

Part VII: Toward New Service Concepts

Chapter 14

The Creation of Settings

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Introduction

This paper is an attempt to discuss two questions: (1) How do people go about creating new settings (I shall be using the terms settings, programs, organizations, institutions interchangeably)? (2) What body of theory and practice is available as guidelines for those who have the responsibility of creating settings? Although I shall be discussing these questions within the narrow context of certain aspects of the mental retardation field, it is my hope to demonstrate in later publications the generality of the problem in as phenotypically diverse activities as art, research, industry, as well as social-political movements which have as an aim the creation of new institutions (in the sociological sense). Despite the obvious and many ways in which the American constitutional convention, the Russian revolution, a new business, a new university, a new hospital or clinic, or new mental retardation service differ, they involve the human mind in the production of end products which will be consistent with original purposes. That is to say, these end products are supposed to have a meaning and structure which are not defeating the purposes of the creators or the interests of those for whom the end products were developed. When in his pioneering book in 1860 on the Italian Renaissance Burckhardt entitled the first chapter "The State As a Work of Art"--meaning it is the product of processes "of reflection and calculation"--he was, I think, recognizing that the creation of settings has kinship to many other types of important, human activity from which we have much to learn.

When one looks over the history of human service fields, such as mental health and mental retardation, one sees time and again how they have changed as a function of a new conception, or theory, or technique (Sarason and Doris, 1969). What I aim to do in this paper is twofold: to examine some of the consequences of these changes, and then to discuss the creation of settings which I consider to be a crucial problem

paper is based on two previous ones. The first paper, "The Creation of Settings," was prepared for a book, *The Yale Psycho-Educational Clinic: Papers and Research Studies*, edited by Dr. Frances Kaplan and myself and to be published by the Massachusetts State Department of Mental Health. The second paper, "The Creation of Settings: the Beginning Context," was prepared for presentation at the Kennedy Foundation Scientific Meeting in Chicago in 1968. At the request of the editors of the present volume those two were combined, revised, and elaborated upon for publication here.

with which human service fields will have to grapple over the coming decades. I fully realize the two dangers involved in such a discussion: one of them stems from any attempt to attain perspective on the present, and the other inheres in any attempt to read the future.

The Significance of the Rate of Creation of Settings

I am quite sure that I am not far wrong when I say that in the past two decades more new settings have been created than in the entire history of the human race. For example, when the Headstart legislation was implemented it meant that several thousand discrete settings were to be created, i.e., in each setting a group of people (children and adults) were to be brought together in sustained relationships to meet certain objectives. When one considers that Headstart is but one of thousands of federal programs--in addition to those created by states, communities, industry, etc.--it is clear that we are dealing with a fantastic rate of setting creation. In addition, one must keep in mind that within our larger institutions and organizations (e.g., hospitals, schools, universities) new programs are constantly being implemented, programs which result in grouping or regrouping of individuals into new and presumably enduring relationships for the attainment of stated objectives. Faced with the task of creating a setting, particularly one devoted to human service, what theory and experience are available as guidelines? The answer, unfortunately, is very clear. Existing psychological theories--be they primarily individual or social psychological in nature or emphasis--do not address themselves to the problem of the creation of settings. There is an ever-growing body of theory and observation on "sick" settings--which in a few years will probably be equal in bulk to that of "sick" individuals--but little or nothing on the creation of healthy settings. The problem will not be clarified because of the tendency, understandable in clinicians, to focus on, or to be called to, the malfunctioning setting.

Within the past decades, few fields rival mental Subnormality in the rate of setting creation. It is neither to disparage these efforts nor to assume the role of prophet of gloom that I maintain that these new developments may in general miss their intended goals--not for a lack of appropriate motivation or financial resources but rather because these new programs or settings do not reflect an explicit awareness that the creation of a setting involves problems and requires a way of thinking not contained in the implicit or explicit theories which ordinarily guide us.

The problem would be difficult enough if only new settings were, involved. However, as Blatt and Kaplan (1967) demonstrated in their photographic essay Christmas in Purgatory, we are also faced with the problem of how to change settings which no longer are consistent with their stated purposes and, let us not forget, debasing of all concerned.

In my opinion, the major significance of their work is the force it gives to the question: why do programs and settings fail? The question goes far beyond the confines of mental Subnormality. Elsewhere (Sarason, Levine, Goldenberg, Cherlin, and Bennett, 1966) my colleagues and I have indicated that the question is central both to our understanding of professional as well as organizational failure:

In an article we consider to be among his most important statements—an article not read and reread with the frequency it merits—Freud takes up the problem of how the analyst must protect himself against tendencies that rigidify and insidiously damage his outlook and practices—considerations that led Freud to suggest that analysis ought to be re-analyzed every several years. His discussion is, in our opinion, highly relevant to the problems of social organizations and their tendency to be smug about what they are doing, and, as a consequence, to be blind to the fact that they are no longer responsive and sensitive to their original goals. Gardner has succinctly and beautifully put the same problem in terms of organizations and is contained in his concept of "educating for renewal":

"I have collected a great many examples of organizations or institutions that have fallen on evil days because of their failure to renew themselves. And I want to place before you two curious facts that I draw from those examples. First, I haven't yet encountered an organization or institution that wanted to go to seed or wanted to fall behind in the parade. Second, in every case of organizational decline that I know anything about, there were ample warning signals long before trouble struck. And I don't mean warning signals that only a Monday-morning quarterback could discern. I mean that before trouble struck there were observers who had correctly diagnosed the difficulties to come.

"Now if there are plenty of warning signals, and if no organization really wants to go to seed, why does it ever happen? The answer is obvious: eyes that see not, ears that hear not, minds that deny the evidence before them. When organizations are not meeting the challenge of change, it is as a rule not because they can't solve their problems but because they won't see their problems; not because they don't know their faults, but because they rationalize them as virtues or necessities."

The Empirical and Theoretical Problem

How do people go about creating settings? In light of the lack of relevant theory and description, a number of us at the Psycho-Educational

Clinic have taken advantage of several opportunities to observe and participate in the process. The first opportunity is very partially described in our book on the Yale Psycho-Educational Clinic (Sarason, et al., 1966). The second, and a far more significant and sophisticated attempt, involved Dr. Ira Goldenberg's assuming the responsibility for organizing and developing a Residential Youth Center for inner city boys between the ages of 16 and 21. The third opportunity--involving Dr. Frances Kaplan, George Zitney, and myself--is very recent and concerns an institution for the mentally retarded which will not be a physical reality for at least 2 years.

Obviously, it will be some time before we will be able to organize and present our thoughts, experiences, and data in coherent form. But certain general statements can already be made:

1. In creating a setting, the person or persons with responsibility quickly became overwhelmed by two related, strong feelings: first, the problem is far more difficult than they imagined, and second, that they have no explicit guidelines for determining what they will do, the sequence in which it might be done, how to anticipate problems, etc. This becomes most revealing when the person or persons with responsibility are professional individuals with a demonstrated competence in dealing with the dyadic or small groups therapeutic situation. When handling individual problems they are relatively at ease. They have a feeling of security about what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how it is likely to come out. They have wedded theory and technology which, despite its shortcomings, serves as a psychological map. Faced with the task of creating a setting, they tend to feel as if they were alone in a small boat on uncharted seas, with a cloud cover obscuring the stars, possessing no reliable compass--and worried lest the frail boat spring a leak. The regressive content of the last part of this metaphor does not require that I say anything about anxiety in the creation of settings.

2. In our society, at least, creating a setting involves one with a variety of existing settings which may have different purposes and traditions but with which one must develop and maintain relationships. One comes quickly to recognize that (as in the case of a modern nation) the problems of coordinating them in a non self-defeating way are enormous.

This probably is not always the case, particularly when those with responsibility approach the task in a predetermined, businesslike way, armed with organizational charts which prevent the anticipation and recognition of substantive problems. The generalizations offered above hold, in our experience, for those individuals with acute awareness that the relationships between an organizational chart and the actual functioning of a setting may be like that between an individual's curriculum vita and the "real individual."

3. At every step of the process, and particularly in the earliest stages when relatively few people are involved, every decision, or action, tends to have immediate consequences for the group. My point does not concern goodness or badness of action or decision. What I wish to emphasize is that decisions and actions have consequences for relationships within the small group; and, since in the earliest stages the small group tends to consist of those in important positions, unawareness of this fact, or not having built-in vehicles for insuring awareness of it, can engender a pattern or style of talking and relating which, over time, results in full-blown organizational craziness. (The only good argument I can come up with against the use of the term "craziness" is that what we call craziness seems to be the norm for organizations.)

4. In the earliest stages, as we indicated, there is usually a small group of individuals involved—this is practically always the case when a physical structure has to be built to house the setting. The point at which this small group begins to enlarge—and this enlargement may involve one or more newcomers—is always a danger point because it involves the "old" and the "new," the insider and outsider, those who have belonged and those who want to belong, those who have had power in some form or other, and those who will want power. When this enlargement takes place very rapidly, and again when there are no built-in vehicles for anticipating, recognizing, and handling the problem, the setting tends quickly to become a highly differentiated one in which the parts are maladaptively related and the overall purposes of the setting become secondary to the purposes of its component parts.

5. Creating a setting is, from a purely intellectual point of view, a fantastically complicated array of problems. In fact, its conceptual complexity is of such a high order that when its complexity is recognized by those whose responsibility it is to create a setting, it results in strengthening the tendency to simplify the problem. The need to simplify problems as a defensive tactic to protect the self is inversely related to the degree of awareness of the complexity of the issues and its consequences. This is identical in principle to the situation of the artist who knows what he wants to create but is faced with the knowledge that he cannot, or will not, be able to do it. In both instances the consequences can be disastrous for the individual and his products.

6. There is an ego-syntonic expectation that there will be a time in the history of the setting when there will be few problems (within the setting and between settings), so that those who create the setting can look forward to reduction in the level of intellectual and emotional turmoil required by the need for vigilance and the anticipation, recognition, and handling of problems. It is identical to the myth entertained by most people entering therapy or analysis, i.e., when it is all over they will be conflict and anxiety free,

competent to handle any or all problems. In the case of the creators of settings, the awareness that the myth is a myth can wittingly or unwittingly set into motion a way of viewing and relating to the setting, so that the level of struggle is indeed reduced at the same time that the level of craziness in the setting increases--one produces what one wanted to avoid.

Some Further Aspects of the Beginning Context With
Special Reference to Mental Retardation

In order to elaborate somewhat more concretely on the significance of the beginning context, let us take the following situation:

Let us assume that legislation has been passed to enable an appropriate state agency to build a new facility for the mentally retarded which will develop a variety of programs, day care and residential, for a circumscribed geographical area. A director for the new facility has been appointed.

My interest is in how this director thinks and plans from the time he assumes his responsibilities. I need not labor the point that my interest reflects two considerations. The first is that the problem requires that we know the director's thinking and planning processes-- those are our "data" without which we continue to operate in the realm of opinion as to the beginning context of setting creation. It may surprise you to learn that I have not yet found a single description of the beginning context that anybody would dignify with the adjective "adequate"--and I have searched the literature in many fields. The second consideration in my interest is the assumption that the beginning context is fateful for what comes later, i.e., the seeds for later success or failure are contained in the beginning context. That this is a safe assumption should increase one's puzzlement as to why it has not been systematically studied or tested--after all, the history of science could be written from the point of view of how dangerous "safe" assumptions are.

I have no data to present about the thinking and planning processes of the director in the beginning context. However, in the past decade I have had the opportunity to interview many directors, albeit after the stage of the beginning context. What I can report to you is what they did not think about or plan for but which they later felt caused them no end of grief. I can only list and briefly discuss some of the factors which were little or not at all in the director's thinking.

1. From a developmental viewpoint, the appointment of the director comes relatively late in the beginning context. That is to say, before the director's appointment, a relatively large number of individuals and groups--varying markedly in status, influence, and point of view--have in one way or another attempted to influence what the setting ultimately should be. In each instance the director "knew" there was a

prehistory, but this knowledge never resulted in a searching attempt to determine the prehistory, to assess its implications and complications for the future, and to take steps to deal with them. After reviewing their past experience (i.e., their acts of omission) in their present positions, all the directors agreed with the statement by one of them: "Before you start shaping the future you had better know and deal with the past."³

The most sophisticated attempt we know, in deed and word, to create a new setting is that of Dr. Ira Goldenberg of the Yale Psycho-Educational Clinic. For 6 months he was director of a Residential Youth Center for hard core, inner city youth between the ages of 16 and 21. Prior to the center's opening he selected and trained a staff of nonprofessionals who would carry on after his 6 months as director. One and a half years after he left, the center continues as an exciting, helping setting every bit as effective as similar settings run by professionals. Dr. Goldenberg's book will, I predict, be a major contribution to the long-neglected problem of how to create and maintain health settings. In connection with his experiences in opening the center the following is relevant:

"There is a myth, publicly disavowed but privately protected, that an institution is born on the day it opens its doors and starts doing 'business as usual'. We refer to this as a myth only because, public protestations to the contrary, institution-builders often act as if what they do, the decisions they make, and the actions they take before a new program becomes operational bears little relationship to, and has few consequences for, the eventual appearance, acceptance, and success of the program itself. But if there was anything to be learned from our prior involvement in the community it was this: that the fate of any new program--whether or not it survives; and even if it survives, whether or not it achieves or approaches its goals--is dependent not only on the soundness of its ideas but also on how and in what manner it is introduced into the community. In short, there is an intimate relationship between the problems of conceptualization, planning, and implementation on the one hand, and how a program looks once it assumes an existence of its own on the other. The two are inextricably bound to each other, and what may well signal the beginning of that self-defeating process through which new and often innovative programs create the conditions for their own destruction, is the belief, the myth, that this is not really so."

2. It will be recalled that in the circumstances I described it was stated that legislation was passed to enable "an appropriate state agency" to build a new facility. The word "appropriate" was, of course, not fortuitous and was meant to emphasize that there was already an existing, differentiated, ongoing structure, each part of which could be counted on as having two related concerns: first, that the new facility would "fit in" with what was already ongoing (although "fit in" would be defined differently by the different parts of the structure); second, that the new facility should not intrude into the existing domains. It has to be said that most of the directors were in varying degrees aware that by their appointment they had become part of a social system or structure which could affect them and their plans, particularly if, as is often the case, the director was previously a part of this structure in another capacity. But again, in no instance did a director explicitly and planfully act on this knowledge so as to minimize the problems and conflicts which later confronted him by virtue of the fact that he was part of a particular system--and the severity of the problems and conflicts are proportional to the degree to which the director views himself, or is viewed by others, as an innovator. The point deserving emphasis is that what I am describing takes place independent of the personality of the director, i.e., it is perhaps a defining characteristic of a social system or structure that the introduction of a new component affects and in turn is affected by the existing structure. Personality is an added variable which almost always is seized upon in a way so as to obscure the characteristic workings of the system qua system. Conflict within the system is usually experienced and explained in "interpersonal" or personality terms at the expense of the recognition that such conflict reflects the nature of the system--a lack of recognition that tends to guarantee that innovation will result in surface change, and that the more things change the more they remain the same.

3. Unlike the first two considerations, the present one does concern what directors or superintendents do. It focuses on an understandable and unwitting process which illuminates the first two points at the same time that it has a dynamic of its own, precisely because it reflects an "individual" way of thinking. I am referring here to the director's tendency to view the program and the planned facility as his, i.e., these things are his, psychologically he owns them, and his world is simplified into "inside and outside," "friends and strangers," and "we and they." It is an unwitting but profound process defining boundaries which prevent recognizing the significance of prehistory and the dynamics of the system of which it is a part. Let me be quick to add that this process is in the nature of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, under certain conditions and at certain times the erection of boundaries and walls can protect and foster productive growth and innovation. On the other hand, screening out the "outside"--acting on the basis of the myth that it is not part of an existing structure or that it is not embedded in a community--can set the stage for later catastrophe. At the very least it maximizes the number and extent of

future problems. Etiologically speaking, the problems in large part stem from our failure (by no means limited to directors) to think and conceptualize in terms of structure and system. This failure automatically reduces the amount of information which can become available as well as awareness of the number of different alternatives for action, and prevents one from recognizing that the consequences of actions one has taken has to be viewed not only in light of what one did but also in light of what one might have done. What is crucial to recognize in the beginning context is that each decision or planning step can be conceived as involving a universe of alternatives and that one's major task is to avoid constricting this universe. To the extent that the director's universe of alternatives for action is defined primarily by a psychology of the individual to the exclusion of considerations of structure and system, he is dealing with a restricted universe in which virtues tend to be made of necessities, i.e., things are done because they have to be done and there are no alternatives.

The Universe of Alternatives in Residential Care

It is appropriate at this point to ask a deceptively simple question: how do we understand why, in this country, at least, the pattern of residential care has been so consistent, i.e., a relatively large number of children are housed in a place staffed by a wide variety of professional and nonprofessional personnel? This is even true in a state like Connecticut where they have decentralized the state into regions in each of which there is a regional center (see Klaber's chapter). In each regional center there are residential facilities, and although the number of residents is far fewer than in the usual monstrous institutions, it is still true that the residents are in that regional center. It seems, unfortunately, to be the case that a large part of the answer to the question involves the failure explicitly and systematically to list and evaluate the universe of alternatives in regard to residential care.

There is more involved here than the weight of tradition, although that is an important factor. What I have been impressed by is that even in instances where the conditions for innovation were ripe those who were responsible for creating the settings did not examine the alternative ways one could view and implement residential care. It is ironic that in planning buildings these same people can spend vast amounts of time creatively examining the alternatives for design and allocation of space, but fail to act and think similarly in regards to the alternatives to housing the children in one locale. Let me illustrate my point by relating the following experiences: On four occasions I had the opportunity to ask the following question of a group of individuals who either had or would have responsibility for creating an institution for mentally retarded children: "What if you were given the responsibility to develop residential facilities with the restrictions that they could not be on 'institutional land,' no one of them could house more than 12 individuals, and no new buildings could be erected?" The following, in

chronological order, were the major reactions of the different groups.

1. Initially the groups responded with consternation, puzzlement, and curiosity. For some members of each of the groups, the question seemed to produce a blank mind, but for others it seemed as if the question quickly brought to the surface all their dissatisfactions with the usual mode of residential care and stimulated consideration of alternatives.

2. In the early stages of discussion, the chief stumbling block was the restriction that "no new buildings could be erected." I should say that throughout the discussions I adopted a relatively nondirective approach and tried only to answer directly questions which would clarify the meaning of the initial question. For example, when asked if one could remodel existing structures, I indicated that this was, of course, permissible. When I was asked if there was any restriction as to where these houses or small buildings could be bought and rented, I said there were no such restrictions. The point deserving emphasis is that many individuals struggled for some time until they realized that there was no one way to act and think but rather that there was a potentially large universe of alternatives for action from which they could choose. In addition, as some individuals came to see, there was no necessity to choose only one alternative, i.e., one could and should proceed in different ways at the same time.

3. Midway in the meeting the behavior of the members began to change in rather dramatic ways. Whereas before most were hesitant, deliberate, and cautious in their remarks, they now seemed to respond as if they were engaged in an exciting, intellectual game in which one possibility led to thinking about other possibilities, and what at first seemed to be unrelated were then seen as crucially related. Faced with the task of creating settings they truly began to think and talk creatively.

4. In two of the groups--and for reasons I cannot wholly account for--a plan for residential care evolved which brought together the renovation of substandard housing, training programs for nonprofessional personnel, volunteer services, and neighborhood involvement and responsibility. In short, these two groups were no longer dealing with mental retardation in its narrow aspects but in the context of some of the most crucial aspects of what has been termed the urban crisis.

One of the more experienced superintendents pointed out to his group that in the plan they had discussed "we are meeting more social problems, and providing more meaningful service to children and their

families, at far less money than we are now spending." It was indeed remarkable how intellectually fertile the discussions in these two groups were. For example, one of the group members made the point that if these small housing units were strategically placed around our high schools they could be used by the schools in at least three ways: for educating these youngsters about mental retardation, for purposes of training child-care workers, and for enlisting volunteers for recreational and other purposes. Another group member, in the context of a discussion about food preparation in these small units, maintained that if neighborhood participation and responsibility were taken seriously, food preparation and feeding could be handled on a volunteer basis, besides which the food would probably taste better. In my opinion, the creative thinking and planning that went on in these two groups were, in part, a consequence of a process which permitted the members to think not only in terms of the retarded child but in the context of pressing urban problems which ordinarily are not viewed in relation to the field of mental retardation.⁴

It is, of course, significant that the members could come up with approaches to residential care which they had not considered before and which deserve the most serious consideration. But what I consider of greater general significance is the fact that in the usual ways in which such settings are created the universe of alternatives is never described or thought through. It is my opinion that research on how settings are created will ultimately have a more beneficial impact on the quality and varieties of residential care than any other single thing we might do. Up to now we have focussed research on the recipients of residential care. I am suggesting that we will learn a great deal about the recipients by turning our attention to the values, assumptions, and thought processes of those who plan for the recipients.

Mention should be made here of a development which is taking place in Connecticut and which may have profound effects not only on programming in that state but in others as well. I refer here to the new Central Connecticut Regional Center, where a serious attempt is being made to view and implement a pattern of residential care very similar to that evolved in the two groups described above. This attempt is being carried out primarily by two people: Mr. George Zitnay, director of the new center, and Dr. Frances Kaplan of the Yale Psycho-Educational Clinic. Needless to say, this pioneer effort would not be possible without the support of Mr. Bert Schmickel, Deputy Commissioner of Mental Retardation. This new center legally came into existence July 1, 1967. It had and has no buildings and practically no staff. At this time, 1 year later, literally scores of individuals and agencies are involved on a working level not only in the development of services but, more important, in the actual rendering of service--and in almost all instances the individuals and agencies heretofore had no service relationship to the problems of mental retardation. In my experience what has been accomplished there in 1 year is the best example of what should be meant by a program being psychologically and socially in and of a community.

Future Directions

So far, I have not gone beyond the appointment of the director--we have barely discussed programs, buildings, staffing, children, parents, communities, etc. In short, we have not gotten to the growth of a complicated social system. What I eventually hope to do is to demonstrate two things. First, that the beginning context--by which I mean its prehistory, the thinking and planning processes of its director, and the structure of system from which the setting has come and to which it will be related--is crucial to the development and understanding of what comes later. Second, that the limitations and dangers inherent in the beginning context (as I have too briefly described them) are manifested with great clarity as the setting becomes differentiated. That is to say, there develops within the setting a variety of subdivisions each of which has its director who thinks in terms of his subdivision in the ways characteristic of the overall director. The result is what I have termed organizational craziness, in the context of which the goals of service are drastically and adversely affected.

The conditions described by Blatt and Kaplan, those described by many in regards to our urban schools, those that exist in many of our state mental hospitals--in these and other settings, self-defeating characteristics can in large measure be traced back to characteristics of the beginning context. That is certainly not the whole story, but it is an important part of it and one which has not received attention. However, we cannot see the problem until we first recognize that the creation of a setting (or the repair of a sick one) is not a clinical problem, or one which is contained in or derivable from theories of individuals or individual personality, or a communication problem which is solvable by legislating talk, or an administrative problem requiring refinement of organizational charts, or a problem requiring motivation, good will, and abundant energy. The problem requires a way of thinking and conceiving which recognize the existence, characteristics, and dynamics of social systems and structures; the consequences of these for stating and choosing alternatives for planning and action; and the development of means and vehicles from the beginning, so that (to change Gardner's words) eyes will see, ears will hear, and minds will face the evidence before them.

My generalizations (highly selective) may or may not be well stated, and it may be that we or others will find out over time that, as is usually the case, understanding the interrelationships among issues and processes is less likely to result in conceptual distortion than becoming enamored of one or another aspect of the complexity. The two purposes for these generalizations were to suggest the degree of complexity with which we are dealing, and to suggest that the craziness of settings may have their roots in the earliest stages of their development.

The creation of settings is not a problem contained in or derivable from existing psychological or social science theory. I am of the belief that it may well be the problem which will facilitate the

development of that kind of heightened consciousness or awareness which will lead to conceptions that will both encompass and transform existing theories of man and society. The transformation will result in conceptions of man in society. If such a transformation begins to take place--which is but another way of saying that our styles and categories of thinking will have begun to change--one may look forward to the day when those in our fields of inquiry and practice will look with understanding, condescension, and amusement at our current tendencies to win battles and lose wars, to react instead of act, to engage primarily in works of repair instead of works of creation, and, worst of all, that the crucial problem we failed to see, and hence to control for, was how our theories and practices were the inevitable consequences of our times, society, and history. Freud taught us a good deal about why we had to take distance both from ourselves and the patient. The next difficult task is to reach that higher elevation which may enable us to catch insightful glimpses of the interrelationships among ourselves, our theories, practices, and society. But to strive for the higher elevation implies (as it does in the act of seeking personnel therapy) that we have made the crucial decision that movement and change are necessary.

To some people the contents of this paper may be seen as vague or irrelevant, or too abstract, or worse yet, unimportant and boring--reactions which stand a fair chance of being valid if only on the basis of an actuarial assessment of papers in general. But there is one opinion or observation which I would request such people to consider as one possible source of their reactions. Such reactions tend to come from people who prefer to think that what they are and what they do, what they have been and what they will be, is not an important measure explainable by the characteristics and dynamics of the social structures and systems in which all people in our society have been, are, and will be. To think otherwise, for some people, is to admit the possibility that it is theoretically indefensible to maintain that as individuals we are masters of our fate and captains of our soul. Is it not noteworthy that in order to maintain a psychology of the individual and individualism we resort to the words "masters and captains," which so clearly denote particular systems or structures? Our thinking and our actions inevitably reflect the setting we are in and the settings in which we have been. As I said earlier, settings are not the whole story but they are that part of it to which we have given little or no systematic attention.

Very recently, Cleland and Cochran (1968) published a brief paper entitled "Demographic Characteristics of Superintendents in State and Private Institutions." At the beginning of their paper the authors state:

"In the field of mental retardation a renaissance has occurred during the past decade and one encouraging sign is an increased research and training interest in institutional personnel--mainly attendants. A similar interest in leadership personnel has yet to evolve and the present study reflects

an effort to describe certain characteristics of administrators occupying the top position in state and private facilities for the retarded. If more is known of leader characteristics it may be possible to understand more fully the barriers and gateways to institutional change."

At the conclusion of the paper these authors state that their study provides "a beginning effort to complement existing knowledge of other institutional employees. Cooperation between various employee groups, professional and nonprofessional alike, should theoretically advance if information is provided on all groups and more intensive study of this numerically small but target group of leaders might lead to improved institutional operations."

I heartily agree about the significance of these kinds of studies. However, if only to be consistent with my own position, I would have to maintain that the basic problem is not one of studying different groups within a setting but how to conceptualize the setting itself in its developmental aspects so that we better understand how and why differentiation takes place, the implicit and explicit factors which make for barriers to change, and, most important, forces us to face the question of the alternative ways in which structure and function can be related. At the present time the question of the relation between structure and function is answered primarily on the basis of tradition rather than on the basis of theory and research. But, as John Dewey pointed out in a beautiful paper, "Science and the Future Society," we have not yet learned to use "organized intelligence" to bear on the problems of living and working together.

It is precisely because of the rate of setting creation in the field of mental Subnormality that there is the opportunity for this field to make a contribution to the theory and practice of setting creation which would have significance far beyond its borders. If this problem is not recognized and studied, we will continue to confuse action with progress, programs with accomplishment, the expenditure of money with improvement, and the failure of a setting with bad luck or the obtuseness and evil of individuals. The modest research program which I and some colleagues have been engaged in lends unequivocal support to the idea that settings misfire in the same way that so much research misfires: the conceptualizations which generate the creation of settings (or research) are either oversimplified, fuzzy, or simply wrong.

It is likely, as the present book suggests, that in this country we are at the beginning of a new era in patterns of residential care. For example, the suggestion has been made that the federal government make it financially possible for parents to have freedom of choice as to where their retarded child will be placed, a suggestion which would give use to many small and private residential facilities. This proposal is viewed as one way of beginning to eliminate or reduce the number of our large state institutions some of which have the scandalous characteristics

depicted by Blatt and Kaplan. As a reaction to our present way of handling residential care, the proposal has merit. However, I must express the serious reservation that the proposal perpetuates the tendency to think primarily in terms of the retarded child and not in terms of the possible relationships between the field of mental retardation and other community needs and problems. To the extent that a plan for residential care does not reflect the systematic exploration of the alternative ways in which it can be related to other community needs and problems--that is to say, truly integrated with the activities of diverse groups and settings in the community--to that extent the field of mental retardation and the larger social community will be robbed of the benefits they can derive from each other.

In their recent book Sarason and Doris (1969) have discussed in some detail the history of the relationship between the field of mental retardation and the larger society. They describe how in various ways changes in the larger society affected the understanding and management of mentally retarded individuals--and those effects were usually not beneficial. As we enter a period in which new patterns of residential care are being seriously discussed we have the possibility, perhaps for the first time, of planning in ways which would make it possible for the field of mental retardation beneficially to affect the values, consciousness, and activities of the larger community. But this will be possible only to the extent that we concretize the difference between being physically in a community and being psychologically and socially a part of it.

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