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# *The Voice and the Eye: On the Relationship Between Actors and Analysts\**

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*For a long time we have been accustomed to define social sciences as a study of society and to conceive society as a functional system organized around values and norms, and creating order and civilization. This "classical view" should be abandoned and the very concept of society dropped. In situations which appear as temporary and unstable results of various processes of power relations, conflicts, and negotiations, we should study how society is produced more than the way it is consumed, the way it changes more than how it functions. That cannot be achieved with our usual methods to study "answers" to "situations". We should give a high priority to methods through which social movements and all forms of collective behavior create a system of social control of given cultural orientations. The method I call sociological intervention, whose principles have been presented in *La voix et le regard* and which has already been applied to the student movements (1978) and to the antinuclear movement (1979), is an attempt to design a new tool for the study of a new image of social reality.*

## BEYOND THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETY

### *Society as Father*

The creation of the International Society of Political Psychology is a particularly appropriate occasion to examine afresh the relationship in the social sciences between the situation and the actor; in other words to redefine the specific object of these sciences. We are still to some extent the heirs of an intellectual tradition which has long defined this object with a simplicity which seemed self-explanatory: is not society the object of social sciences?

We may use different terms when dealing with societies other than our own modern industrial one, but they all play the same role. The nineteenth century used the word *civilization* to refer to concrete historical units which were defined not so much in terms of an activity as in terms of a spirit, which was usually expressed mainly in terms of religion. And when we study preliterate communities we consider them primarily as cultures, as quasi-stable systems of internal and external exchanges. The word *society* is more usually employed for historical entities which are defined in terms of the action which they exert on themselves rather than by their values and their stability. Its use has spread with the growth of the modern state, of its law and regulations, and with the development of national consciousness. But the difference between cultures or civilizations and societies is that the former, because they are systems of social reproduction or of social control, do not distinguish between the actor and the social system. Society on the contrary is defined in terms of a social order which is actively imposed upon a set of human beings.

*\*The Distinguished Invited Address, delivered by Professor Touraine at the second annual meeting of ISPP, May, 1979.*

This leads to a separation between the social system, which is perceived as the “spirit” of the laws (*L’ esprit des Lois*) to use Montesquieu’s title, and the actors who are thought of as the raw material which is organized by the law, which brings order to disorder. In the vocabulary of classicism, society is reason, whereas the actors are moved by passions. Hence the importance of education which, for social philosophy, is the equivalent of socialization, defined as internalization of the rules of conduct which enable us to live in society. The classical concept of society leads to a complete separation between the system and the actor, akin to the distinction which exists between public life and private life, or between male and female. Politics is then identified with man and psychology with woman. The former is the domain of calculation and reason, even reason of state; in the latter, feeling and emotion are predominant. This classical image of society strangely reappears in some contemporary Marxist authors. They are returning to a definition of society as a social order, or, to use the vocabulary of Althusser, as the ideological instruments of the state, probably because the institutionalization of industrial conflict has made it more difficult to put open class conflict at the center of our image of society. N. Poulantzas, for example, insists on the need to distinguish between the level of social structure, (that is the mode of production considered as an overall system) and the level of action which he considers to be subject to constant changes and hence less important. Similarly, historians who have been influenced by Marxism have distinguished between history in depth, which deals with the cultural and material bases of society, and the history of events, which deals with the actors. Whether these authors consider material resources or cultural values as the background of society is of little importance. The main point is that in every case the actor is located in the realm of contingency and therefore in a less important position than that accorded to the system and to the structure underlying it.

This devaluation of the actor has led us to define social sciences as the study of institutions. The latter were defined as the normative regulation of functional activities. Society was therefore seen as a living being, and theories about society conveyed an image of society as *paterfamilias*, or as “The Prince”—the latter being incarnated either in the King or in the Republic. Generally speaking, order is considered a creative and pacifying force while the actor symbolizes violence and disorder; but sometimes, as for example in the writings of J.J. Rousseau, order is, on the contrary, considered as a force of oppression and contrasted with the state of nature which is the world of community and equality. In both cases, the opposition nature-society, which corresponds to the opposition actor-system, gives a central role to the state and the laws which ensure, for better or for worse, the transition from the state of nature to the state of society.

### *The Ambiguities Inherent in the Discovery of Social Relations*

Sociology was born with the critique of this conception of society, when order was no longer opposed to disorder, or spirit to nature, and when society was defined not as a unifying principle but as a network of relations among social actors. Beginning with Hegel, the idea of civil society becomes distinct from that of the state, and it triumphs with the rise of the industrial bourgeoisie. This is explained by the fact that the intervention of society on itself has gone beyond the world of trade and the circulation of goods, which was regulated by laws and political measures, and has entered the world of work organization. All the analysts of the making of industrial society, from Adam Smith to Ure, or from Saint-Simon to Marx, have commented on

this. Industry is primarily an authoritarian change in the forms of work organization. It is not defined by the use of machines (the best known examples of rationalization are those of Taylor and do not involve a single machine) but as the breaking down, the measurement and the redefinition of the elements of the productive process so as to improve the productivity of the workshop.

Any progress in industry is therefore fundamentally linked to the transformation of the social relations of production. Social life is centered round problems of work and production and no longer those of space and legislation. Society was defined as a system of production. Industrialization in Great Britain, and later in Western Europe, was so brutal and unprecedented that social thinking was long concerned uniquely with its origins and attributes. But just as social relations seemed to be becoming the main object of analysis, a new type of appeal to a metasocial principle as an explanation of social life began once again to obscure them. The opposition of order to disorder, or of reason to nature, was over. But social thinkers opposed modernity, complexity, and exchange to tradition, experience, and custom as successive stages of evolution. The concept of society is then broken down into social relations, that is, the world of the actors and historical development as evolution from the simple to the complex, which can be found in the writings of Darwin, Spencer, Durkheim, and Talcott Parsons (whose death has so recently bereaved us). When the concept of society is no longer seen as a unifying principle in the analysis of the social situation, the concept of evolution replaces it and maintains the distance between the system and the actors. This dualism seems to be inherent in all sociological writings which originate in a reflection on industrial society. For Auguste Comte, Durkheim, and the functionalists, evolution is defined in natural, material terms. Take, for example, the importance which Durkheim gives to the density of social interactions and more recently the definitions of modernization given by Deutsch, Germani, or Lipset. On the contrary, social relations are defined by them in terms of values, or moral integration or disintegration. On the other hand, the Weberian tradition maintains a cultural definition of the orientations of action while it observes the progress of instrumental rationality at the level of social relations. Finally, Marx emphasized the opposition between social relations dominated by profit and exploitation and the natural evolution of the forces of production, leaving no room at either level for values.

Thus, all of the three main classical schools draw a sharp separation between social relations and historical evolution. Weberian Kantism opposes the noumenon to the phenomenon. Marx reciprocates by opposing the necessary and desirable course of evolution to the irrationality of social relations dominated by contradiction. Finally, Durkheim, while admiring modernity and secularization, is alarmed (as was de Tocqueville before him) by the destruction of social bonds and insists on the need to recreate, in particular through education, the moral unity of society.

Thus, the evolutionists did away with the concept of society but reconstructed it in another form. Today, we must reject interpretations as vigorously as the first sociologists rejected those of the 17th and 18th centuries.

In our century social thinking is dominated by a deep transformation of the relationship between politics and history, and therefore between the actor and the system. Contemporary societies can no longer be situated historically, because they produce their history. The concept of development is replacing the concept of evolution. It was fitting that the International Sociological Association chose as the title for its recent congress "the paths of development." The plural excludes any

recourse to the type of evolutionism that dominated social thinking from Auguste Comte to Talcott Parsons. Today it is impossible to believe that different types of societies follow one another in a linear progression, that socialism will follow capitalism, and that division of labor, secularization, and rationalization will carry on indefinitely. Growth and crises, wars and revolutions, fascism, communism, nationalism, and even welfare states are evidences of the capacity of our societies to upset their very existence, and to transform their economies and their organization in the name of ideas and as a result of a way of seizing and using power. Social organization can no longer be thought of as a train, with the economy, or inversely with ideas as the engine. This new experience spans the whole of the planet and not just the “developed” countries, but it leads to two rather different directions in the developed and in the developing countries.

Let us consider first the case of societies which are moving beyond the industrial economy. In most aspects of social life, and not only in the production of goods, they appear to be dominated by decision-making centers and large organizations that impose on the population a certain type of consumption and therefore of social behavior. This in return leads to the creation of countermodels of consumption. These models reject the definition of demands by the system of supply and appeal to needs that can be defined as natural or basic but also, and more significantly, as the expression of a desire for personal and collective autonomy—in a word, for self-management. Thus the whole of what used to be defined as institutions becomes networks of power relationships and a scene for new protest movements. The cultural movements or innovations and the social crises, which have been even more frequent in the past 15 years in the United States than in Western Europe or in Japan, have dealt the final blow in the destruction of the concept of society. Instead of the idea that the university is an instrument for the development of rational thinking, or of the opposite idea that it is merely a means of reproducing social inequalities, the idea is gradually spreading that knowledge itself is a source of power and can be produced, transmitted, and utilized in different ways according to the political situation. Similarly, a discussion on public health has begun, which has demonstrated that hospital organization and drug industry or, on the contrary, anticapitalist or antitechnocratic movements can define health in different terms and build different health policies. Especially in countries in which social security expenditures have reached a very high level, the simple idea of a continuous progress of medical care has been abandoned. But the most far-reaching change is the tendency to end the distinction between public and private life, that is between society and nature. This has been hastened by the women’s movement based on modern methods of birth control and of the recent increase in the participation of women in the labor force, especially at the higher levels. As I said, the distinction between the system and the actor, between order and nature, was classically manifested by the distinction between male and female. During the period of industrialization, the opposition between money, machines, and arms on the one hand, and family life on the other hand was still that of male and female. Women hardly ever entered the decision-making centers of the industrial economy. The women’s movements, by rejecting this separation and the subordinate position in which they were imprisoned, have made a crucial contribution towards the elimination of all explanations of social action which resort to a transcendental, metasocial principle. They have contributed to reducing what is referred to as “society” to a network of social relations between actors who are involved in conflicts about the social and political control of cultural resources.

Henceforth, society is no longer a unifying principle, but the end product of social conflicts and of the main cultural orientations which are the issues at stake in the social conflicts. Society is no longer an essence, but an event. Likewise, an organization appears to be only an unstable and provisional state of relations between social groups which possess or do not possess authority within defined limits. A society is merely an ever-changing combination of latent or manifest conflicts, of negotiations, of imposed domination, and of violence. One cannot understand the actor by studying the society to which he belongs. To understand how the categories of social behavior are constructed we must begin with the actors and the conflicts which oppose them and through which society produces itself. The outcome of this basic conflict is the partial institutionalization.

At last sociology can completely do away with the concept of society. A biologist, François Jacob, has written that modern biology originated when biologists stopped asking questions about life and started studying living beings. Similarly, sociology really begins when sociologists reject society as a concept and devote themselves entirely to the study of social relations.

This in turn puts an end to any opposition between functionalists and interactionists and to any separation between the system and the actor. The actors are not motivated by a search for pleasure or interest and must not be analyzed "psychologically." Neither should the system be defined historically or in terms of principles or objective laws. The actors are ultimately defined by their position within the struggle for the control of cultural patterns through which a collectivity molds its relations with its environment. I therefore propose that the concept of society be completely disregarded in sociological analysis and that this term be used solely to describe specific historical entities, such as the "American society" or even the "industrial society."

### *The Self-Production of Society*

The sociologist becomes easily enthusiastic about changes which reveal the originality and the necessity of his approach. He looks everywhere for conflicting processes of self-production of society. At times he feels at one with the new protest movements; more usually his affinities lie with the new forms of democracy which are attempting to force their way into grounds which were formerly dominated by tradition or principles. He likes to think that his research contributes to the extension of democracy because the illusion of order is being replaced by the reality of discussion, conflict, and negotiation. In short the sociologist demonstrates that society is a political arena. But as he scales the heights of the Capitol, the Tarpeian rock looms before him. From a society characterized by action, innovation, and conflict, we move suddenly to the complete opposite—to a society characterized by a restrictive and repressive social order. In large parts of the world this order is imposed by a totalitarian state which speaks in the name of national and social movements, as well as in the name of economic development. We, the sociologists, who have consistently fought for the civil society against the state and against all the forces of social and moral control, suddenly find ourselves surrounded by states with unrestricted power. Events like the communist revolutions from Petrograd to Peking and from Havana to Phnom Penh, which had been perceived by many of us as the most tremendous production of societies by popular mass political and social forces, became, under our very eyes, *Gulag*, gang of four, cult of personality or genocide. Mass movements are tending increasingly to give birth to fundamentalist movements, be they Muslim or otherwise, and to states with unrestricted powers. In our own coun-

tries, the capacity for innovation and conflict seems to be suppressed by the concentration of power and the diffusion of a consumers' mentality which discourages any active intervention. Even the development of defensive professional unions or leagues, which proliferate in the shadows of the technobureaucracy, contributes to the decline of what Proudhon used to call "political capacity."

The increasing control of society over itself and the development of mass politics themselves can very well lead not to more active societies but to the division of the world between conformity and terror, and ultimately to the destruction of all social relations and to a total state control. When confronted with the rise of Nazi totalitarianism, the philosophers of the Frankfurt School, from Horkheimer to Marcuse, given the dramatically obvious impotency of the social forces, were compelled to invoke the Waning out Reason. Today Jurgen Habermas anxiously asks himself and us whether it is possible that civil society, the *Öffentlichkeit* with its origins in the England and France of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, might disappear. The dissidents, who oppose Communist regimes, no longer reason in terms of class struggle, even when they say they are Marxists, but in terms of the right of man, as opposed to the absolute state. They also appeal to the cultural experience which has marked them most intensely and most personally, in reaction to the abstract, arbitrary world which Solzhenitsyn, Bukovki, or Zinoviev describe.

When the sociologist describes society as networks of actors, one can be tempted to believe that he has been dazzled by a bright light which is gradually fading and does not notice the deepening shadow of the states which surround it. It may be that the ending of "society" does not liberate the social actors; would it not be more correct to say that it brings us back to the domination of empires and to the reinforcement of social control, of propaganda, and of repression? This is in effect the question which we have inherited from de Tocqueville. And we sociologists, are not we disappearing with the object of our studies from an increasing number of areas of the world, after having believed, in the light of decolonization and revolutions, that all the parts of the world were going to become actors of their own transformation?

I shall not conclude on such a pessimistic note but at least retain the idea that the sociologist is of necessity engaged in the struggle for the recognition and the expression of social relationships in opposition to the domination of social order, especially when the latter is totalitarian. This idea leads us into the second part of this reflection in which we must no longer ask "what do you think?" but "what is to be done?" It reminds us that the object of our study is never visible to us. It is constantly hidden and repressed by power and its counterpart, violence. Instead of seeing social relationships everywhere, we mainly see systems of prohibition and revolts or concentration camps. To be able to study social behavior we must first fight for the liberation of actors and social relations. This attitude, apart from being politically or morally praiseworthy, is useful to us because it helps us to set up research methods which are suited to our new representation of social facts.

## THE STUDY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

After having defined the object of our research by making a comparison with other representations of social facts, we must define in the same way a method to study it by opposing it to other ways of studying social behavior. Above all, we must emphasize the differences which exist between methods as far as the relationship between the researcher and the actor is concerned.

*From Studies of the Consumption of Society to Studies of the Production of Society*

We have all studied choices which are predetermined by social organization. We reduce then the actor to the roles given him by his various statuses in society. We show that the rich are more conservative and the poor more reformist or that the most highly educated are more culturally innovative than the others. These studies of how social resources are consumed, whether they bear on commercial, political, or educative behavior, place the observer in a position of neutrality. He only intervenes in order to constitute aggregates and categories and to relate behavior to a situation. Both behavior and situation are more or less directly defined as forms and levels of social participation.

But we cannot limit ourselves to these studies of social consumption. Even when they explain the responses given, they do not enable us to understand why the questions took a particular form. They tell us why a specific social category tends to vote more frequently Democrat than Republican. They do not explain why the voters have to choose between Republicans and Democrats rather than between Monarchists and Trotskyites. Whence the importance of a second type of research, which deals with the production of the categories of practice, and especially with decision-making processes. Considerable progress has been made recently in the study of urban or industrial policies. The situation here no longer preexists the intervention of the actors. On the contrary, the situation seems to be the result of their intervention and of their relative influence. The researcher here is forced to intervene more directly than in the studies of consumption since not all the elements of a decision leave a trace in the form of a written document or a visible effect. He feeds back information to his informants and provokes a reaction among the actors by informing them of the actions or the attitudes of other actors. Sometimes he organizes simulations.

But the moment has now come to go beyond consumption studies and decision-making studies and to enter the world of the self-production of society. Let us consider directly the central conflicts, in which social forces fight for the control of investment, of knowledge, and of the patterns of ethical behavior. For example, in industrial, capitalist society, private businessmen and industrial workers oppose each other in an attempt to assign a specific social orientation to the values of industrial society, to its beliefs in progress, in work, in the deferred gratification pattern, in historical explanation, in organization. Both sides accept these basic tenets, but they attempt to give them different social forms, which can be schematically termed capitalist and socialist. The entrepreneurs and the workers in their respective movements are the two leading actors in an industrial society. The mode of production, distribution, and consumption is shaped by the outcome of their conflicts and negotiations. Each of these actors is aware that his struggle for power makes him a producer of society and not merely a consumer of it.

But the question is: how should we study these actors? The researcher who thinks of them as consumers, whose behavior manifests a given degree of social participation, would be completely mistaken. It is necessary to side with the actor, his values and his aims. But then another danger arises, which is as serious as the previous one. The sociological analysis may be confused with the ideology of the actor: however, it is imperative that it remains separate because ideology is the definition of a social situation by the actor who is involved in it, whereas the sociological analysis is the explanation of the actor by the social relationship in which he is involved.

Sociology has not given much thought to this fundamental difficulty. Most of the books which deal with collective behavior or social movements limit themselves either to conveying the intentions and ideology of the actors, or to reducing action to patterns of consumption and adaptation. The literature on the labor movement, for example, in its attempt to explain strikes, either concentrates on an objective analysis of the general economic situation or just comments on the reformist or revolutionary statements made by political and trade union organizations. It could be said that the study of collective behavior, whose outcome is of the greatest social importance, is the weakest chapter in sociology, and, still worse, the field in which the study of the social system and that of the actors are kept most strictly apart when they should be more closely united here than anywhere else. What is the point of thinking that society is engaged in a process of self-production through its cultural orientations and its social conflicts if one is not capable of studying the actors who are collectively involved in these innovative and conflictual actions?

### *The Actor as Self-Analyst*

This question brings two complementary answers to mind since it comes up against two obstacles. In the first place, the actor must be recognized as such: this immediately places the sociologist in a new situation. It is not enough to say that, if one wishes to study the labor movement, the black movement, or the women's movement, there is no point in using surveys and questionnaires since social movements are not answers to questions but constructions of a social field. It can be easily accepted that research on collective action must be carried out by means of the study of groups of actors, even when the movement examined has an individualist ideology, as is usually the case with the action of economic leaders. But the main point is that the actor must take part in the research as an actor and not as a subject for observation or experimentation. If, in his own eyes, our research does not have a positive function for his action, either he refuses to participate in it, or, if he does not do so, he just plays the game and his real orientations are covered by ideological rationalizations. All this rules out the classical separation between action and research. In his relationship with the researcher, the actor must behave as an actor; the researcher cannot be a referee, still less a judge.

But before we examine the problems that face the researchers in this situation let's look more closely at the role of the actor in research. Two methodological principles can be formulated. In the first place, the actor must be studied as much as possible within the context of social relationships which are meaningful to him. Should we not remind ourselves that, since our main object of study is social relations, we ought to concentrate more on these in our observations and experiments and less on situations or behavior? For example, we should not study the labor movement but study directly the social relations of production, always bearing in mind that these relations are relations between actors who are at the same time opposed to each other socially, and oriented towards the same cultural values. If, however, one takes as a starting point a study of union members, one must immediately observe them in interaction with executives, civil servants, labor lawyers and with all the other social actors whom they themselves recognize as belonging to the same field of action.

Secondly, it is imperative to respect another fundamental principle of sociological analysis, namely, that there can be no role without consciousness of it and consequently no class without class-consciousness, although class consciousness may not lead directly to class action. The nearer one comes to the highest level of collective behavior, which corresponds to the *self-production of society*, the more impor-

tant it becomes to respect the analysis which the actor makes of his action. The object of the analysis should not be the behavior of the actor but the analysis which the actor makes of his own behavior and of the behavior of his social partners. In the method of research which I term *sociological intervention*, the first and the most obvious of the researcher's roles is to continually push the actor to conduct this self-analysis, while continuing to be an actor. It is the actor's ability to conduct this analysis which best informs us about the nature of his actions, since this ability increases as one goes from behavior that can be defined as *production of society*. To sum up, the intervention consists first of all in studying collective actors as actors in their relations with their social partners and through the analysis of these relations which they themselves conduct. That requires a long interaction between actors and researchers—more than a hundred hours in my own practice. Quite different from extensive surveys, this approach is still more different from the classical Marxist approach. The latter reduces the labor movement, for example, to a sign of the contradictions of capitalism, a sign which can only be interpreted by those intellectuals who are the trustees of a scientific theory of history. On the contrary, I consider that social relations oppose value oriented actors who try to control in opposite ways the same cultural field.

### *The Intervention of the Researcher*

This self-analysis of the actor cannot be entirely freed from ideology. If it were, the actor would stop being an actor and would become a sociologist—which is in effect what happens when a movement is assailed with doubts and a feeling of helplessness. The actor therefore requires a mediator, who enables him to be confronted with a more elaborate analysis of his own behavior while remaining himself an actor. How can the researcher play this role? How can he avoid either being an ideologist or destroying the actor by observing him as a dead butterfly? I think that he can do this by representing for the actor the highest possible meaning of his action. This constitutes the central proposal of the method which I am putting before you. Let's consider the case of antinuclear militants who oppose the construction of nuclear power plants. They are afraid of accidents or of contamination, or they criticize the economic and technical arguments of the spokesmen for the nuclear industry. But the researcher introduces the hypothesis that this defensive action bears the seeds of a new form of class struggle, the defense of a population against technocracy and that at the same time it contains elements of cultural innovation since it introduces values and consumption patterns which are appropriate to the postindustrial society in the making. The researcher in no way states that this highest possible meaning is in fact historically the most effective. He does not say that antinuclear actions are actually capable of becoming an organized political movement with the capacity to attack centers of power. But he presents to the actors the highest possible meaning of their collective action in such a way as to ensure that the actors react to it. All collective actions involve, directly or indirectly, a struggle for power, together with other kinds of social relations. The nature of collective action can be determined by the way in which the actors react to the image put by the sociologist of its highest components. When faced with this very abstract and very general interpretation of their action, the actors are far from their ideology, which interprets a concrete historical situation. They are as far removed as possible from their practical activity, and this disequilibrium forces them to look for a deeper significance of their action. The researcher, by placing himself as far away as possible from the practical interpretation of the action, leaves room for the analysis. The actors, by responding to

the researcher's hypothesis, define their own place in it. If we were to compare the situation with that of an oil refinery, we could speak here of the cracking of collective behavior.

The sociologist in no way identifies himself with the actual struggle of the actor or with his ideology. Nor is he a neutral observer incapable of interacting with the actor without destroying him. He acts as an agent in the analysis of the actor and his intervention enables him to advance his own analysis. This role of the researcher is very far from the cold objectivity of the sociological tradition. But it is even further from the identification with the actor which the different types of militant research or action-research propose. The researcher aims at knowledge while the actor's aim is action. But the researcher is not neutral. He hopes that the actor will be capable of acting at the highest possible level. Like the psychotherapist who wishes to help his patient to control his behavior and to liberate him from anxiety, the sociologist wishes here to help the actor liberate himself from the constraints of a situation which is imposed upon him and to participate in the conflictual *self-production of society* because it is only through the struggle of the actors that the object of sociological analysis, the social relations themselves, can be discovered, beneath thick layers of dominant ideologies which hide aims and conflicts. Action and analysis are allied against order and ideology.

#### *Analysis and Action: Permanent Sociology*

This definition of his role leads the sociologist to verify his hypotheses by studying the effects of his analysis on the behavior of the actors. The actor, using the sociologist's analysis obtains, from the observed consequences of his action, confirmation or refutation of this analysis. He transmits the results to the sociologist and asks him to change his hypotheses if necessary. More simply, the sociologist observes whether the actors react in a predictable manner to situations that correspond to different levels of collective action. By doing so we enter a two-way process between action and analysis which could go on for ever. This is why I have named the second part of the research, which follows the intervention itself, *permanent sociology*. In the case of the study that we are completing at the moment, which deals with the antinuclear movement in France, this phase of permanent sociology has been going on for more than a year now and we expect it to continue for several years after the publication of our book.

As a closing remark about the method that I have briefly presented, and which is described in greater detail in my recent book *The Voice and the Eye (La voix et le regard)*, I want to emphasize that it implies a deep transformation of the relationship observed between the analyst and the observed actor. Psychologists are accustomed to this double role of analyst and intervener. Sociologists preferred to keep their distance because they remained convinced that the object they were studying was society. They saw a clear division of labor between themselves and social psychologists who devoted themselves to the study of actors in social situations and especially in groups. The approach that I am attempting to develop differs both from the psychological study of groups and particularly from group-centered groups, and from the analysis of situations or social trends. It seems to be appropriate for the study of collective behavior, which questions most directly cultural orientations and power structure. But this method should not be limited to the study of protest movements. We are devoting our first six-year program to these movements, but I shall attempt to gradually extend the application of the method to other data by turning my attention to three different fields: First, ruling class movements because

management should be considered as a social movement, exactly as much as unionism; second, movements which are oriented toward the control of the process of societal change, for example of industrialization, especially in developing countries; and finally, diluted or indirect forms of protest movements which are generally classified as riots, disorder, deviance, or even mental illness. My first research program, which I began in 1976, deals with the student movement, the antinuclear movement, a regionalist movement, labor unions, and the women's movement. The study of the student movement has just been published. The one on the antinuclear movement is finished, and we are now in the midst of our study of the regionalist movement. These studies are carried out in France for practical reasons but I should here like to express my deep interest in training research teams and in conducting research with these in other countries, especially where sociologists are independent and creative.

I trust that this research and the spirit in which it is carried out will help to increase our capacity for innovation and conflict and will contribute to the development of new forms of direct democracy. When power was in the hands of the Prince, the nation attempted to elect its representatives to vote for taxes and to thereby control the most important decisions. When power was personified in the factory owners, the labor unions created a more direct form of democracy. Now that almost all the spheres of our life are dominated by technostructures, there is a need to further the development of social movements that are no longer transmission belts for political parties and that go beyond lobbies and interest groups.

Our active participation in this new advance of democracy will support our search for knowledge. It is not by keeping our distances from creative social action and by taking for granted the present forms of social organization that we shall reach a better knowledge of social life and free it from ideological and social pressures. To the contrary, we would thus make ourselves responsible for identifying a social system with its power structure. The abstract character of certain formulations should not prevent us from seeing that they were 10 or 20 years later, to a large extent, an expression of the dominant ideology of the times. By perceiving as directly as possible relationships, conflicts, and social movements, we will be able to free ourselves from ideologies and to discover the central object of our research, that is to understand how a human group, acting upon itself through symbolic systems, investment and ethical patterns, produces, through conflicts for the social control of these actions, the categories of its social and cultural organization.

Since the actors in the drama of industrial society are gradually disappearing from the state of history, while new actors and new issues that represent postindustrial society are only beginning to appear, we often have the impression of living in a historical vacuum. This impression is heightened by the decline of dominant ideologies, either in the West or in the East. This explains why, at the moment, a semiotical conception of social life, which sees signs where sociologists look for social relations, is so influential. I can understand why so many observers see in present day societies only signs of bureaucracy, mass consumption, nationalism, or totalitarianism. But it is already too late to accept such a pessimistic image. From many places we hear again voices of anger and hope; they announce the coming of new debates and new struggles. I feel myself very remote from those, Marxists or not, who reduce society to a system of domination and to the reproduction of this domination, and very close to those, Marxists or not, who are sensitive to innovations and to new forms of social struggle. I also listen to those who try to impose new forms of power and who invent new ideologies that break with those of the former ruling

classes. I would like us sociologists to waste no more time on reliving the struggles of the 19th century and not to yield to the false idea that actors have disappeared from our societies, either because these are totally submitted to a central power or on the contrary because all conflicts are disrupted by permanent changes. I would like sociology to realize that new dramas and new social movements are being born in many parts of the world. These include places where totalitarianism seemed to have drowned out their voices, where nationalism seemed to preclude any social discussion, as well as places where the complexity of organizations and the rapidity of changes seemed to make the formation of struggles in general more difficult. If we succeed in thus redefining our role, we shall give sociology a legitimacy which it is no longer sure of possessing. The concept of society gave it a legitimacy which has become more dangerous than useful. Today we must start with the conviction that the study of social relations, conceived as primarily created by social movements, is linked with the permanent fight for freedom and against nonsocial explanations and legitimizations of social order.

We can play a recognized role in our society if we first succeed in ending the separation between the system and the actors, and between politics and psychology because domination and repression have always been ideologically based on these dichotomies. And in doing so we will give its full importance to the study of political psychology which brings us together today.