

TELE

Empathy, as defined by Lipps,^{*} is a "one-way" feeling into the private world of another ego and as such a psychological phenomenon; it satisfies the needs of the psychologist. But it does not take care of the "two-way" and multiple feeling into each other's private worlds of several individuals and the socioemotional structures resulting from them. This is, however, a process of greatest importance to sociologists and sociometrists. Parallel with this Freud[†] developed the concept of transference, which signifies the unconscious projection of fancied experiences upon the person of the physician. Whereas empathy tries to feel into something real, transference feels into something unreal. Transference tries to satisfy the needs of the psychiatrist. Transference, too, is an individual psychodynamic phenomenon, although with a psychopathological connotation.

This is the situation with which I was confronted when I tried to find a theoretical framework for my sociometric and psychodramatic discoveries. Neither transference nor empathy could explain in a satisfactory way the emergent cohesion of a social configuration or the "double" experience in a psychodramatic situation. First, because these represent two or multiple ways of interaction; second, because they are seen as a social whole, from a superior plane, not from the point of view of one particular person A, or B, or C, although they are included in it. It is a sociological phenomenon. I hypothesized therefore, that empathy and transference are parts of a more elementary and more inclusive process, *tele*. This is a concept which satisfies the needs of the psychologist, the psychiatrist, *and* the sociologist; I defined it as "An objective social process functioning with transference as a psychopathological outgrowth and empathy as esthetic outgrowth" and explained further "developments in the tele process are Einfuehlung, empathy of an actor into his part ; empathy is positive but the process of *reciprocation* does not enter into its meaning"—and transference "The factor responsible for dissociation and disintegration in social groups." I defined tele as the factor

^{*} Theodore Lipps, "Das Wissen von Fremden Ichen", Psychologische Untersuchungen, 1, pp. 694, 1907.

[†] Sigmund Freud, "Vorlesungen zur Einfuehrung in die Psychoanalyse", Vienna, 1926.

responsible for the increased rate of interaction between members of a group, "for the increased mutuality of choices surpassing chance possibility."

If the psychologist insists that the factor responsible for all forms of "interpersonal sensitivity" is empathy or an empathic process, or if psychoanalysts dilute the concept of transference, as many psychoanalytically oriented group psychotherapists are doing, they are stretching the meaning of these concepts beyond recognition; they lose their original and generally accepted meaning. A good scientific term has its own profile. By such playing with words we lose two good concepts and ruin a third. Therefore, I offered a solution which preserved both concepts, transference and empathy in their original profiles and related them logically to a larger concept, the tele hypothesis.

Thales of Miletus is accredited with the knowledge of the attractive power of ferrous material. He attributed to it a "soul." As soon as the physical basis of this phenomenon was recognized, Thales' interpretation was discarded. But more than two thousand years later Mesmer postulated an attractive power, this time coming from "animal" bodies. He thought that in the process of hypnosis a magnetic fluid passes from the operator to the subject, that this fluid is stored up in animal bodies and that through this medium one individual can act upon another. Braid demonstrated later that it cannot be proved that a mysterious fluid passes from one person to the other, that the phenomena emerging in the process of hypnosis are subjective in origin. Charcot, Freud, and others developed from this point the subjective psychology of today.

Perhaps the controversy between Mesmer, Braid and Freud can be settled if we remove our attention from the operator-subject relation in the process of hypnosis, or from the physician-patient relation in the process of suggestion and concentrate upon certain processes of *interaction* between persons which make it doubtful if these are of subjective origin only. In the Stegreif (spontaneity) experiment we could observe that some individuals have a certain *sensitivity* for each other, as if they were chained together by a common soul. When they warm up to a state, they "click". It often was not the language symbol which stimulated them. When the analysis of each individual apart from the other

failed to give adequate clues for this "affinity" we could not avoid considering the possibility of a "social" physiology—internal *tensional maladjustments which corresponding organs in different individuals bring into adjustment*. At a certain point man emancipated from the animal not only as a species but also as a society. And it is within this society that the most important "social" organs of man develop. The degree of attraction and repulsion of one person towards others suggests a point of view by means of which an interpretation of the evolution of the social organs can be given. One example is the functional relation between the two sexes; another example is the functioning of speech. The sexual organization of man is divided functionally between two different individuals. A correspondence of physiological tensions exists to which emotional processes are correlated. The attractions and repulsions, or the derivatives of these, between individuals, can thus be comprehended as surviving reflections, as a distant, a "tele" effect of a socio-physiological mechanism. The origin of speech also cannot be comprehended without the assumption of a socio-physiological basis. Just as we have in the case of sexuality corresponding external and internal organs we have in the case of communication corresponding internal organs, the brain centers of speech in one person relating to the brain centers as well as the external organs of hearing in the other. Speech of one person shaped the hearing and understanding of speech of the other person, and *vice versa*, which became another chief stimulant in the development of man's sociability. It seems to us a valuable working hypothesis to assume that *back of all social and psychological interactions between individuals there must once have been and still are two or more reciprocating physiological organs which interact with each other*. The principle of bisexuality is only a small part of a wider principle: biosociality. The attractions, repulsions and indifferences which we find, therefore, oscillating from one individual to the other, however varying the underlying factors, as fear, anger, sympathy or complex collective representations, it may be assumed, have a socio-physiological anchorage.

The innumerable varieties of attractions, repulsions and indifferences between individuals need a common denominator. A feeling is directed from one individual towards another. It has

to be carried into distance. Just as we use the words teleperceptor, telencephalon, telephone, television, etc., to express action at a distance, so to express *the simplest unit of feeling transmitted from one individual towards another* we use the term *tele*, τῆλε, "distant."

The tele concept is introduced by us not for a convenience but due to the pressure of our analytic findings. The subject under investigation is not covered by any of the social and psychological sciences today. Sociology is satisfied with the mass approach of a mass. It may attempt to calculate the *trends* in population through statistical measures, the frequency of characteristic traits, etc. Mass psychology is descriptive of mass reactions, as for instance, loss of individuality in a mass, etc. Psychology of the individual aims at an interpretation of mass situations through projecting to a mass the findings which relate to a single individual, for instance, hysteria, neurosis, etc. But the salient point is to investigate a mass of, for instance, five hundred individuals from the point of view of each individual contribution and of the emotional product which results in the form of mass reactions. Then it becomes evident that the frequencies of the sociologist are the surface expression of deeper structural layers in the make-up of populations ; that mass psychological findings, as, for instance, the loss of individuality in mass actions, are an impressionistic description, the comprehension of mass processes from a spectator's point of view and not from that of the participants ; that projections of hysteria, neurosis, Oedipus complex, etc., from an individual to a mass are undue generalizations and symbolizations. The actual processes are of a different nature. The microscopic investigations of the organization of this mass, the position each individual has within it, the psychological currents which pervade it, and the forces of attraction or repulsion which it exerts upon other masses, compel us to formulate new concepts and a special terminology better adapted to the new findings. Before the advent of sociometry all findings appeared to indicate that the essential elements of existence are locked within the individual organisms and are recognizable only in respect to the individual. The social impulses also did not seem to present an exception to this rule, however great an influence in shaping them we attributed to the environment; the shape they had attained in the course of their

evolution was bound within the individual organism only, nothing which mattered fundamentally existed outside of the individual organism. This was the position of the psychological schools. The majority of the sociological schools held too rigidly to the concept of collective. What had started under the leadership of Emile Durkheim as a good road developed into a blind alley. There was no vista for a genuine approach to an experimental sociology. But there is in the field outside of the organism a special area, the area *between* organisms where a new outlook was found. Characteristic patterns of interrelation have been found to exist between individuals, definite rules control the development from stage to stage and from place to place ; they are of such a regularity of form and have such a continuous effect upon groups near and distant that it appears as if social impulses have been shaped not only in respect to the individual organism but also *between individuals* and that a remainder of this process is always discoverable whenever social groups are analyzed. These relations cannot be comprehended as accidental: they are in want of an explanation as to how this order of relations developed. The simplest solution is to assume that on a more primitive level of society the individuals were physically more closely allied and that this bond weakened gradually with the development of the telencephalon and the teleperceptors.

If we imagine a monistic origin of life from a common unit it is hardly believable that the organisms which have derived from this milt and have developed to different kinds and races have entirely broken off the original bonds existent among them. some remainder, however scant, however rudimentary, however difficult to discover, must still exist. In analogy, the social and cultural pattern in its initial stage must have consisted of such an intimate bond of interrelations that at first group reactions predominated and that in the course of evolution the emancipation of the individual from the group increased more and more. But the group bond among the individuals never broke off altogether. A remainder of it—and perhaps a safeguard in emergency situations—persists. Indicators of such a remainder are the persistent recurrence of various structures on various levels

of differentiation from a psycho-organic level in which expression of feeling is inarticulate up to a psycho-social level in which expression of feeling is highly articulate. Concepts as reflex, conditioning reflex, instinct, mental syndrome, etc., which have grown out of the approach of the individual organism, are not explanatory of these findings and have no meaning in this area. Fifty individuals who singly are classified as suffering from hysteria may as a group reveal a pattern totally different from a mass hysteria, for instance, an extroverted group organization with a high number of incompatible pairs. Or, again, the sexual character of individual members may be male or female, heterosexual or homosexual. From an individual point of view this is a definable condition, but from the group point of view the intersexual choices, attractions, repulsions and indifferences among such members may result in an organization which has as a totality a different meaning from that of the sexual character of its individual members alone. It may, for instance, show an organization split into two parts, a homosexual and a heterosexual gang which are in a state of warfare because some members of the homosexual gang are objects of the desires of certain members of the heterosexual gang or *vice versa*.

Transference is defined as the psychopathological branch of tele, empathy (Einfuehlung) as its emotional branch. Tele is a social concept, it operates on the social plane; transference and empathy are psychological concepts, they operate on the individual plane. It has been found that tele and empathy can be trained; parallel with the training of tele, transference can be "untrained".

Every individual man functions in a system which is confined by two boundaries: the emotional expansiveness of his own personality and the socio-emotional pressure exerted upon him by the population. The psychological variations in population pressure affect the individual especially during his formative years. We have shown how deep its effect is even in the apparent vacuum around an isolated person, that the specific molds and boundaries we have created to shelter and shape individuals, the home unit, the school unit, and the work unit are not actual boundaries, that the forces of attraction, repulsion and indifference pass beyond these limits, ceaselessly striving towards exchange of emotional states, that this tendency to reach out and to exchange emotions is stronger than social institutions formed apparently to protect man against the vagaries of his adventurous nature.

The relations treated up to this point may mark the beginning of a measurement of social atoms. The electro-magnetic and physio-chemical analysis of emotions is outside of the sociometric domain. Our problem is the social expansiveness of man and his transmission of social emotion. Social expansiveness, differing from emotional expansiveness, does not infer only how potent an emotion is which is projected towards this or that person, but how *many* persons a person is able to interest, to how *many* persons he can transfer an emotion, and from how *many* persons he can absorb emotion. In other words, it traces the origin of a "psychological current."

Even if one day the feeling complex, *tele*, should yield to physical measurement, from a sociometric point of view this feeling complex is separated only artificially from a larger whole; it is a part of the smallest living unit of social matter we can comprehend, the social atom. Therefore the sociometric approach of *tele* is closely linked with our findings in regard to the inner organization of a social atom. The first thing we meet in the social atom is that a feeling complex which goes out from a person does not run wildly into space but goes to a certain other person and that the other person does not accept this passively like a robot but responds actively with another feeling complex in return. One *tele* may become interlocked with another *tele*, a pair of relations being formed.

Tele is an abstraction; it has no social existence by itself. It has to be comprehended as a process within a social atom. But it is possible to classify it according to the equation of its social expansion, its social *effect*. This is exemplified in the following illustration:

An individual A is the first and exclusive choice of a second individual B, and B is her first and exclusive choice. Except for the one *tele* from B, A is fully isolated in the community. However, B is first choice of C, D, E and F. C, D, E and F are the choice of respectively 6, 8, 5 and 5 other individuals. Among these latter 24 individuals are three persons, G, H and I. Each of them is the center of 7 choices. The effect of the one *tele* from B to A is to connect A with a main psychological current enabling her to reach 43 persons potentially predisposed towards her. On the other hand, another individual may be unable to exert any

considerable effect upon the community as her tele relate her only to individuals who are in a relatively isolated position. Her tele are side-tracked and never reach the main currents. An individual like A, who is as a person comparatively unknown but who exerts through the medium of other individuals a far-reaching effect upon masses of people, is an invisible ruler. The form which the one tele going from the individual A to the individual B takes can be said to be aristocratic, an *aristo-tele*. Such an aristo-tele has often turned the cultural and political history of a people, as in the instance of Socrates and Plato, or Nietzsche and Wagner, or Marx and La Salle.

EMPATHY AND TELE

The part which empathy plays in the tele process in the course of sociometric testing can easily be explained; the testee will need some degree of *Einfuehlung* to judge who among the members of a group like him, dislike him or are indifferent towards him.

It is more difficult to unravel the function of empathy in role playing and psychodramatic situations. I have pointed out the need for a wider concept when I first began to systematize the experimental approach to group formation in *statu nascendi* "Es gibt Spieler, die durch eine geheime Korrespondenz miteinander verbunden sind. Sie haben eine Art Feingefuehl fuer die *gegenseitigen* inneren Vorgaenge, eine Gebaerde genuegt und brauchen sie einander nicht anzusehen. Sie sind fuer einander hellseherisch. Sie haben eine Verstaendigungsseele, eine mediale Verstaendigung."* "There are role players who are linked together by a secret bond. They have a sort of sensitivity for each other's *reciprocal* inner processes, a gesture suffices and frequently they do not have to look at one another. They are clairvoyant for one another. They have a special sense for communication, a medial understanding."*

This hypothesis brought me closer to the essence of the problem *Just as the transference theory has proved insufficient to explain the phenomena of reality testing and social cohesion on the group*

* "Das Stegreif theater, " 1923, p. 57; transl. "The Theatre of Spontaneity," Beacon House, 1945.

level, the empathy theory is incapable of explaining the phenomena of multiple reciprocity of feelings. It was the empirical test which aided me in the clarification of this riddle.

The "double situation" in psychodrama is a clinical technique in which the client is interacting with his double, portrayed by an alter (auxiliary) ego; it can also be used as an experimental design, it provides an observer with an excellent opportunity for the study of the interweaving of empathy and transference in the tele process. Certain facts stand out and have been identified by many observers.

A) There is the feeling in of the alter (auxiliary) ego into the subject. The alter ego (therapist or counselor) is the active, empathizing agent; the patient, client or subject is the object. This process is empathy. It corresponds to the making of (..oi2e going out from A to B in the sociometric realm.

B) There is the return "feeling in" of the subject or client into the alter ego-therapist. It is part and parcel of every double situation.

(From a transcript)

Double: I'm unhappy, I should not have such terrible thoughts.

Subject: Yes, I have thoughts of ending my life; I cannot stop them.

Double: I couldn't stop them, but I will.

Subject: I will. I must forget him.

Such a return feeling can be called "empathy." It corresponds, in the sociometric area, to the response from B to A for a choice or rejection.

C) There is not always agreement between ego and subject. The empathic statements, true or untrue, of the alter ego, are often violently resented by the subject.

(From a transcript)

Double: I love that man.

Subject: Oh no, I don't love him. I hate him!

The challenging of the client is often a part of the technique to bring a feeling to crystallization. After a pause the client extends:

Subject: I loved him once, but now I hate him.

Because of this internal struggle it is useful to differentiate between "positive" and "negative" empathy.

D) One of the most significant phases in the double drama is

when the double and the client reach an almost complete unity of communication; in the acting out of feelings and thoughts, gestures, movements of the subject and alter ego complement each other as if they would originate in one and the same person. It is more than *Einfuehlung* from A to B or B into A; they have the same sorrow and the same pain, or the same ecstasy or the same love. The distinction between double and client is gone; they share in a single "Erlebnis." This phenomenon may be called "omnipathy", a term coined by Max Scheler.[‡]

E) What is real to the patient, especially to the psychotic, is for the alter (auxiliary) ego a play, a skill, an ability. The feeling of grief because of having lost her lover in an air crash, or being fired from a job and without means of support, or hearing voices informing him of his wife's disloyalty and ordering him to act, is an external and internal reality to the patient. But it is unreal to the alter ego. This inequality of status produces profound conflicts, the behavior of the alter ego may appear artificial and contrived and upsets the patient. The solution to this is frequently to have another patient as a double, one with *similar* psychotic experiences, if possible, a psychotic leader in the sociogram of the ward. The patient may trust and admire him, whereas he may distrust and resent a professional ego. Another solution to this conflict is openly to have the ego admit to the patient: Yes, it's so, I am "acting" the part, but it gives me an opportunity to understand you better. Or, finally, and often most effective, what started out in the ego as a skill, an intervention, becomes genuine love, it becomes identity.

F) The patient, as a part of his sickness, feels himself into delusory and hallucinated events and persons. This phenomenon has been called "autotele." The alter ego has to follow the patient in this difficult task.

G) The trichotomy tele-transference-empathy opens up great potentialities for development. "Emotional expansiveness is subjectible to training."[§] "As a compass of interhuman relations it is primitive, but I believe that our intuition in this direction is trainable."^{**}

[‡] "Wesen and Formen der Sympathie," 1922.

[§] See p. 463.

^{**} See "Sociometry in Action," *op. cit.*, p. 302.

H) Quantitative studies of the tele-transference-empathy complex have been on the way since 1937.

When we study a community, as an interrelated whole, using the trichotomy -transference empathy as reference and considering what effect one part of the community has upon the other, we recognize that its totality too, does not grow without direction or chaotically; that, just as the individual organism grows towards a definite end, maturity, also groups grow with a tendency towards a definite organization which guarantees end-forms, survival and a lasting preservation of the whole. Like the inevitability of a pre-conceived plan, the organization unfolds. At first, out of an indefinite status grow a horizontal and a vertical differentiation of structure, the development of a "bottom" and of a "top." Then stage follows stage as gradually the social, sexual and racial cleavages differentiate it further. Examining the membership of this crystallizing organization we observe again that this too, is not a wild distribution of position and function. If we may be allowed to develop the analogy of a bottom and a top of the group still further, we may say that the isolated whom we find at the top of the group are relatively superior, solitaire individuals and the isolated whom we find at the bottom of the group are relatively inferior, unchosen and unwanted individuals. The individuals forming the top of the group may become aggressive towards the members of the middle groups and the individuals forming the bottom of the group may also turn towards the members of the middle groups; between these two groups the middle group attempts to develop a cohesive unity and coordinated strength to keep in check both the top groups and the bottom groups. It appears that the end-forms towards which the sum total strives is one in which the representatives of the creative function (aristo-tele) come to an inter-functioning with the representatives of the social function, the leaders of the group.

See Tele charts, p. 296-298; *Sociatry*, Vol. I, 1947, p. 446; *Sociometry*, Vol. 9, 1946, p. 178; see also *Psychodrama Monograph* No. 12, 1944, "Role Analysis and Audience Structure."