, have divergent interests (both in the narrow sense of the appropriation of economic returns and in the more profound sense in which the interests of the working class promote the incipient socialization of labour, clashing with the entrenched defence of private property on the part of the dominant class); that these entail that class conflict, latent or manifest, is endemic in capitalist society; and that this condition of antagonism is more or less directly controlled or stabilized through the agency of the political power of the state. The transcendence of capitalism, however, marks the transcendence of classes, of their conflicts of interest, and of 'political power' itself. In this later regard, one can trace without difficulty the residual influence of Saint-Simon's doctrine, the idea that the administration of human beings by others will give way to the administration of humans over things. Marx's notion of the transcendence of the state is certainly vastly more sophisticated than that, as is evident in his remarks in his early critiques of Hegel, and his later comments on the Commune and the Gotha Programme. But classes, class interests, class conflict and political power are for Marx in a basic sense contingent upon the existence of a given type of society (class society), and since he rarely discusses 'interests', 'conflict' and 'power' outside of the context of classes, how far these concepts relate to socialist society is left obscure. *Class* interests and *class* conflicts may disappear in socialist society, but what happens to the interest divisions and conflicts which are not specifically linked to classes? There are statements in Marx's early writings which could be read as indicating that the arrival of communism signals the end of all forms of division of interest. We must surely presume that Marx did not hold such a view; but the absence of anything more than scattered hints about such matters makes it impossible to say much of a concrete sort about them. Now it may

be pointed out that Marx refused to go into any detail about the society of the future on the grounds that such speculation degenerates into utopian socialism, since it is not possible to foresee the form of social organization that will characterize a society based on very different principles to the existing ones; and similarly it may perhaps be argued that concepts developed within one type of society – capitalism – would not be appropriate to the analysis of another – socialism. But these arguments do not detract from the main point: that the only cogent analyses of conflict and power in Marx link these specifically with class interests. From this aspect, Marx's writings do not provide an elaborated alternative to those main traditions of social thought whose 'philosophical anthropology' is centred upon the concepts of value, norm or convention.

What follows relies upon the fundamental idea of *the production and reproduction of social life*, which certainly appears consistent with the Marxian ontology of *Praxis*. In Marx's words: 'As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce.'[12] But 'production' has to be understood in a very broad sense, and in order to detail its implications we have to go well beyond what is immediately available in Marx's works.

The production or constitution of society is a skilled accomplishment of its members, but one that does not take place under conditions that are either wholly intended or wholly comprehended by them. The key to understanding social order – in the most general sense of that term which I have distinguished above – is not the 'internalization of values', but the shifting relations between the production and *reproduction* of social life by its constituent actors. *All reproduction is necessarily production,* however: and the seed of change is there in every act which contributes towards the reproduction of any 'ordered' form of social life. The process of reproduction begins with and depends upon the reproduction of the material circumstances of human existence: that is, the re-procreation of the species and the transformation of nature. Human beings, as Marx says, produce 'freely' in interchange with nature, in the paradoxical sense that

they are *forced* actively to transform the material world in order to survive in it, since they lack an apparatus of instincts which would provide for a more mechanical adaptation to their material environment. But what above all distinguishes humans from the animals is that the former are able reflexively to 'programme' their environment, thereby monitoring their own place in it; this is made possible only by language, which is first and foremost the *medium of human practical activities.*

What are, analytically, the main conditions relevant to the reproduction of structures of interaction? These can be discussed as being of the following kinds: the constituting skills of social actors; the rationalization of these skills as forms of agency; the unexplicated features of settings of interaction that promote and permit the exercise of such capacities, which can be analysed in terms of *elements of motivation*, and what I shall call the *duality of structure.*

I shall develop the argument in the following sections of this chapter with reference to language, not because it is helpful to regard social life as some sort of language, information system or whatever, but because language, as a social form itself, exemplifies some aspects – and only some aspects – of social life as a whole. Language may be studied from at least three aspects of its production and reproduction, each of which is characteristic of the production and reproduction of society more generally. Language is 'mastered' and 'spoken' by actors; it is employed as a medium of communication between them; and it has structural properties which are in some sense constituted by the speech of a 'language community' or collectivity. From the aspect of its production as a series of speech acts by an individual speaker, language is (1) a skill, or very complex set of skills, that is possessed by each person who 'knows' the language; (2) used to 'make sense', literally, as a creative art of an active subject; (3) something which is *done*, accomplished, by the speaker, but not in full cognizance of how he or she does it. That is to say, the individual is likely to be able to offer only a fragmentary account of what skills are exercised, or of how they are exercised.

From its aspect as a *medium of communication in interaction*, language involves the use of 'interpretative schemes' to make sense not only of what others say, but of what they *mean*; the

constitution of 'sense' as an *intersubjective* accomplishment of mutual understanding in an ongoing exchange; and the use of contextual cues, as properties of the setting, as an integral part of the constitution and comprehension of meaning. Considered as a *structure*, language is not 'possessed' by any particular speaker, but can be conceptualized only as characteristic of a community of speakers; it can be conceived of as an abstract set of rules which are not mechanically applied, but are employed in a generative mode by speakers who are members of the language community. Social life, I shall wish to say, then, may be treated as a set of *reproduced practices*. Following the threefold approach distinguished above, social practices may be studied, first, from the point of view of their constitution as a series of *acts*, 'brought off' by actors; second, as constituting forms of *interaction*, involving the communication of meaning; and third, as constituting *structures* which pertain to 'collectivities' or 'social communities'.

The production of communication as 'meaningful'

The production of interaction has three fundamental elements: its constitution as 'meaningful'; its constitution as a moral order; and its constitution as the operation of relations of power. I shall still for the moment defer consideration of the latter two, but only because they are so important as to warrant detailed treatment, and in the end these elements have to be reunited, since though they may be separated analytically, in social life itself they are subtly yet tightly interwoven.

The production of interaction as meaningful depends first of all upon mutuality of 'uptake' (Austin) in communicative intent, in which language is the primary but certainly not the only medium. In all interaction there is a constant interest in, and ability to disclose, modes of understanding of the conduct of the other apart from uptake of communicative intent – for example, in the understanding of motives. The subtleties of the everyday production of interaction can easily appear as merely peripheral nuisances if idealized models of dialogue as 'perfect mutual understandings' are treated as anything more than a possible world of philosophy only. Merleau-Ponty says: 'The will

to speak is one and the same as the will to be understood.'[13] But whereas this presumably applies to itself as a statement of the philosopher, in everyday situations of interaction the will to speak is also sometimes the will to baffle, puzzle, deceive, be misunderstood.

It is essential to any adequate analysis of interaction as a product of the constituting skills of actors to recognize that its 'meaningfulness' is actively and continually negotiated, not merely the programmed communication of already established meanings: this, I take it, is the substance of Habermas's differentiation of 'linguistic' from 'communicative competence'. Interaction, as I have already emphasized, is temporally and spatially situated. But this is no more than an uninteresting truism if we do not see that it is typically used or *drawn upon* by actors in the production of interaction. Anticipations of the responses of others mediate the activity of each actor at any one moment in time, and what has gone before is subject to revision in the light of subsequent experience. In this way, as Gadamer emphasizes, practical social life displays ontologically the characteristics of the 'hermeneutic circle'. 'Context-dependence', in the various ways in which this term can be interpreted, is aptly regarded as integral to the production of meaning in interaction, not as just an embarrassment to formal analysis.

In relation to theories of definite descriptions, philosophers have frequently discussed the ambiguity of such sentences as 'A wants to marry someone of whom her parents disapprove.' But it is important to see that such discussions can become wholly misleading if set up as attempts to isolate an abstract logical structure from the communication of meaning in interaction. Here 'ambiguity' is ambiguity-in-context, and must definitely not be confused with the senses which a given word or sentence may have in circumstances other than those in which it is uttered by a particular speaker at a particular time. The sentence mentioned above is probably not ambiguous, for example, if uttered in the course of a conversation in which the individual figuring in the marriage plans of A has already been referred to; or alternatively if the course of such a conversation has made it clear to the participants that A was set on choosing a spouse who would prove objectionable to her parents, although having no

one in particular in mind as yet. On the other hand, a statement which out of context might appear quite unambiguous, such as 'A is looking forward to getting married tomorrow', may in fact be ambiguous if, for example, uttered with a sufficient hint of sarcasm for a listener to be unsure whether or not the speaker 'means what he or she says'. Humour, irony and sarcasm all in some part depend upon such open possibilities of discourse, as recognized elements of the skills whereby interaction is constituted as meaningful.[14]

While such skills obviously involve 'knowledge' that is in principle capable of being expressed in propositional form, their saturation by temporal and spatial aspects of the context of communication is evidently not to be dealt with solely in these terms. Take an example discussed by Ziff. It is sometimes held by linguists that the meaning of a sentence such as 'The pen on the desk is made of gold', when used in an everyday context of communication, could be expressed in a formal language as a series of statements, known implicitly by the participants, describing 'relevant' contextual characteristics.[15] Thus the exact referent could be indicated by substituting for 'the pen on the desk', 'the only pen on the desk in the front room of number 10 Downing Street at 9.00 a.m. on the morning of 29 June 1992'. But as Ziff points out, such a sentence does not make explicit what was known to the participants in the encounter within which the utterance was made and understood, or used by them to produce the mutual understanding of the sentence. A hearer may be quite able to understand what was said, and the referent of the phrase, without being aware of any of the additional elements brought into the longer sentence at all. Moreover, it would be mistaken to suppose that, were everyday communication to be phrased in terms of sentences such as the longer one, there would be an increase in precision or a loss of ambiguity. The first sentence, uttered in a specific context, is neither imprecise nor ambiguous, whereas the use of the longer might bring about more vagueness and uncertainty, since it would extend the range of what has to be 'known' in common to accomplish the communication of meaning.

The use of reference to physical aspects of context is no doubt fundamental to the sustaining of an intersubjectively 'agreed

upon' world within which most forms of day-to-day interaction occur. But 'awareness of an immediate sensory environment', as an element utilized in the production of interaction, cannot be radically severed from a backdrop of mutual knowledge drawn upon to create and sustain encounters, since the former is categorized and 'interpreted' in the light of the latter. I use the term 'mutual knowledge' to refer generically to taken-for-granted 'knowledge' which actors assume others possess, if they are 'competent' members of society, and which is drawn upon to sustain communication in interaction. This includes 'tacit knowledge', in Polanyi's sense; mutual knowledge is 'configurative' in character.[16] Even the most cursory verbal interchange presupposes, and draws upon, a diffuse stock of knowledge in the uptake of communicative intent. One person says to another: 'Do you want a game of tennis?', to which a second replies, 'I have work to do.' What is the connection between question and answer?[17] To grasp what has been said, 'by implication', it is necessary to know not merely what 'game' and 'work' mean as lexical items, but other much less easily formulated elements of knowledge of social practices which make the second utterance a (potentially) *appropriate* answer to the first. If the reply is not a particularly quizzical response, it is because it is mutually 'known' that work generally takes precedence over play when they conflict in the allocation of a person's time, or something of the sort. How far the questioner would 'let the response pass' as 'adequate' would of course depend upon a variety of circumstances particular to the situation in which the enquiry was made.

Mutual knowledge is applied in the form of *interpretative schemes* whereby contexts of communication are created and sustained in interaction. Such interpretative schemes ('typifications') can be regarded analytically as a series of generative rules for the uptake of the illocutionary force of utterances. Mutual knowledge is 'background knowledge' in the sense that it is taken for granted, and mostly remains unarticulated; on the other hand, it is not part of the 'background' in the sense that it is constantly actualized, displayed and modified by members of society in the course of their interaction. Taken-for-granted knowledge, in other words, is never fully taken for granted, and

the relevance of some particular element to an encounter may have to be 'demonstrated', and sometimes fought for, by the actor; it is not appropriated ready-made by actors, but is produced and reproduced anew by them as part of the continuity of their lives.

Moral orders of interaction

The moral elements of interaction connect in an integral way with its constitution both as meaningful and as a set of relations of power. Each of these connections must be regarded as equally basic. Norms figure in an important way in the writings of both those who have taken a strongly naturalistic stance in social theory (especially Durkheim) and those who have been their most fervent critics. Although Durkheim came to elaborate his original views in his later works, he nevertheless always tended to stress the significance of norms as *constraining* or obligating: to be approached through the notion of *sanctions*. Schutz, Winch and others, on the other hand, have been more preoccupied with the 'conferring' or 'enabling' qualities of norms. I wish to argue that all norms are both *constraining* and *enabling*. I propose also to distinguish between 'norms' and 'rules', which are casually used as synonymous by most post-Wittgensteinian philosophers; normative or moral rules I shall treat as a sub-category of the more all-inclusive notion of 'rule', which I shall wish to connect with that of 'structure'.

The constitution of interaction as a moral order may be understood as the actualization of *rights* and the enactment of *obligations*. There is a logical symmetry between these which, however, can be factually broken. That is to say, what is a right of one participant in an encounter appears as an obligation of another to respond in an 'appropriate' fashion, and vice versa; but this tie can be severed if an obligation is not acknowledged or honoured, and no sanction can effectively be brought to bear. Thus, in the production of interaction, all normative elements have to be treated as a series of *claims* whose realization is contingent upon the successful actualization of obligations through the medium of the responses of other participants. Normative sanctions are thus essentially different (as Durkheim recognized)

from those connected with the transgression of technical or utilitarian prescriptions, which involve what von Wright calls 'anankastic propositions'.[18] In prescriptions such as 'avoid drinking contaminated water', the sanction that is involved (the risk of being poisoned) follows 'mechanically' from the execution of the act: it depends upon causal relations that have the form of natural events.

In making this distinction, however, Durkheim neglected a vital sense in which norms may be approached in a 'utilitarian' fashion by participants in the production of interaction, and which must be conceptually related to the contingent character of the realization of normative claims. This is that a normative claim may be acknowledged as binding, not because an actor to whom it applies as an obligation accepts that obligation as a moral commitment, but because she or he anticipates, and wants to avoid, the sanctions which will be applied in the case of her or his non-compliance. In relation to the pursuance of her or his interests, therefore, an actor may approach moral claims in exactly the same way as she or he does technical prescriptions; in each case the individual may also 'calculate the risks' involved in a particular act in terms of the probability of escaping sanction. It is an elementary mistake to suppose that the enactment of a moral obligation necessarily implies a moral commitment to it.

Since the sanctions which follow the transgression of moral claims do not operate with the mechanical inevitability of events in nature, but involve the reactions of others, there is typically some 'free space' for the transgressor, if identified as such, to *negotiate* the character of the sanction which is to follow. This is *one* way in which the production of a normative order exists in close relation to the production of meaning: what the transgression *is* is potentially negotiable, and the manner in which it is characterized or identified affects the sanctions to which it may be subject. This is familiar, and formalized, in courts of law, but also pervades the whole arena of moral constitution as it operates in day-to-day life.

Sanctions are easily classified, on an abstract level, in terms of whether the resources which are mobilized to produce the sanction are 'internal': that is, involve elements of the actor's personality, or 'external': that is, draw upon features of the context of

action. Each of these may be further categorized in terms of whether the resources which the sanctioning agent is able to mobilize are 'positive' or 'negative' with regard to the wants of the actor who is the target of sanction. Thus the actualization of 'internal' sanctions may draw upon a positive moral commitment of the actor, or negatively upon anxiety, fear or guilt; the actualization of 'external' sanctions may draw upon offers of reward or on the other hand may hold out the threat of force. Obviously, in actual situations of interaction several of these influences may operate simultaneously; and no 'external' sanction can be effective unless it brings into play an 'internal' one: a reward is only such if it impinges upon a person's wants.

The 'interpretation' of norms, and their capability to make an 'interpretation' *count* by participants in interaction is connected in subtle ways with their compliance to moral claims. Failure to see this, or at any rate to spell out its implications, is bound up with some characteristic defects of both Durkheimian–Parsonian functionalism and post-Wittgensteinian philosophy. The moral co-ordination of interaction is asymmetrically interdependent with its production as meaningful and with its expression of relations of power. This has two aspects, themselves closely associated with one another: (1) the possibility of clashes of different 'world-views' or, less macroscopically, definitions of what *is*; (2) the possibility of clashes between diverging understandings of 'common' norms.

Relations of power in interaction

The notion of 'action', I wish to claim, is *logically tied to that of power*. This is in a certain sense recognized by philosophers, who talk of 'can', 'is able to' or 'powers', in relation to the theory of action. But such discussions are rarely if ever related by their authors to the concept of power in sociology. The connection of 'action' to 'power' can be simply stated. Action intrinsically involves the application of 'means' to achieve outcomes, brought about through the direct intervention of an actor in a course of events, 'intended action' being a sub-class of the actor's doing or refraining from doing; power represents the capacity of the agent

to mobilize resources to constitute those 'means'. In this most general sense, 'power' refers to the *transformative capacity* of human action, and I shall henceforth for the sake of clarity employ this second term, reserving the former one for a more restricted, relational use of 'power', to be further explicated below.

The transformative capacity of human action is placed in the forefront in Marx, and is the key element in the notion of *Praxis*. All systems of social theory have had to deal, in some way, with this – with the transformation of nature and the restlessly self-modifying character of human society. But in many schools of social thought the transformative capacity of action is conceived of as a dualism, an abstract contrast between the neutral world of nature on the one hand, and the 'value-laden' world of human society on the other. In such schools, particularly those associated with functionalism, with its emphasis upon social 'adaptation' to an 'environment', a grasp of historicity is easily relinquished. Only in the linked traditions of Hegelian philosophy and (certain versions of) Marxism has the transformative capacity of action, as the self-mediating process of labour, been made the centre-point of social analysis. Labour is, as Löwith says, 'a movement of mediation . . . a fashioning or "forming" and therefore positive destruction of the world which is present in nature'.[19] There seems little doubt that this broad emphasis remained basic to Marx's mature thought, although not significantly elaborated in it; in the *Grundrisse* we find affirmed, in language that closely echoes his early immersion in the 'brook of fire', that 'labour is the living, shaping fire; it represents the impermanence of things, their temporality, in other words their formation in the course of living time'.[20] However, Marx became increasingly preoccupied, not with labour as the transformative capacity of agency, but with its deformation as 'occupation' within the capitalist-industrial division of labour; and power as involved in social intercourse between people, as I have indicated in a preliminary way earlier, is analysed as a specific property of class relations rather than as a feature of social interaction in general.

'Power' in the sense of the transformative capacity of human agency is the capability of the actor to intervene in a series of

events so as to alter their course; as such it is the 'can' which mediates between intentions or wants and the actual realization of the outcomes sought after. 'Power' in the narrower, relational sense is a property of interaction, and may be defined as the capability to secure outcomes where the realization of these outcomes depends upon the agency of *others*. It is in this sense that some have power 'over' others: this is power as *domination*. Several basic points have to be made here.

1 Power, in either the broad or restricted sense, refers to *capabilities*. Unlike the communication of meaning, power does not come into being only when being 'exercised', even if ultimately there is no other criterion whereby one can demonstrate what power actors possess. This is important, because we can talk of power being 'stored up' for future occasions of use.

2 The relation between power and conflict is a contingent one: as I have formulated it, the concept of power, in either sense, does not logically imply the existence of conflict. This stands against *some* uses, or misuses, of what is perhaps the most famous formulation of 'power' in the sociological literature, that of Max Weber, according to whom power is 'the capacity of an individual to realize his will, even against the opposition of others'.[21] The omission of the 'even' in some renderings of this definition is significant; then it becomes the case that power presupposes conflict, since power only exists when the resistance of others has to be overcome, their will subdued.[22]

3 It is the concept of 'interest', rather than that of power as such, which relates directly to conflict and solidarity. If power and conflict frequently go together, it is not because the one logically implies the other, but because power is linked to the pursuance of interests, and people's interests may fail to coincide. All I mean to say by this is that, while power is a feature of every form of human interaction, division of interest is not.

4 This does not imply that divisions of interest can be transcended in any empirical society; and it is certainly necessary to resist the linkage of 'interest' to hypothetical 'states of nature'.

The use of power in interaction can be understood in terms of resources or facilities which participants bring to and mobilize as elements of its production, thereby directing its course. These thus include the skills whereby the interaction is constituted as 'meaningful', but also – and these need only to be stated abstractly here – any other resources which a participant is capable of bringing to bear so as to influence or control the conduct of others who are parties to that interaction, including the possession of 'authority' and the threat or use of 'force'. It would be quite out of place to attempt to set out an elaborate typology of power resources in this study. My only concern at this point is to offer a generalized conceptual scheme which integrates the notion of power into the theoretical account developed in the present chapter. What it is necessary to do, however, is to relate this analysis of power back to the production of meaning in interaction.

This can best be accomplished by reverting briefly to Parsons's 'action frame of reference', or more specifically to criticism voiced about it by some of those influenced by ethnomethodology. Such criticism has taken roughly the following form. In Parsons's theory, it is argued, the actor is programmed to act as a result of values 'internalized' as need-dispositions of personality (in conjunction with non-normative 'conditions' of action). Actors are portrayed as unthinking dupes of their culture, and their interaction with others as the enactment of such need-dispositions rather than as, as it truly is, a series of skilled performances. I think this is right; but those who have expressed this sort of view have failed to pursue its consequences far enough. That is to say, following Garfinkel, they have been interested only in 'accountability', in the cognitive management of communication and communication settings. This is treated as the result of mutual 'labour' on the part of actors, but as if it were always the collaborative endeavour of *peers*, each contributing equally to the production of interaction, whose only interests are in sustaining an appearance of 'ontological security' whereby meaningfulness is constituted. In this one can trace the strong residual influence of Parsons's problem of order, but denuded of its volitional content, and reduced to a disembodied dialogue.

As against this, we must emphasize that the creation of frames of meaning occurs *as the mediation of practical activities*, and in terms of differentials of power which actors are able to bring to bear. The significance of this is crucial in social theory, which must find as one of its chief tasks the mutual accommodation of power and norms in social interaction. *The reflexive elaboration of frames of meaning is characteristically imbalanced in relation to the possession of power*, whether this be a result of the superior linguistic or dialectical skills of one person in conversation with another; the possession of relevant types of 'technical knowledge'; the mobilization of authority or 'force', etc. 'What passes for social reality' stands in immediate relation to the distribution of power – not only on the most mundane levels of everyday interaction, but also on the level of global cultures and ideologies, whose influence indeed may be felt in every corner of everyday social life itself.[23]

Rationalization and reflexivity

I have already pointed out that in most traditional schools of social thought reflexivity is treated as merely a nuisance, the consequences of which either can be ignored or are to be minimized as far as possible. This is true both in respect of methodology, where 'introspection' is swingeingly condemned as contrary to science, and in respect of the conceptual representation of human conduct itself. But nothing is more central to, and distinctive of, human life than the reflexive monitoring of behaviour, which is expected by all 'competent' members of society of others. In the writings of those social thinkers who do not acknowledge this as central, there is an odd paradox, often pointed to by their critics: for recognition of their very 'competence' as authors involves just what is obliterated in the accounts they offer of the behaviour of others.

No actor is able to monitor the flow of action exhaustively, and when asked to explain why she did what she did at a particular time and in a particular place, may choose to reply 'for no reason' without in any way compromising others' acceptance or her as 'competent'. But this only applies to those aspects of

day-to-day interaction which are accepted as trivial, not to anything deemed important in an agent's conduct, for which the actor is always expected to be able to supply reasons if they are asked for (I shall not consider here how far this observation might apply outside the realm of Western culture). Since the giving of reasons involves the actor in providing a verbal account of what may only implicitly guide her or his behaviour, there is a thin line between 'rationalization' as I have used the term, and 'rationalization' meaning the giving of false reasons after the event. The giving of reasons is embroiled in the assessment of moral responsibility for acts, and hence easily lends itself to dissimulation or deceit. To recognize this, however, is not the same as holding that all reasons are merely 'principled explanations' offered by actors about what they do, in the light of accepted canons of responsibility, regardless of whether these were in some sense incorporated into their doings.

There are two senses in which reasons may be held by actors to be 'valid', and the interlocking of these is of no small consequence in social life. One is how far an agent's stated reasons in fact express the person's monitoring of what he or she did; the other is how far his or her explanation conforms to what is generally *acknowledged*, in that individual's social milieu, as 'reasonable' conduct. The latter, in turn, depends upon more or less diffusely integrated patterns of belief which actors refer to in order to derive principled explanations of each other's conduct. What Schutz calls the 'stock of knowledge' which actors possess, and apply in the production of interaction, actually covers two analytically separable elements. There is what I have called generically 'mutual knowledge', which refers to the interpretative schemes whereby actors constitute and understand social life as meaningful; this can be distinguished from what I shall call 'common sense', which can be seen as comprising a more-or-less articulated body of theoretical knowledge, drawn upon to explain why things are as they are, or happen as they do, in the natural and social worlds. Common-sense beliefs typically underpin the mutual knowledge which is brought to any encounter by participants; the latter depends in a basic way upon a framework of 'ontological security' supplied by common sense.

Common sense is by no means solely practical in character – 'cookery-book knowledge'. It is normally in some substantial degree derived from, and responsive to, the activities of 'experts', who make the most direct contribution to the explicit rationalization of culture. 'Experts' include all those who have the authority of privileged entrée to realms of specialized knowledge – priests, magicians, scientists, philosophers. Common sense is certainly in part the accumulated wisdom of laypeople; but common-sense beliefs just as certainly reflect and embody the perspectives developed by experts. As Evans-Pritchard remarks, the individual in European culture regards rain as the result of 'natural causes' which could be set out by a meteorologist, but is unlikely to be able to offer anything more than a rudimentary explanation of this sort; a Zande characterizes the origins of rain within a different cosmology.[24]

The rationalization of action via common sense is a phenomenon of far-reaching importance to sociology, since social scientists themselves lay claim to be experts who are purveyors of authoritative 'knowledge'. This therefore raises the crucial question: in what sense are the 'stocks of knowledge', which actors employ to constitute or make happen that very society that is the object of analysis, corrigible in the light of sociological research and theory? Without prejudicing later discussion of this on an abstract level, we must first of all consider two aspects from which actors' conduct may be opaque to themselves: first, that of motivation and, second, that of the structural properties of social totalities.

The motivation of action

It would be wrong to suppose that the kinds of explanation that actors look for, and accept, regarding the behaviour of others are limited to the rationalization of conduct, that is, to where the actor is presumed to understand adequately what she or he is doing and why she or he is doing it. In ordinary English usage, as I have previously mentioned, 'reasons' are not clearly distinguished from motives: one might ask 'What was his reason

for doing Y?' as an equivalent to 'What was his motive for doing Y?' Nevertheless, it is recognized that to enquire into someone's motives for acting as he does is potentially to seek elements in his conduct of which the actor might not fully be aware himself or herself. This is why, I think, the term 'unconscious motives' does no particular violence to ordinary English usage, whereas 'unconscious reasons' seems rather less easy to accept. My use of 'motivation', therefore, as referring to wants of which an actor may or may not be conscious, or may only become aware after he or she has carried out the act to which a particular motive refers, in fact conforms quite closely to lay usage.

Human motivation may be aptly conceived of as *hierarchically* ordered, both in a developmental sense and in terms of the distribution of wants at any given time in the life of the person. An infant is not a being capable of reflexivity: the capacity for the monitoring of one's own activities is predicated firmly and fundamentally upon the mastery of language, although this does not preclude the possible validity of Mead's thesis that reflexivity is on its most primitive level grounded in the reciprocity of social relations in the interaction of the infant with other members of the family group. Now although the very young infant may know a few words, which serve as signs in interaction with others, a child does not attain a broad command of linguistic skills, or a mastery of the intricacies of the deictic terminology of 'I', 'me' and 'you', until somewhere between two and three years of age. Only as this occurs is she or he able, or expected, to attain the rudiments of the ability to monitor her or his own conduct in a manner akin to that of an adult. But while a child is not born a reflexive being, it is born one with wants, a set of organic needs for the provision of which it is dependent upon others, and which mediate its expanding involvement in a definite social world. The earliest period of 'socialization', therefore, can be presumed to involve the development of the capacity for 'tension management' on the part of the infant, whereby it is able actively to accommodate its wants to the demands or expectations of others.

Given that the modes of management of organic wants represent the first, and in an important sense the most all-embracing,

accommodation which the child makes to the world, it seems legitimate to suppose that a 'basic security system' – that is, a primitive level of management of tensions rooted in organic needs – remains central to later personality development; and given that these processes occur first of all before the child acquires the linguistic skills necessary to monitor its learning consciously, it also seems reasonable to hold that they lie 'below' the threshold of those aspects of conduct that, learned later and in conjunction with the reflexive monitoring of such learning, are easily verbalized – thus 'made conscious' – by the older child or adult. Even the earliest learning of the infant is understood in a misleading sense, however, if conceived of as mere 'adaptation' to a pre-given external world; the infant is from the first days of its life a being that actively shapes the settings of its interaction with others and, having wants that may in some part clash with those of others, can become involved in interest-conflict with them.

That human wants are hierarchically ordered, involving a core 'basic security system' largely inaccessible to the consciousness of the actor, is of course not an uncontroversial assertion, and is one which shares a great deal with the general emphasis of psychoanalytic theory; but it does not imply a commitment to the more detailed elements of Freud's theoretical or therapeutic scheme.

The maintenance of a framework of 'ontological security' is, like all other aspects of social life, an ongoing accomplishment of lay actors. Within the production of modes of interaction in which the mutual knowledge required to sustain that interaction is 'unproblematic', and hence can be largely 'taken for granted', ontological security is routinely grounded. 'Critical situations' exist where such routine grounding is radically dislocated, and where consequently the accustomed constituting skills of actors no longer mesh in with the motivational components of their action. The 'security of being' which is largely taken without question in most day-to-day forms of social life is thus of two connected kinds: the sustaining of a *cognitively* ordered world of self and other, and the maintenance of an 'effective' order of want management. Tensions and ambivalences in motivation can derive from either of these sources, and as such can be analysed

as conflicts within and between 'layers' in the stratification of wants.

The production and reproduction of structure

The true locus of Weber's distinction between 'action' and 'social action' is in the differentiation of action from acts carried out with some kind of communicative intent, the second of these being the necessary condition of interaction. Mutuality of orientation in this respect may be regarded as a defining characteristic of interaction, anything else – for example, a man's adoration of a film star who is unconscious of his existence – being a limiting case of action. Two points need to be made here that will have to be more fully developed later.

1 Communicative intent, that is, the production of 'meaning' in this sense, is only one element of interaction; it is equally important, as I have indicated, that every interaction is also a *moral* and a *power relation*.
2 Collectivities 'consist of' interactions between members but structures do not; any system of interaction, however, from a casual encounter up to a complex social organization, may be analysed structurally.

An approach to the analysis of structure in sociology can be made by comparing what I will now simply call 'speech' (action and interaction) with 'language' (structure), the latter being an abstract 'property' of a community of speakers. This is not an *analogy*: I am definitely not claiming that 'society is like a language'. (1) Speech is 'situated', that is, spatially and temporally located, whereas language is, as Ricoeur puts it, 'virtual and outside of time'.[25] (2) Speech presupposes a subject, whereas language is specifically subject-less – even if it does not 'exist' except in so far as it is 'known' to, and produced by, its speakers. (3) Speech always potentially acknowledges the presence of another. Its relevance as facilitating communicative intent is fundamental, but it is also the intended medium, as Austin makes clear, of a whole host of other 'illocutionary effects'; (natural) language as a structure, on the other hand,

is neither an intended product of any one subject, nor oriented towards another. In sum, generalizing this, practices are the situated doings of a subject, can be examined with regard to intended outcomes, and may involve an orientation towards securing a response or range of responses from another or others; structure, on the other hand, has no specific socio-temporal location, is characterized by the 'absence of a subject', and cannot be framed in terms of a subject–object dialectic.

In most versions of what has come to be called 'structuralism', and particularly in the writings of Lévi-Strauss, 'structure' is not regarded as a descriptive concept: a structure is discerned in myth through applying rules of transformation which penetrate the level of appearances. The parentage of this standpoint in Saussurian linguistics is well known, and however brilliant its achievements in the formal dissection of mythologies, it bears the limitations of its origins in its inability to confront issues of the genesis and temporality of meaning. Lévi-Strauss was apparently prepared, at one time at least, to accept Ricoeur's representation of his views as 'Kantianism without a transcendental subject', disavowing this as a criticism. He has subsequently recoiled from this position, but still seems unconcerned about 'bracketing out the acting subject'.[26]

In 'functionalism', from Spencer and Durkheim through Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski to Parsons and his followers, on the other hand, 'structure' is used in descriptive, and largely unexamined ways; it is 'function' which is called upon to play the explanatory role. The introduction of the notion of function as an explanatory element in Durkheim's sociology excluded temporality from major areas of social analysis, in so far as history (and causation) was severed from function. I have argued elsewhere that Durkheim was far more of an historical thinker than is generally recognized today.[27] One reason this is not often acknowledged is that, once he had methodologically separated history – happenings in time – and function, he was unable to recombine them. One looks in vain for any systematic account of social change in Durkheim that is connected theoretically to his functional analyses of moral integration; change appears only as an abstract scheme of types of society in an evolutionary hieararchy.

It is surely true that these emphases reappear also in Parsons's writings, and it is as well to consider the inadequacies of functionalism at source in Durkheim, who, in a way characteristic of much nineteenth-century social thought, drew upon 'organic analogies'. I shall make no attempt to trace through the career of the concept of function at the hands of Merton, etc., since I propose to abandon the notion completely. The separation of function (relations between 'parts' of a 'whole') from seriality (happenings in time) that Durkheim sought to draw cannot be sustained; a functional relation cannot even be stated without implied reference to temporality. In the analogy from physiology upon which Durkheim's account is based, we may say that the heart stands in a functional relation to the rest of the body, contributing to the overall perpetuation of the life of the organism; but what such a statement conceals is reference to a series of events in time: the heart's pumping of the blood through the arteries conveys oxygen to other parts of the body, etc. *A structure can be described 'out of time', but its 'functioning' cannot.* In physiology, statements couched in terms of functional relations can always in principle be transcribed into statements of causal connections without residue: the causal properties of blood flow, etc. The chief interest of 'functional analysis' is not really anything to do with 'wholes' and 'parts' at all, but is in the postulation of *homeostasis*. This, however, is readily reconceptualized as a problem of the *reproduction* of structure: as in the constant replacement of the cells of the skin in a physiognomy which – through this very process – maintains its structural identity.

It has to be made clear that use of 'structure' in social theory is not necessarily implicated in the failings of either structuralism or functionalism, in spite of its terminological association with them: neither school of thought is able to grapple adequately with the constitution of social life as the production of active subjects. This I shall seek to do through introducing the notion of *structuration* as the true explanatory locus of structural analysis. To study structuration is to attempt to determine the conditions which govern the continuity and dissolution of structures or types of structure. Put in another way: *to enquire into the process of reproduction is to specify the connections between 'structuration' and 'structure'.* The characteristic error of

the philosophy of action is to treat the problem of 'production' only, thus not developing any concept of structural analysis at all; the limitation of both structuralism and functionalism, on the other hand, is to regard 'reproduction' as a mechanical outcome, rather than as an active constituting process, accomplished by, and consisting in, the doings of active subjects.

A structure is not a 'group', 'collectivity' or 'organization': these *have* structural properties. Groups, collectivities, etc., can and should be studied as systems of interaction, and there seems little doubt that systems-theoretical concepts can be applied fruitfully within the social sciences. Systems theory has only superficially penetrated the vocabulary of social science, and it is essential to make clear the difference between it and traditional notions of homeostatic systems as, for instance, characteristically employed in functionalism. Reciprocal effects tending to the establishment of equilibrium, such as may be involved in mechanical or organic systems, are not examples of autopoesis proper. The differences are actually threefold.

1   Equilibrium tendencies working through reciprocal effects operate 'blindly', not through control centres by means of which input and output are mutually assessed and co-ordinated.
2   The notion of homeostasis presupposes a static inter-dependence of parts, and is able to conceive of change in the system only in terms of a strain to equilibrium versus a strain toward disintegration (function versus dysfunction in a 'net balance of functional consequences' in Merton's phrase), not in terms of the internal self-transformation of the system.
3   In homeostatic systems of 'functional interdependence' each functional relation is usually regarded as equivalent to every other: in social systems, however, it is vital to recognize degrees of interdependence, since relations of interdependence are always and everywhere also relations of power.

I have already indicated that structure is 'subject-less'. Inter-action is constituted by and in the conduct of subjects; *struc-turation*, as the reproduction of practices, refers abstractly to the dynamic process whereby structures come into being. By the *duality of structure* I mean that social structure is both

constituted *by* human agency and yet is at the same time the very *medium* of this constitution. In sorting out the threads of how this happens, we can again profit initially by considering the case of language. Language exists as a 'structure', syntactical and semantic, only in so far as there are some kinds of traceable consistency in what people say, in the speech acts which they perform. From this aspect to refer to rules of syntax, for example, is to refer to the reproduction of 'like elements'; on the other hand, such rules also *generate* the totality of speech-acts which is the spoken language. It is this dual aspect of structure, as both inferred from observations of human doings and yet also operating as a medium whereby those doings are made possible, that has to be grasped through the notions of structuration and reproduction.

The duality of structure in social interaction can be represented as follows:

INTERACTION	↑	Communication	Power	Morality
(MODALITY)		Interpretative scheme	Facility	Norm
STRUCTURE	↓	Signification	Domination	Legitimation

What I call 'modalities' refer to the mediation of interaction and structure in processes of social reproduction; the concepts on the first line refer to properties of interaction, while those on the third line are characterizations of structure. The communication of meaning in interaction involves the use of interpretative schemes by means of which sense is *made* by participants of what each says and does. The application of such cognitive schemes, within a framework of mutual knowledge, depends upon and draws from a 'cognitive order' which is shared by a community; but while drawing upon such a cognitive order the application of interpretative schemes at the same time *reconstitutes* that order. The use of power in interaction involves the application of facilities whereby participants are able to generate outcomes through affecting the conduct of others; the facilities both are drawn from an order of domination and at the same time, as they are applied, reproduce that order of domination. Finally, the moral constitution of interaction involves the application of norms which

draw from a legitimate order, and yet by that very application reconstitute it. Just as communication, power and morality are integral elements of interaction, so signification, domination and legitimation are only analytically separable properties of structure.

Structures of signification can be analysed as systems of *semantic rules* (or conventions); those of domination as systems of *resources*; those of legitimation as systems of *moral rules*. In any concrete situation of interaction, members of society draw upon these as modalities of production and reproduction, although as an integrated set rather than three discrete components. When related to a totality of collectivities, as an integrated *system* of semantic and moral rules, we can speak of the existence of a common culture. The modes in which actors draw upon semantic and moral rules in the constitution of interaction can be generally treated in the manner of Wittgenstein's analysis of rule-following. That is to say, to know a rule is not to be able to provide an abstract formulation of it, but to know how to apply it to novel circumstances, which includes knowing about the *contexts* of its application. However, we have to be careful to acknowledge the limits of the game-analogies which are used to express the fusion of language-games and forms of life in the *Philosophical Investigations*, and which have been employed so often by philosophers of action subsequently. The rules of games are usually of a distinctive sort. The boundaries within which they apply – the 'play-sphere' – are typically clearly delimited and unquestioned. Moreover, they constitute a unified whole in that they are more or less rationally co-ordinated with one another. There are a few other social practices, namely rituals and ceremonials, which also tend to have a 'closed' character (Huizinga, Caillois and others have pointed out that the sacred displays close similarities to play), and do not generate much change from within themselves just because they are set apart from the ordinary interests of day-to-day life. But most rule-systems must not be assumed to be like this. They are less unified; subject to chronic ambiguities of 'interpretation', so that their application or use is *contested*, a matter of *struggle*; and constantly in process, subject to continual transformation in the course of the production and reproduction of social life. Hence

the importance of examining the organization of resources which, on the level of interaction, actors are capable of drawing upon as sanctions; and which, on the level of structural integration, support divergent ideologies.

Processes of structuration tie the *structural integration or transformation* of collectivities or organizations as systems to the *social integration or transformation* of interaction on the level of the life-world. But it is important to recognize that forms of the integration of interaction do not necessarily directly parallel the systems which they serve to reproduce. Hence there is a need to differentiate *conflict* from *contradiction*. The notion of conflict is closely tied to that of 'interest' (although not necessarily so, since actors may mistake where their interests lie), which logically presupposes that of the 'wants' which actors bring to interaction. Conflict, in the sense of active struggle pursued in the context of clashes of interest, is a property of interaction. Contradiction, on the other hand, may be understood as a structural quality of the collectivity, and as standing in contingent relation to conflict. Contradiction can be conceptualized as the opposition between structural 'principles': for example, between the fixed allocation of labour characteristic of feudalism and the free mobility of labour stimulated by emergent capitalist markets at a certain period in European history. Now in order to avoid treating contradiction as equivalent to 'functional incompatibility', it is essential to recognize that such 'principles' *always* entail an implicitly or explicitly acknowledged distribution of interests on the level of social integration – for example, that a certain category of actors (entrepreneurs) have interests in promoting the mobility of labour, while others (feudal landowners) have opposing interests. But the occurrence of conflict on the level of social integration does not necessarily produce system contradiction; and the existence of contradiction is not inevitably expressed as overt struggle.

To speak of 'structure' and 'structuration', in sociological analysis, is not equivalent to speaking in the *reified mode*, which has to be treated as a phenomenon of the life-world of lay actors. In the reified mode, collectivities figure in the language of their members as entities that are produced, not by people themselves , but as alien objects in nature and are thus dislocated

from their character *as* human products. The terminology of structure and structuration acknowledges a distinction between objectification (*Vergegenständlichung*) and reification. Failure to observe such a distinction is the characteristic mark of idealism in social theory. The dissolution of reification is evidently tied to the possibility of the (cognitive) realization by actors that structures are their own products; and to the (practical) recovery of their control over them. These two implications of the transcendence of reified modes of thought are easily confused, however. Just such a confusion lends credence to rationalistic social criticism: the thesis that awareness of the conditions of human social life leads *ipso facto* to the achievement of control.

Summary

A few summary comments on the themes of this chapter might be useful. I began by suggesting several respects in which Durkheim's sociology and Parsons's 'action frame of reference', although directed towards many of the issues which are covered in this study, are unsatisfactory. Although Parsons employs the term, his scheme in fact fails to develop a theory of action, as I have defined the notion; it allows for division of interest in social life only in terms of an opposition of the 'individual' and 'society', seen as a moral community; and the origins of social conflict are correspondingly traced to imperfections in the moral commitments which tie the motivation of individual actors to the 'central values' upon which social stability depends. Marx's writings appear to offer a very different framework of analysis, in which power, division of interest and struggle appear as the leading features; but because of his concentration upon the critique of the political economy of capitalism, to which he gave over his life's work, Marx never managed to return to the more general problems of ontology that preoccupied him in the early part of his intellectual career. Consequently Marx's works offer only a broad preliminary orientation, in respect of the notions of *Praxis* and the transformative capacity of human labour, to the specific concerns with which I wish to deal.

The production of society, I have argued, is always and everywhere a skilled accomplishment of its members. While this is recognized by each of the schools of interpretative sociology that I have discussed in the first part of this study, they have not managed successfully to reconcile such an emphasis with the equally essential thesis, dominant in most deterministic schools of social thought, that if human beings make society, they do not do so merely under conditions of their own choosing. In other words, it is fundamental to complement the idea of the production of social life with that of social reproduction. Speech and language provide us with a series of useful clues as to how to conceptualize processes of social production and reproduction – not because society is like a language, but on the contrary because language as a practical activity is so central to social life that in *some* basic respects it can be treated as exemplifying social processes in general. Speech (action) presupposes a subject (actor), and speech acts are situated contextually – as is dialogue between speakers (interaction). Speech and dialogue are each complex accomplishments of their producers: knowing how to produce them, on the other hand, is very definitely not the same as being able to specify either the conditions which make possible their production or the unintended consequences which they might be instrumental in bringing about. Considered in terms of its structural properties – and this is crucial – (natural) language is a condition of the generation of speech acts and the achievement of dialogue, but also the unintended consequence of the production of speech and the accomplishment of dialogue. This *duality of structure* is the most integral feature of processes of social reproduction, which in turn can always be analysed in principle as a dynamic process of *structuration*. Analytically, three elements of the production of forms of interaction can be distinguished: all interaction involves (attempted) communication, the operation of power, and moral relations. The modalities whereby these are 'brought off' in interaction by participating actors can also be treated as the means whereby structures are reconstituted.

By the term 'structure' I do not refer, as is conventional in functionalism, to the descriptive analysis of the relations of interaction which 'compose' organizations or collectivities, but to

systems of generative rules and resources. Structures exist 'out of time and space', and have to be treated for purposes of analysis as specifically 'impersonal'; but while there is no reason why the sorts of theoretical apparatus which have been developed to analyse the behaviour of open systems should not be applied to the structure of collectivities, it is essential to recognize that structures only exist as the reproduced conduct of situated actors with definite intentions and interests. Thus, for example, the identification of 'contradiction' on the level of system integration is only possible because it implicitly presupposes recognition of opposition of interest on the level of situated forms of inter-action: it is precisely this which separates the notion of contradiction here from the notion of 'functional incompatibility' as formulated in functionalist theory. Two points should perhaps be stressed to avoid misunderstanding.

1   To say that structure exists 'out of time and space' is only to claim that it cannot be treated as the situated doings of concrete subjects, which it both serves to constitute and is constituted by; not, of course, that it has no internal history.

2   The concept of reproduction no more has a special connec-tion to the study of social 'stability' than it has to that of social 'change'. On the contrary, it helps to cut across the division between 'statics' and 'dynamics' so characteristic of functionalism from Comte until modern times. Every act which contributes to the reproduction of structure is also an act of production, a novel enterprise, and as such may initiate change by altering that structure at the same time as it reproduces it – as the meanings of words change in and through their use.

The concept of motivation is important to social theory in three ways. First, motivational elements may operate as un-acknowledged causal conditions of action – that is, as uncon-scious impulsions unavailable to the reflexive monitoring of the rationalization of conduct. In principle, the relation between such elements, and an actor's ongoing rationalization of his or her behaviour, must be regarded as plastic, as offering the possibility of the revelatory development of self-understanding. Second, motives generate definite *interests*. While the notion of

'interest' has to be understood very broadly, as referring to any course of action that facilitates the achievement of wants, the more significant sense in social analysis is that of 'social interest', where a response of *others* serves as a means to the pursuance of particular interests. Third, the theory of motivation is immediately relevant to that of the reproduction of structure. As I tried to show at the beginning of this chapter, however, the thesis of the correspondence of motives and the 'internalization' of consensual values, as set out by Parsons, is an inadequate version of such a theory. This is so for two reasons.

1 It is derived from the 'Hobbesian problem of order', which, predicating a state of nature in which every person's hand is set against every other, is only able to cope with division of interest in society in so far as this is represented as a division between the interests of individual actors and those of the social community as a whole.

2 Motivational commitment to a given 'order' is made equivalent to moral commitment to that 'order', thus pushing to the margins a concern with accommodation to it as a system of domination which both expresses, and is reproduced by, asymmetries of power in social interaction.