EXPLORATIONS IN THE DIALECTICS OF

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

by

PETER W. REASON

EXPLORATIONS IN THE DIALECTICS OF
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

Abstract

by

PETER W. REASON

In this study, interpersonal relations are seen to involve
the dialectical resolution of contradiction. It is assumed that
human existence involves the resolution, always temporarily, of
basic ontological "given" contradictions. Development is seen as
meaningful only within these fundamental dialectics which can
never be permanently resolved.

Three such fundamental dialectics of relationship are iden-
tified, which are termed the dialectic of Self and Other, of Person
and Interperson, and of persons as Subject and Object.

An empirical study of relations involves the discovery of
ways people in relationship manage these inherent contradictions.
This requires an approach adequate for the study of persons and
personal interaction, presenting a number of methodological chal-
lenges. The study is seen to require a holistic approach, a per-
sonal interaction with the subjects, and involvement of the sub-
jects in the actual process of discovery and description of data.
These methodological requirements were actualized by gathering the
data at a "Workshop for the exploration of two-person relationships."

Five studies of relationship are presented, which demonstrate the utility of the theory. In addition, the notion of a principal contradiction, an organizing theme which is the focus of energy and concern in the relationship, emerged as an important part of the description of each relationship, re-emphasizing the need for a holistic approach. Change and development in relationships are seen as involving a movement of the principal contradiction.

Finally, there is a consideration of ways in which the explorations of this dissertation point toward a truly holistic approach to theory and research in the human situation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In their _very_ different ways, Dave Brown, Bob Kaplan, Don Wolfe, and Mary Ann Huckabay were major sources of support, stimulation, confrontation, and practical assistance while I was writing this dissertation.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all my American friends and teachers who have made my four year stay in the United States so stimulating.

Thank you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Nonbeing ... has a double face,
resembling two types of nightmare.
The one type is the anxiety of
annihilating narrowness, of the
impossibility of escape and the
horror of being trapped. The other
is the anxiety of annihilating open-
ness, of infinite, formless space
into which one falls without a place
to fall.

                      Paul Tillich

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of "facework" and "authenticity" first struck me in a classroom. I was co-teaching a course in Interpersonal Dynamics, and for one class had prepared a lecture on feedback. I based this lecture on standard "humanistic" premises, talked about the benefits of being open in interpersonal relations, the importance of respecting the other as a separate and unique person, and how it is helpful to avoid judgments and evaluations of the other's behavior and identity. After some discussion of this, my colleague stood up and gave another short lecture on facework, based on the writings of Goffman (1967), in which the emphasis was on the management of impressions and the presentation of a face, and the quite generalized position an individual takes in the social order.

I was struck, and so were our students, with this contradiction of "facework" and "authenticity". I was most fascinated to see that although the two approaches to describing interpersonal relations are in almost direct contradiction, both represent an aspect of reality, both are in some sense true, albeit half-true. This dissertation is an exploration of these contradictory half-truths.

I used the terms "facework" and "authenticity" in my early attempts to describe this problem. They are by no means sufficient

1

terms since they are not precise and as yet remain undefined, but

I intend to use them here to evoke in general terms two alternative

approaches to understanding relations between persons. For the

moment, they are initial handles on the subject to be more care-

fully explored later, and I have placed them in quotation marks

to remind myself and the reader of their ill-defined nature.

The field of interpersonal relations has been aptly described

as

> ... a strange field: loosely organized, interdisciplin-
> ary and interstitial ...; it is a field without fixed
> boundaries or stable definitions. (Bennis et al., 1973,
> p. 2)

Even the questions that the writers in the field ask point them

in totally different directions; for example, compare Laing with

Goffman:

> Can human beings be persons today? Can a man be his
> actual self with another man or woman? Before we ask
> such an optimistic question as, "What is a personal
> relation", we have to ask if a personal relation is
> possible, or, are persons possible in our present
> situation? (Laing, 1967, p. 23, original emphasis)

> What minimal model of the actor is needed if we are to
> wind him up, stick him in amongst his fellows, and have
> an orderly traffic of behavior emerge? What minimal
> model is required if the student is to anticipate the
> line along which an individual, qua interactant, can
> be effective or break down? A psychology is necessar-
> ily involved, but one stripped down and cramped to
> suit the sociological study of conversation, track
> meets, banquets, jury trials, and street loitering.

> Not, then men and their moments. Rather moments and
> their men. (Goffman, 1967, p. 3)

One of the primary characteristics of this field is its con-
tradictory nature. Some writers see effective relations as basic-
ally open, congruent, "authentic", while others see relationships
as inevitably based in presentations and maintained by "facework".
Some writers start from the person as a private and unique center
of experience and action, while others start from the social milieu
from which each person emerges and declare that personal individual-
ity is an illusion. Finally, some writers see influence as based
in an unfolding of each person through encounter with the Other,
while others see it as a process of negotiation and exchange for
interpersonal goods and services.

These contradictions in the theory are matched by those of
everyday experience. Folk sayings exhort us to curb our expres-
sions of our experience, telling us to "Put a good face on it",
that "Least said, soonest mended", and "If you can't say anything
nice, don't say anything at all". Other sayings contradict these,
and tell us to "Speak out", to "Give him a piece of your mind",
that "Honesty is the best policy", and of course, "To thine own
self be true ..."

These contradictions in the literature of interpersonal re-
lations and in everyday experience tend to push the inquirer in
one direction or the other, so that he tries to find the "truth"
in "authenticity" on the one hand, or in "facework" on the other.
The contradiction becomes a choice: "facework" or "authenticity".

But this is to create a false dichotomy, because the relationship between the two concepts must in essence be dialectical:

> Two concepts are dialectically related when the elabor-
> ation of one draws attention to the other as an opposed
> concept which has been implicitly denied or excluded by
> the first; when one discovers that the opposite concept
> is implied (presupposed) for the validity or applicabil-
> ity of the first; and when one finds that the real theo-
> retical problem is that of the interrelation between the
> two concepts and the real descriptive problem that of
> determining their interrelations in a particular case.
> This is known to dialecticians as the principle of the
> interpenetration of opposites. (Diesing, 1971, p. 212)

The problem, then, is not "facework" or "authenticity", it is "facework" and "authenticity": the basic assumption of this disser-tation is that in any relationship these two will coexist. The problem of this dissertation is first to define clearly the essen-tial contradictions of interpersonal relations -- to define more clearly what the terms "facework" and "authenticity" stand for -- and second to discover how these contradictions coexist and give each other meaning in particular relationships.

Chapter Two contains a further exploration of these theoreti-cal issues: it starts with a discussion of the idea of a dialectic as applied to human affairs, since this is required to be clear about the kind of dimensions of relationship we are seeking, and proceeds to a description of three basic dialectics of relationship.

Empirical exploration of these issues presented some particu-lar methodological challenges. In a study of persons and of per-sonal interaction, data comes not from a passive observation of

inert objects, but from a mutually active and aware interaction
of persons; thus, this kind of study is inevitably an intervention
into other persons' lives. The present study involved a major in-
tervention since very intimate information was required for an
adequate description of the interpenetration of "facework" and
"authenticity" in relationships. Rather than attempt to minimize
or balance this intervention, a methodology was invented in which
it was accepted as an integral part of the study: the data was
collected at a "Workshop for the exploration of two-person rela-
tionships" which had the twin aims of learning and research.
Chapter Three discusses these methodological issues in greater
detail and presents a description of the workshop. Chapter Four
contains studies of five of the pairs who attended the workshop,
using the theory discussed in Chapter Two as a means of ordering
the data obtained at the workshop.

Chapter Five contains a general discussion of the studies,
looking first at ways in which the studies illuminate the theory
and demand revisions and elaborations. In addition, this chapter
contains a discussion of the implications of the studies for the
development of a theory of change in relationships and social
systems in general. Finally, Chapter Six contains a discussion
of the requirements of a holistic methodology.

CHAPTER II

THEORY

This chapter contains a further exploration of the theoretical approaches to the problem of "facework" and "authenticity". The first part goes further into the idea of a dialectic as applied to human affairs; the second part is an attempt to clarify the terms Facework and Authenticity by identifying the basic contradictions of human relationships.

A Further Exploration of the Dialectic

The essence of a dialectic lies in the coexistence of opposites; more than that, it lies in the requirement each pole has for the other for the reciprocal establishment of identity. Thus cold is meaningless without the idea of hot, pleasure unknowable without pain, yin incomprehensible without yang; any figure requres a ground from which to emerge and with which to contrast. Relations between persons are essentially dialectical, since Self requires Other and Other requires Self for the mutual establishment of identity.

Dialectical reasoning is based first in the development of a theme or statement which describes a situation. Such a "totalization" is primarily a hypothesis about reality, and its truth or utility is judged empirically, by its ability to predict.

However, this theme, and the action which stems from it, must inevitably and in time draw attention to its opposite or contradiction. At such a time, one is required to radically restructure one's view of the situation, to pull together the contradictory events into a new synthesis which includes the original contradiction; and one is required to do this again and again as new contradictions emerge to disturb each new gestalt.

Thus, understanding and action progress through a three-step process of the statement of a theme, the emergence of a counter-theme which contradicts the theme, and the development of a new theme which moves us beyond the contradiction in a comprehensive synthesis which includes both theme and countertheme.

> The progression depends on recognizing the principle
> of contradiction, the principle of the inseparability
> of the experience of contradiction from all human ex-
> perience in whatever mode this experience occurs. And
> this understanding may only occur dialectically --
> through personal experience and action. The progressive
> reconciliation of the contradictions of experience in
> successively more comprehensive syntheses is the prin-
> ciple of recognizing the contradictory nature of exper-
> ience, and the validity of contradiction as such.
> (Esterson, 1972, p. 227)

The Polsters (1973), in their discussion of "contact episodes" in gestalt therapy, illustrate a dialectical movement: they des-cribe an episode as starting with the emergence of a need, and

> the process of playing out that need, developing its
> details so that it may move toward completion and sat-
> isfaction. Then, as the need becomes clearer it may
> meet resistance because the fulfillment of need in
> psychotherapy usually does rise in the face of strong
> resistance. At that point where the power of the need

and the strength of the resistance are approximately
equal, the impasse occurs. The impasse may be seen as
the fulcrum around which the individual's movement may
be blocked or advanced. (p. 175)

A theme develops which is contradicted by the resistance of the

individual to fulfilling that need; this contradiction reaches an

impasse which is broken by the introduction of new experiences,

for example by the therapist, so that the individual reaches a

resolution of the episode. This is achieved through a "reshuffl-

ing of the familiar ingredients" which impels the patient to "move

beyond a stale rehash of old contradictions" (E. & M. Polster,

1973, p. 181). This is of course the same kind of "radical recon-

struction" to which I referred earlier.

Dialectical thinking, as the term will be used in this disser-

tation, involves first a recognition that most human -- personal,

interpersonal, social -- phenomena must be seen in terms of the

coexistence of opposites; this is the principle of contradiction

mentioned before. Thus, if we are concerned about "authenticity"

in relationships, we must view it as coexisting with its opposite,

"facework". The relevant question is not only, "under what circum-

stances do "authenticity" and "facework" occur?", but also, and

maybe more importantly, "how do 'facework' and 'authenticity'

coexist in relationships?" This dissertation is concerned with

this latter question.

Theoretically, there are three modes of coexistence of oppo-

sites, which correspond to the movement of dialectical reasoning.

First, there may be a simple theme or statement, apparently unen-
cumbered by contradiction, such as "Effective relationships are
authentic." Such a clear and direct statement provides a rally
point for action, and may thus be the basis of a social movement:
the early stages of the "encounter" movement was based on this
assumption; the cry for "Equal Rights" has a similar urgent
quality. Yet these simple themes or statements -- they are in
essence slogans -- carry with them contradictions which are for
the present hidden.

In the second mode of coexistence of opposites, the contradic-
tion is explicit. Thus, the definition of effective relations as
"authentic" is contradicted by the realization that individual ex-
perience is, thank God, invisible to the other, that we are strang-
ers even in parts of our most intimate relationships; to say nothing
of the fact that in some circumstances disclosure of one's flow of
experience would be a naive or suicidal action. Similarly, Equal
Rights movements, pressing for equality with the mainstream of
society, have been challenged by movements for the expression and
development of the uniqueness of the minority. The change from a
demand for integration of blacks to an expression of black pride,
and the development of radical feminism from the Women's Movement
(Atkinson, 1974; Johnston, 1973) are examples of this. The emer-
gence of such a contradiction comes about as a result of action:
the attempt to live and act on the basis of the theme brings the

contradiction to light (Esterson, 1972; Freire, 1974).

The existence of an explicit contradiction may be managed in a variety of ways, of which repression, inhibition, vascillation, and confrontation are clear possibilities. The purpose of a human change process is often conceptualized as an attempt to identify, confront, and move beyond what may be seen as the principal contradiction of the moment. We have already seen this in the Polsters' description of a contact episode; Erikson's epigenetic model of human development (1963) describes the development and passing of a series of crises in life; Whitaker and Lieberman (1964) describe group therapy in terms of a focal conflict model. More generally, Esterson defines radical social change as the abolition of the "current principal social contradiction" (1972, p. 235).

It is interesting that bi-polar concepts are popular in explorations of human affairs; they seem to capture the contradiction of the moment and provide at least some clarity. In the applied behavioral sciences McGregor's (1960) statement of Theory X and Theory Y must be the classic example of this, but there are many others such as Argyris' (1957) exploration of personality and organization, Maslow's (1968) Deficiency and Being motivation, Blake and Mouton's (1964) concern for people and concern for production. Kaufmann (1970), in the prologue to his translation of Buber's I and Thou, writes that

> Man's world is manifold, and his attitudes are manifold.
> What is manifold is often frightening because it is not
> neat and simple. Men prefer to forget how many possibil-
> ities are open to them. (p. 9)

The third mode of coexistence of opposites lies in the movement from explicit contradiction to the development of a synthesis which contains but moves past that contradiction. In this situation a new order, a new gestalt is formed, which soon becomes self-evident with the clarity of hindsight, and thus becomes a new theme which generates its own new contradiction.

One example of this is Blake and Mouton's (1964) synthesis of concern for production (9,1 style) with concern for people (1,9 style), resulting in a style in which high production is attained through effective use of people (9,9 style). This synthesis very quickly generates its own contradiction, since it is evident that a person who can maintain a 9,9 style is not a manager, but rather a "superperson": the demands on the individual are impossible.

Another example may be taken from approaches to madness, which was originally located as a problem of the individual (and of course still very often is). The advent of double-bind theory (Bateson, 1972) meant that some forms of madness could be seen as products of intolerable social situations, so that the problem became located in the family, for example in the "schizophregenic mother". This contradiction -- the problem is in the individual versus the problem is in the social environment -- is to some extent resolved by seeing the individual as the "identified patient" in a troubled situation and the problem as located in the whole nexus of family relationships (Laing and Esterson, 1964). This kind of analysis

can be applied to many forms of social deviance: once the resolution is seen, it often appears rather obvious.

However, the idea that a contradiction can be "resolved" is misleading. Clearly contradictions in theory can be resolved, as unsatisfactory concepts are replaced by more complete ones, and in this way theory may be said to "advance". Similarly, the contradictions that occur on a pathway of growth may be said in some sense to be resolved, as is illustrated in Erikson's epigenetic model of the stages of development. But it is in many ways a fallacy to speak of resolution, since when we explore human life we are attempting to understand ways in which people cope with ontological "givens": the inevitable problems of human existence.

Thus, Bion's (1961) work in groups demonstrates that life in a group involves at some level coping with dependency, with fight and flight, and with love: there is no permanent resolution of the issues, rather each mode of the "basic group" is a saviour of the previous mode. Glidewell (1970) has used these three modalities to explore what he calls the "perpetual problems" of living with other people: when and how to fight and run away; when and how to be dependent and to be dependable; and when and how to offer love and to seek love. Similarly, Slater (1974) writes of the "layeredness" of culture:

> According to this perspective, any pattern, values, ideal, or behavioral tendency is always present in a culture at any time, along with its polar opposite. Only the relative emphasis given to each pole and the

ways of arranging their simultaneous expression tend to
change. One pole is dominant, given overt expression,
and highly valued; the other is forced to express itself
around the edges ... This rearrangement theory, then,
sees change as merely the fluid patterns formed by the
incessant variegated collisions between irreconcilable
but equally necessary opposites. (p. 164-165)

Thus, while theories of human relationship, and indeed the

less formal personal constructs of relationship, may progress

dialectically, as diverse conceptual elaborations become synthe-

sized into a new more encompassing whole, the inherent problems

of living with other people can only be resolved for the present,

temporarily, and the resolution of one contradiction is likely to

draw attention to another. This is not to deny the possibility of

developmental trends as basic issues are played out in more elabor-

ated forms; rather, I am attempting to avoid our culture's over-

emphasis on development and growth. As May (1967) points out,

... we can no longer talk about simple "growth" as the
basic need of the human being, for growth is always
within a dialectical relationship in a dilemma which
is never fully resolved. (p. 19)

This viewpoint is not static; the idea that we can never re-

solve the basic contradictions of human existence draws attention

to the point of view that to travel hopefully is better than to

arrive. In addition, as the existentialists point out, it places

heavy emphasis on individual choice and commitment to act despite

contradiction. It is even possible that development involves an

emphasis on the contradiction, as May (1967) suggests in connection

with one particular polarity:

> ... in the dialectical process between these two poles
> lies the development, and the deepening and widening,
> of human consciousness. (p. 20)

This discussion of the dialectic has moved us to a point of greater clarity in an attempt to understand "facework" and "authenticity": we need to define the basic contradictory dimensions of relationships between persons. This is the task of the next section of this chapter.

Dialectics of Relation

In this section I explore three basic "givens" of interpersonal life: these are the inevitable contradictions around which relations between persons must be patterned. The three are based in a simple statement of the subject of this dissertation, a simple definition of interpersonal life: separate persons in relation.

First, separate: an essential part of a relationship is that those involved in it remain separate persons. Maybe transcendence of the boundaries of individuals is possible, but that transcendence would take us right out of the realm of interpersonal relations; my basic assumption is that the flow of experience of an individual is invisible even to the most intimate other, and that a relationship involves two persons with separate flows of experience who are yet in contact. Thus, one of the basic contradictions of relationship lies in the simultaneous existence of separateness and contact in a relationship. This I term the dialectic

of <u>Self and Other</u>.

Second, <u>relation</u>: a relationship is not the simple addition of two persons, it is the creation of an <u>interperson</u>, a social system with dynamics of its own which evolve from the patterns of interaction and interexperience of its members. The development of an interperson involves the development of interidentity: the interlocking, complementary identity of two persons. The dialectic is between the individual identity each person brings to the relationship, the self-concept which is of course being formed through relations with others, and the identity given through membership in the interperson. Interperson identity will simultaneously enhance and inhibit individual identity. This I term the dialectic of <u>Person and Interperson</u>.

Third, <u>persons</u>: one of the very basic paradoxes of existence is that human beings can be regarded and treated both as subject and as object, and thus a relationship involves persons as subjects and as objects simultaneously. One of the ways this is expressed is through two approaches to <u>influence</u>. This can be based in the other as object, depersonalizing them -- propaganda is a good example; or alternatively in other as subject, in an "encounter" between persons, a mutual understanding and confirmation in which influence is the outcome of a confrontation with a different other. This I term the dialectic of <u>Subject and Object</u>: of the three it is the most difficult to grasp.

The next few pages explore each of these dialectics of rela-
tion in greater depth, and discuss some of the issues that arise
from them.

Self and Other

A human relationship involves <u>separate</u> persons in relation.
The ability of a person to join with another rests in the capacity
to stand in dialectical relation with the other: one essence of
relationship is that the persons involved retain their boundaries,
are in contact, and yet are separate.

Ortega y Gasset (1957), who approaches the issue from the per-
spective that each person exists in the "radical solitude" of his
own world, speaks of the enormous paradox that there appears, in
this world, <u>another</u> solitude, and thus "a world alien to mine, an
<u>other</u> world" (p. 119, original emphasis). He points out that:

> ... the only class of being capable of responding to
> me ... the only class of beings of whom I could hope
> that they would make it possible for me to emerge from
> my solitude and communicate with them, namely other
> men -- precisely because they are such, because they
> are <u>other</u> men and <u>other</u> lives like mine, are in their
> radical reality incommunicable with me. Between us
> only a relative and indirect and always dubious com-
> munication is possible. But, first and last, that is,
> at the beginning and at the end of my experience in
> respect to the Other Man, for me he is fundamentally
> the Being who is strange to me, the essential stranger.
> (p. 140, original emphasis)

This essential strangeness of the other, the separateness
and invisibility of his experience, allows for the possibility of
contact between persons at the boundary of "two compellingly

attractive but clearly differentiated figures of interest" (Polsters,

1973, p. 107). Only from separateness can contact be made. Buber (1957a)

has described the basis of human life using the similar terms of

distance and relation:

> ... a twofold movement which is of such a kind that the
> one movement is the presupposition of the other. I pro-
> pose to call the first movement "the primal setting at a
> distance" and the second "entering into relation". That
> the first movement is the presupposition of the other is
> plain from the fact that one can enter into relation only
> with being which has been set at a distance, more precise-
> ly, has become an independent opposite. (p. 97)

Laing (1965) writes of "ontological insecurity", the position

of persons who cannot in everyday life maintain dialectical rela-

tions with others, and who as a consequence separate a "disembodied

self" from others to avoid the risk of being "engulfed" by others,

losing themselves.

> Thus, instead of the polarities of separateness and rela-
> tedness based in individual autonomy, there is the anti-
> thesis between complete loss of being by absorption into
> the other person (engulfment), and complete aloneness
> (isolation). There is no safe third possibility of a
> dialectical relationship between persons, both sure of
> their own ground and, on this very basis, able to "lose
> themselves" in each other. Such merging of being can
> only occur when the individuals are sure of themselves.
> (p. 44)

In relationships, people are usually able to regulate the ten-

sion between contact and separateness by keeping some parts of their

experience concealed while allowing other parts to be open. In

addition, there is the possibility of dissemblement and deceit,

since the person is able to keep hidden his experience and present

an appearance -- an act, a line, a facade -- which is in some sense more suitable to the circumstances. Relations with others involve the management of privacy -- letting others in and keeping others out -- which is the management of ultimate aloneness and the need for others; and they involve the management of transparency and presentation.

This issue has been described in a great many ways, such as open and closed, authentic and pretending, the transparent self and the presentation of self. This diversity is not surprising in view of the centrality of the issue for human life, but it does make a choice of terms rather difficult. The poles of the issue have been well explored in the human sciences, as may be seen from the following comparison of Rogers and Goffman who, starting from a very similar analysis of the problem end up in quite different places.

Rogers (1961) starts from the position that effective human relations rest on the fullest possible expression of human experience. He uses the concept of <u>congruence</u>, which he defines as a "matching of experience, awareness and communication", and he hypothesizes that in a relationship

> The greater the congruence of experience, awareness and communication on the part of one individual, the more the ensuing relationship will involve: a tendency to reciprocal communication with a quality of increasing congruence; a tendency to more mutually accurate understanding of the communications; improved psychological adjustment and functioning of both parties; mutual satisfaction in the relationship. (p. 344)

Rogers (1961) identifies two sources of incongruence, between experience and awareness, and between awareness and communication:

> When there is an incongruence between experience and awareness, it is usually spoken of as defensiveness, or denial to awareness. When the incongruence is between awareness and communication, it is usually thought of as falseness or deceit. (p. 341)

However, both sources of incongruence disobey Buber's (1957b) injunction of "letting no seeming creep in" (p. 108), and both result in a relative disintegration of the relationship.

While Rogers (1961) places congruence at the center of effective human relationships, he is by no means oblivious to the potential cost, and he writes of the "existential choice", "Do I dare to communicate the degree of congruence I feel?" (p. 345). Here he is in the company of Buber (1957b), who writes "To yield to seeming is man's essential cowardice, to resist is his essential courage" (p. 108). These writers are clear that the courageous and fully human choice is always toward openness, but they acknowledge that this is often the more difficult choice for a human being to make.

The contrasting viewpoint is made by Goffman, who describes interaction in terms of the management of impressions and appearances, using the terms "facework" (1967) and "performance" (1959). Goffman's orientation to interaction is based in concealment, and in the management of impressions for others. His argument is that there is a "fundamental dialectic":

> When one individual enters the presence of others, he
> will want to discover the facts of the situation ...
> Full information ... is rarely available; in its ab-
> sence, the individual tends to employ substitutes --
> cues, tests, hints, expressive gestures, status sym-
> bols, etc. -- as predictive devices. In short, since
> the reality that the individual is concerned with is
> unperceivable at the moment, appearances must be re-
> lied upon in its stead. And, paradoxically, the more
> the individual is concerned with the reality that is
> not available to perception, the more he must concen-
> trate his attention on appearances. (Goffman, 1959,
> p. 249)

This is, in essence, a description of the dialectic of two persons
in relation based on the "invisibility" of experience. Goffman
argues that one way to manage this is a "gentlemanly" approach,
in which people

> ... give little conscious heed to the fact that impres-
> sions are being formed about them but rather act with-
> out gile or contrivance enabling the individual to re-
> ceive valid impressions about them and their efforts.
> (1959, p. 250)

But he contrasts this by summarizing the theme of his writing:

> But there is another way, a shorter and more efficient
> way, in which the observed can influence the observer.
> Instead of allowing an impression of their activity to
> arise as an incidental by-product of their activity,
> they can reorient their frame of reference and devote
> their efforts to the creation of desired impressions.
> (1959, p. 250)

Thus, Goffman, while allowing for the possibility of congruence,
in his writting stresses the management of presentations. He ack-
nowledges a push toward authenticity, writing of a person who may
be "too socialized, who leaves the others feeling that they do not
know how they really stand with him" (1967, p. 40), but his basic

position is that "a surface of agreement must be maintained by means of discretion and white lies" (1967, p. 36).

This comparison shows how Rogers and Goffman, dealing with the same problem of relations between people, have ended up seeing the same thing in different ways, Rogers arguing that effective relationships are based in congruence, Goffman that they are based in pretense and presentation. My earlier discussion of dialectics suggests that both viewpoints are true, and that the real question is to discover how they intermingle and interpenetrate in different relationships. To understand a relationship dialectically we need to know:

1. In what ways are the two persons open with each other, and in what ways are they closed?

2. How do openness and closedness fit together? In what ways are they in contradiction?

3. How is this contradiction managed? What is its significance for the relationship?

These questions should help us move towards an understanding of the coexistence of the concepts discussed here, rather than their simple polarity.

Person and Interperson

A human relationship involves separate persons in relation.

... our sense of union depends paradoxically on a heightened sense of separateness, and it is this paradox we constantly seek to resolve. The function which synthesizes the need for union and for separation is contact ... Contact is not just togetherness or joining. It can only happen between two separate beings, always requiring

capture in union. At the moment of union, one's full-
est sense of his person is swept along into a new cre-
ation. I am no longer only me, but me and thee make
we. Although me and thee make we in name only, through
this naming we gamble the dissolution of either me or
thee ... In contacting you, I wager my independent ex-
istence, but only through the contact function can the
realization of our identities develop. (E. & M. Polster,
1973, p. 99, my emphasis)

In this passage, the Polsters bridge between the idea that a rela-

tionship involves two separate people and the idea that together

they make a "new creation" to which they must both relate. "Thee

and me make we": the joining of two persons in relation is the

creation of a new whole -- the We, You, Them -- which is formed

when two people get together (or are placed together) in relation.

A relationship exists as a synthesis which comprehends the separate

existence of the two in relation: "What matters here is the we.

In it, I do not live but co-live" (Ortega y Gasset, 1957, p. 146).

The dialectic of Self and Other is the separateness and contact

of the two parts of the interperson; the emphasis now changes to

look at the dialectic of the person and the interperson, the larger

social unit of which he is a part.

The interperson is a new whole, and as such it is a level of

phenomenon in its own right. Buber (1957b) shows how the interper-

son needs to be considered as a separate level of analysis, when

he points out that it is not possible to understand relations be-

tween persons entirely in terms of a larger group or culture:

... to be thus bound up (in a social system) means only
that each individual existence is enclosed and contained

> in the group existence. It does not mean that between
> one person and another there exists any kind of personal
> relation. (Buber, 1957b, p. 105)

Nor is it possible to understand the interperson entirely as psy-

chological:

> When two men converse with each other, the psychologi-
> cal is certainly an important part of the situation, as
> each listens and each prepares to speak. Yet this is
> only the hidden accompaniment to the conversation itself,
> the phonetic event so fraught with meaning, whose meaning
> is to be found in neither of the two partners, not in both
> together, but only in their dialogue itself, in this "be-
> tween" they live together. (Buber, 1957b, p. 106)

In referring to the interperson as a "new whole", I am also

saying that it is a _system_ -- and thus an entity different from

the simple sum of two people. Angyal (1969) points out that

> In aggregates it is significant that the parts are added;
> in a system it is significant that they are _arranged_.
> (p. 26, my emphasis)

The identities and behaviors of the persons in relation must be

arranged, structurally related -- they must complete, complement,

contrast, reflect each other -- for there to be a relationship.

As the interperson is a system, we must look for the _patterning_ or

organization of parts rather than their simple addition; for to

put two persons together, to simply add them (if that were possible),

would not result in a relationship.

Laing (1969) speaks of this as _complementary identity_. He

points to the need to understand individuals in the context of

their relationships with others, and each person acting upon others

and acted upon by others.

> A woman cannot be a mother without a child. She needs
> a child to give her the identity of a mother. A man
> needs a wife for him to be a husband. A lover without
> a beloved is only a would-be lover. Tragedy or comedy,
> according to the point of view. <u>All "identities" re-
> quire an other: some other in and through a relation-
> ship with whom self identity is actualized</u> ...
>
> By complementarity, I denote that function of personal
> relations whereby the other fulfills or completes self.
> One person may complement another in many different
> senses. This function is biologically determined at one
> level, and a matter of highly individualized choice at
> the other extreme ...
>
> Every relationship implies a definition of self by other
> and other by self. (Laing, 1969, p. 82-86, my emphasis)

Thus, in considering the interperson, we need to think in terms of

interaction, interidentity, interexperience (Laing, 1967), the

patterns of action, identity, and experience which the two persons

create. These patterns have, of course, a certain stability in

their own right.

Laing's concept of complementarity is sufficient for my pur-

poses here, but I want to draw attention in passing to some more

explicit analyses of the structure of relationships. Watzlawick

et al. (1967) contrast <u>symmetrical</u> relations in which the behavior

of the participants is similar, equal, and in which differences in

their behavior are minimal, with <u>complementary</u> relations, in which

the differences are maximized (note that this use of "complementar-

ity" is <u>not</u> identical to Laing's). Leary (1961) has developed a

model of varieties of interpersonal behavior based on the dimen-

sions <u>dominance-submission</u> and <u>love-hate</u>; and in some ways similarly,

Brown (1965) differentiates between <u>status</u> and <u>solidarity</u>. In general, we might say that the structure of a relationship involves behavior and identities which fit together on the basis of similarity and difference, and on the basis of vertical (one-up/one-down) and horizontal (equal) components.

The structure of interidentity may be seen as derived from three sources. First, from the individual patterns that each person brings to the relationship, the simple individual interaction of two persons. Second, from the press of the culture they inhabit: every culture contains models of relationship to which individuals are pressured to conform. Third, from the task or other purpose that the relationship is formed to complete, which may require division of responsibility or specialization which impacts on the human relationship.

Thus, any relationship imposes an identity on the participants which will at the same time facilitate and inhibit their "being themselves". On the one hand, the relationship will enable them to take the identity which it offers, and be more fully that part of themselves; on the other hand, the structure of the relationship prevents them from being other parts of themselves. To the extent a relationship involves complementing another person, the individual may find he takes an identity-for-the-other more than an identity-for-himself; to the extent that the relationship is socially defined, he may find he takes a more generalized role

than he is a unique person; and to the extent that the relation-
ship involves a task, he may find his identity is limited, or
specialized, or distorted by the pressures of that task.

Similarly, the individual threatens the relationship: pres-
sures for the expression of individuality are in contradiction to
pressures for the maintenance of the relationship, which require
the individual to take the identity prescribed for him by the in-
terperson.

The relationship between person and interperson may be por-
trayed in two ways: with the individual as figural and the inter-
person as ground; and with the interperson as figural and the in-
dividual as ground, as shown in Figure 1.

In (i), the individuals are figural, and the interperson is
overshadowed by the individuality of the persons in the relation-
ship; they can "be themselves" and there is no threat to their in-
dividual identity. But to the extent that the relationship is far
in the background, it is unlikely to effect them much and is un-
likely to have much significance for them, so while the personal
risks are not high, neither are the rewards. In (ii), the inter-
person is figural, which means that the relationship has assumed
a clarity and a potency which marks it out from other parts of
life. It is likely that the person "feels different" somehow when
in this relationship. The impact is high, for good or for bad,
and so are the threats to individual identity.

Figure 1
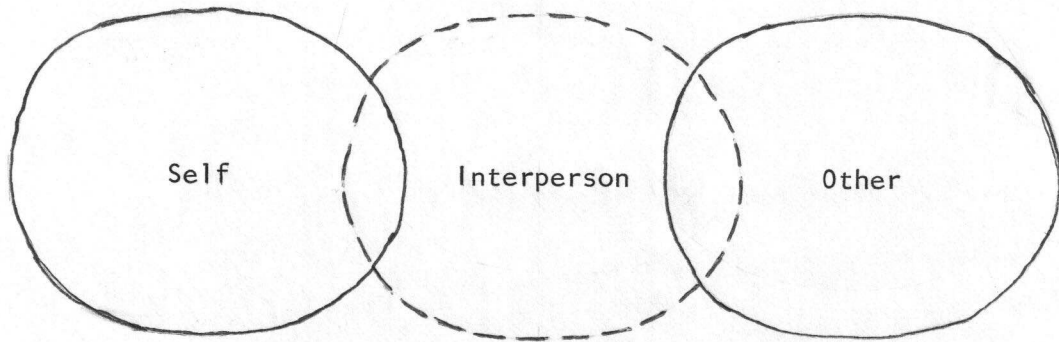
(i)
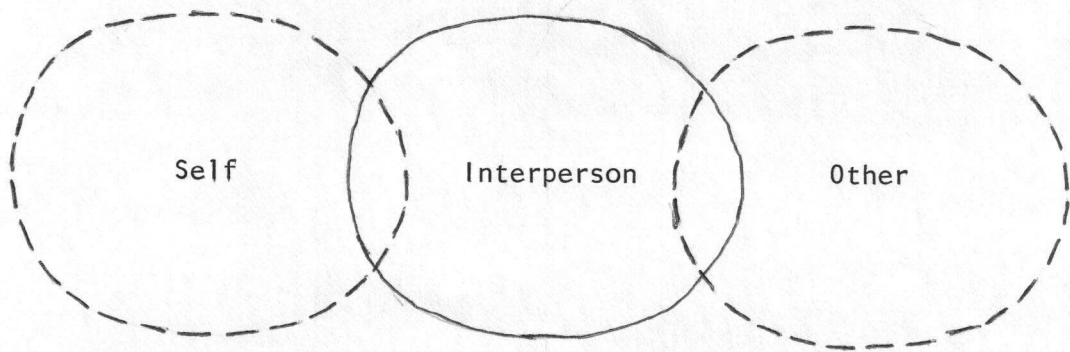
(ii)

It is simply not possible to understand the development or the present state of an individual except in the context of his relations with others; the human person is a product of his interpersonal and social milieu. Interpersonal and social situations provide the only environment for the development of human life. They create the potential for the emergence of a unique human person, and at the same time they constrain that development to fit in with the requirements of the social system. Thus, the interperson is the primary and essential place for the individual to discover, create, express his individuality; at the same time the structure of the relationship limits him.

Thus, person and interperson are in dialectical relationship; to understand a relationship dialectically, one needs to ask the following questions:

1. What is the structure of the interperson? What are the patterns of interidentity, interexperience, interaction?

2. In what ways are individual expression and the maintenance of the interperson in conflict?

3. How is this contradiction managed? What is its significance for the relationship?

Subject and Object

A human relationship involves separate persons in relation, and it is possible to view persons in a multiplicity of ways without them actually changing at all. In particular, persons may be viewed as subject and as object.

One views persons as subjects in terms of _intrinsic_ qualities: the flow of experience; needs and wants; freedom and choice; purpose. On the other hand, one views persons as objects in terms of _extrinsic_ qualities: appearance and behavior; utility; predictability; purpose-serving. In a sense, it is possible to see the whole person from a subjective viewpoint, while from an objective viewpoint is inevitably fragmenting. Since a person is aware of at least a portion of his own experience, while the experience of others is invisible, it is easy to view Self as subject and Other as object.

Bugental (1965) points out that it is also possible to view oneself as object. He differentiates between the _I-process_ which is "irreducibly a unity and invariably subject ... the essential being" (p. 201), and _Me_ or _Self_ which are perceptual objects. This differentiation is important because

> ... the present confusion results in the _person_ losing his sense of being, which means his awareness as subject. the _I_, and comes to experience himself solely as object (_Self_, _Me_) and thus without genuine awareness, choice, relations, and so forth. (p. 202)

One recognizes the _other_ as subject to the extent that one is subject for oneself, and to the extent that one experiences the other to be like oneself. This happens when one sees another center of experience and orientation to the world, another center of intentional, purposive action.

To treat the other as a thing, to depersonalize, is to treat the other as having no subjectivity of "its" own, and hence no

reciprocal intentions (Laing, 1969). A thing can be bought and sold, used, manipulated, acted upon: it is valued for what it _does_, rather than for what it _is_; a relationship with a thing is of quite a different order from a relationship with a subjective person. Much academic psychology, and also a lot of psychiatry, has been criticized for its depersonalization of human beings, and the so-called Third Force Psychology, the "humanistic" movement, has developed to emphasize concern for the subjective (Maslow, 1968).

However, persons are inevitably things in some aspects of their existence. In this context, Cooper (1967) follows Sartre in differentiating between primary and secondary alienation. Secondary alienation is a result of exploitation and the social structures that grow up as a result of exploitation. Primary alienation, on the other hand, is a necessary, _unavoidable_ part of human action and experience, which may take two forms. First, "alteration", whereby "my acts for myself" are replaced by "my acts for the other", so that one turns oneself into what the other (alter) wants one to become; this is a similar concept to Riesman's (1950) "other directedness". Second, primary alienation may take the form of "objectification", whereby "my acts become actually and recordably impressed on the physical or social reality of the world" (Cooper, 1967, p. 46).

Buber (1970), in identifying the two "primary words" I-Thou and I-It, has pointed out how personalization and depersonalization

are based in the nature of human existence, and thus coexist in any relation. Other persons are both subject and object, and these two aspects of a person call for very different forms of interaction between persons.

If we approach another as object, our stance is likely to be hedonistic, and our question likely to be, "What can he/she do for us?" We are likely to look for ways in which the other's behavior can meet our needs and for ways to avoid the noxious by-products of interaction. The approach is evaluative, influence is based in the balance of power that each has to meet the other's needs, and interaction will be akin to negotiation and exchange of goods.

If we approach the other as subject, our stance is likely to be existential, and our question is likely to be, "How can I meet this other person?" We are likely to look for ways in which we can build an understanding of the other's view of his world and of us, which will give us a basis for mutual confirmation, or, where we fail to understand the other's world, for mutual disconfirmation. The approach to the other is accepting and allowing the other person's existence. Influence, in this case, is based in encounter. Two separate persons meet and understand each other in their different subjectivities; they confront each other with their differences. Yet they do not attempt to control the other; rather they allow each other to make of the confrontation what each will, so that the meeting with a different other facilitates the actualization of each.

Each of these approaches has been taken as the basis for a theory of interpersonal relations: an exchange theory and an existential theory. Exchange theory deals with persons as objects, and deals with relations as, in effect, transactions of goods. This approach has been well summarized by Carson (1969), who draws on the work of Leary (1961), Homans (1973), and Thibaut and Kelley (1959). Carson uses Leary's circumplex model to categorize a limited number of complementary interpersonal behaviors, and assumes that interpersonal behavior is motivated to elicit from people appropriate responses which allow a person to behave in preferred ways; like Leary he argues that we spend our lives training others to respond to us appropriately. He then uses Thibaut and Kelley's exchange model to argue that appropriate responses are rewarding, innappropriate responses costly, and that a relationship is evaluated in terms of the balance of rewards and costs. If in the calculus the costs are too high, the person will either try to change the other's behavior, or try to leave the relationship.

In this exchange model, interpersonal relations are seen as an "exchange of goods, material and non-material" (Homans, 1973, p. 391). Thus, clearly the first concern is with the evaluation of the balance of rewards and costs, with the economics of the transaction. This is followed by a concern to maximize the benefits, and to change the actions of other people to suit one's own

ends: the economics of interaction soon become the politics of

interaction.

On the other hand is the existential view, that relations

with others involve an encounter of two separate centers of sub-

jective experience.   To the extent that these two are able to

understand each other they are able to "confirm each other in

their individual beings by means of genuine meetings" (Buber, 1957b,

p. 103).

> A confirmatory response is relevant to the evocative
> action, it accords recognition to the evocatory act,
> and accepts its significance for the evoker, if not
> for the respondent. A confirmatory action is a direct
> response, it is "to the point", or "on the same wave-
> length" as the initiatory or evocative action. A par-
> tially confirmatory response need not be in agreement,
> or gratifying, or satisfying. Rejection can be con-
> firmatory if it is direct, not tangential, and recog-
> nizes the evoking action and grants it significance
> and validity. (Laing, 1969, p. 99)

Confirmation is a _relevant_ response, and thus is dependent on the

ability to understand the experience of the other person.   In this

sense, I use confirmation in a similar way to Roger's (1961) use

of acceptance, which is not meaningful unless based in an under-

standing of the other person.   Buber (1957a) sees full confirma-

tion as entering into the subjectness of the other, so that "for

the first time does the other become a self for me" (p. 103).

It is _not_ possible to confirm another whose world view you do

not understand, or to confirm those _parts_ of the other you do not

understand.   At most, is it possible to say directly, "I do not

understand", which at least helps to avoid a radical disconfirmation; unfortunately, in these circumstances one often does not know that one does not understand.

These two approaches to relations between persons are in many ways complementary; they deal with different aspects of interpersonal life, and it would be foolish to reject either since both are needed. It is inappropriate to deal with another in a task situation as if all that is needed is an encounter of subjective experience, since objective capabilities and actions also matter. On the other hand, if one is trying to understand another's experience of a situation and to build a base for mutual support and confirmation, it is quite inappropriate to base the relationship on evaluation and exchange: evaluation of another's being and experiencing is likely to get in the way of effective communication, and is thus likely to make encounter and mutual confirmation less possible.

It is easy to see how the two approaches are complementary, and it is easy to see how they directly conflict. What is not clear is how they may be intermingled. For example, in a threatening situation, to what extent is it important that the person next to you is your existential comrade in crisis (i.e., subject), and to what extent is it important that he or she is competent (i.e., object) to get you both out of it? Or, to what extent is sexual intercourse a subjective encounter, and to what extent is it the interaction of competent lovers? The whole thing is

additionally confused since the experience of another person is invisible, his experience never directly grasped, so objective behavior must always stand for, or symbolize, the subjective experience in an encounter.

Despite these confusions, we can say that persons are subject and object, so interaction must be based in evaluation-exchange _and_ encounter-confirmation. Again, the relationship between these two is dialectical, and to understand a relationship between two persons one needs to ask the following questions:

1. In what ways is this relationship between persons as object and in what ways between persons as subject? In what ways is it based in evaluation-exchange, and in what ways in encounter-confirmation?

2. What are the ways in which these two modes complement and contradict each other?

3. How is the contradiction managed? What is its significance for the relationship?

One other issue arises. In any exploration of "facework" and "authenticity", questions about the value stance of the writer must be raised; I find that I need to state my own value stance particularly in connection with this issue in an attempt to add clarity to what I have to say.

I stand by what I have written above as an analysis of the human issue. However, I believe that life in our culure tends to reflect _more_ the idea of interaction as exchange than interaction as encounter. Interaction as exchange, "ruthlessly

hedonistic", as Carson (1969) puts it, reflects a concern for the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain: it seeks the other for what he or she can do for us, and tries to avoid the noxiants of interpersonal life. This orientation is basic to our culture, and is well criticized from an existential standpoint as a way of avoiding the full realities of life.

> We were taught, as we grew up, to think there are two faucets to life: one marked "Pleasure" and one marked "Pain". Now we have finally discovered that there is but one faucet, and it is marked "Awareness". If we turn off the faucet we think is marked "Pain", we're turning off all awareness. We feel neither pain nor pleasure. We are empty, dead. (Downing, 1973, p. 14)

Or as Laing (1967) puts it:

> It has always been recognized that if you split Being down the middle, if you insist on grabbing this without that, if you cling to the good without the bad, what happens is that the dissociated evil impulse, now evil in a double sense, returns to permeate the good and turn it into itself. (p. 75)

My position is that in our society we have been successful in formalizing and depersonalizing relationships, in turning them into economic and political events, and that our present position demands a greater emphasis on interaction as encounter-confirmation. But other persons are objects which mediate our environment as well as subjective others, and what we ultimately need is a means of understanding the coexistence of these two modes.

A Tentative Integration: The Notion of Principal Contradiction

I have tried to show that a simple statement of the subject matter of this dissertation, separate persons in relation, may be

seen as containing three dialectics, and I have explored each of these separately. The three are, however, obviously connected, and their separation can be no more than an analytical gambit which needs resynthesis. What, then, is the relationship between these three dialectics?

First, I think the idea of "authenticity" with which I started is well represented by a combination of one pole of each of the three: "authentic" relations, in the tradition of humanistic psychology, are open, they are concerned with individuals and with relations which foster individual actualization, and they are concerned with persons as subjects. In contrast, "facework" encompasses closed relations that maintain a social order of persons as objects.

At a more intricate level, it is possible to indicate different types of relationship according to the way they combine the three sets of poles. An open-person-object relationship might be one in which the separate contribution of persons to a task was the primary concern, while an open-interperson-object relationship would be one in which the task accomplishment involved a collaboration of the two. The open-interperson-subject relationship is the intense mutual involvement of lovers, or a close frienship such as between Narcissus and Goldmund (Hesse, 1968). Situations in which personal survival is at stake might be seen as closed-person-subject, such as Frankl's (1969) experience in a concentration camp where his own experience of subjective meaning was essential for survival,

but could rarely if ever be made public. This is similar to
Sartre's statement of individual freedom, "It is possible to
think 'No'."

Finally, it is likely that in any relationship one of the
three themes will emerge as the principal contradiction around
which the energies of the relationship will be in some way focused;
it is likely that the other dialectics which have been separated
here for analytical and theoretical purposes will, when the rela-
tionship is examined holistically, be closely connected and in-
fluenced by this principal contradiction. Thus, another set of
questions must be asked in any relationship:

1. Does one contradiction stand out as primary?

2. How do other contradictions relate?

3. What is the significance of this principal con-
   tradiction for the relationship?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In designing an empirical study to explore the theoretical
questions posed in the previous chapter, one is faced with three
major methodological problems. The theory is concerned with _per-
sons_ and with _personal interaction_; it is concerned not only with
personal action, but with the flow of _personal experience_ by which
persons make sense of their relationship, experience that will at
times be intimate, if not usually totally hidden; and it is con-
cerned with integration, with a search for a _holistic_ view of re-
lationships.

The design for such research must be based on Laing's (1965)
premise:

> The science of persons is the study of human beings that
> begins from a relationship with the other as person and
> proceeds to an account of the other still as person ...

> The other as person is seen by me as responsible, as
> capable of choice, in short as a self-acting agent.
> (p. 21-22)

In a science or persons, the researcher is not looking for
inert facts that may be observed from outside the subject matter
in the manner of classical physics; rather, the data arises in the
process of interaction with another person:

> In a science of personal interaction ... mutual dist-
> urbance of the observer and the observed is not only
> inevitable in every case but it is this mutual dist-
> urbance which gives rise to the primary facts on which

39

theory is based and not the disturbed or disturbing personal entities. The facts that constitute the observational data of anthropological sciences ... differ in ontological status from natural-scientific facts. Put another way, the observer-observed relation in a science of persons is ontologically continuous (subject-object vis-a-vis subject-object), whereas in natural sciences it is discontinuous (subject vis-a-vis object) permitting a purely exterior description of the field of the observed. (Cooper, 1967, p. 5, original emphasis)

Thus, action, or rather interaction, is inevitable in a science of persons, and the question for a research design is to make that interaction facilitate data gathering rather than regard it as an annoying artifact. The primary task of the researcher is to establish a mutual, personal relationship with his subjects; if he cannot do this, he need not bother further with his data. Apart from his interpersonal skills, the researcher needs to develop a data gathering approach which accords respect to subjects: questions and processes need to be explicit and relevant to his existential position.

As well as not being inert, the data required for a science of persons is often not immediately available, since it is concerned with subjective and experiential processes, with discovering the dialectical process through which an individual construes his world. An "exterior" process of observation cannot grasp this subjective process. The researcher must not only establish a personal relationship with his subject, he must actively involve the other in the process of discovery and description of these experiential processes.

41

Finally, the theoretical task set out in Chapter Two is no-
thing if not holistic. I am trying to establish a way through
which we can understand relationships as both "facework" and "au-
thenticity", trying to integrate different viewpoints into a new
whole. Diesing (1971) describes an approach to research which
attempts to grasp the totality of a situation, which he calls the
"holistic standpoint". This starts from

> ... the belief that human systems tend to develop a char-
> acteristic wholeness or integrity. They are not simply
> a loose collection of traits or wants or reflexes or var-
> iables of any sort; they have a unity that manifests it-
> self in nearly every part ... This means that the charac-
> teristics of a part are largely determined by the whole
> to which it belongs and by its particular location in the
> whole system.... The holist believes not only that wholes
> exist but that his account of them should somehow capture
> and express this holistic quality ... not only the mani-
> fold interrelations among parts that appear in the ori-
> ginal but also some of the unique characteristics, the
> distinctive qualities that differentiate this system
> from others. (p. 137-139)

According to Diesing, the holist tends to use concrete con-
cepts that are often derived from the subject matter itself. He
describes his subject matter as an interconnected whole, relating
each detail to a comprehensive viewpoint. He believes in "the
primacy of his subject matter" (p. 140), that his methodology must
first do justice to the phenomena studied, even if this is to the
detriment of systematic, calibrated, generalizable "scientific"
procedures. This belief in the primacy of his subject matter is
closely connected with "a general attitude of respect for human
beings" (p. 141), a feeling that they should not be treated as

things, should not be fragmented or experimented on in the name of science. This is of course not simply an ethical issue: as I have argued above, it is not possible to study persons if one's methodology defines them as things.

Finally, according to Diesing (1971), the holist believes that the only instrument that is good enough for the study of human existence is the human person: that only a person has the range of perception and empathic qualities which enable him to grasp another existence. Thus, the only devices that should be used in research are those which increase this range of perception, such as cameras and tape recorders. Thus, we are back to the first point: a science of persons begins from a relationship with the other as person.

Research Approach

The specific research problem was to obtain detailed, accurate, intimate data about action and experience in a set of two-person relationships, so that they could be described holistically in terms of the theoretical perspective set out in Chapter Two. The aim was first of all to see if the theory was useful -- if it would facilitate understanding of and action in a relationship; and second to use an empirical approach to add depth and subtelty to the theory. The previous section has pointed to four important considerations for a research design in this instance: that it be

based in a personal relationship; that the data is the result of
a relevant interaction; that the subjects be involved in the ac-
tual process of discovery and description of data; and that the
data be gathered in the context of the relationship as a whole.

With these considerations in mind, I decided to conduct the
research at a "Workshop for the exploration of two-person relation-
ships", which was designed as an experiential event in the tradi-
tion of laboratory education. This workshop was staffed by myself
and a colleague, and the participants, who were pairs of people in
a pre-existing relationship, were recruited by public advertise-
ment:

> The workshop is designed to give participants an oppor-
> tunity to develop deeper understandings of their impor-
> tant relationships, and specifically their relationship
> with one other important person ...

> The workshop is designed for pairs of participants in a
> continuing relationship. We are hoping to attract a
> wide variety of two-person relationships: married
> couples, lovers, friends, colleagues, boss-subordinate
> pairs; same-sex and mixed-sex pairs; pairs who live
> together, play together, and work together ...

We used the theory described in Chapter Two as the basis of
the workshop, and developed activities which would encourage par-
ticipants to explore the three basic contradictions of relation-
ship. In this sense, it was a highly structured workshop in which
the staff assumed a theoretical expertise and a responsibility for
directing learning activities. This process of design was the
first major practical test of the theory, as we struggled to

translate the abstractions of the theory into concrete learning activities.

We were concerned to clearly contract with participants that the workshop was aimed at both learning and research, and to engage them as fully as possible in the research process. To do this, we invented the concept of "learner-researcher", which was described in the publicity notice:

> These two aims will be integrated by inviting participants to engage as "learner-researchers" -- implying that the process of learning is in many ways similar to the process of research. Participants will be invited to explore their relationships through a variety of activities, and to periodically record their discoveries for research purposes.

We explicitly invited the participants to explore, or research, their relationship; to understand it and accept it before trying to change it. Apart from legitimizing the research aspects of the workshop, this is an approach to learning that makes a lot of sense. Beisser (1972) has written of the "paradoxical" theory of change, that "change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not" (p. 88).

As staff of the workshop we took a three-part role, as researchers, trainers, and learners. We were concerned to obtain useful data for the study, and thus we asked pointed questions, made field notes, managed tape-recorders, and so on. But we were also well aware of our responsibility to conduct a professional workshop and give participants their money's worth (although we

charged a minimal tuition). Finally, we were concerned to learn about our own relationship as close friends and colleagues. It is interesting that we rarely experienced these three roles as in conflict. Effective training in the workshop was well based in an attitude of inquiry into relationships, which helped us avoid the normative pitfalls of telling people how they should relate. More important, our attitude of learning about our own relation- ship not only provided useful modeling of the learning-researching process, it moved us away from being outside voyeurs on other people's intimate lives to being more partners in a process of ex- ploration. While training, research, and learning are often seen theoretically as closely related, it was gratifying that we were able to join the three in practice. The major area of conflict was, of course, time: we kept ourselves very busy.

The data for the studies was gathered mainly by tape-recorder: initially I had intended to record only selected parts of the work- ship, but in the end anxiety got the better of me and I recorded nearly all the sessions. A second source of data was field notes, which both staff members took reasonably fully after each session; however, in our multi-roled position, yesterday's researcher's field notes often became today's trainer's interventions, so the tapes became the primary source of data. A third and very minor data source were written materials which were developed in the exercises.

Workshop Design

The workshop was held over a long weekend -- Thursday night to Sunday afternoon -- and was residential. Five pairs of participants attended, bringing a range of types of relationship, although all were close friends and intimates. Learning activities were designed to take place (a) in the whole group of twelve; (b) in two groups formed so that each person was separated from his/her partner (Separates groups); (c) in two groups made up of two/three pairs meeting with a staff member (Couples groups); and (d) in pairs. The events of the workshop can best be described as falling into five phases.

1. _Opening_. We had asked each pair to select some symbol of their relationship and to bring this to the workshop. After some orienting comments, we started the workshop in the whole group, first asking each person to introduce his/her partner, and then asking each couple to talk about their symbol and describe how it represented their relationship. Following this, we met in Separates groups to discuss individual learning goals and to establish those groups as significant learning vehicles. An important function of these groups was to provide a forum for individuals to discuss their relationship away from their partner. This served both learning purposes, allowing each person to get an individual perspective on the relationship, and research purposes, making it possible to compare what an individual said when

with his partner with what that person said when they were separate.
This initial session of the Separate groups provided an opportunity
for setting the ground rules for these two groups, in particular
making sure that what a person said in those groups remained pri-
vate to the group unless that person chose to take it further.

2. Interperson. Most of the first whole day of the workshop
was spent in activities designed to develop understandings of the
relationship as a total system of interaction and interexperience.
We started with body movement exercises in the pairs -- mirroring
movements, building a "machine" together, etc. -- which were aimed
to focus on how each pair might move physically together. This was
followed by a verbal activity in which each person was asked to
make a short list of characteristics of his/her partner, and follow-
ing this to make a corresponding list how he/she behaved in response
to these characteristics. Finally, we asked each pair to draw a
picture together without speaking, paying attention to the process
of drawing: to their patterns of dominance, collaboration, compe-
tition, and so on. These activities generated a lot of data about
each relationship which was discussed in the afternoon in the Sep-
arates group, primarily in response to the questions:

(a) What is this relationship? How can I describe it?
Who are "we"?

(b) What does it mean to me? How does it facilitate
my life? What can I be in this relationship which
I cannot be otherwise?

(c) How does it limit me, hinder me, get in my way, and
entrap me?

The information generated in these sessions was then discussed in pairs in the Couples groups; as trainers we worked primarily to facilitate communication and understanding between persons.

This pattern of activities, designed activities for pairs in the whole group with brief informal discussion, followed by a discussion in the Separates group, and finally a discussion in the Couples groups, was the basic pattern of activities we used for the whole weekend.

3. Openness, Closedness, and Facades. Following this early work on the pair as an interperson, we changed focus to stress the separateness of each person, and to explore ways in which people were in contact and separate in each relationship. We started with a series of activities aimed to heighten this perspective taken primarily from personal growth training techniques (Weir, in press) which stressed the uniqueness and validity of individual perception and the privacy of experience. These activities led up to an exercise in which each person developed a model of him/herself in the relationship, a model based on a paper bag: on the outside the person wrote things that he/she was open about in the relationship, plus any "facades" or other intentional presentations of self; on the inside were placed pieces of paper on which were written things that were closed to discussion, or things that were not normally discussed. Again, this material was discussed first in Separates groups and then in Couples groups.

4. Evaluation-exchange and Encounter-Confirmation. On Saturday, we designed an evening session aimed to heighten evaluation-exchange aspects of the relationship. After some movement activities stressing assertiveness, everybody was asked to individually draw up a "balance sheet" listing gains and losses from the relationship, with a "bottom line" statement of profit or loss -- in essence, to view the relationship entirely as an economic transaction. Following this we asked them to list changes they wanted to demand from their partner, and the price they themselves were prepared to pay for those changes. We tried to create a "market place" of interpersonal transactions.

In contrast to this, we tried to heighten the confirmatory aspects of the relationship next morning in an activity of mutual unfolding. After each person comes to rest in a quasi-meditative state, the pairs stand facing each other. Without speaking, one chooses to turn and walk away from the other, and curls up in the most protective position they can find. After this, again without speaking, the partner comes over and attempts to "unfold" them, to make them relax and give themselves up. This can be a very moving activity.

5. Closing. We closed the activities of the weekend first with a guided fantasy which took each person through the past, present, and future of the relationship. We then asked each pair to choose another symbol of their relationship to take away from

the workshop, which would complement the one they had brought with them. And finally we said goodbye.

As an experiential workshop, this was a great success. The group developed a culture of its own of mutual support and confrontation, so that the design became a support and guide for activities rather than a rigid program. Although we as staff kept a very firm control on activities on the whole, when we had nothing to suggest, the group was very capable of inventing its own activities. In addition, side activities developed to supplement the scheduled meeting times, and some of these were spontaneously tape-recorded by participants for research purposes, which is significant, considering that some of these private conversations contained very intimate discussions.

Generally, the activities aimed at evaluation-exchange and at encounter-confirmation were less successful than the earlier ones. This was partly because the group was very hard working, so that by Saturday night many were quite emotionally exhausted and needed more of a low-key activity than we had planned for them. Partly, too, we as staff were simply less clear about what we were doing.

Data Processing

The tapes of the workshop were first completely transcribed, the data cross-referenced, and a separate file of raw data assembled for each pair. Each pair was then studied with the four sets of

questions posed in the previous chapter in mind; in doing this, I
tried to subjectively immerse myself in the experience of that
pair, to read and re-read the transcripts, to listen to the tapes,
until a holistic pattern of that relationship emerged. This patt-
ern was then checked against the data and the case written up.

An important question in this kind of research concerns the
validity of data which tend to be qualitative, fleeting, and at
times frankly impressionistic. Diesing (1971) argues that the
holistic researcher must seek "contextual validity" for his data.

> First, the validity of a piece of evidence can be as-
> sessed by comparing it with other kinds of evidence on
> the same point. Each kind ... has its own characteri-
> stic ambiguities and shortcomings and distortions, which
> are unlikely to agree with those of another kind. The
> second form ... is to evaluate a source of evidence ...
> to locate the characteristic pattern of distortion.
> (p. 148-149)

Essentially, to seek contextual validity means to cross check diff-
erent sources against each other and within an emerging pattern so
that the researcher may use "types of evidence whose independent
validity might be middling to low" (Diesing, 1971, p. 148).

The end product of this kind of research is the building of
a "pattern model" of the subject, in which a "theme, and also a
relation, is explained by specifying its place in the pattern"
(Diesing, 1971, p. 158). Objectivity in this kind of research is
rooted in the whole:

> For the pattern model, objectivity consists essentially
> of this, that the pattern can be indefinitely filled in
> and extended: as we obtain more and more knowledge it

> continues to fall into place in this pattern, and the
> pattern itself has a place in a larger whole. (Kaplan,
> 1964, p. 335)

The pattern model is in a number of ways different from the
more familiar deductive model. First, the deductive model involves
general laws which explain a set of facts, while the pattern model
involves large number of facts of equal importance. Second, deduc-
tion of unknown parts from known parts is not possible in the patt-
ern model. Indeed, prediction is not important in the pattern model:
explanation lies in "bringing out the connections of a puzzling item
with other items" (Diesing, 1971, p. 164). Third, the pattern model
is rarely if ever finished, since there is always data about a par-
ticular aspect of the subject which is somehow unavailable: the
pattern tends to grow with the collection of data which, however
well planned, is always to some extent dependent on chance. Fin-
ally, the pattern is subject to change in the course of its devel-
opment as new data become available (Diesing, 1971).

Thus, data processing involved not only a subjective immer-
sion in the data, but a systematic search for connections in that
data which would both help validate particular pieces of data, and
also fit them into an overall pattern. Since many sources of data
were available -- participant comments in different situations,
the interjections of other participants, field notes, memory,
written materials -- it was usually possible to develop a cohesive
description of each pair.

This was not, however, possible with one of the pairs. This couple remained peripheral to the group for the entire weekend, and did not appear to engage fully in any of the activities: if they researched their relationship at all, they rarely made their discoveries public. For a number of reasons we as staff became concerned about the stability of one of the two, who appeared at times rather hysterical; in addition, we found this person unattractive and experienced ourselves as quite unable to develop an effective relationship. As a consequence, we chose simply to "contain" this pair as part of the group, but not to challenge what we saw as their games with us and with each other. Thus, the data about this couple is sparse and superficial, and as researcher I found myself quite incapable of a "subjective immersion" into the experience of these two people, and incapable of writing a sympathetic account of them.

If a "science of persons ... begins from a relationship with the other as person", the minimal prerequisites for a scientific study of this pair were not met, and they are therefore not included in the studies presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FIVE RELATIONSHIPS

This chapter contains descriptions of five couples who came to the workshop: a man and a woman who started "going together" only shortly before the workshop; two women friends attempting to form a family; a Lesbian couple with a long and complex history; the colleagueship/friendship of the workshop staff; and a couple approaching marriage.

As far as possible, I have allowed these people to introduce and to speak for themselves; the accounts have been deliberately left quite rich and complex, and the reader is asked to immerse him/herself in each couples' exploration.

Each account follows roughly the flow of the workshop, and is followed by a brief theoretical review.

Jane and Brian

Jane: I'd like to introduce Brian. I guess we probably have one of the youngest relationships here: we really only started going together about six weeks ago. He's in Medical School and is dedicated to that; he's really good at it, and that's something I really admire in him. He's a real charmer. He's very fast moving and intense, and kind of a little confusing in that respect sometimes. But another side of that is a craziness and a relaxedness I can really learn from. He's very sensitive and very easy to talk to, and I feel real comfortable with him.

Brian: I'd like to introduce Jane. Jane has a number of at-
tributes ... which attracted me to her. Possibly be-
cause I tend to be a rather selfish person and a rather
predetermined person, there are certain things which I
would like to see before I actually meet a person.
People have to meet these -- I hate to call them --
minimal criteria, which Jane very capably did, I think.
I find her very attractive, very bright, very sensitive.
There is another side of the coin -- she is very sensi-
tive but tends to be in some cases very weak in dealing
with people, and I have a difficult time relating to
that because I need to establish a very dynamic con-
frontative sort of relationship. As a result, our short
but intense relationship has been stormy.

As a symbol of their relationship, they brought a little bowl con-

taining a mixture of sugar and salt.

Brian: We had a difficult time deciding what to bring as a
token of our relationship -- even up to the start we
had not really decided what we would bring. The choice
was really dependent on what our relationship really
means, because we began by saying -- in contrast to a
lot of you here -- that it was a non-committed rela-
tionship ... Jane suggested a puzzle, because when it's
together it's _really_ together, and when it's apart
there's a certain jumble which has the _potential_ for
really getting back together, but it's really hard.
Just before we left we decided that sugar and salt
would be a good symbolism if not carried too far per-
haps. We had a hard time deciding precisely what salt
meant and precisely what sugar meant. Sugar probably
means "sugar and spice and all things nice", and salt
means ... what does salt mean?

Jane: Salt would probably mean tangy in the sense of the less
pleasant parts of our relationship -- kind of represent-
ing the stormy parts ...

On Person and Interperson

This relationship is in many ways confused, unclear, and un-

formed; Jane and Brian are constantly asking questions about what

the relationship means to them. Part of this confusion stems from

their definition of the relationship as "open": it is not an ex-
clusive partnership sexually or otherwise, and both are involved
in other intimate relationships and in activities they do not share.
There is a constant problem of defining the boundaries of time and
place of the relationship.

Brian: Another big conflict in our relationship is one of
commitment ... She doesn't want an exclusive committed
relationship, so I am trying this relationship out ...
I really don't know what I want ... I feel our rela-
tionship is destined for failure ... There's a growing
affection, that perhaps I don't really want ... Should
growth of this relationship leave others to die?
[Feelingly] <u>I don't know what I want</u>.

Both Jane and Brian are ambivalent about the "open" definition
of the relationship: in some ways, both would like a fuller and
less ambiguous involvement with each other, but both fear the im-
pact this would have on the rest of their lives. Brian in parti-
cular is concerned to manage this issue carefully.

Jane: ... when I mention another relationship to you, you
back off from me and go overboard in encouraging me
in that other relationship: I almost feel it is lett-
ing you off the hook if I get involved with someone
else ...

Brian: You want me to be on the hook?

Jane: I don't feel that you <u>are</u> on the hook, or that you need
to get on or off.

Brian: I think part of the reason I give you so much room is
perhaps because it <u>does</u> let me off the hook, because I
do feel really torn apart by a bunch of different ac-
tivities. I'm afraid of a relationship which takes
too much time, which I have to feel responsible for.

Jane: Lets you off the hook time-wise?

Brian: It lets me off the hook in terms of responsibility for
           our relationship. You have other friends, so let them
           have their share of the responsibility, so I can feel
           safe to go about my other activities.

           Later:

           I do want [the relationship] to go on, and I feel
           pulled apart ... so I do a lot of contradictory things.
           As a result, I get frustrated, because when it comes
           right down to making the choice, being with you, that's
           cool, but then a lot of other things fall apart ... I
           just have too many irons in the fire, and I don't like
           being put in the position of having to make a choice ...

The contradiction is between commitment and autonomy -- in-

volvement in the relationship and freedom from it -- in the context

of growing affection. They are not sure how to deal with this con-

tradiction, but it does seem that they fear to grow too intimate,

since then they might find themselves inevitably committed --

committed despite themselves, as it were. Several patterns of in-

teraction have developed which have the effect of preventing the

development of too great an intimacy.

One such pattern is that they deflect each other, pushing

each other away:

Jane: We both see each other as sensitive, but both see our-
           selves as responding to the other person's sensitivity,
           at least some of the time, by deflecting. Brian by
           teasing, myself ... by being evasive and super-inde-
           pendent ...

Probably the most important pattern which keeps them distant

is one which caused a fight which almost had them leave the work-

shop on the first day. It starts when Jane moves toward Brian and

makes it known that she wants greater intimacy; Brian hears this

as a "demand".

Jane: Brian is extremely sensitive about having demands made
on him. I feel the things that I want out of the re-
lationship are not necessarily demands, but he seems to
get very uptight if he feels I'm wanting anything and
immediately says "No" and backs off ... That makes me
uptight, and I start making demands, and he gets pissed
off ...

As Brian sees it, the demands simply get more uncompromising:

Brian: It's hard for me to think clearly. It seems to me that
she's like being a spoiled child because she's not will-
ing to compromise what she wants ... Because she's not
willing to compromise ... she feels she gets nothing.

One consequence of this is that Jane's demands, or statements of what

she wants, become unclear (because she is afraid of making a demand)

and her growing anger (which if communicated would be yet another

"demand") gets hidden from Brian. This muddled communication is

compounded by Brian, who grows hostile and begins to play with her.

Brian: She's getting frustrated and very defensive, which re-
sults in her making more and more demands which creates
tensions that I can't deal with, which leads to a vic-
ious cycle of more and more tension and more and more
demands ...

Trainer: The more she gets frustrated, the more you withdraw?

Brian: And the more hostile I get -- I show this in teasing.
She will suggest we make love; I will say "Wait till
later" ... but cuddle and kiss her and turn her on.
It's real nasty.

At this stage, too, Brian makes, or implies, promises which he

later does not keep. Jane of course seizes on these as giving her

what she wants, without making sure first that they are real pro-

mises, and then feels cheated and is super-upset when Brian fails

to deliver.

The result of this pattern is that Jane is quite unable to know what to do, and Brian gets fearful of the emotions raised but not dealt with.

Jane: I just can't see a way to get out of it, I've never been in one like this before ... Because I don't feel like I'm making demands in the first place, and the only way he will be happy is ... well, my fantasy is the only way he will be happy is if I absolutely leave him alone, and I don't think that's what he wants.

Brian: ... it feels like you make these ... these ... these total demands on me ...

        ... I really hate your dependency: I interpret your becoming upset with me as a sign that I have power over you, and I can't stand that ... what I can't deal with is your intense emotional reaction when your demands aren't met.

Both feel powerless and distanced from each other; it is as if the pattern of interaction had an independent life of its own.

This contradiction of commitment and autonomy is recognized by Jane and Brian as a major issue in their relationship. Usually, the contradiction is managed by asserting their definition of their relationship as non-exclusive, and by these patterns of interaction which avoid too much intimacy. In addition, or rather in contrast to this, they make some moves to resolve the contradiction in the opposite direction, through explorations of _increased_ involvement with each other which bring about some interesting interaction sequences.

These moves involve both of them making statements of greater and greater exclusivity and commitment, reaching an almost orgasmic

peak, from which both then run away as fast as they can, leaving a path of total confusion behind them. This pattern occurs at least three times during the workshop.

On one such occasion they have been discussing in intricate and (for the researcher) boring detail the precise place of the boundaries of this relationship with their other relationships. Suddenly Jane bursts out:

Jane: There is definitely a part of me that really wants to be dependent, to be very secure, and have one person I can really latch onto ...

Brian: Yeah! Yeah! Yeah, me!! (Long pause, and then quietly) I'd almost enjoy being that one.

Jane: Oh wow!

Brian: (Practically) But, you know, we set up the relation-ship differently.

And they move away from the choice point.

On another occasion, Brian attempts to radically change the nature of the relationship; he suggests they should:

Brian: ... settle down, live together, and be happy for every after.

Jane: Oh God! (later) Are you demanding that I live with you?

Brian: OK, I want to have a nice, traditional, committed re-lationship; I want you to get rid of all the other people in your life.

Jane: I just really don't know what to do with that at all.

This was an intense interchange, a time of real tension and excitement in the group, for after all, how often does one witness

such a proposal? However, the emotional charge soon got lost and the conversation became more mundane. The "ever after" part of Brian's proposal was lost immediately, soon too was the proposal of exclusive commitment, so that later in the day they are again discussing the boundaries of their open relationship. Jane acknowledges the event:

Jane: It's really a conflict situation. I really like that expression of commitment that you are willing to make, and a part of me really wants that commitment too; but there's a whole part of me that really wants to be independent, and which says that that would be a bad thing for me ... I guess, that since I really don't know what I want, I feel it wouldn't be very smart to commit myself to one part of me by saying yes, or to the other part of me by saying no. Got that?

Brian: Got it.

Jane and Brian appear to derive a lot of energy and excitement from moving right up to and beyond their present definition of the relationship; these sequences seem to be attempts to test the critical limits of that relationship.

On Self and Other: Openness, Closedness, and Presentations

Exploration of the ways in which Jane and Brian are open and closed to each other show that their patterns of concealment are intimately connected with the same issue of commitment and autonomy.

Information about their other relationships is usually unavailable:

Brian: We don't share information about other relationships; you have with your other male friends the same trust and secrecy you have with me. I feel inhibited in

discussing my other relations so as not to cause jealousy...

Jane: There are definite boundaries about sharing other relationships, and they are pretty close. Each relationship is pretty private, but I think I am more private about other people with you because of that reaction.

Usually, experience or feelings about each other which do not fit their "party line" of an open, uncommitted relationship are not expressed. Thus, Brian finds it difficult to talk about his ambivalence, and makes promises that he doesn't intend to keep:

Brian: I'm not willing to admit I'm jealous [of other relationships].

I feel you get very frustrated, which makes me want to make promises because I like you, but won't let me keep them because I feel pressured.

Similarly, as has been seen, Jane finds it difficult to share her feelings of need for the dependability and security of one person -- and Brian finds it difficult to accept these feelings as well.

In this context, Jane presents facades to fit into the definition of the relationship:

Jane: I would like to present the image of being available to you and of being busy at the same time ... so you know that I'm doing you a tremendous favor by being with you!

Brian: I like that, because I present the image of being busy and inflexible ... so when I really want to be with you, I want to know that you're making a bit effort to be with me ...

And:

Jane: You set up these criteria for what you want in your ideal woman, so that puts a heavy burden on me not to

exhibit those parts of me that don't fit ... Any dependence, or shyness ... I feel like I don't want you to see.

The pattern of demand and denial described above puts the burden of initiative on Jane, and Brian can avoid actively defining and communicating what he wants from the relationship:

Brian: ... so I let _you_ call the punches, let _you_ tell _me_ when you were ready to have me ...

Jane: I'd really like you to make more demands.

Brian: When one person ... makes fewer demands, then the person making more demands gets refused a lot, and so the other person can take a passive role -- he accepts, here and there, a demand. He knows that plenty will be demanded, so he can accept a portion and reject a portion.

Jane: And never have to make any demands himself ...

Brian's passive stance keeps Jane demanding, and essentially maintains the pattern of demand and denial which I have already suggested is a means of avoiding too great an intimacy. It also allows Brian to remain in control of his boundaries.

Finally, one area that Jane found clearly concealed from Brian was her anger:

Jane: I have a feeling I am letting it all out, and he doesn't even know I'm angry ... Usually it's delayed, so I have time to rehearse, so by the time I've been over it twenty times all the angry words are perfect in the script, and I say them like I'm not angry at all ... Yeah, if I were Brian, that would confuse me a lot.

All these areas of closedness and pretense -- other relationships, ambivalence, dependency needs, facades, anger -- are directly tied up with the issue of commitment and autonomy. Jane and Brian

find their affection and intimacy growing within the boundaries of a non-committed, non-exclusive relationship. The question is whether this is possible, or whether the growing intimacy and increased real contact will prejudice the maintenance of an uncommitted relationship. On the one hand, "Will we find ourselves uncontrollably committed?"; and on the other hand, "Will the boundaries we have set on the relationship prevent the intimacy we seek?"

Jane is much happier to pursue greater intimacy in the relationship than is Brian:

Jane: ... I can spend a limited amount of time with a person, which represents not complete commitment, but be really close to that person in the time that we spend. Once I achieve that closeness ... I don't make any demands about time.

Brian is much more concerned to maintain the limits of contact and intimacy:

Brian: In order to define for myself what this relationship is all about, I set very tight limits.

            I guess the problem is that you define the relationship as totally commited emotionally and timewise when we're together, while I define it as close but not too close even when we're together ... I think I need a low-key relationship.

He also gets concerned about Jane's intimacy:

Brian: I'm feeling uncomfortable ... I hate ... I really have difficulty being with someone who likes me when that like isn't entirely reciprocated by me. It generates feelings of hostility, because of the feelings of control over someone makes me feel I have power over them.

In part, this difference in approach stems from Jane's much greater ability to tolerate the ambiguity of uncommitted intimacy, yet greater fear of a formal, exclusive involvement. It was she that took the lead in defining the relationship as open, and Brian is going along to see what this is like, but is left with the task of defining and maintaining boundaries that are comfortable for him in a situation where there is more ambiguity than he really wants. Later in the workshop, when Brian tries to change the rules and proposes a closer but simpler and clearer relationship, it is Jane that fears engulfment:

Brian: I want to have a nice, traditional, committed relation-
           ship ...

Jane: ... I'm not confident enough about the independence I've
           developed in my head in a situation where I can't be
           dependent on anybody that I'm certain I can be indepen-
           dent in a situation where it would be very easy to be
           dependent on somebody ... living with anybody would
           just feed that dependency.

All these maneuvers which I am arguing are essentially to avoid too much intimacy are in part maintained through unclear communication. When they get to a situation in which the contradictions in their relationship are coming clear, or when they seem to be making real contact with each other, the conversation starts to get vague, they deflect each other, or talk about different things without realizing it. It is as if to be really in contact, really intimate, is too dangerous for them given their confusion and ambivalence about commitment.

On Evaluation-exchange and Encounter-confirmation

Many significant interactions in this relationship take place in the mode of evaluation-exchange -- the pattern of demand-denial is a good example. This is another of the ways Jane and Brian deal with -- and mystify -- the issue of commitment and autonomy. Beyond a certain point, negotiation seems to be a way of avoiding the risks of confirmation and disconfirmation.

Brian describes relationships almost exclusively in terms of demands:

Brian: Every relationship is a real demand, I think: I de-
             mand something and you demand something and we reach
             a compromise. The question is how much?

Drawing a picture together becomes a demand issue:

Jane: ... he'd do his own thing, and then I'd add something
             and he'd immediately go and do something else ... I
             felt when I was drawing the picture that I was con-
             stantly demanding that he do something with me ...

And the focus on demanding creates some very confusing situations:

Jane: I feel that you demand that I make no demands on you
             at all, which means that if I make any demands that
             defies your demand.

In some areas, a pattern of negotiation seemed to work very well for them: they were able to work out in almost clinical, de-tached ways the kind of boundaries on their relationship. They were able to discuss living together in terms of what would be within and what would be outside the relationship:

Brian: Do you think if we lived together that would exclude
             Bob?

Jane: I don't know ... I don't know if that is part of your demand.

Brian: That's a negotiation we could make ... I could get what I want without having to be exclusive ... we could close out the boundary and exclude enough people.

Jane: That's very interesting ...

Brian: <u>Clarify</u> those boundaries, I guess, rather than having them shift in and out ...

Jane: You mean you see a relationship of our living together meaning that I can maintain my relationship with Bob, but not with anyone else except you?

Brian: Yes ...

However, in this exchange, while they again move a bit closer to defining a relationship with an acceptable degree of freedom and commitment, they back off again and break off the conversation inconclusively. This seems to be because negotiation of the objective arrangements of their relationship just cannot cover all aspects of their being together. In particular, it is not a mode in which they can deal with their <u>experience</u> of the relationship and encounter each other fully in their attraction to and fear of each other. Indeed, the negotiation seems to be a way of <u>avoiding</u> this encounter, just as the pattern of demand-denial was a way of avoiding too much intimacy. Subjective experience gets turned into an objective demand, as in the following interaction, in which they were instructed to make statements to each other beginning with "I":

Brian: I think we share a lot of good things.

Jane: I think we could share a lot more, though.

Brian: I think I like you.

Jane: I think I _really_ like you.

Brian: I think I get uptight when you place demands on me.

The flow of the conversation suggests that "really liking" is experienced as a demand: the subjective gets turned into the objective.

The non-verbal activity of mutual unfolding (see page 49) was an attempt to get the pairs to experience a simple encounter with each other; even this activity was converted by Brian into a demand situation. He described how Jane unfolded him, and said:

Brian: She made the demand, but I accepted it on my own terms.

And later:

Jane: I really feel it was very much a meeting situation when
            I was being unfolded, but very much a demand situation
            when _Brian_ was being unfolded ...

Brian: I think there must be some element of meeting -- de-
            manding seems so _gross_; the contractual basis of the
            relationship, it sounds so antiseptic; there really
            must be something else. I don't think we are entirely
            that; I wouldn't be comfortable in the relationship.

Trainer: Maybe the meeting's OK until it gets too close, and
            then you turn it into a demand situation?

Brian: Yes ... I think that does make sense. Up to a certain
            point I don't even consider these things as demands at
            all. Then I get more interested in my holding back,
            and on the other hand I want to consider the other per-
            son, so let's compromise.

Group
  Member: It seems like they're just about to get involved and
            then get scared, back away ...

Brian: I'm not sure if I back away. But I do kind of stop in
            my tracks.

Evaluation-exchange appears to be a primary mode of interac-
tion in this relationship: most significant issues are dealt with
in this mode. As I have pointed out, this means that Jane and Brian
are unable to encounter each other fully in their attraction to and
fear of each other, since negotiation cannot cover these aspects of
relation. Thus, their attempts to deal with the contradictions of
their relationship are superficial.

While this is frustrating for both, as they seem to keep
"missing" each other as total persons, it also seems to be the
intent of this pattern: negotiation is a way of avoiding encounter,
and of avoiding an intolerable heightening of the contradictions
of the relationship, in particular the contradiction of commitment
and autonomy.

Summary: Commitment and Autonomy.

This relationship can best be understood in terms of a prin-
cipal contradiction of commitment and autonomy: both Jane and
Brian want more involvement with each other, and both fear the
consequences of that involvement for their individual identities
and their other interests and relationships. They are still indi-
viduals first and a pair second. The major issues of this rela-
tionship revolve around this contradiction: full intimacy, com-
plete openness, and confirmation are all avoided for fear they

would heighten intolerably the tensions of this contradiction.

This principal contradiction can be seen in terms of each of the three dialectics of relation.

Person and Interperson. Essentially, the question is whether this interperson is to become salient in their lives, and what the consequences of this salience might be. Both are ambivalent about commitment. In addition, Jane and Brian differ as to what that commitment might mean: for Bill, it would involve an exclusive, culturally accepted ("normal"), objectified/negotiable relationship; for Judy, it would be non-exclusive, person-to-person, intimate subjective-encounter. They are in conflict as to what they might commit to.

Self and Other. The patterns of openness and closedness and of presentations served to help manage the tensions of the principal contradiction. Thus, Jane and Brian were primarily closed about issues that would challenge their definition of the relationship as open and uncommitted, or would challenge their identity as free, independent persons. Thus, they deny, or at least fail to affirm, parts of the reality of the relationship.

Evaluation-exchange and Encounter-confirmation. The intimacy of full encounter is avoided. Evaluation-exchange as a mode of interaction appears to be used as a means to avoid full mutual confirmation; Brian especially seems adept at transforming the subjective into the objective. Presumably, encounter would reveal

and thus heighten the tension of the contradiction of commitment and autonomy.

The principal contradiction exists quite openly, in a clear state of tension, and both of them seem to recognize it as an issue they must deal with. However, the contradiction exists in the context of a growing affection for each other, and there is concern that if they grow too fond of each other, they may find themselves inevitably committed to each other. A number of patterns have grown up which have the effect of downplaying the attractiveness of the relationship and reinforcing desires for autonomy. On the other hand, there were during the workshop a number of moves to increase their involvement with each other, which might be seen as ways of testing the limits of their relationship.

One way they manage the tension of the contradiction is through their definition of the relationship as open and non-exclusive. This is not, however, a fully satisfactory solution -- it contains the issue rather than resolves it. The alternative seems to be a greater and clearer involvement with each other -- Brian's exclusivity or Jane's intimacy -- or a break up of the relationship -- dissolution. The patterns of the relationship are a means of avoiding the finality of these options, so that the relationship can be maintained in its present state of tension.

The major learning from the workshop seems to have been that their perspectives on the relationship are different:

Jane: Well, I guess very symbolically the dish with the salt and the sugar got washed. I think that's OK, it was too jumbled up, all those tiny pieces together. If we had one, our symbol (now) would be a pocket mirror that's a mirror on both sides, but not magnifying on either side, symbolizing that it's the same thing, but completely different from the two different sides.

Brian: The sugar and salt were no longer appropriate at all. Our relationship has progressed tremendously; these things we talked about and faced up to on the lab would have taken months in any other kind of setting. So I view the relationship quite differently.

Jane: But our perspectives are completely different -- but we do realize we are looking at the same thing.

Sally and Kate

Sally: This is my very good friend Kate. Kate is an extremely sensitive person; she's the most caring, warm person I know. She'll reach out and help, or she'll reach out and touch, or just be there for anybody. Sometimes I think that's the problem, but it's Kate's greatest strength; she seems to always be able to be there. Another very beautiful thing about here is that she's super-creative; she has that child-like quality that comes through that frees her up a lot, and she can ... do anything, it seems like. She's a very concerned person, about issues, things that she feels should be important, not only in her life but in others, that are important for us to live well, in a very human caring warm way ... She's a new family member, and a very loving beautiful kind person, who I love a lot.

Kate: Sally and I met ... about four years ago ... It's been one of those things, our relationship was just really thick right from the beginning. We had mutual things: we were both breaking up from our husbands at the same time, we left Rochester at the same time, went to General Motors at the same time, got laid off at the same time! She went and had a baby, which I didn't! I experience my greatest strength when I'm with Sally ... and more fun ... I have a sense of us just walking,

and being very tall, and strong, and because of our
strength being able to reach out to anybody round us --
it's really neat. And also, because of her strength,
I sometimes get scared, and sort of stay off in a
corner; that's the way I experience myself sometimes
with Sally ... I have a tremendous respect for her,
because she's both strong and weak, and she lays it
out ... and I know I'm OK, and I'm not only OK, I know
I'm beautiful, and if you don't accept me, fuck it!

She continues to talk about their "symbol": Sally's seven-month

old boy, Andrew:

The thing we -- the person that we brought to represent
our relationship is Andrew. One of the newest things
that is happening to Sally and I is that we are attempt-
ing to formalize our relationship in a way that will
make me a real partner in the bringing up and sharing
of the child. And that's really exciting for me ...
Andrew represents the creativity that Sally and I both
share together; he represents a lot of the fun and
playing which Sally has which is marvellous and I want
to learn how to do; he represents a commitment to the
relationship that I have. [To Sally] You didn't say
anything about Andrew, did you?

Sally: No. I'm going to. Yeah, my son -- it's going to be a
shared son, that's one of the things I have to get used
to. The child that we are sharing in a very real way,
really represents a nucleus, a real commitment to the
relationship in a structured way, in a family way. I'm
looking on it in a symbolic way, looking on it as a new
birth. Our relationship has taken a new turn, it's
taking ... there's a whole new side to it ... It's just
like a new birth, like a new baby, and that baby has to
be loved and raised and shaped and guided.

On Person and Interperson

The first thing one notices about Kate and Sally is how simi-

lar they look. They are both well-built, attractive women who hold

themselves well and, as Kate puts it, "walk tall". The second

thing one notices is how much noise they make, like singing "Sweet

Georgia Brown" together at top volume in the bathroom. When to-
gether, they seem full of laughter and energy; their laughter is
quite uninhibited and very infectious -- they open their mouths
wide and roar at each other. They give the impression of two high-
stepping independent women who are putting a lot of energy into
living.

This impression supports their own statements about the value
of their relationship and the excitement they draw from being to-
gether. In some ways this high energy, high excitement pattern
may prevent them from dealing with some of the more sombre aspects
of their relationship: for example, they often laugh together when
discussing their unpleasant feelings about each other, which may be
a way of reducing tension before it reaches uncomfortable, but
profitable levels for dealing with the issue. Sally herself des-
cribes some ways in which this pattern is a facade:

Sally: A couple of things ... are facades I maintain with you
        sometimes. One of those is being hip and cool ... It's
        ... a part of me I like a lot -- I can be very flam-
        boyant and absolutely outrageous, and I love it -- but
        other times it's not really there, but I will do it
        because I know how much you enjoy it, and I also know
        how much you like to be there yourself. You say those
        are the times that you really enjoy being with me.

The relationship between Kate and Sally is taking a new turn
as they try to work out ways in which they can develop and formal-
ize their commitment to bring up a child together. They are moving
towards developing a kind of family, with a task not only of mutual
support and friendship, but of bringing up a son; and there are few

models about how two women might do this. Understandably, then, the central question for both is whether they will be able to do this and at the same time not lose themselves in the relationship; and also understandably, their previous patterns of interaction now come under even closer scrutiny as they move to a new commitment.

Sally: ... it's been a committed uncommitment. We've been good friends and we can rely on one another, but it's still not been committed. And that's changed: we decided we wanted to establish a family type of structure with Kate and myself and Andrew and maybe other people perhaps in the future ... The thing that's scary for me is recognizing that commitment, really defining it and committing myself to it and getting that close to a person ... I want to be close but not too close because that's scary ... I value separateness; I don't ever want to get lost in a relationship. I really want to maintain the separateness ...

Kate: One of the very frightening things for me is this relationship now which Sally and I are forming. My caring for Andrew is developing ... it's not static, it's a growing caring. My life, now, is being designed around this child, who I hardly know. He is not really a part of me, only as Sally is a part of me. I'm scared about that; I'm scared of making more rigid my relationship with Sally, which is frightening -- the relationship itself is frightening for me, even though I love it. It's exciting and dynamic, and we touch parts of each other which are not touched by other people, which is very important. But there is no person that I am as frightened of in terms of running over my sense of my self as I am of Sally ...

Their individual needs in the relationship are quite different, and often bring them into conflict. Kate wants a relationship in which she can be free to develop and find herself, one in which her own sense of personal power and separateness are maintained.

She does not want to be taken over by Andrew and Sally:

Kate: I have to fight all the time to make sure ... to keep
a sense of myself _being_ there, and I don't like to have
to fight to do that.

On the other hand, Sally seems more concerned to maintain
clarity and commitment in the relationship. She sees a lot of
Kate's behavior as haphazard and poorly judged, and this sometimes
comes over to her as uncaring:

Sally: A thing that causes a lot of distress between us is
Kate's not judging situations very well in my percep-
tion ... She's kind of haphazard ...

I get extremely agitated ... I pull right back and get
extremely rigid, very hurt ... I feel she doesn't care
enough about me ...

And she becomes concerned about commitment:

Sally: To me, no commitment means no relationship.

Kate: What I hear is, "No commitment on my terms, Kate" ...

Sally: No, Kate, no. One of the things that prompted [this]
for me were actual statements, a lot of statements,
that you just couldn't make any promises to anyone
about anything; you didn't want to be tied down; you
didn't want any boundaries; you didn't want to have to
say you'd be here, there, or anyplace ... That trans-
lates to me in a non-caring way, very non-caring: if
anything else comes up, that will be more important.
And it's _very_ important for me to firm that up.

One of the primary ways in which these individual differences
get worked out is a pattern of dominance-submission in which Sally
is clearly dominant and Kate is one-down: in fact, one of Kate's
earliest comments was that, generally, Sally needs to take charge.
Sally is more concerned about -- and sees herself as more competent

in -- practical organization, and she takes a position of trying to control what Kate does, and is the judge of her activities. When something goes wrong, Sally gets agitated, then angry, and starts punishing Kate, who then feels incompetent, hurt, and withdraws. There is a lot of anger on Sally's part, resentment on Kate's part, and mutual confusion about this pattern.

Sally: ... one of the things we talked about in our relation-
            ship is for me not to dominate, not to take stuff away
            from you ... And you've said to me, that when I take
            over you feel like I'm controlling you, and you lose
            your sense of identity.

Kate: ... When I feel competent to do something on my own,
            but when the something ... is being done your way,
            and I'm incompetent in your way, is when I feel sort
            of controlled. When I try to function according to
            standards you set up is when I lose my sense of com-
            petence and feel controlled by you.

While this issue of dominance often arises in connection with day-to-day, practical matters, it is also symbolic of who will de-fine the relationship, and who is joining whom. In a very harsh interchange:

Kate: I want to feel you're making as much of an effort to
            be part of my life as I am to be a part of yours --
            and at the moment we have separate lives.

Sally: Yeah, I'm planning to keep my separate life -- you're
            joining us.

Kate: No. I'm not doing that. I see us making a third life
            maybe, but I'm not giving myself up.

This pattern of dominance-submission is probably the most sig-nificant of the whole relationship, but there are others which seem to be dealing with the same issues of maintenance or protection of

individual needs in the relationship. In one such pattern, the dominance is reversed, and Kate takes over, usually in relation to creative or emotional issues in which Sally feels less competent and from which she withdraws. Another pattern involves the two of them in symmetrical relation, each working hard to protect their personal space. This escalates to a stand-off:

Sally: When you were saying that, it came through as being really pissed off and being very stubborn. One of the feelings I get sometimes is a real stubbornness, like it's going to be your way and that's all.

Kate: Well, that's why I'm feeling anger right now, feeling pissed, pissy, because I see your need to put it in your own words ... and I don't want to buy into something which doesn't have as much meaning for me as it does for you.

The contradiction is that they both prize the relationship highly, and at the same time prize their individuality highly. The relationship gives each an identity they value, but at the same time threatens their identity and is confusing and frightening for them. Kate loves Sally's strength, but is at the same time afraid of being overwhelmed by her; Sally loves Kate's sensitivity and child-like qualities, but is at the same time afraid her disorganization will mean desertion. Since they want both the relationship and individuality, it becomes very difficult for them to deal with the resultant contradictory feelings. They manage the contradiction partly by reducing it's tension through laughter, and by reinforcing the value of the relationship through stressing the conflict-free aspects of it -- the "walking tall". They also are learning

to confront each other about their individual needs and to nego-
tiate a clear contractual basis for the relationship, as we shall
see.

On Self and Other: Openness, Closedness, and Facades

During the workshop, their discussions about the ways they
are closed to each other were directly connected to the issues of
personal space and dominance-submission discussed above. Their
major problem of openness is, as might be expected, in the areas
of the relationship which are most conflicted. While many of
these issues cannot yet be discussed openly, both place a high
value on being open with each other, and have reached the stage of
being able to be fairly open about their areas of closedness.

Kate describes her areas of openness to Sally:

Kate: It's really nice about our relationship that we have
more and more open parts as we go along ... The open
things that I share with you are high points and good
feelings about myself, and bad feelings about myself.
I can share those easily, I feel safe doing it and
know that it won't come back to haunt me ... I know
you see my smile ... my style of response to people
is more non-verbal than yours. You appreciate areas
in which I am competent ... You see my stubbornness ...
it's seldom explicit, but I know you feel that ...
mostly a way of saying, "No, ma'am", or, "I need more
space" ... Sometimes I feel that an open part of us is
my blankness ... that's a way of cutting you off be-
cause I need more space, and also a way of responding
when I have angry feelings. I think that we share our
laugh as a way of getting to our fear as well as to
our happiness and joy. You see me in some of the parts
I like most about myself, and you let me know you see
them and value them.

While she is able to describe her closed parts to Sally, Kate is

rather more explicit about them away from her:

Kate: ... feelings about myself in regard to Sally that I
don't share with her, and also some judgments about
Sally. I don't think she knows my hostility, my
anger, and my resentment -- those are things I haven't
felt safe in sharing with her. She doesn't know that
sometimes I have no sense of my love for her, my sense
of that goes away ... I know I don't express that to
her. I don't feel she knows the extent of my personal
power and strength. Sometimes the relationship seems
to focus on my non-strengths ... not focusing my own
sense of my profound strength. She doesn't know that
sometimes her expression of caring is manipulative.
Sometimes I feel she is inconsiderate as hell. I feel
she doesn't know how much I need to be alone, how much
I need space and my own independence. Maybe she feels
it, but she won't give it to me, or she gets in the
way around my needs for independence. Sometimes I feel
she doesn't want me to be myself, that she wants me to
fit into her life, and it doesn't seem like she's will-
ing to fit herself into mine.

Sally's main concern about closedness has to do with her own

anger, which is the counterpart to Kate's hostility and resentment.

Usually her anger is not directly expressed: although it is obvious,

it remains implicit and they deal with the tension by being "nice"

to each other. There were, however, some angry exchanges during

the workshop:

Kate: I sure felt your anger.

Sally: I'm glad you felt it, because sometimes I feel I can't
be angry -- most of the time ... I get afraid of what
my anger will do to us, what would happen ... if I
really ... One of the feelings I've been having is
that part of our relationship isn't authentic, and it
centers around the anger, not being able to level with
you when I'm really angry. Some of the times I've
done that it hurts you ... and I retreat and you re-
treat ...

Kate: The thing is I have never experienced you as being
          angry with me directly at the moment of your anger,
          and confronting me with your anger. What I withdraw
          from is the anxiety of unexpressed anger -- 'cause I
          feel it, but when you don't express it I don't know
          what to do with it ... that's when I feel I have to
          withdraw ... I wish you would yell at me sometimes.

Sally: (laughs) It's very scary. (They laugh together)

Kate: We are both very anxious about that.

The contradiction is that they are unable to be open with
each other about the very feelings and experiences which would
help them move away from the patterns of the relationship of which
they are most afraid. They fear that expression of their anger
and resentment would blow the relationship apart, but by not ex-
ressing those feelings, they preserve the very parts of the rela-
tionship that are most likely to cause the relationship to fail:
their closedness with each other helps preserve the patterns of
dominance and submission -- unexpressed anger and resentment are
in many ways dominant and submissive emotions, respectively.

Kate is afraid of being overwhelmed, and her response of
blankness rather than expressed resentment invites overwhelming
responses from Sally. Sally is afraid of desertion, and her unex-
pressed anger creates the tense situations that make Kate back
away from her. The patterns of the relationship discussed above
create identities for each which mean that neither can be fully
available for each other, and so the pattern continues, with their
closedness preserving the frightening parts of the present.

On Evaluation-exchange and Encounter-confirmation

This discussion of the relationship has so far pointed to the ways in which Kate and Sally both value and fear their relationship. Both agree that there is a need to change the nature of parts of their relationship as they move into a firmer commitment.

The following interactions are taken from the Saturday evening negotiation session (see page 49), in which Sally and Kate tried to build some contractual bases for their relationship. This conversation is reported quite fully here, since it illustrates some of the ways in which an interaction may be seen as containing both exchange and encounter. As described in Chapter Three, we asked the participants to create a "market place" for interpersonal relations. Sally starts the bargaining:

Sally: I want you to be a lot more committed to this relation-
          ship ... I want you to come to [visit] once every two
          weeks; I want you to take Andrew at least one day
          every two weeks; I want you to draw up some plans and
          give them to me about how you are going to be a family
          member with him and with me.

Having presented these demands in a very gruff manner, she laughs incongruently; it is often difficult to see which are real demands and what are exagerations.

They start by negotiating vitits:

Kate: I might be able to come every two months.

Sally: (Snaps) For how long?

Kate: For a weekend.

Sally: (Snaps) To spend entirely with us?

Kate: (Pauses; then, unsurely) Yes.

It is clear, however, that this negotiation of visits is a
symbol of something bigger:

Kate: ... I would like another side of that, and that is
               your coming to me ... I want to feel as though you're
               making as much of an effort to be part of my life as
               I am of yours ... I really feel like I'm going to you
               and that's a heavy issue for me.

However, they appear to agree on a schedule of visits, and Sally
raises the second part of her demand:

Sally: ... I want to see something about how you see your
               responsibilities in his raising.

Kate agrees that this is an area for discussion, but:

Kate: ... my back is really raised by your demand that I
               write something down to submit to you for what I call
               your approval ... It pisses me off.

Sally: Final approval is mine.

Kate: This is a joint thing. I'm coming into this because
               I want to, and also at your request, and I'm never
               going to be put in the position of feeling I have to
               request things from you which you'll then approve
               based on what you want.

They agree to sit down and work out a list together:

Sally: Things I see needing to be done, and perhaps you see
               needing to be done; what responsibility can be shared,
               and what will be yours and mine exclusively.

While the substantive issues have been resolved -- the ques-
tion of visits and the care of Andrew -- there is clearly a tone
in the conversation which indicates that all is not well. The
two women are sitting a long way apart for such an intimate con-
versation. Kate is sitting bolt upright in a hardback chair

looking tense; Sally is sitting in a more relaxed way, but continues
to make hard demands in an uncompromising tone.

Kate brings up some of the things she would like changed in
the relationship; she asks from some fairly small things she sees
as symbolic of a larger issue, and says:

Kate: I have felt more storngly than I have ever felt that
things are going to Mecca -- like my going to you,
and everything being on your terms. I want some com-
mitment from you to value my life as a separate entity
from yours ... I want you to recognize those needs of
mine and see them as valid.

Sally continues in the bargaining mode of the exercise, asking Kate
what these things are worth to her, and what she will give up to
get them. Kate gets more and more upset:

Kate: If you can't recognize those things for me, I will give
up this relationship ... I'm saying those are minimal;
the idea that you respect these is the minimum I need
in this relationship ... I'm not exchanging, I'm giving
up a lot of my life to you and Andrew, and it takes a
lot for me to make those commitments, and I see this
as something you are giving in return ... The things
that were said earlier tonight have made me distrust ...
your willingness to view me as a person with a separ-
ate life from yours -- a person who has a right to be
separate from you. I'm not willing to spend a lot of
my energy fighting for survival in this relationship ...
I want you not to have to control so much. I don't
know what to do but ask for some very specific things ...
I'd like you to say something about the sense behind
that, my having to be an independent person.

Sally: I'm lost.

Kate: The whole thing of you setting the terms -- is it pos-
sible for you to value my independence and still have
the commitment you want?

Sally: Are we dropping the bargaining?

Kate: I just want you to <u>talk</u> to me about that.

This last <u>crie de coeur</u> indicates that Kate cannot get what

she wants out of this interaction if it remains in a bargaining

mode: her concern is with her identity in the relationship rather

than with specific behaviors she can negotiate. The conversation

is temporarily at an impasse, and they try to explore how the ex-

ercise itself may have contributed to the difficulties:

Kate: I'm not sure how much of Sally's presentation was <u>her</u>
              and how much it was a game ...

Sally: I don't think I've ever demanded like that since I've
              known you. One of the things I wanted to try tonight
              was to be ... cold and deliberating, and getting the
              vegetables at the cheapest price -- and that's what
              was operating. It's a <u>really</u> shitty feeling, it's
              distressing because ... I'm wondering if it isn't may-
              be what it does come down to, and putting it out on
              the table is extremely uncomfortable, looking at it
              like it is, instead of playing games.

Kate: ... I feel a need to protect myself against you. If
              this is making <u>straight</u> what because of our understand-
              ing of jargon and humanistic bullshit we were able to
              make unstraight because it was more comfortable, then
              I don't like this.

At this stage, it is pointed out that when Sally made her ini-

tial set of demands, Kate's response had been to resist, and she

had never asked Sally what she was prepared to give up in return

for the increased commitment she demanded. When she does so, the

tone of the conversation takes an abrupt turn:

Kate: What are you prepared to give for that?

Sally: Sharing, giving up having full responsibility for An-
           drew.

Kate: Tell me how that is a real giving up for you ... I want to know how sharing a heavy responsibility is giving something up.

Sally: I mean in decisions regarding his life. (Pause) Which means my life too. (Long pause) It means .. means trusting you .. with the most important thing for me. (Cries) And that's a big, a really big price to pay. (Cries) It means, Kate, trusting that you can ... saying that your decisions and your feelings are going to be considered along with mine to try to make the best life for him.

Kate: (Long, long pause) I'm really glad I asked that question. It gives me the whole other side that was missing in the earlier discussion. That's neat. (Pause) It's frightening for me not to have my feelings touched in the same way as you right now, not to have the same depth of feeling that you have for Andrew right now ... It's frightening for me to make a commitment when I'm not in touch with a whole lot of feeling, but I'm doing that because I know the potential for the shared love of the three of us is really great ... I feel there is a whole huge area I don't have any direction for ... you must have the same feeling, a new world where we don't have anything to go by.

Sally: Mm!

Kate: I really understand ... I'm just frightened to death that you won't take me equally into consideration.

Sally: I want you to know that I will, that you can trust me to do that, or at least to tell you when I can't, and why. (They both laugh)

I really feel a lot better now ... I feel more strongly that you're really committed to this. I really wasn't sure; I wasn't sure how much it sounded like it would be nice, and it would be new, and it would be different, or if it was something you really wanted. I feel a lot more sure of that now.

If this conversation is first explored in terms of interaction as evaluation-exchange, it is clear that the hard bargaining did being some important aspects of the relationship into focus, having

to do with the practical details of jointly raising a child. There are no models set out by society for how two women can do this, so Kate and Sally have to work all this out from scratch -- who will do what, who will take responsibility for what, and so on. These are objective aspects of the relationship and are best seen as exchange: to a major extent one person's loss is another's gain -- if Kate doesn't drive to see Sally, Sally must drive to see Kate.

These practical issues are of primary concern to Sally. On the other hand, Kate's demands for an equal and independent identity in the relationship cannot be clearly seen in terms of exchange. The things she demands are rather insignificant in themselves, but they seem to symbolize, to point beyond themselves to a larger issue. Kate ends up with an exchange of greater commitment to the relationship for greater responsibility in the relationship, which is a very poor bargain -- she herself says, "I want to know how sharing a heavy responsibility is giving anything up" -- yet in the end she is content with the outcome. Something else is going on in this conversation in addition to the exchange.

In terms of encounter-confirmation, the interaction initially confirms Kate in an identity she experiences as false -- one-down and oppressed; she allows this, and Sally exploits it. This confirmation of her false self is of course in effect a disconfirmation, and Kate finds she has to protect herself, so the conversation disintegrates.

She does, however, express her resentment rather than hide
it behind her usual stubbornness, and finally she moves out of
the weak position and takes a strong demanding stance ("What are
you prepared to give for that?"); Sally is now able to be weak.
They move from a stand-off to an interchange in which they speak
directly to each other, and the level of understanding and empathy
is high: they are able to move to encounter and mutual confirma-
tion, so that in the final parts of the conversation they are able
to express and understand their experiences of the problems of
joining. This encounter was not possible while Kate was in her
false, weak identity: paradoxically, it was not until she tried
to bargain strongly that encounter became possible.

This conversation is concerned with both objective patterns
of action between two women, and subjective patterns of experience:
the action can be seen as exchange, but the experience involves an
encounter. What is confounding about parts of the conversation is
that they attempt to deal with their experience in a mode which is
suitable for activity; in other words, they try to deal with the
subjective as objective.

Part of what both want to change and develop is objective,
and is thus negotiable. The mode of encounter is not one in which
they can work out the very important practical aspects of their
relationship. But the major issues of the relationship -- commit-
ment for Sally, individuality for Kate -- can only be dealt with

through an encounter of the subjective experience of each -- their hopes, fears, loves, and hates -- rather than through a negotiation of who will visit whom.

The two modes are in conflict in two ways. First, when an attempt is made to deal with the subjective in terms of the objective -- to negotiate what is unnegotiable; and second, to deal with the objective in terms of the subjective, so that in the excitement and passion of encounter, one forgets to pay attention to the practical details of life.

Summary: Love and Excitement; Desertion and Engulfment

The issues in this study of Kate and Sally center around the principal contradiction of their love for and fear of each other in their relationship. At present, they "flip-flop" between experiencing the excitement and power of their relationship, the ways they can be for each other and the new ways they may in the future, and experiencing their fear of the relationship, their fear that their personal needs will get overlooked, their personal space invaded.

This principal contradiction may be seen in terms of each of the dialectics of relation.

Person and Interperson. Kate and Sally bring quite different needs to their relationship, particularly with reference to control and independence; since they fear that the other's needs will overshadow their own, both engage in maneuvers to protect their personal

space. One of the most common outcomes of this is a pattern of
interaction in which Sally is dominant and Kate one-down.

Self and Other. Part of the defense of personal space involves
remaining closed about their experience of anger and resentment to-
ward each other. They do not often speak of this when things are
going well, and when tension rises they find they cannot deal with
these feelings openly at all. The result is an inauthenticity of
which both are aware but with which they cannot deal openly, and
as a result the tension increases. This pattern of closedness
about the obvious unpleasant parts of their relationship in fact
increases the need for each to protect her personal space.

Subject and Object. When they attempt to develop plans for
the future of their relationship, both are particularly concerned
that their own needs are not overshadowed. They attempt to nego-
tiate arrangements, falling into their pattern of dominance-sub-
mission as they do so, which of course serves only to reinforce
their concerns about the future of their relationship. In addi-
tion, this negotiation focuses on their objective behavior in the
relationship when their concern is with their experience of the
relationship: as I have pointed out, they attempt to deal with
the subjective in terms of the objective.

Encounter becomes possible when they move out of the dominance-
submission pattern and stop dealing with aspects of the relationship
which involve win-lose negotiations. Each then can stop defending

her own space, hear the other and understand her experience.

The principal contradiction of attraction to and fear of the relationship is heightened as they move to develop a family structure. Usually, they ignore this contradiction, accentuate the attractive aspects of their relationship, and take the tension out of situations with their infectious laughter. They suppress their fear until something begins to go quite badly wrong. When things get too tense for suppression to work, all the protective maneuvers come into play -- closedness about anger and resentment, protection of personal space, dominance and flight, attempts to change the behavior of the other -- and these protective maneuvers form a self-sustaining cycle.

It is difficult for them to get out of this cycle once it starts, because the stakes are always both high and increasing. Since they usually ignore the noxious aspects of the relationship, they never get a chance to deal with them when they are at a moderate level, only when they have reached such a peak that the whole armory of weapons is brought into play.

As they leave the workshop, they confirm their concern for this issue, that they have made some progress in understanding it, and that there is a lot of work to be done:

Kate: Sally and I decided that Andrew continues (laughter) ...
         continues to represent our relationship. Originally
         he represented the commitment we were beginning to de-
         fine, and a lot of the issues on the workshop were
         around commitment. We defined it in some initial ways,
         and I think we developed a trust that there's a willing-
         ness to continue to define it. One of the other issues

that seemed paramount was control -- particularly for me, and I've got some clarity about what that's hooked into ... Sally said very clearly that control is less of an issue when [she] senses the commitment, and that gives a whole new light on it for me, that wasn't clear after last night's discussion. I feel much more re- laxed; I also feel those issues will have to be reworked. So, Andrew for me represents a sense of continuing de- sire to share my life with Sally and Andrew, and my con- tinuing trust in Sally's caring for me, and the chal- lenge of working through my own effort to be a total individual.

Sally: The thing that's a lot clearer now is around the issue of commitment, which had a lot of tension for me ... I felt a lot of tension about that, and I don't feel that same tension now. I guess the things I see happening is a terrific growth in that part of our relationship, and a very clear understanding of what we both need and want.

Carol and Susan

Carol: I've known Susan for about three years, and we've had many many ups, and many many downs. We've been through a lot of personal hassles together, between the two of us and with other people involved. She's flighty; when she gets upset she's spacey, but yet she balances me, because what I don't do consistently or well, she seems to pick up on. We're totally different in what we like, which is sort of nice because she gets me into things I've never been involved with. She puts up with my bitching -- which I'll commend anybody for. She's warm, and she's genuine -- she's one of the most genuine people, consistently. She cares about me -- she can get into what I'm into, and vice versa.

Susan: Carol has her BS out of college, and she has her Masters in library science. She's well educated, one of the smartest people I think I've known ... She is bitchy, that's very true. She's very particular about some things, particularly about myself; she sometimes over- powers our relationship, and sometimes takes an awful lot for granted. But that happens seldom, and always seems to work itself out for some reason. She's a great

strength to me -- I've an awful lot of faults. Her in-
telligence is quite a problem between us, not a big
problem but it does cause problems. But I'm learning
from her the basics of life -- elementary things that I
haven't already learned ...

Carol describes their symbol, a small statue of two women:

Carol: There were many things we could bring. One was a box
           of Tide, because we always used to meet at the laundro-
           mat. One was paper and pencil, because we play a lot
           of games ... We settled on this because we thought the
           others were so silly. This is a statue that I got when
           I was living in DC ... It's called "Two Women" ... and
           I think we decided on this because it shows the close-
           ness, and it shows the caring and the touching, and for
           a long time our relationship was sort of in the shad-
           ows, and it was sort of nameless and faceless, and yet
           there was a feeling that was strong and real close ...

On Person and Interperson

First impressions are that Carol really overpowers this rela-

tionship: she is a very lively, vocal woman, very much a central

figure in the whole workshop group, while Susan stays more in the

background. Carol appears to define and dominate the relationship,

and Susan initially supports and complements her in that role.

Susan: ... part of my problem with Carol is because ... she is
           very outgoing and can talk to anybody and do anything,
           and I just freeze. She has a better education than I
           do, and I have great difficulty being in the same group
           with her and other people -- I kind of hide in the cor-
           ner ... She can deal with everybody and all situations,
           while I have more of a difficult time associating with
           everybody ... I get shot down an awful lot ... I can't
           express myself the way I should, or I think I should,
           or maybe I can't do it the way Carol thinks I should
           do it -- that's probably what it is ... she's very
           critical ...

When it is pointed out that she always seems to define the relationship

and to speak for Susan, Carol says:

Carol: I think I do that because I know exactly what she's
           going to say a lot of times, and I can get to the point
           quicker ... I think I also do it because I don't want
           her to get fuddled ...

Trainer: Why does she need protecting?

Carol: (Laughs, hesitates) ... I don't know ... I'm a torch-
           bearer; I've got my causes ... and in the beginning
           she was just one of my causes ... I don't mean that
           harshly.

Their levels of commitment to the relationship are different.

Carol has just recently separated from her husband, and Susan has

just moved in, more or less in Jim's place:

Carol: I want to find out what keeps us together ... When I
           separated from my husband, all I wanted to do was live
           alone, and I haven't done that yet and that bothers me ...
           I don't want to think I just sort of shifted people ...
           I don't want her to move in in Jim's place ... It's
           also convenient to have her around -- I don't take her
           for granted as much as I did, but I still do ... I don't
           want it to be convenience that I have her around. I
           don't want it to be habit; I don't want it to be sub-
           stition ... I know what I don't want, but why do I want
           to be with her? I can see [many] hassles ... if I stay
           with her. It's one of the happiest alternatives I've
           found, one of the happiest modes I've found of living,
           and I don't want to lose that. It's much easier liv-
           ing with a woman than with a man.

Compared with Carol's confusion and ambivalence, Susan is quite

clear:

Susan: I could be very content and very happy in my life just
           doing for Carol.

A similar kind of difference between the two of them is that

Carol is more "polygamous" than is Susan, and tends to keep a lot

of relationships going at one time:

Susan: I'm content with a one-on-one relationship ... and
          she's content with a one-on-all. She's got to have
          sixteen relationships going all at one time, while I'm
          very content with just a relationship with Carol.

Significantly, it is out of place for Susan to play Carol's games.

When she does, she reveals not only her own strength in the rela-

tionship, but also her role in supporting Carol's gadfly behavior:

Carol: ... she went out and picked up on somebody else. No-
          thing made me move quicker than when my primary one was
          out there playing my games ... I had to sit there and
          say, "Wow! I've been doing that to her." But I moved,
          I mean I moved ... she knew she would get a reaction
          out of me, and she got a strong one. I was pissed ...
          I walked into the house and said, "What the fuck do you
          think you are doing to me?" And I'd been doing [the
          same thing] for two and a half years! If your non-
          monogamous, if you've got your anchor, you know, you
          can always come home to ...

Group
 Member: You've got to have a monogamous anchor?

Carol: You've got to! Otherwise you don't get the excitement
          out of it. You've got to have someone to come back to
          and recharge your energy.

The initial definition of the relationship is that Carol is

one-up -- the strong one, the leader, the one who is helping and

supporting Susan. This is the aspect of the relationship which is

stressed and presented by Carol and Susan, and from the initial

descriptions would seem to be their own image of the relationship.

However, throughout their conversations are clues that this is an

incomplete and inaccurate definition of the relationship, for ex-

ample above, where Carol depends on Susan as a strong home base for

her other romances. At one point Carol allows, soto voce, that

Susan is stronger than she gives her credit for being.

To see Susan as one-down in the relationship becomes increasingly less possible in the inquisitive social atmosphere of the workshop, and Susan realizes her strength quite early on. This takes place in three phases. First, she realizes how she puts herself down:

Susan: I put myself down real bad.

Next, she discovers some of her own contribution, and she contrasts Carol's "inquisitive" attitude to life -- her restlessness and impetuosity -- with her own "genuine" attitude -- more accepting and letting things be:

Susan: ... my genuine attitude towards people of taking it
          gradually and not jumping into something all of a
          sudden ... [contrasts hers]. We're kind of comple-
          menting each other: I'm trying to meet more people,
          while she's trying to slow down and not get so involved
          with them so quickly ... She has a lot more initiative
          than I do; she's a go-getter. She's the leader ... I'm
          the follower, to a point, and then I hit my point and
          I stop, and then she gets down on me because I stop,
          and then more times than not we found out that where
          I stopped was better off to stop than continue on ...

The third stage is that Susan discovers that she doesn't just sometimes lead by saying "No", but that she brings some important qualities to the relationship.

Susan: I'm finding myself being able to find more things that
          I'm stronger at and more available to Carol than I
          thought I was. I was really feeling good about it be-
          cause I've got all these good things [written] down.
          It makes me feel we are leveling off the relationship,
          instead of this leadership-followership thing.

Susan's strength is as the supportive, stable one in the

relationship on whom Carol depends for nurturance. It is very easy <u>not</u> to see Susan's strength, because Carol is so lively, and because they both present the relationship as Susan one-down. However, once one sees past this initial presentation, it becomes easier to pick up clues, often non-verbal, as to the underlying relationship. For example, the words of a statement of Carol's may be disparaging or patronizing, but the tone will be loving. One very powerful non-verbal clue is in their posturing together: Susan is a physically much larger woman than is Carol, and Carol quite often assumes a physically dependent position, for example sitting on the floor at Susan's feet, holding onto her leg as if physically supported and protected by Susan. Carol acknowledges this, her tone less confident than usual:

Carol: ... in the physical relationship, she's more in tune
            with what I need, or she cares more about what I need.
            Until lately, she's the one that's had the shoulder ...

Generally, Carol relies on Susan's knowledge of her, that Susan knows what she needs, even when she herself doesn't.

In this relationship it appears initially that Susan plays one-down to Carol's one-up -- and as we shall see, Carol particularly needs to be one-up. There is a contradiction between this definition of the relationship and Susan's real strength, her capacity to be strong and nurturant for Carol; and there is also a contradiction between this definition of the relationship and Carol's dependence and need for support. In some ways, Susan has

two identities in the relationship: explicitly as one-down; im-
plicitly as strong, central, and nurturant. These two identities
contradict each other, and her strength in the relationship is
usually played down by both of them. However, as the workshop pro-
gressed, this strength grew clearer and more difficult for either
of them to ignore. This contradiction of identity is central to
this relationship.

On Self and Other: Openness and Closedness

It is clear that Carol and Susan know each other well. They
are able to be open with each other in major parts of their rela-
tionship, and they have a contact with each other such that they
can often speak for each other with creditable accuracy. On sev-
eral occasions during the workshop, each described the same inci-
dent in their history independently, and in each case the two des-
criptions match well. In many relationships this might be seen as
a collusive maneuver to present a united front; while there are
areas of collusion in this relationship, there are also major areas
in which the two women are simply well in contact with each other.
As Carol put it:

Carol: We are definitely very close friends and we know each
           other well ... There's a love and there's a respect
           and there's a comfortableness, and there's a "Oh, am I
           glad she knows me and I don't have to explain what I
           want to do" ...

           I think we have a way of feeling each other out, and
           knowing when it's time to sit down and have a good rap
           session.

Given this basic openness, the areas in which they are not able to be open with each other are significant. These closed areas in the relationship are ones in which there is continuing tension, and the closedness serves to support and preserve the definition of the relationship of Susan as one-down.

First, they do not communicate about some of Carol's other relationships; Susan in particular feels this:

Susan: ... it gets very frustrating for me because I feel we should be able to talk about just about anything ... there's some things I feel should be talked out and brought out and leveled off and be able to understand both parts. She should be able to understand that I'm having problems handling this particular situation ... to be able to understand my feelings ... I get hurt very easily ... [and] I'm not even going to bring it up, because I know all hell's going to break loose.

In order to understand two other areas in which they are closed with each other, it is important to be familiar with some pieces of their history which have led up to the present state of their relationship. Carol and Susan met just after Carol's marriage. At first, they were simply buddies, but their Lesbian relationship developed quickly, and they became more and more involved with each other as Carol's marriage broke up; in particular, Carol relied on Susan as a confidante during this process. It is quite unclear what contribution their relationship had to the breakup of the marriage:

Carol: ... she was my trigger in this whole thing [of gay relationships].

Susan: You see, that right away makes me very defensive ...
          God, if I hadn't come along ... possibly you'd be very
          content and very happy in your marriage. I don't know.
          I can see problems in your marriage that would have
          happened <u>anyway</u> ...

Carol: I can see a lot that would have been avoided, though,
          too!

Susan: Oh, yeah ... but at the same time I also feel, I think
          I've added an awful lot ... I think there were a lot
          of marriage difficulties there, which maybe she didn't
          see until she had her buddie to talk it over with, may-
          be, and maybe I brought them out, because we were such
          close friends that it developed into warm, warm serious
          rap sessions about she and her husband.

Carol: I think it rides on both of us, because Susan was de-
          finitely an integral force in the separation from my
          husband; and he knows it, and I know it, and Susan knows
          it. You know, and that's a heavy thing for anybody to
          handled where three people are involved.

Both of them agree that this subject is difficult for them to talk

about; they both place it in the "closed" area of their relation-

ship.

A related issue for Susan that doesn't get discussed is the

future:

Susan: I think it's hard for us to talk about our future on a
              long range basis because we still are in the bind of
              the marriage ... I'd like to sit down now and talk a-
              bout getting a house ... setting up a relationship in
              a house together. I think we have problems talking
              about that, and that stems from not knowing where it's
              going.

A further issue that adds to the complexity of this relation-

ship is the fact that Susan got pregnant by Carol's husband and had

an abortion. For many reasons this is a highly charged issue, but

the details of the story are not significant here. What <u>is</u> important

is that Susan did not tell Carol who the father was for a year, and

Carol had never basically forgiven her for this deceit. It is an

indication of the closedness of this part of the relationship that

the following excerpts are taken from a converstaion towards the

end of a whole day which they spent trying to grapple with this

issue alone and together. They are both very upset:

Carol: ... I had no idea it was going to go like this; and if
             I did I don't even know if I would have brought it up.

Susan: It's affected me because I don't even know how your
             feeling about it. I don't know what it is about the
             abortion that's been sitting in the back of your head,
             which you didn't tell me ...

Carol: Both of you supposedly said you loved me and you trusted
             me, yet neither one of you told me, and that really
             pissed me off. You waited a whole fucking year! Jim
             I can understand, you I don't understand yet.

Susan: I was afraid of losing you if I told you ... I think
             our relationship developed over that year that I could
             finally tell you ...

Carol: (Very harshly) It's ironic that you didn't. Jim did.

Trainer: You sound very angry.

Carol: Mm-hm. Because I'm closer with Susan than I've ever
             been with Jim. And if anybody's going to tell me, she
             should have done it ...

Susan: So ... it's affecting our relationship because I lied
             to you about the abortion?

Carol: You lied to me about the father.

The conversation continues, with Carol reviewing many of the details

of the affair about which she feels bitter. The trainer suggests

that these may all be "fallbacks", ways of avoiding acknowledging

and accepting the full significance of the relationship:

Trainer: ... another fallback for you [Carol] at this point is
             locking into feeling betrayed by the two of them in
             not discussing it with you for a year ... One of the
             fallbacks, and one of the things that's been most dif-
             ficult to talk about is that you haven't ever really
             forgiven her.

Susan: It's probably the only time I ever really lied to you ...
             a major thing I really lied to you about and covered up
             for so long ... I can see now why we've had problems in
             so far as you actually believing what I've been telling
             you ... That makes sense to me now .. she's not believ-
             ing me, and I don't understand why not.

Carol: I don't necessarily keep grudges, but I remember, and
             it all adds up ...

Susan: So our two years of such honesty and a complete togeth-
             erness, and then all of a sudden the shock of a total
             lie and covering up has more or less sat back on our
             relationship. You're not really trusting me and believ-
             ing what I've been telling you of things.

Carol: Yeah ...

All these areas of closedness in the relationship -- Carol's

other relationships, Susan's part in the breakup of the marriage,

their future together, and Carol's feeling of resentment and mis-

trust, her failure to forgive the abortion affair -- all of them

contradict the basic openness of this relationship. They serve to

preserve a distance between the two in a relationship which is

otherwise very close. They also preserve Susan's identity as one-

down in the relationship, and permit Carol to remain one-up and

less than fully committed to the relationship. These areas of

closedness put Susan continually on the defensive, so her major

contribution goes almost unnoticed. Carol gets as far as

acknowledging this, and more generally her need to be one-up in

life:

Carol: To me, you just don't let it all go, cause your gonna
           get fucked in the end. It goes back to my father and
           it goes back to my sister, and I'm not gonna get fucked
           by this woman ... unless I do it back: I still gotta
           be one-up. You know it upsets me that you're feeling
           so fucking independent, cause it's equaling out again,
           it's equaling out ... and I'm afraid of what she's
           gonna do when she really learns her true worth, which
           is why I put her down so she doesn't ...

One other area of closedness, not between Carol and Susan, but

between them and the wider world, is their Lesbian relationship:

Susan: It hassles us not to be able to tell others about our
           relationship outside the gay world.

My impression is, and I write this cautiously, that the secrecy

which surrounds their relationship with regard to the "straight"

world is more of a burden for Susan than for Carol, since she is

more committed both to this relationship and to Lesbian relations

in general than is Carol. This might be an additional factor that

keeps her one-down and defensive. The workshop was highly signi-

ficant for her in this respect, because their relationship was

made public in a "mixed" group, and was affirmed by that group.

In particular, they became close to another couple during the

workshop, with whom a continuing relationship seems to have been

established. Susan says rather sadly toward the end of the work-

shop:

Susan: I'm not really going to be able to express it to a
           whole lot of people when I get back home, because it
           is a gay relationship. It's kind of "Oh, shit!", you

know? Because it's been really wild for me to be able
to sit, especially in mixed company, to admit it and
say it and to be able to touch in mixed company and
everything. And now to have to go back (sighs), and
oh damnit, here we go again, that horrible humdrum of
not being able to do what we want to do.

On Evaluation-exchange and Encounter-confirmation

Most of the issues that Carol and Susan struggled with during

the workshop had to do with expressing and understanding their ex-

perience of the relationship, rather than with the things they ac-

tually did in the relationship; that is to say, they were mainly

concerned with the subjective, rather than the objective, aspects

of the relationship. Thus, the major contradiction of identity is

a subjective issue, so too is most of their closedness with each

other, and nearly all the issues they identify for negotiation are

also subjective rather than objective. Thus, while undoubtedly

there are parts of this relationship that may be seen in terms of

exchange, the primary issues need to be seen in terms of their

capacity for encounter and confirmation.

As I have pointed out, Carol and Susan really _know_ each other

well, and their communication with each other is basically confirm-

atory. They make clear judgments of each other -- Susan quite

happily calls Carol a "flighty bitch" and means it -- but these

judgments are made from a basis of knowledge of each other, and

they are confirmatory, albeit a little harsh.

This relationship is in a process of change: possibly more

than any other pair, Carol and Susan see their relationship in new ways at the end of the workshop, and although this is no guarantee of lasting change, it is a beginning. As the relationship changes, the two women are increasingly influencing each other: this influence is _not_ based in exchange -- you do this and I'll do that -- but in an understanding of each other and a realization of what they might be for each other, so that the total amount of influence in the relationship is increasing.

As they discuss the changes they would like to make in their relationship, they seem to move together such that what each wants is almost the same, and begin a movement beyond the issues they have been working on so hard. The following passages are taken from the negotiation session of the workshop. While the form of the conversation is negotiation, there is little hard bargaining or actual exchanging; rather, the conversation illustrates a process of encounter, each realizing the needs of the other and moving toward her.

Carol: I want freedom and independence and space without any
            hassles from you, and I will try to give you the same ...

Later:

Susan: One of the things I would like would be a total commit-
            ment from Carol, and to get it ... I'll go through just
            as much shit and just as much hell as I've been going
            through, because I really want it.

Carol: You can go through that shit, but it's still not an
            assurance your going to get it.

But a few moments later, Carol seems to negate this last comment:

Carol: The only big thing ... I want is <u>peace</u> ... and comfort-
            ableness ... and I'm ready to give up my bullshit ...
            my bullshit with [other relationships].

Susan: <u>You</u> want peace in our relationship, and your willing to
            give up ...

Carol: Yeah, I'm willing to quit kindling the fire! ... I'm
            also getting tired of the bullshit ... my games with
            other people. It's getting callous, it's not necessary
            anymore, which makes <u>me</u> feel good.

Susan: That gets to my next one of jealousy. I want us to quit
            being so jealous ... I want <u>me</u> to quit being so jealous,
            and it stems from the bullshit, and the games with other
            people, because you push the games so far they become
            threats to me in our relationship.

In this conversation are two intertwined issues: the ability
of each to be herself, to retain an individual identity, and the
possibility of a peaceful, comfortable relationship together. Carol's
need for space is matched by Susan's willingness to be less jealous;
Susan's desire for commitment is in some ways matched by Carol giv-
ing up her "bullshit". The relationship is changing in some signi-
ficant ways, not through a process of bargaining individual needs,
but through a process of mutual understanding and confirmation that
each may be herself while they are together.

Summary: A Contradictory Identity

The <u>principal contradiction</u> for Carol and Susan lies in their
simultaneous affirmation and denial of Susan's central nurturant
place in the relationship. This contradiction may be seen in terms
of each of the three dialectics of relation, and there is consider-
able evidence of movement in each of these.

Person and Interperson. This relationship initially appears to be based in dominance-submission, with Carol clearly the strong one, the leader, who brings Susan along in tow, as it were. This is how both present the relationship initially, but this definition is unstable, because it denies Susan's crucial central position. This aspect of the relationship, which emerges through the workshop, is usually played down by both. Both are caught in their initial definition of the relationship, which denies important parts of each -- the parts of Susan that are strong, and the parts of Carol that are weak and dependent.

Self and Other. While Carol and Susan know each other remarkably well and are very intimate, there were significant ways in which they were closed to each other -- things that did not get discussed, or where it was very difficult for them to understand each other's viewpoint. These issues were in contradiction to the basic openness of the relationship, created a distance between them, and fostered doubts about the viability of the relationship. They serve to keep Susan one-down, on the defensive, and to keep Carol in control and relatively free; to an extent, this gives Susan the status of a utility to serve Carol, Carol becomes the full Self, and Susan's experience becomes secondary.

On the other hand, their basic openness with each other is in contradiction to the initial presentation of the relationship as one-up/one-down, since openness involves a symmetry in a relationship

which does not fit well with the asymmetry of dominance-submission.

   Subject and Object. Most of the interaction of Carol and Susan during the workshop was concerned with their subjective experience of the relationship, and their interaction illustrates a process of influence through encounter, rather than as a process of exchange. There are ways, however, in which Susan's subordinate position as a utility for Carol essentially objectifies her and denies her a subjective identity.

   However, the initial definition of the relationship as one-up/ one-down is unstable, and two major changes occur during the workshop to make it no longer tenable. First, Susan begins to recognize the qualities she brings to the relationship, and second some of the patterns of closedness which supported the principal contradiction -- particularly Carol's remaining resentment about the pregnancy-abortion episode -- are made explicit. Thus, this relationship appears to be moving past its current principal contradiction.

Susan: Carol and I came with that hard statue, that now looks
           to us as ... it was _us_, but it was also _her_. So we
           came up with -- lucky we found it -- it's a three of
           Spades [playing card]: Carol, me, and us. We are find-
           ing our perspective of being individuals, but we still
           have "us". [The card] was just lying there on the
           ground, and I said, "Hey, that's cool, because there's
           you, and there's me, and there's us".

Carol: And before it was, we think, me and us ... there's three,
           not two and a half ... The other thing I found was this
           [a cardboard tube]: we're not doing away with the touch-
           ing of the statue, and the closeness, and us having two
           different things is not negating that. But this is more
           bendable than the statue, and it's lighter and it's not

as powerful, and you can see all the way through it.
It's a clear cut thing: we both have open ends ...
We didn't fight about what we were going to bring to-
day, and when we came on Thursday, we had a real has-
sle ...

Molly and Peter*

Molly: My partner is Peter. I've known Peter for close to
three years; he's a colleague of mine. He is on occa-
sion very bouncy, and on occasion very in the doldrums,
and that's clear. That's one of the ways I would char-
acterize being with him ... high energy ... and then
low energy ... We do a lot of work together, and I've
enjoyed that a lot. I enjoy being around him because
I think he's competent.

Peter: Molly is one of those people who I think will be a
friend of mine even though I might be many thousand
miles away, and there's very few of them. She's very
bright. She's very insightful about individual cir-
cumstances and individual relationships. She's some-
one who I think a lot of other people find they can
talk to -- I certainly do -- and rely on, and share
pieces of themselves that are difficult to share.
She's usually late, and gets stroppy when you tell her
she's late, and tends to get fluffy round the edges
under some circumstances, and that's a pity. I wish
she wouldn't.

Let me just talk about the thing we brought, which is
this [two pieces of rope tied together in a knot]. What
we tried to do was to symbolize who we are for each
other, what the relationship is. This is a carrik
bend -- a very intricate, balanced knot, very strong,
it won't come to pieces very easily, and it's pretty
difficult to change without undoing the whole lot of
it. Sometimes one piece of the rope is in the front,
and sometimes it's in the back -- sometimes one of us
is in the front, and sometimes one of us is in the back.
It's a very elegant, intermeshed system. There's more
wrong with our relationship than there is with this

---

* Molly and Peter were the staff of the workshop; Peter is
the present writer.

knot, because some of the intricacies are not good for
either of us or for our being together, so the knotty-
ness of the knot may be appropriate ... That's us.

On Person and Interperson

The relationship between Molly and Peter takes the form of two

overspecialized patterns of dominance-submission; these two patt-

erns alternate, so that at one time Peter is dominant and at an-

other time Molly is dominant:

Molly: ... in a lot of the work we do he is real dominant, and
          I buy into that and it doesn't occur to him to do things
          differently ... It's got exagerated to the extent that
          I really shut myself down and don't use the skills I
          do have because I'm expecting him to assume responsi-
          bility. So that in a public sense we do a one-up/one-
          down number, where I buy into being one-down and allow
          him to be one-up. Then we have a whole other side ...
          in a private sense ... I'm the one-up person ... I'm
          the one he relies on -- I'm sort of his therapist ...
          It's almost a real classic male-female number: power
          behind the throne. I'm not happy about that at all.
          I would like him to be more of a resource to me in my
          own life ... and I would definitely like to have more
          ascendance publicly.

Peter: It's an intricate balance of who's one-up and who's
          one-down, who is dominant and who is submissive. In
          our public life, particularly consulting, I tend to be
          very dominant, and she allows me to do that. I don't
          like that very much; I feel sort of guilty, because
          there are all sorts of nasty male chauvinist things
          around that which I find uncomfortable. I also lose
          a lot, because I lose a lot of her contribution to what
          we are doing together. Privately it flips over, and
          I allow her to be one-up in regard to my issues about
          living: she does a lot of "therapeutic" work with me,
          much more than I do for her ... that isn't reciprocal.
          So we've got two non-reciprocal things, and they flip
          over. That's where the knot came in: it's a very solid,
          stable, elegant, balanced set of collusions, because we
          both gain and lose from them, but I think we could gain
          a lot more if we could be equal in both sides.

The "public" pattern applies to their professional work to-
gether, and also to their different stance towards organizing their
lives. Peter is more organized, at times compulsively so, while
Molly can be compulsively dis-organized; this difference gets ex-
aggerated in their relationship. Peter nags, teases, and other-
wise bullies Molly about her disorganization (note for example that
he introduces her as "usually late"); Molly responds to this with
passive-aggressive resentment, and gets more disorganized. On the
other hand, in the "private" pattern, Molly helps Peter deal with
personal and emotional concerns, but is less revealing about her
own issues.

In many ways, these two patterns are useful to both of them,
because they are based in their respective skills and abilities.
However, the relationship has to an extent become "locked in" to
these patterns, so that the identities within the relationship
are often constraining for both of them. The "public" pattern in
particular causes a lot of irritation not only for them, but for
their colleagues and their clients. It is clearly detrimental to
their ability to do an outstanding job together, since much of
Molly's contribution gets lost. There is a lot of unexpressed
anger associated with this pattern, which will be discussed in de-
tail below.

Similarly, the "private" pattern is a useful and genuine part
of the relationship, but its non-reciprocal nature raises questions

about what covert functions it may serve. As I shall discuss below, this pattern may well be best understood as a way of coping with ambiguity and ambivalence about the intimacy of their relationship.

In some ways the patterns complement each other: each has an opportunity to lead and be dominant in a part of the relationship, and to be dependent and "helped" in another. In other ways, the patterns are quite contradictory, as exaggerated dominance in one aspect of the relationship is negated by exaggerated submission in another. The two patterns are not integrated; rather they take place at quite different times and in quite different circumstances, so that the contradiction is managed by compartmentalization in time, place, and subject matter.

On Self and Other: Openness and Closedness

There are in this relationship major contradictions having to do with their openness with each other, their availability for each other, and their knowledge of each other. Primarily, Molly and Peter are very close colleagues in a field which demands a high degree of self-knowledge and open interpersonal relations; they are trained in and value interpersonal openness.

In their work relationship, they are very open and available for each other:

Molly: I don't think there is anybody else I know, or have
          ever known, that I would share or give them the amount
          of energy -- around thinking through problems or doing

work together. There's nobody else that I would do a lab for for their dissertation, ever, and there's nobody else I would feel as free to contribute or want to contribute a lot of my own thinking to that process, and not get into issues of ownership in any significant way ...

On the other hand are major areas of closedness. One of these is their anger associated mainly with the "public" pattern of Peter dominant. Both are quite irritated by this pattern, at times furious, but they both express their anger obliquely:

Peter: I don't think I'm very well in touch with anger generally, but particularly with you. I think I tease or bother or joke; I'm rarely expressive of anger. I think I tend to divert it into all kinds of other things, rather than be explicit about it. There isn't any limit to anger; I don't think it starts very much.

Molly: I think our anger is really something else. I think we both do our anger in oblique ways, and that most of the things we've been running around the mulberry bush about in the last three or four days -- like my unreliability and your nagging me -- are patterns of anger. You nag me, and that makes me furious, but I'm either not in touch with that, or can't respond to it and say "Shove off, leave me alone"; so I don't do things, out of anger, and the cycle gets perpetuated ...

Another area in which they are closed to each other, or more accurately confused, is the area of personal intimacy:

Peter: In many ways the things that I'm most open with you about are also the things where there's a limit somewhere, where I close up, and in that way the things that are most significant about being open are also the most significant about being closed ... In many ways we are very intimate, but then in other ways we're not ... I'm not sure at the moment that some of our intimacy isn't gamey; and I want to be very careful that it isn't.

Molly: That was the first thing that occurred to me, that ... I'm a relatively open person with you. And then I realized that for every ounce of openness there's the same

amount of closedness in other areas that's just as in-
tense. I've got a tight little boundary around some ...
stuff ...

I'm aware that [work energy] is in some kind of dynamic
equilibrium with other parts of personal energy ... that
I don't have available for you at all ... there's cer-
tain areas where I'm more trusting of [you] than prob-
ably anybody else ... but there are other parts where
my trust level is minimal. I don't feel I can take
risks; [these things] are limits to our relationship.

Part of the confusion comes from both of them being rather sur-

prised at finding themselves as fond of each other and as personally

attracted to each other as they are. They are capable of touching

each other deeply -- in ways that sometimes seem more appropriate

to a much more primary relationship than theirs is or ever could

be.

Peter: The whole [relationship] is in a context of a very deep
           love for each other, and we're not sure how to deal with
           that. The stakes are very high, but also not very clear.

In contrast to this intimacy, there are many ways in which

Molly and Peter are strangers to each other: they simply do not

know each other at all. They have chosen quite different life-

styles and move in different social circles, so that the closeness

of their relationship does not fit well into other parts of their

social and interpersonal lives.

There is a major contradiction in the relationship between

their very high intimacy and connectedness, and their very high

separateness and strangerhood. This contradiction is dealt with

primarily by allowing the issue to remain unclear, so that on the

one hand neither is easily able to express closeness, because they are unclear about where the closeness ends; and on the other hand, neither is able to express distance or anger, for fear of blowing the relationship apart. They also use Molly's "therapy" as a means toward a pseudo-intimacy: they can talk about intimate things, without the risks of real intimacy.

On Evaluation-exchange and Encounter-confirmation

In the parts of their relationship where Molly and Peter know each other well, exchange and confirmation are complementary modes of interaction. For example, they know each other well as professionals and have a capacity to work well together, thus confirming each other in important parts of their identity. In addition, they know each other's competences and are able to make evaluations of each other's work, and to express these directly and clearly.

As I have pointed out, however, there are several ways in which Molly and Peter remain strangers to each other: there are ways in which they simply do not comprehend each other's approach to their life, and they have chosen very different life-styles which are in some ways incompatible and conflicting. Thus, the close relationship they have established is quite threatening to both, since it may put them in contact with a very different and quite incompatible orientation to the world.

As a consequence, to the extent that they <u>are</u> able to reach through this distance and meet and confirm their radical difference and the uniqueness of each, the confirmation is highly significant, because it is the confirmation of a very different Other. The combination of high separateness and high confirmation is exhilerating and frightening.

However, in the areas where they do not understand each other, where they appear to be <u>radically</u> separate, a basic disconfirmation appears inevitable, since they fear that to know the other fully would be too destructive of themselves. They disconfirm each other in major ways, but rather than face this disconfirmation and accept it as a part of the relationship, they usually turn it into a judgment, as a means of self protection and a <u>reconfirmation</u> of self. The other's actions are not simply different, uncomprehended, and thus disconfirming; they are wrong. Molly gets close to describing this:

Molly: I've had a myth about our relationship ... a myth of
           one-manship, a myth of some sort of superiority to you.
           And it's been a need to control and put boundaries on
           who you could be for me, and not be able to confirm the
           parts of you that I love and value and respect and ap-
           preciate because they're things I don't have ... That's
           in some kind of weird unfreezing place. I suppose it
           comes down to saying, "Hey, I'd rather be me than you".
           And a lot of [unspoken things] are sort of judgment
           things that have to do with that myth.

In addition, these judgments are usually made obliquely rather than directly, so that the whole process is mystified. First, there is the basic disconfirmation resulting from their radical separateness.

Second, this disconfirmation is made into a judgment: the other's
life is somehow wrong (or mine is?); you should be more like me
(or I should be more like you?). Thirdly, this judgment is made
in a way that can be denied -- through jokes, teasing, covert
punishment, withdrawal -- resulting in a mystification of the whole
process.

Thus, while in some parts of their relationship confirmation
and exchange are complementary modes of interaction, in other parts,
oblique, mystified judgments are used as a means to avoid a fright-
ening disconfirmation.

Summary: Intimate Strangers

The principal contradiction in this relationship is between
intimacy and connectedness -- knowing and loving each other --
and separateness and strangerhood -- not knowing and threatening
each other. This contradiction lies primarily in the dialectic
of Self and Other, with the other issues of the relationship con-
nected to and supporting it.

Person and Interperson. Molly and Peter are friends and
close colleagues. Much of their relationship is based in an alter-
nation of two overspecialized patterns of dominance-submission,
one in which Peter is dominant as the leader, and one in which Molly
is dominant as the helper. In some ways these patterns are based
in their complementary skills, but they are also in contradiction,
and constrain both in the relationship. The patterns are not

integrated, but separated in time, place, and subject matter.

Self and Other. The relationship is based in open interpersonal values, and Molly and Peter are basically open about their work together, and in many ways are personally intimate. However, there are major areas of closedness, one of which has to do with their anger about the "public" pattern of their relationship, and the other is based in confusion about the nature and degree of their intimacy. There is a major contradiction between their intimacy and connectedness and their separateness and strangerhood.

Subject and Object. In the more open parts of their relationship, exchange and confirmation are complementary modes of interaction. On the other hand, in the more closed and confused parts, judgment is used as a way to avoid the disconfirmation which results from their inability to understand each other's being.

The structure of the relationship -- the two patterns of dominance-submission -- make unclear the identity of each in the relationship. On the one hand, this avoids the intimacy of an equal peer relationship, and at the same time provides a pseudo-intimacy in a "therapeutic" relationship. This heightens the tension of the principal contradiction.

This tension is avoided -- falsely -- by turning basic disconfirmation into a judgment of the other as a way for each to confirm his/her own rightness; the judgment is avoided by being expressed obliquely.

This interconnection between the issues in the relationship
may be expressed in another way. Because Molly and Peter fail to
acknowledge that the relationship is centered around a juxtaposi-
tion of high intimacy and high strangerhood, it is impossible for
either to establish or maintain a clear identity in the relation-
ship, and it is impossible for them to be clear about areas of
confirmation/disconfirmation and evaluation/exchange. The rela-
tionship is in many ways rewarding and exhilerating, but at the
same time it contains a weirdness because of the existence of
issues neither have faced up to.

It is unclear how this relationship will (or can) move to re-
solve this pattern of contradiction. It cannot become more clearly
intimate without a radical revision in the lives of both Molly and
Peter, which neither would tolerate; it is more likely to drift
apart as they move away from each other physically and temporally.

Conceivably, the relationship could continue as a loose affil-
iation involving a high degree of tension, in some ways as a bridge
between the different cultures they represent. Such a relationship
would be more valuable if based in much greater clarity of struc-
ture and communication, and a greatly increased ability of each
to accept the risks of high confirmation and high disconfirmation.
Such a relationship is likely to be developmental for both, but
would clearly be far too tense to be a primary source of support
for either; the basic tensions of this kind of relationship can be

managed in different -- more stressful -- ways than is likely to
be tolerable in a primary relationship.

Peter: We untied the knot, because we didn't think we were
            intertwined in the same kind of way. One of the prob-
            lems with that knot was that you couldn't tell which
            piece of rope was which -- and we couldn't tell which
            piece of us was which sometimes. We still wanted the
            linkage, which is still pretty strong, but we tied two
            knots, one each, and our sense is of being able to see
            how the two things intertwine much more clearly, or
            it's moving that way; and there's also much more free-
            dom to move within the two ...

Molly: The other thing is that before, all of us was really
            on top of each other, and I really feel one of the
            things we're working on right now is finding out the
            place where we do interlink, and the fact that there
            are lots of places ... that really are not accessible
            to each other. And so we are defining ways in which
            we are more separate, getting some clarity about what
            was before pretty fuzzy.

Bridget and David

Bridget: I'd like to introduce David. We've known each other a
            little over 18 months now, and have spent a great deal
            of that time together in one fashion or another. He's
            a person who is initially rather shy; he is very con-
            cerned about developing his mind -- he has a good one ...;
            he is very interested in physical activity ...; he's
            one of the few men that I know who is a feminist, and
            that's very important to me. He's particularly good
            for me because he calls me when I'm a fake, when I'm
            goofing off intellectually ... I wouldn't take that
            from many people. He's very important to me person-
            ally, but he's also important to me professionally;
            we're in the same course of study, and that's very
            important to me because it means he's not only my best
            friend and the person I love most in all the world, but
            is also a colleague.

David: This is Bridget. I think she's probably the most no-
            nonsense, upfront, no-bullshit person I've ever met.

She comes on very strong a lot of times, and I really like that a lot. She's intellectually lazy sometimes, and doesn't give herself credit for being as bright as she is. One of the crucial things I think that gets done to her is that her strength and her confrontive nature and her no-nonsense gets interpreted as hard. It's not hard. She's incredibly caring; I've learned a lot from her in that way ...

Bridget: (Cries a little) That shows you how hard I am!

David: (Tape unclear. Talks about a small plant in an earthenware pot as the symbol of their relationship. The pot represents the boundary of the relationship, which is permeable, open.) The soil is the nutrients for our relationship -- that's our families, our friends, and our work. There are two plants there, not one, there's two separate plants, and that's the two of us, and also our personal life and our professional life, which are both important in our relationship, and obviously intertwined in a lot of ways. It's a small plant, meaning it's got a long way to go; it's not mature yet, but it's alive and growing. We need to learn to fight more than we do; we are going to be more competent professionals; we are just going to grow ...

In contrast to some of the other pairs, Bridget and David came to the workshop with few issues needing urgent attention:

Bridget: ... the way I'm feeling about our relationship [is] that we're having a good time. We don't have a lot of strong issues we're working; we're very content.

David: I feel very good and solid about our relationship.

During the workshop they had no fights or super-heavy sessions. Their discussions of their relationship, while clearly meaningful for them, never gave the impression of great urgency: things were not critical; they could wait. In fact, Bridget and David did not talk very much: this relationship provided one-third to one-half as much data as the other pairs. This was not because they were

not fully engaged in the process of the workshop, nor primarily be-
cause they evaded difficult issues. It would appear, rather that
whatever contradictions exist at present in their relationship are
latent or hidden, or at most, emerging. Bridget and David are,
primarily, content with each other and with their relationship.

On Person and Interperson

Bridget is seventeen years older than David; they were first
of all very good friends and colleagues, and their present lover
relationship and plans for marriage grew from that basis, rather
contrary to their expectations:

Bridget: The way our whole thing developed was that we were very
            good friends ... we could afford to be friends because
            we both recognized that there was too big a difference
            [in age] for us to ever get involved. So we were each
            other's sounding boards for all kinds of stuff ...

David: ... we became very good friends, we were great friends,
            as committed to each other as friends as I've ever been
            to anybody ... We had a very solid relationship and then
            we added sex to it ... the relationship was standing on
            its own before the other stuff happened.

    Their relationship is primarily one of equals:

Bridget: I feel -- I guess we feel -- leadership flip-flops
            fairly often; it doesn't stay with one person all that
            long, and we both kind of like that ... There doesn't
            need to be leadership as such because we both just do
            what needs to be done ... there's more give and take
            for me than in any other relationship I've been in ...

            I think we both have a thing about competence ... He's
            demonstrated competence that primarily comes out of the
            intellectual kinds of things; I've been sort of practi-
            cal. So we use those off one another; I'm trying to get
            more of what he's got, and he's trying to get more of
            what I've got, yet we're fairly comfortable that we've
            each got something.

Alongside this basic equality are some aspects of the relationship in which Bridget seems to be fairly consistently in a one-down position:

Bridget: ... the things that didn't go so well, that we need to think more about .. I can get defensive pretty fast, and when I do, he nags, which only gets me more defensive, so we get into a kind of spiralling thing ...

She characterizes David as strong intellectually:

Bridget: I realize ... I have several responses to that. One is to walk away from it and let him do his own thing, be a Great Mind if he chooses to. Another is to be a very passive student, just see if I can eat it up, but not really challenge him in any way or engage him at all: be like the worst possible kind of student in the classroom, who just takes notes, and really doesn't even stop to make sure he understands. The third way is to engage him, and to challenge him and to challenge me to work something through with him intellectually. The last is what I prefer ... but it's not where I'm at yet.

In contrast to Bridget, David does not seem to be consistently one-down in any aspect of the relationship. Indeed, he could be said in some ways to set the tone of their relationship: their ways of dealing with anger together, which will be discussed below, are more David's than Bridget's, as are some aspects of their public presentation of the relationship:

David: I think the public even-keelness is primarily a reflection of my personal style too. A couple can't be intensely emotional, either angry or loving, if one of them isn't doing it. And that's the way I am, most of the time.

Bridget and David read this account of their relationship in draft form, and they disagree with this analysis. They argue that just as Bridget is one-down intellectually, David is one-down and

less experienced as a practitioner of their profession. They also argue that both are equally influential in setting the tone of their relationship. Throughout our discussion of the draft, they picked up and objected to points which suggested an inequality in the relationship, and they agreed with me when I suggested that they might have such a major investment in developing a relationship of equals that it might be difficult for them to see and deal with aspects of their relationship where they are _not_ equal.

Whatever contradictions exist between person and interperson in this relationship are latent: both are clearly very happy with who they are in the relationship. There are, however, aspects of this relationship that could become significantly contradictory. One of these is that their basic investment in a relationship of equals may become contradicted by the development of one of them as dominant; this may be difficult for them to manage if they deny present aspects of their relationship in which they are not equal.

At present, however, no clear contradiction exists; both find a comfortable identity in their relationship.

On Self and Other: Openness and Closedness

On a number of occasions during the workshop, Bridget and David discussed the smoothness of their relationship, the ease with which they get along together. One thought that comes to them

is that they collude to keep this smoothness:

David: One of my interests is to try to uncover the ways that
          Bridget and I collude. I'm sure we do, because that
          happens in any close two-person relationship ... The
          relationship functions so smoothly that I fear collu-
          sion in it ... One thing is ... I think we could learn
          to fight better. My lifelong approach to fighting has
          been to withdraw, and that's not been Bridget's; I
          taught her how to do that.

Bridget: Probably there's not sufficient challenge to one an-
          other. I see that for me; I know he challenges me
          intellectually; I'm not sure I challenge him ... I just
          feel sometimes that things are going along too smoothly,
          and I would like to take some stand on something, but
          there's no real issue to do it on ... Yet smoothness
          can be negative in some ways, so now and then I feel I'd
          like to disrupt things a little.

They get a lot of feedback from the group that they are seen as "A

very content couple; not a lot of hassles." Bridget hears this as

"deadly and dull", and David as lacking the energy he feels in the

relationship.

Bridget and David are very open with each other; the relation-

ship is based on mutual self-disclosure, so that when they find

something about themselves or about the relationship which is hid-

den from the other, they tend to share it and open that topic for

discussion:

Bridget: I've written the five most terrible, terrifying awful
          things here, and I am willing to talk about them. I
          can't think of anything worse, at the moment.

They appear to value openness and to be skillful at being open

with each other; and yet they are still concerned about ways in which

they are not open, and fascinated by the idea that they may remain

strangers to each other:

David: [The idea of being] strangers and lovers fits very well
            for me in our relationship. I walk into the room some-
            times, look at Bridget, and say, "Who is that woman?
            And what does she know about me?" And that's spooky
            when it happens.

Bridget: ... colluding .. makes us look a tight fit. By look-
            ing at us separately, and by asking what parts of us
            are strangers, that's very threatening, but by the same
            token it feels like movement.

These issues of smoothness in the relationship and of possible

collusion become focused on ways they manage anger with each other;

in particular, they look at ways they avoid expressions of anger:

Bridget: We don't fight much, and my personal style of fighting
            has changed since I've been in the relationship with
            David. His coping style is withdrawal, and he thinks
            a lot before he comes back and does stuff. I used to
            pop off, and I was so afraid of what my popping off
            might do given his style, that I've adopted his style
            as well. So that, from time to time -- it doesn't
            happen that often -- there's just two very quiet, pen-
            sive people, who eventually talk to one another in sub-
            dued tones, even if they're saying very strong things.

David: It's terrible; it really is terrible.

            Explosive expression of anger can only really take place
            in the context of a very trusting kind of relationship.
            Because when you don't know what's going to happen when
            you really explode, and if you don't have a lot of con-
            fidence in the relationship, you may blow the whole
            deal.

Bridget: I guess I believe at this point that if I really got
            angry it wouldn't end it. It's just a question of act-
            ing on it. I didn't believe that at one point; that's
            why I changed my behavior.

This contradiction of hidden anger in an open relationship may

be seen as an emerging issue in the relationship:

Bridget: ... it's taken this weekend to see how unhealthy it is,
             and I'm delighted he agrees ...

However, while Bridget and David define this issue intellectually,

and both agree they need to change it, there is very little in their

interaction which indicates that this is a really significant issue

for them. It has none of the qualities of a lively, impellingly

attractive gestalt which the contradictions in other relationships

have. Bridget and David said after the workshop that this issue of

anger loomed larger during the weekend than in their day-to-day

life; they felt they over-emphasized it.

    It is not clear that there is a contradiction in their patt-

erns of openness and closedness; it may be that the issue of con-

cealed anger will emerge into an emotionally charged contradiction,

I am personally doubtful. The openness and smoothness of this re-

lationship is impressive, quite clearly a major achievement on which

more can be built.

On Evaluation-exchange and Encounter-confirmation

    It is easy to be impressed with the ways Bridget and David

are able to be in touch with one another emotionally: they seem

to be well in contact with each other, and are able to say both

hard and soft things to each other in a way that communicates well.

They have a style of doing this which is quiet and, especially

David, undemonstrative, but a major part of the smoothness of their

relationship comes from their skills in communicating with each

other. Their relationship is based primarily on mutual confirmation.

At the same time, they have a fear of disconfirmation: there is at times an air of considerable respect and cautiousness, reflected, for example, in Bridget's continued inability to "pop off" at David in her usual style. In the unfolding exercise, they found it almost impossible to move away from each other:

Bridget: ... the hardest thing was to split to begin with ...
            Every couple in the room had split and we were still
            standing there, and I felt like standing there forever.
            But I also got the message ... that if I didn't move
            there wasn't going to be any movement.

To the extent that moving away is an act of disconfirmation, it is significant that this was difficult for them.

The mode of negotiation and exchange is a secondary aspect of their relationship which might be said to complement their basic mutual confirmation. Bargaining takes place about actvities -- what they will do together, not about their experience and identity in the relationship. Their bargaining session was really a civilized planning of activities which picked up some of the issues they had uncovered on previous activities and specified and agreed action on them.

Again, there was no hard bargaining, the interaction proceeded smoothly, and it is unclear whether this was because they are open and skillful with each other (which is partly true) or because they are cautious with each other (which is also partly true). When

challenged about this, they say:

Bridget: ... the weekend isn't full of surprises for me; there's
not all kinds of new issues, but they're finally being
given sufficient time and being made explicit enough so
that I'm feeling committed to act on them.

David: ... it doesn't feel unreal to me; it doesn't feel like
I'm running away from stuff, but I don't know whether
I'm kidding myself or not.

Bridget: You mean it would seem more real to an onlooker if
there were a little more drama?

Summary: A Synthesis, for the Moment

There is no <u>principal contradiction</u> in this relationship as
there is in the others: there is no major issue which attracts
all attention, which demands to be worked, which colors the whole
relationship. There is however a <u>theme</u> to the relationship, a
theme of smoothness and contentment which is supported in all as-
pects of the relationship. The interperson is based in equality
and is experienced as giving energy to both of them; they are open
in their expression of their experience of the relationship -- and
it is easier to be open with an equal; the openness leads to a
basic confirmation and ease of bargaining; there is a give and take.
Bridget and David are almost classically "authentic" with each
other.

<u>Person and Interperson.</u> This relationship is primarily one
of equals, and Bridget and David are both content in it. While
there are some indications that Bridget may be consistently one-
down, they both deny this, and are very strongly invested in the

maintenance of equality; they may find it difficult to see or to manage inequality in their relationship. Presently, there is no contradiction of person and interperson.

Self and Other. This is a very open, skillful, smooth-running relationship. While there is some concern about unexpressed anger, this is not a major issue, and again, there is no real contradiction here.

Subject and Object. This relationship is basically confirmatory, and to an extent Bridget and David fear and avoid disconfirmation. Bargaining and exchange is a mode which complements their basic mutual confirmation.

The question is, what happens when this happy absence of contradiction gets upset? This might happen if the pattern of equality became upset, with one of them becoming dominant -- the seeds of this may be in David's occasional one-up position, or in Bridget's greater practical skills; another possibility is that one of them will want to take a job at the expense of the other's career. At present, they are not willing to look at ways in which they are not equal, and this may make it hard for them to manage inequality if it becomes an issue in the future. Another way the "authentic" pattern might be upset is if the management of anger becomes a significant contribution. Or again, they may just get plain bored.

A relationship without contradiction really tests a theory based in inevitable contradiction. One view might be that the

theory does not apply and needs major revision. A second view is that the theory holds, but that the research methods did not uncover the <u>real</u> truth of this relationship. For a while, especially during the workshop, I felt this way, and thought I was being incompetent as both trainer and researcher since I was not "helping" Bridget and David to really understand their relationship. However, careful examination of the data gives no indications that this description is incorrect: the requirements of contextual validity are met, and no item of data diverges from the pattern in a major way.

This points to a third possibility, that the relationship of Bridget and David has stabilized, it is on a plateau, the smoothness is a gratifying achievement. But this plateau represents a synthesis <u>for the moment</u>, a consolidation of the relationship as they move toward marriage. This synthesis will generate its own antithesis, so that Bridget and David will face contradiction in their relationship in the future. From a plateau, one may go either up or down.

Bridget: Well, we still have our plant here. Sometimes on the weekend it was in the sunlight, and sometimes it got watered and nourished, and sometimes it just got pushed in the corner or went in the shadows for a while. Two leaves fell off -- died, I guess -- and there's new life in different spots ... For the most part it feels still appropriate symbolically: it was growing and changing, and that kind of thing. The one thing we were trying to add to it if we could remake it or something would be a few thorns here and there, which would bring the other part of the iceberg out, so that we could be more explicit about the hurtful kinds of stuff. So maybe there should be a few thorns, but in general, it's still symbolic.

CHAPTER V

THEORY REVISITED

So far in this dissertation, I have developed a theoretical
approach to the problem of "facework" and "authenticity", described
a method for its empirical investigation, and presented studies of
five two-person relationships. In this chapter, I move back to a
more general perspective, to look at ways in which the empirical
explorations illuminate the theory and suggest elaborations, cor-
rections, and new directions.

Generally, the basic notion that relationships can profitably
be studied in terms of an interpenetration of "facework" and "au-
thenticity" is well supported in the studies. In particular, the
search for contradiction proved to be a fruitful basis for the
design of an experiential workshop. Thus, Brian and Jane's rela-
tionship may be understood in terms of a contradiction of autonomy
and commitment; Kate and Sally show a contradiction of identity
within the relationship; Carol and Susan show how disturbing the
principal contradiction may help a pair move beyond the staleness
of repeating that same contradictory situation; Molly and Peter
present a rather different contradiction, between high intimacy
and high strangerhood. Finally, Bridget and David are the inevi-
table exception that proves the rule: their relationship is at
present free from contradiction, but we may hypothesize that their

132

present "classically authentic" interaction is simply a synthesis for the present, which will inevitably and in time draw attention to its own contradiction.

One limitation of this dissertation is that all the relationships studied were in some sense "primary" -- their major purpose was mutual love, support, confirmation -- and thus these studies throw no direct light on different types of secondary relationships. It would be most interesting to extend this exploration to include, for example, a variety of task and socially defined relationships, in which "facework" would be accepted as a legitimate and necessary means of maintaining both the relationship and personal integrity within that relationship.

While the theory of interpersonal relationships set out in Chapter Two is basically sound, it requires some changes in emphasis in the light of the empirical studies. In particular, the three dialectics of relationship proved difficult to maintain as three clearly separate "variables": they tended to merge together, or to reflect each other, during the research. At times it was difficult to decide just which dialectic a particular incident exemplified.

The reason for this is that the three dialectics are in many ways analytical concepts in a study that attempts to grasp the holistic, concrete reality of relationships. Despite my acclamations of holism in Chapter Three, the theory retains major elements

of an analytic approach, and the studies demonstrate tensions between analytic and holistic approaches. Holism won the day, because the rich, concrete data gathered on the workshop refused to stay within the neat bounds of an analysis.

The implications of this for the theory of interpersonal relations is that the three dialectics must be seen not as purely analytical (i.e., as distinct issues of relationship), but as analytical concepts as one stage in a movement towards a concrete synthesis. They present three different perspectives on a relationship; through each dialectic one may see the same scene in a rather different way, and thus build up a more complete whole picture. This whole picture is synthesized in the notion of a principal contradiction, which provides a unifying theme, a way of moving from a fragmented to a whole view of a relationship. Both movements -- the analytical and the synthetic -- are important: the synthetic movement was under-emphasized in Chapter Two.

In the next few pages I review each of the three dialectics in the light of the empirical studies, treating each as a different perspective on a relationship; this is followed by a discussion of the principal contradiction as a holistic concept; finally, there is a consideration of ways in which this approach to interpersonal relations contains the germs of a theory of change.

Dialectics of Relation

Self and Other

The dialectic of Self and Other provides a perspective on the "two-ness" of a relationship: the essential separateness yet contact of the two persons in relation, the existence of two centers of experience, the need for these to communicate, and yet the impossibility of total communication. In the studies, these issues were explored in terms of openness, closedness, and facades.

There is another aspect to the dialectic of Self and Other which was not explored in the theory nor directly in the design of the workshop, but which is of major importance. This is the issue of responsibility: a relationship consists not only of two centers of experience, but also of two centers of responsibility for that experience and for the action that stems from it.

This issue of responsibility arises from a dialectical consideration of anger and other "interpersonal" emotions. Every one of the five relationships studied was in some fairly major way troubled with the question of anger and its expression. Each pair experienced anger as destructive, and themselves as closed to anger or expressing it obliquely; each pair wished they could find a clear direct way to express their anger, to "get it all out", rather than let it fester, yet none of the pairs had found a satisfactory way to do this. What follows is an attempt to make some sense of the issue of anger dialectically.

Jack and Jill are quarreling: Jack is angry at something Jill
has done. Jack may feel that Jill has made him angry: Dammit,
why does she have to annoy me like that? Jill may feel that Jack
is oversensitive: Why does he have to fly off the handle at the
slightest thing? Thus, the anger may be seen as having two "causes":
one of these is Jill's action, which may or may not have been cal-
culated to cause anger; the other is Jack's perception, interpre-
tation, and emotional response to Jill's action. Clearly, Jill
may be seen as responsible for her action, and Jack as responsible
for his response.

One way to deal with this situation is through cooperative
facework to restore the ritual order of interaction (Goffman, 1967),
as for example Kate and Sally laugh together when angry as a way
to restore equilibrium. But this strategy clearly has its costs;
what, then, is an "open" approach to anger?

Jack might say to Jill: You make me angry when you do that.
He might shout and scream and tell Jill just what he thought of
her. This would give expression to a very real aspect of the re-
lationship, but in doing so Jack places all responsibility for his
emotion on Jill, and thus gives away responsibility for himself.
He is also likely to hurt Jill, who will be driven to defend her-
self, if not counterattack; he may even drive her away completely.

On the other hand, Jack might wonder: Why do I make myself
so angry? He might take the point of view of some personal growth

theorists (Weir, in press), and view his emotion as an act of him-
self as a fully responsible agent, and really nothing to do with
Jill at all. The drawbacks of this point of view from an inter-
personal standpoint are evident: in treating each person solip-
sistically, each becomes a closed system with no real possibility
of interpersonal contact.

This discussion shows two oversimplified views. The important
point is that emotion in an interpersonal setting needs to be under-
stood dialectically, from both standpoints. In an emotional situa-
tion, each person needs the capacity to reflect inwardly, to explore,
understand, and take responsibility for his own capacity for emo-
tion; and look outward, at the real behavior of the other. An
open management of anger rests not in getting it out at the other,
but in the dialectical ability to reflect and express, to discover
the total meaning of the anger in that particular situation.

The general theoretical point is that the dialectic of Self
and Other provides a perspective on two individuals as centers of
experience and of responsibility in a relationship.

Person and Interperson

The dialectic of Person and Interperson allows a perspective
on the "we-ness" of a relationship, on the interperson as a system
of interaction and interexperience, and on ways in which member-
ship in the interperson simultaneously enhances and inhibits the
being of each individual. It is clear that the interperson is a

vital force in the lives of the ten individuals who participated in the study, and it is clear that this power enhances the being of each, as he or she gets joy and energy and comfort and security from the relationship; and is experienced as destructive of each person, so that they fear the relationship, and insist on maintaining an individual space within it.

For Brian and Jane, the question is whether the interperson is to become highly salient in their lives; they are still very much individuals first and a pair second. For Kate and Sally, the interperson is already a very important part of their lives and has been for quite some time. They are concerned with the conflict between their individual identity, their sense of self control and management of their own destiny, and the demands of their relationship, and they are concerned about further conflicts as the relationship develops. Carol and Susan are clearly joined in a significant interperson; they are troubled by the identities it gives them, and by the extent of their commitment.

Thus, this dialectic provides a perspective on two issues: first, inclusion and commitment, or "Shall we join in a significant relationship?"; and second, identity, or "Who does this relationship permit me to be?"

Subject and Object

Persons may be regarded, and may regard themselves, as subject and as object. Similarly, interaction may be seen as between

persons as objects -- evaluation-exchange -- or as between persons
as subjects -- encounter-confirmation. Of the three dialectics of
relationship, that of Subject and Object is in many ways the most
fascinating, has the widest ramifications, and is the least ex-
plored.

It is clear that these two modes of interaction may be comple-
mentary: that the objective parts of relationship need to be ap-
proached as exchange, the subjective aspects of relationship need
to be seen as encounter, and that these two modes take place to-
gether, in parallel. Two people in a relationship need always to
manage the practical aspects of being together, such as taking care
of their physical needs and performing whatever task they are en-
gaged in together. These two people need in addition at least a
minimal encounter with each other as subjective individuals -- some
of the worst forms of punishment, and the most devastating forms of
alienation, come from attempts to totally deny another's subjective
individuality and intentionality.

Even when encounter-confirmation is the primary raison d'etre
of the relationship, as with close friends, lovers, and some kinds
of therapeutic relationships, there will still be an objective side
to the relationship which needs attention. On the other hand, a
relationship may exist primarily to accomplish a task, but if this
is done at the expense of a major alienation of the individuals
involved, that relationship cannot be expected to last very long,

nor be fully fruitful. One mode of interaction may be primary,
but the secondary mode cannot be ignored: it is always present
and will always need maintenance.

While the two modes of interaction may be complementary, a
lot of trouble may arise in relationships when they get muddled,
so that one mode is used inappropriately in place of the other.
Evaluation-exchange may be used for the subjective aspects of re-
lationship, in a painful attempt to bargain love or friendship:
if you loved me you would put the garbage out. More serious is
the politics of experience whereby persons are taught, through
processes of violence and mystification, what to experience and
what not to experience (Laing, 1967).

On the other hand, if encounter-confirmation is used for ob-
jective aspects of relationship, the result is likely to be a
"beautiful relationship" in which nothing ever gets done: encount-
er is not a mode for problem-solving, although it may -- indeed
must -- coexist with and complement problem-solving in effective
relationships.

The negotiation sequence of Kate and Sally demonstrates both
these confusions (see page 82ff). At the start of the interaction
they use an exchange mode of interaction, when they are in fact
primarily dealing with issues of subjective identity. Towards the
end of the interaction they manage to move to an encounter with
each other, to understand and accept each other's viewpoint, but

they fail to supplement this with a clear agreement about actions on the very important practical problems they face.

The two modes of interaction may be further confused if one person is intent on encounter and the other on exchange -- as with Kate's concern for a confirmation of her separateness in the face of Sally's negotiation of detail. This kind of confusion is likely to produce some strange and disturbing family dynamics described by Laing and Esterson (1964).

One of the major reasons for all these confusions is that it is never possible to know the subjective other except through the objective other: since the experience of another person is not directly available, a pure and direct intersubjectivity is impossible. Objective behavior, then, is not only important in its own right, as the practical part of an interpersonal exchange, but for what it stands for, or symbolizes. For example, Sally's demands that Kate visit her regularly had a practical basis and could reasonably be part of a negotiation; they also symbolized a continuation of an interidentity which placed Kate in a one-down and threatened position in the relationship.

Discovery of the connections between the subjective and the objective is critical. These connections may well lie in analogue and ritual (Watzlawick et al., 1967); in the "language of the myth" in which

> ... the speaker does not say what he connotes, but
> points to a hidden meaning, whose sequence depends
> on the unique human ability of the teller and the
> audience. (Back, 1963, p. 69)

and in symbols, which Jung (1964) differentiates from signs:

> ... the sign is always less than the concept it repre-
> sents, while the symbol always stands for more than its
> obvious and immediate meaning. (p. 21)

These explorations of relationships as subjective and objec-
tive only begin to examine an important theoretical issue. The
separation, for analytical purposes, of the subjective and the
objective aspects of human interaction, the realization that while
these are not necessarily in conflict they can confound one another
in a variety of ways, and the explorations of the interrelations of
these two modes, could be the basis for major new understandings of
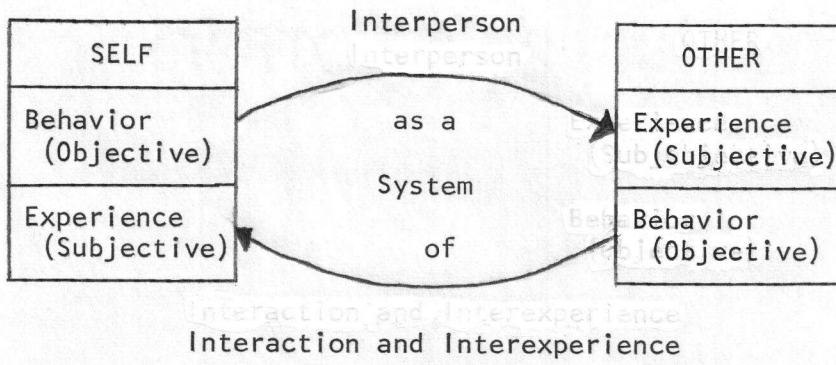interpersonal life.

Interrelationship of the Dialectics

The interrelationship of the three dialectics may be shown as
in Figure 2. Self and Other are two separate persons, each of
whom may be seen subjectively, as a center of experience and or-
ientation to the world, and objectively, as a center of action in
the world. The experience of each is not directly available to the
other, but is mediated by their behavior. Self and Other coexist
within an interperson, a system of interaction and interexperience
which may be more or less salient for them.

The Principal Contradiction

The notion that a relationship may be understood in terms of
its principal contradiction has emerged as the most important concept

Figure 2

SELF	Interperson	OTHER
Behavior (Objective)	as a	Experience (Subjective)
Experience (Subjective)	System of	Behavior (Objective)

Interaction and Interexperience

of this dissertation. While the three dialectics of relationship allow three useful different perspectives on a relationship, they remain analytic and provide only three overlapping, yet still separate views. The notion of a principal contradiction is a holistic concept, a way of developing a total picture from these partial perspectives.

A study of this kind needs both types of concept. Without some means of analysis, it is not possible to know where to start in the study of a relationship: one needs to find the essential parts in order to find the ways these may be unified in different wholes. Analytic concepts provide useful "handles", places where one can initially grasp the subject. The error is to see these concepts as purely analytic, rather than as one part of an analytic-synthetic movement. To fail to reintegrate one's view of the relationship is to fail to portray that particular relationship, to fail to do justice to one's subject matter, to grasp the concrete reality.

Thus, the principal contradiction in a relationship -- or in any social system -- is a synthesizing theme which guides the enquirer through the multiple contradictions of a complex social system; the assumption is that all, or nearly all, aspects of the situation are in some way connected to the principal contradiction, which thus provides a relatively clear holistic view of a situation at a particular point in time.

Of course, a particular formulation of the principal contradiction may be clear without necessarily being correct: clarity is often self-validating. I have already discussed the need to establish a contextual validity of data in this kind of exploration, and Kaplan's (1964) argument that objectivity in a pattern model lies in the ability to indefinitely fill in and extend the pattern (Chapter Three). Thus, the principal contradiction is primarily a working hypothesis, which is only valid if it allows effective action in the social system: ideally, this action will produce contextually valid data which further fills in and extends the pattern.

Change and Development in Relationships

The theory developed in this disseration has important implications for change and development in relationship, which probably apply equally to other social systems. I have argued that development can take place only within dilemmas that can never be fully resolved (page 13); development involves not the resolution of problems, but a continual process of making the best, for the present, out of the given human situation. This suggests that a major aspect of development is meta-learning, or "learning how to learn", which involves understanding the nature of the tensions of the three dialectics of relationship, and a facility in managing these tensions optimally -- optimally meaning the actualization of

particular values according to the situation. At times this may involve the exploitation of tension for particular ends; at other times resolving or moving beyond the tension of a particular contradiction.

As a working hypothesis, the principal contradiction can become the focus of efforts for change in a relationship. Even though contradiction is inevitable, a relationship may become "stuck" in a particular contradiction so that it becomes repetitive and stagnant, and is experienced as a drain on energy. At such a time, significant change involves a movement of the current principal contradiction, either to enliven it as a source of creative tension, or to close it in a new synthesis.

Thus, development involves either a meta-learning about the effective management of contradiction, or a movement of the principal contradiction, or both. Whichever, an effective change effort must start from a thorough exploration of the situation to determine the current principal contradiction and its consequences for the relationship as a whole. A methodology for the diagnosis of the principal contradiction in an interpersonal relationship has been presented in this dissertation; it is likely that diagnosis of the principal contradiction in other social systems could be made in a similar manner.

A diagnosis based in the discovery of the current principal contradiction will help the change agent move beyond normative

approaches to social system change. It is very easy for a practi-
tioner to try to impose a strategy for change on his client, based
on his values, his experience of other similar situations, and his
skills and interests, rather than on the particular needs of the
client system. However, the dialectical change agent does not im-
pose change, he is rather:

> ... a midwife patiently easing the birth of a new exist-
> ential order about to be born. (Esterson, 1972, p. 248)

Thus, the strategy for change is chosen on the basis of the poten-
tial of the client, and the change agent has a means of choosing
between different strategies. Change activities which do not focus
on a movement of the current principal contradiction are likely to
be unsuccessful and/or counterproductive.

From this perspective, developmental efforts may be seen as
exploratory, as supportive, and as disturbing. They will be _ex-
ploratory_ to the extent that they help define and clarify the prin-
cipal contradiction and lay out the pattern of contradiction in the
relationship. For example, the primary developmental task in the
relationship of Bridget and David is to monitor all aspects of the
relationship over time so that they are aware of and prepared to
manage significant contradiction when it arises.

Developmental efforts are _supportive_ to the extent that they
help the persons involved fully live and express both sides of a
polarity and accept the contradiction, rather than express one pole.
As Beisser (1972) points out, change involves becoming fully what

you are, not trying to be something you are not. This suggests that with Jane and Brian, for example, the appropriate strategy is to do no more than help them accept their present confusion, and to keep them from a premature closure of the issues in either separation or marriage. Similarly for Molly and Peter, the primary issue is for them to accept as stimulating their contradiction of intimacy and strangerhood.

Support may also be important if the contradiction is "imported" from the environment of the social system: the tensions of a two-person relationship may be rooted in the different backgrounds and reference groups of the individuals; the tensions in an organization may reflect a wider class struggle in society. In this kind of situation, while no one is likely to be able to change the situation radically, it may be possible to find ways to manage the conflict in minimally destructive ways.

Finally, a developmental strategy may be <u>disturbing</u>, it may aim to upset the present balance of the relationship or social system so that a new order may emerge. For example, the relationship of Carol and Susan was in an unstable state when they came to the workshop, and two major interventions -- the support Susan received as a strong individual, and the explorations of important areas of closedness -- probably helped to upset the existing order, move the relationship beyond its current principal contradiction, and thus force the emergence of a new order.

This points to the destructive nature of a change or developmental process: the change agent must deal with the issue of how radical he is prepared to be, how much he is prepared to tear down an existing social order, however unhappy it may be, to allow a new one to emerge. However, this analysis suggests that it is possible to destroy prematurely: if a social system is judged not to be ready to make a radical move beyond its current principal contradiction, it is incorrect to try to force it. The appropriate strategy in this kind of situation is to help the people involved fully express and explore both sides of the polarity until they are ready to make a major movement.

Thus, a developmental strategy may involve both support and disturbance, as may be seen from an examination of the relationship of Kate and Sally. At present, they downplay the fearful aspects of their relationship -- they laugh them away or otherwise suppress them -- and support is appropriate to help them learn to accept and express better the anger and resentment in their relationship as well as the love and excitement. On the other hand, some controlled disturbance might shake them out of what seem to be rather stultifying assumptions about their relationship: such disturbance would probably best take the form of some experiments with different ways of being with each other and some different structures to the relationship.

The current principal contradiction can thus provide a guide

and a focus for developmental activities in a relationship or other
social system, which help the change agent invent appropriate in-
terventions, help decide when to act and when to desist, and above
all to base his activities on the needs and potentials of the sit-
uation, rather than on his own biases. In particular, this approach
allows the change agent to approach the situation in its totality,
as a whole system; the final chapter of this dissertation discusses
further the requirements for a holistic methodology.

CHAPTER VI
TOWARD A HOLISTIC METHODOLOGY

Two major themes run through this dissertation. One is the theory of interpersonal relations, presented in Chapter Two and revised in Chapter Five. The second is the methodological theme of holism.

This second theme _emerges_ through the dissertation: it is hinted at in the introduction, embraced in the discussion of research methodology, demonstrated in the studies. Yet I think there are ways I use the term "holism" now which are quite different from earlier usage, and there are places where my approach remains only tenuously holistic.

On the surface, holism involves a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach; case studies rather than tables of statistics; "grounded" rather than "theoretical" concepts. What is often not stressed or explored is that the purpose of a holistic approach may be quite different from an analytical approach; that the stance of the holist vis-a-vis his "subject" is totally different; and that holism presents the researcher with its own peculiar methodological and epistemological problems, just as intricate as in the design of an experiment or quasi-experiment (Campbell & Stanley, 1966). In this final chapter I want to draw together as clear a statement about the holistic approach as I am able.

1. Holism is an attempt to make the human situation intelligible as a concrete reality; to grasp the way in which a whole situation is constituted out of a plurality of parts. Theory, prediction, generalization are _not_ the purpose of holism; rather the purpose is to understand (and act in) particular concrete situations. Methodology is important as a means to do this.

2. The dialectic is a type of thought which is required if the human scene is to be intelligible holistically. The dialectic is the "praxis" or persons: the way persons as agents constitute their world and build a whole out of the parts, a relationship out of contradiction. Thus, the dialectic is both an approach to knowing and the human phenomena to be known: two persons constitute a relationship through a dialectical praxis, and comprehension of that relationship also requires a dialectical approach (see Laing and Cooper, 1964).

3. Analytical thought, in the mode of classical physics (if such a thing exists), is passive with regard to the phenomena studied and exterior to them: the relation is one of subject to object. Analytical thought is necessarily fragmenting, having no means to create wholes. It is straight-line thinking from cause to effect, and from an analytical perspective, dialectical reasoning appears circular.

4. The holistic approach is active with regard to the persons studied: the relationship of observer to observed is

ontologically continuous (subject-object to subject-object), the data for a study of the human situation must come from an interaction of persons, and thus the observer must be inside the situation studied. "The dialectic is the living logic of action" (Laing & Cooper, 1964, p. 101).

5. The act of synthesis is never final. There are no final "totalities", only totalizations constituted, for the present, through the praxis of persons: the dialectic is totalization-detotalization-retotalization (Laing & Cooper, 1964, p. 103). This synthesis is a creative leap made by a person, and in this context, Hainer (1968) writes of meta-concepts, "meta" signifying "freedom for me to formulate as well as I can to be understandable" (p. 30).

> The existential emotional position is characterized by emergence of alternatives, by choice of commitment, by responsibility for the choices you make or you accept, and by willingness to work for personal contribution even if all is dark, depressed, and uncertain ... (Hainer, 1968, p. 38, original emphasis)

6. While an analytical approach is insufficient for grasping the concrete reality of human situations, synthesis is dialectically meaningless except in relation to analysis. A holistic approach requires two movements: an analytic, destructive movement, and a synthetic, creative movement. The movement from totalization through detotalization to retotalization is an analytic-synthetic movement.

7. Two major methodological conclusions are inevitable given the above. First, the kind of multiple professional role --

trainer, researcher, and learner -- described in Chapter Three is
inevitable given a truly holistic approach, and only possible in
that approach. Holism requires action inside a situation in order
to understand, and understanding in order to act: it is impossible
to divide these two in a holistic approach, and if they are divided,
the approach is no longer holistic. Much of the failure of "action-
research" to fulfill its promise may derive from attempts to take
this kind of multiple professional role in projects which are essen-
tially analytic.

8. The second methodological conclusion is that the persons
involved in the study, the "subjects", need to become researchers
of their own situation. In fact, they are researchers anyway,
since they are acting intelligibly inside their situation (see
point #7), in fact are constructing the situation as it is being
studied, and are thus in a unique position to know that situation.
The only reality the researcher can discover (as opposed to creat-
ing himself) is the way the persons in a situation construe that
situation. In addition to this, if the relationship between ob-
server and observed is to remain ontologically continuous (point
#4), the "observed" must be acknowledged as studying as well as
studied, just as the researcher is studied as well as studying.
Thus, the observer and the observed take complementary positions:
the observer as outsider-coming-in and the observed as insider-
coming-out.

In conclusion, this discussion shows how the holistic, dial-
ectical approach to the human situation leads inexorably away from
traditional models of the scientific process; this is not to say
that these models are replaced -- they are rather <u>complemented</u>.
I have tried to present an outline of the major issues of this
approach; frankly, I believe that at present we can see no more
than a pathway <u>toward</u> holism, since we are blinded by the preva-
lent analytical ethos of our culture. There is clearly much work
to be done before we can set out the guidelines for a <u>truly</u> holi-
stic approach to theory and research in the human situation.

POSTSCRIPT

As I move toward closing this large piece of personal work,
I find myself wondering where I have been. I have a sense of ac-
complishment at having made at least partly intelligible a complex
reality, yet I find too a sense of sadness at closing something I
know so intimately. I wonder where else I might have been, and
where I will go with this work in the future.

Of course, every piece of work raises more questions than it
answers; one must hope he has found a better way to ask some of
the questions. He who attempts to work dialectically must know
that his work will inevitably be passed by others -- no statement
can have the whole truth, although none need be totally false.

Not only does the work of other's pass one's own, any piece
of work actually moves beyond itself in the process of becoming
itself. Certainly, the trip is as important as the destination.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Angyal, A. "The Logic of Systems." In F.E. Emery (ed.), Systems Thinking. Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1969.

Argyris, C. Personality and Organization. New York: Harper, 1957.

Atkinson, T. Amazon Odyssey. New York: Links Press, 1974.

Back, K. "The Game and the Myth as Two Languages of Social Science." Behavioral Science, 1963, No. 8.

Bateson, G. Steps to an Ecology of Mind. New York: Ballentine Books, 1972.

Beisser, A.R. "The Paradoxical Theory of Change." In J. Fagan and I.L. Shephard (eds.), Gestalt Therapy Now. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972.

Bennis, W.G., Berlew, D.E., Shein, E.H. & Steele, F.I. (eds.), Interpersonal Dynamics. Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1973.

Bion, W.R. Experiences in Groups. New York: Basic Books, 1961.

Blake, R. & Mouton, J.S. The Managerial Grid. Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1964.

Brown, R. Social Psychology. New York: The Free Press, 1965.

Buber, M. I and Thou. Translated by W. Kaufmann. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1970.

Buber, M. "Distance and Relation." Psychiatry, 1957a, 20.

Buber, M. "Elements of the Interhuman." Psychiatry, 1957b, 20.

Bugental, J.F.T. The Search for Authenticity. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965.

Campbell, D.T. & Stanley, J.C. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research. Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1966.

Carson, R. Interaction Concepts of Personality. Chicago: Adline Publishing Co., 1969.

Cooper, D. Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry. New York: Ballentine Books, 1967.

Diesing, P. Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences. Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1971.

Downing, J. & Marmorstein, R. Dreams and Nightmares. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

Erikson, E. Childhood and Society. New York: Norton & Co., 1963.

Esterson, A. The Leaves of Spring. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972.

Frankl, V.E. Man's Search for Meaning. New York: Beacon Press, 1969.

Freire, P. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: The Seabury Press, 1974.

Glidewell, J.C. Choice Points. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1970.

Goffman, E. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959.

Goffman, E. Interaction Ritual. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967.

Hainer, R. "Rationalism, Pragmatism, and Existentialism: Perceived but Undiscovered Multi-Cultural Problems." In E. Glatt and M.W. Shelly (eds.), The Research Society. New York: Gordon & Breach, 1968.

Hesse, H. Narcissus and Goldmund. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968.

Homans, G.C. "Social Behavior as Exchange." In W.G. Bennis et al (eds.), Interpersonal Dynamics. Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1973.

Johnston, J. Lesbian Nation. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973.

Jung, C.G. Man and His Symbols. New York: Doubleday & Sons, 1964.

Kaplan, A. The Conduct of Inquiry. Scranton: Chandler, 1964.

Laing, R.D. The Divided Self. Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1965.

Laing, R.D.   The Politics of Experience.   New York: Ballantine
    Books, 1967.

Laing, R.D.   Self and Others.   Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1969.

Laing, R.D. & Cooper, D.   Reason and Violence.   New York: Humani-
    ties Press, 1964.

Laing, R.D. & Esterson, A.   Sanity, Madness and the Family.   London:
    Tavistock Publications, 1964.

Leary, R.   "The Theory and Measurement Methodology of Interpersonal
    Communication."   Psychiatry, 1955, 18:2.

Maslow, A.   Toward a Psychology of Being.   New York: Van Nostrand
    Reingold, 1968.

May, R.   Psychology and the Human Dilemma.   Princeton: Van Nostrand,
    1967.

McGregor, D.   The Human Side of Enterprise.   New York: McGraw-Hill,
    1960.

Ortega y Gasset, J.   Man and People.   New York: Norton & Col., 1957.

Polster, E. & Polster, M.   Gestalt Therapy Integrated.   New York:
    Brunner/Mazel, 1973.

Riesman, D.   The Lonely Crowd.   New Haven: Yale University Press,
    1950.

Rogers, C.   On Becoming a Person.   Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961.

Slater, P.   Earthwalk.   New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974.

Thibaut, J.W. & Kelley, H.H.   The Social Psychology of Groups.
    New York: Wiley, 1959.

Tillich, P.   The Courage to Be.   New Haven: Yale University Press,
    1952.

Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J.H. & Jackson, D.D.   The Pragmatics of
    Human Communication.   New York: Norton & Co., 1967.

Weir, J.   "The Personal Growth Laboratory."   In L. Bradford, K.
    Benne & J. Gibb (eds.), Laboratory Method in Teaching and
    Training.   New York: Wiley & Sons, in press.

Whitaker, D.S. & Lieberman, M.A.   Psychotherapy Through the Group
    Process.   New York: Atherton Press, 1964.