

READING FOR CONFLICT AS A COUNSELING PRACTICE:
A COMPARISON OF STRUCTURAL, SYSTEMIC, AND PROCESS MODELS.

by

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Abstract

This interpretive inquiry applies three theories dealing with interpersonal conflict to a career related conversation between a father and his adolescent son. Benjamin's structural analysis (2003), Pearce and Littlejohn's systemic communications model (1997), and Mindell's process-oriented psychology (2000) each portray the dyad interaction. An action analysis of the interpretive procedure, conception of conflict, and conflict resolution intervention provides a basis for comparing the theories. The findings identified temporal parsing, metaphor and teleonomy in the pattern recognition algorithm as distinguishing features of each approach.

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1 Introduction

In the conversations I hear as I pass through my day, I notice how frequently conflict sparks interaction between people. Who should go first, who didn't notice something, why something is unfair, and similar issues are not uncommon subjects in my observation and experience of strangers, coworkers, family and friends. Some conflicts are minor events that can be brushed off without becoming a problem. Other conflicts leave a lasting impression, creating pain and damaging relationships.

As a counselor, I see how disturbing these altercations can sometimes be for people. After recovering from the initial recoil from conflict, attempts to understand conflict sometimes emerge in questions such as: "why do people fight so much?", "how could I prevent that outburst?" or "how can I deal with that angry person?" In such moments, I grapple with my conception of conflict. This thesis conducts an investigation to describe how I recognize this fundamental human experience, and how a particular conception of conflict implies a particular kind of response.

1.1 *The Problem of Conflict*

When I try to explain what happens in counseling, I find it useful to describe the work in terms of helping a person deal with conflicts in their life. Here, I use the term conflict in a broad sense, as the human analogue to the physicist's friction, present whenever force or will meets resistance. Thus not only arguments, but also feeling an unmet longing and preparing to remedy the situation, constitute a conflict-oriented reading of what a person might reasonably bring into counseling.

There are several ways in which counselors are faced with conflict, in addition to the ways in which everyone faces it. That is to say, we all experience conflict to some degree, but counselors experience it both privately and with their clients.

Counselors can sometimes face clients who direct the anger and resentment they hold toward others to the counselor. If the counselor is unprepared to deal with conflict, such clients are often not offered counseling services (Hanna, Hanna, & Keys, 1999). Hanna et al, remind us that counselors can expect conflict to emerge with defiant and adversarial adolescents, and that they can prepare for this by learning strategies to build relationships with those who appear to spurn help.

When an intimate couple enters counseling for help with a fight that is threatening their relationship, the counselor's interpretation of the conflict quickly becomes a relevant issue. For both parties to a conflict, the counselor's construal of their side of the story seems crucial to their feeling understood. Yet, for the counselor, unquestioned acceptance of either side of the story is likely to lead to further disagreement. Since both parties differ in their interpretation, if the counselor endorses one side, such a statement risks alienating the other party.

It would seem that the counselor's response to conflict depends upon an entirely different style of interpretation. As I imagine it, the counselor would interpret conflict in a way that permits both parties to feel understood and that leads to insight in the process of resolving conflict. Such are the lofty goals of my subject – a subject to which psychological theorists have given considerable attention. The overarching goal of this thesis is to investigate how selecting a particular model of conflict shapes a counselor's

understanding of the client's situation, and how this understanding permits the counselor to facilitate change.

1.2 The Research Question

"How do people understand conflict? And how is my understanding of conflict reflected in the strategies I bring to a counseling intervention?" This simple formulation of my research question serves as a starting point for this research.

The response has taken the form of an interpretive inquiry, in which I work with the conflict that suffuses a conversation between a father and his son as they discuss the subject of career. Holding the perspective of a counselor, I assume a particular way of reading conflict in the relationship, and note how each affects my practice. As I imagine how to respond to this couple, I draw upon a construction of conflict and an interpretation of the relationship. Of great interest in such moments are the tools with which I construct my understanding.

I use three tools to carve a story from the raw material contained in the transcript of dialogue. These tools exemplify the intellectual ideas represented in larger psychological theories. Essentially, the approaches I use here look at relationship (Benjamin), values (Pearce), and awareness (Mindell). I am interested in how each approach 'sees' different content, constructs conflict differently, and invites me to intervene for different reasons.

Each of these authors has had an impact on my development as a counselor: Benjamin's work possesses some authority within the psychological research community. It is a theory grounded in data, with an emphasis on the operational description of interpersonal relations. It presents a kind of 'gold standard', against which to compare the

others. I was also drawn to the theoretical basis for the development of mediation and dispute resolution practices, and I found a representative of this in the work of Pearce & Littlejohn. In comparison with these, Mindell's work seems highly theoretical, yet simply applied. It presents a relatively pioneering and radical analysis, stimulating intellectual inquiry into the nature of conflict. I became interested then, in comparing each analysis with the other, and looking for bridging relationships among these diverse forms of conflict research.

Looking at how a particular approach conceives, recognizes, and influences conflict, represents an application of action theory concepts. Like people, who intend to do something and undertake a series of steps to accomplish it, each model supports a conflict resolution strategy and employs a procedure to analyze the text. Concepts developed within action theory serve to organize the interpretations, by providing common levels of observation, across which to compare the interpretive process. The guiding research question then takes on an applied character in the form: "What relations exist between the interpretations and interventions emerging from models of conflict I derive from Benjamin, Pearce, and Mindell?"

1.3 Overview

This study develops an interpretation of conflict in the context of counseling. The investigation is oriented by theories of human relations which address the experience of conflict. Three theories from the field of interpersonal relations, communications theory, and process-oriented psychology each contribute a unique perspective on what conflict is and how people experience it. I explore each theory by describing the factors thought to influence human relations in moments of conflict and express this as a model. I apply

each model by creating an interpretation of interpersonal conflict. Using a transcript of a relatively unmediated conversation about career development, I construct a theory specific account of the conflict that interrupts their discussion. I use this hermeneutic procedure as an analog for the thought process a counselor might use in understanding client conflict. For each theory, I create a narrative of the conflict and propose a conflict resolution strategy that emerges from that conception of conflict. Finally, I create an action analysis of the interpretive process, and use this as the basis on which to discuss relationships between the theories.

2 Literature Review

The subject of conflict has been of theoretical interest within a great many fields. Psychiatry, psycho dynamic analysis, evolutionary psychology, and action theory have formulated theory to describe conflict. Surrounding disciplines such as education, ethology and literary criticism have described conflict in ways that emphasize its centrality to life. Conflict is a necessary subject for fields such as governance and mediation. We begin this review of the conflict discourse at the outer edges, and gradually work our way in to human science and counseling approaches.

2.1 Disciplinary Approaches to the Subject of Conflict

For animals and countries, conflict seems to have always been with us. Although cursory, I begin with some references to the study of conflict occurring within countries, species, institutions, texts and individuals.

2.1.1 Governance

Zelditch (2001) marks the first western written analysis of conflict, and the development of a theory of conflict with the writing of Machiavelli in 1517. There, Machiavelli states “the real interests of the rulers and the ruled are in conflict; and it is power that makes the rules binding” (as cited in Zelditch 2001, p. 42). According to Zelditch, Machiavelli saw conflict as a necessary aspect of government, and encouraged rulers to adopt techniques of conflict management, such as masking through ideology, myth and ritual.

2.1.2 Ethology

In the study of animal behavior, ethologists such as Lorenz (1967) have presented conflict as the expression of an aggressive drive or instinct, although later theorists criticized this as lacking the social context necessary for conflict (Aureli & de Waal, 2000). Models of conflict used to analyze animal behavior include the relational model (de Wall, 1996a). This model proposes conflict as one possible outcome of a cost-benefit analysis in which social partnerships are commodities of variable value. According to the relational model, primates (a biological order including monkeys, apes and humans) respond to the choice between conflict and cooperation, by weighing the benefit of seizing a resource, against the risk of personal injury and the loss of the relationship. These risks are increased by the presence of weapons and decreased by the reparability of the relationship. Within the relational model,

conflict and its resolution may actually contribute to a fine-tuning of expectations between parties, a building of trust despite occasional disagreement, hence a more productive and closer relationship than would be possible if conflict were fully suppressed (Aureli & de Waal, 2000, p. 29).

2.1.3 Education

In studies of elementary school children, Chen (2001) identifies conflict as a teachable moment, suitable for facilitating developmental learning. Children begin with conflict as opposition, shouting 'No!', insisting and escalating. Between age two and five Chen describes qualitative changes in their approach to conflict. Children discover that opposition alone isn't effective enough, and begin to use reasons to overcome conflicts. During this change, insistence decreases, as the means of compromise and convincing are

developed. Chen found that preschooler conflicts often focus on object possession and the distribution of resources. The second most frequent issue of conflict related to play ideas such as fantasy conventions. Shanz (1987) identifies group inclusion as a frequent conflict issue, as children enter nursery and elementary school. Even though the request to play together is met with opposition more than half the time, some children develop strategies to overcome this resistance. In this case, Shanz suggests that sometime a successful strategy is to join observantly and contribute in a relevant manner if an opportunity permits.

In describing children's development in terms of their response to conflict, Shantz (1987) identifies an intrinsic discrimination in a child's perception of conflict types. Of the two fundamental kinds of conflict, the first involves asserting one's will upon another (the opposer) with the expectation that the other will not resist, but yield. The second class of conflict involves situations when the other actively opposes one's will, as when an order is refused, or an assertion is denied or ignored. While conflict generally involves opposition toward others, in the subset of *mutual* conflict, the target of one's opposition also opposes in return. Children come to recognize that in order to solve mutual opposition, one's own solution is insufficient to solve the problem; both must be satisfied if any progress is to be made.

2.1.4 Literature

For interpretive researchers in human science, reading for conflict seems heuristic in uncovering (or creating) meaning. In research on the experience of young women, Gilligan (1982) framed moral development in terms of attempts to resolve the conflict between voices of justice and care. Steele (1982) investigated the interpersonal conflict

between Freud and Jung as a way to explain the difference between dynamic and analytic psychology. Luhrmann (2000) explored the field of psychiatry, organizing it in terms of the conflict between biological and psychotherapeutic approaches to treatment.

The theme of conflict within a text is key to Steele's (1989) description of critical reading, which does "not square with an authorized reading or a conventional view" (p. 224). His critical interpretation is drawn from forms of inquiry that utilize conflict in the analysis of texts. He points to feminist reading in which "the female as a linguistic structural term is held in opposition to the male and is the category against which things considered male – culture, mind, subject status – are compared" (p. 225). In Marxist reading, the conflict of material interests is used to identify the role of class and undermine pretensions of unbiased objectivity. Steele notes how reading for conflict between phenomenological and positivist conceptions of science allows readers to see how efforts to absent the observer from empirical accounts introduces distortion by turning subjects into objects. In psychoanalytic reading, the conflicting interests of civilization and libido allows readers, who begin with shallow interpretations of human behavior as merely irrational, to enrich their understanding. The introduction of concepts such as "displacement, condensation, secondary revision, and symbolic representation" (p. 226) permits the interpreter to reveal unconscious design. Structuralism reads conflict as fundamental to interpretation, elevating it to the role of a "dialectically coupled interplay of nested binary oppositions throughout a text" (p. 226). Conflict takes an active role in deconstruction, where the reader "refuses to collude with a text, its author, and the social order in the production of the illusions of objectivity, authority, neutral and neutered language, facticity, and rationality" (p. 226). Thus critical reading employs

conflict in the text to evidence implicit but undisclosed commitments. It may also utilize conflict in the relationship between reader and text to identify commitments the text asks the reader to permit.

2.1.5 Psychology

Within the psychological domain conflict has been described as a clash of goals. Mayer (2000) defines conflict as having cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions. The cognitive dimension involves the perception that one's "needs, interests, wants or values are incompatible with someone else's" (p. 4). The emotional dimension of conflict refers to the feelings of upset, fear, anger and so on that accompany disagreement. The behavioral dimension of conflict involves the actions one takes to meet one's needs at the expense of another, often reflecting an imbalance of power, and possibly involving violence.

While conflict is typically expressed socially, it may also take covert forms. Individuals may not engage in social conflict, but still experience a subjective state of emotional arousal in response to behavior they find aversive. One study (Miller, 2001) asked participants to record breaches of impropriety. Typically these were social encounters in which the observer reported anger or displeasure, but did not engage in open conflict. They provided reports of aversive reaction to poor personal hygiene, failure to follow social manners, selfishness and rudeness.

2.2 Counseling Approaches to the Subject of Conflict

Although there are many different responses to conflict in counseling, I found two basic approaches to the subject. Indirect approaches deal with ways to respond to conflict we encounter, direct approaches look at a person's own part in creating conflict.

2.3 Indirect Approaches to Conflict

Within contemporary counseling literature, the subject of conflict is often addressed obliquely, with reference to alternate preferred communication styles designed to suppress, resolve, or eliminate conflict (McFarland, 1992). Mediation, assertiveness, and reconciliation are examples of counseling applications where conflict is implicit.

2.3.1 Mediation

When the parties to conflict experience their interaction as stuck, one conflict resolution approach is to invite the creativity of a mediator. Participants to conflict resolution mediation are encouraged to move from fixed positions vis-à-vis their opponent, to an expression of each party's underlying interests and needs (Fisher & Ury, 1981). Within this framework, successful conflict resolution outcome involves the discovery of alternate means that still fulfill each party's underlying interests. Such an approach has been widely adopted in the resolution of commercial and legal conflicts, often called alternate dispute resolution (Duryea & Grundison, 1993).

2.3.2 Assertiveness

While conflict might be expected to some degree, as a normal (if unwelcome) aspect of social life, the outcome of conflict can be improved with assertiveness. According to Paterson (2000), assertiveness is one option in response to conflict, midway

along a continuum of communication styles. On one extreme is the aggressive, confrontational, hostile approach where one's needs regularly take precedence over the needs of others. On the opposite extreme is the passive stance, where one's needs are regularly denied in favor of the needs of others. Both poles can be present in the passive-aggressive stance, where one's own needs are prominently undervalued in a display of self-deprecation designed to elicit the sympathy and guilt of those with the power to change circumstances. Patterson (2000) describes an intervention to hold a preferred, assertive stance as clear communication of one's needs, expressed in ways that allow one to both listen and persuade. The formula for the assertive style was codified into four parts: 1) an observation of the other's behavior, 2) expression of the unwanted consequence or impact of that behavior, 3) a statement of the preferred behavior, and 4) a prediction of the outcome if the unwanted behavior continues or the preferred behavior begins.

2.3.3 Reconciliation

When clients have suffered hurt at the hands of an offender, they may hold resentment and distrust towards the offender, and as a consequence suffer symptoms of anxiety and depression associated with trauma. In such cases, Ferch (1998) encourages the use of intentional forgiveness as an intervention that counselors can offer. This intervention allows clients to express the anger at being hurt, without inflicting harm on others. It involves a psycho-educational component in which forgiveness is presented as a choice, one that involves surmounting barriers to trust, and which is framed as "forgive and remember" as opposed to "forgive and forget". This approach requires that clients define boundaries of justice, and if these are in place such that harmful behavior stops,

the intervention facilitates the reemergence of mutual respect. Ferch intervenes in a directive manner, helping the offending party to shape their communication, so that reconciliation is likely to succeed. When parties to the conflict are learning forgiveness, Ferch directs the offended party to describe the impact of the offense, while ensuring the offender maintains a stance of responsibility expressed with open body language. In such a context, if the offender is able to directly ask "Will you forgive me?" conditions are in place to allow reconciliation to emerge.

2.4 *Direct Approaches to Conflict in Counseling*

While the previous modalities offer a way to recover from conflict or prevent its appearance, some counselors prefer to target conflict more directly. These approaches have made the understanding of conflict central to therapy. These authors suggest that by helping a person deal directly with conflict, a wide range of problems which had chronically impaired the client's life and relationships can be reduced or eliminated.

2.4.1 Evolutionary Psychology

The concept that conflict is central to the need counselors are called to address, is reflected in the therapeutic work of Heitler (1990), who seeks to identify the root conflict from which a client suffers. For Heitler, the client's problem lies in their mode of response to conflict - by fighting, fleeing, submitting, or freezing. Part of her therapeutic work involves identifying intervention strategies appropriate to each mode. These are designed to help a client recognize how they respond to conflict, and assist them to replace maladaptive response styles with those leading to cooperation.

The human capacity to enter into the experience of conflict is thought to have archaic origins, and has been the subject of speculation within the field of evolutionary psychology. Like animals, humans are thought to employ four basic responses to conflict situations. Heitler (1990) refers to these patterns as fight, flight, submit, and freeze. As a counselor, she helps clients identify feelings and response patterns that accompany these primitive reactions to conflict. The fight response is accompanied by feelings of anger, rage, and for some, violence. The flight response employs tactics to avoid conflict such as depersonalization, pretending all is well, and the desire for transport – perhaps enacted by escape through drugs or distraction. The submission response is associated with feelings of sadness and sinking into defeat and depression. Finally, freezing in response to conflict, immobilized in the belief one is unable to solve a conflict, is associated with feelings of anxiety and the physical discomfort that accompanies it. Within this evolutionary context, these emotions constitute painful responses to conflict. Reducing this pain would seem to be the main incentive for investing the creative energy to discover a co-operative response to conflict. Heitler (2001) has described conflict resolution strategies that include providing relief for distress, visualizing changes in relative power, and communication skill building designed to help clients develop co-operative skills in response to conflict.

2.4.2 Psychodynamic Analysis

In an introduction to Luborsky's brief psychodynamic psychotherapy, Book (1998) directs attention to the patient's experience of interpersonal conflict as a way of organizing therapy. This therapy begins with an assessment phase, devoted to the articulation of the core conflictual relationship theme (CCRT). In the assessment phase,

the therapist learns about the patient's relationships and identifies three components from a series of relationship episodes. These components are: 1) a statement of the patient's wish in the context of a relationship, 2) the patient's perception of an actual or anticipated response from the other, and 3) the behavioral and affective response of the patient in the situation. At completion of the assessment, the therapist would make these components explicit, as in the following example: "You wish to be treated with respect, but you expect your wishes to be dismissed, and then you give up in silence and feel sad."

In the therapy stage, attention turns to the re-enactment of these relationship dynamics within the client/therapist interaction. As the patient acts out the CCRT, the therapist recognizes and comments on it, turning an experiential process into a relationship episode that can be seen as content. The goal of the therapy is the actualization of the patient's wish, by working through a transference distortion or a repetition compulsion that stands in the way. In transference distortion, the patient's fear and expectation prevents the patient from acting upon the wish. In repetition compulsion, the patient provokes others to respond in ways that are hurtful in an attempt "to master early childhood experiences" (Book, 1998, p. 50). In both cases, the patient's recognition of their role in frustrating the actualization of their wish is seen as necessary for the patient to work through their difficulty.

2.5 Summary

All of these perspectives mark conflict as integral to the human experience, but they show great variation in their attitude toward conflict. Some regard it as an inevitable aspect of social life; as an unpleasantness to be suffered. Viewed cynically, it has been portrayed as a tool of control with which to gain advantage. Conflict has been portrayed

more neutrally as a natural means of negotiating and asserting relational boundaries. Others identify positive benefits from conflict, as a means of accessing hidden meaning. Similarly, it was portrayed as a marker of developmental learning, one which alerts teachers to the opportunity for growth.

3 Method

This thesis takes the form of an interpretive inquiry into the nature of conflict from the perspective of counseling. As tools for inquiry, I draw upon three related methodological frameworks: action theory, hermeneutics, and heuristics. Action theory provides the structure with which to analyze how a theory of conflict acts upon a text to produce a conflict resolution intervention. Action theory also informs the structure of the original transcript, which was designed to provide access to social and individual meanings on the nature of career. Hermeneutics provides methods related to the interpretive process of drawing out meaning from a text. Heuristics provides methods exploring the act of conflict resolution, with a focus on practical engagement that draws on universal and personal experience.

3.1 *Action Theory Methods*

To investigate conflict, I make use of action analysis to provide a common structure for comparing the three theories. This conceptual framework organizes the analysis of action into levels based on intrinsic divisions, each of which has characteristics requiring different measures (Valach, Young & Lynam, 2002). Thus, each theory can be represented in terms of how it describes the goals, functional steps, and action elements of conflict. Within an interpretation, the citation of text corresponds to

action elements. The organization of citations corresponds to functional steps, as arguments are formed which express the premises of the theory. The set of arguments supports the attribution of goals to the conflict. I then relate the goals the subjects have for their conflict, to the cognitive strategies a counselor might consider in the design of an intervention.

Action theory provides a general structure across which to compare the construction of conflict. The theories act upon the transcript, purposefully organizing it to reveal structure and effect change. To develop content demonstrating this effect, from which to create an action analysis, I propose two means of generating data: Heuristic methods are needed to develop practical engagement with the subject by applying the theories to real life. Hermeneutic methods are helpful in providing a process for relating to a text; successively identifying meanings, qualifying these when they are contradicted, and continuing to develop reasoned descriptions of the latent intentions of the protagonists. These methods have well developed intellectual histories in serving to uncover principles organizing our world.

3.2 Dual Approaches

In a very early commentary on the methods of science we find the pronouncement “Ratiocination Speculative, is either Euretick or Hermeneutic, Inventive or Interpretive.” (Burthogge, 1678, p. 70 as cited in Simpson & Weiner, 1989). I interpret this to say, a form of research involving methodical, logical, and speculative reasoning is based on two kinds of activity: discovery of *how to do* in the face of practical problems, and the explanation of *how others do* what they do. The corresponding branches of research embodying these approaches are heuristic and hermeneutic, respectively. With an

intention to learn about a subject, a researcher can look at their own experience and that of others. Each approach can lead to learning, but the associated methods and results are intrinsically different.

Heuristics involves the discovery of universal qualities of an experience (Moustakas, 1990). Heuristics' goal of understanding is expressed in the real world of the researcher's life. The researcher learns about a subject, studies personal experience of the subject, and brings these together in creative synthesis. Heuristics involves describing the qualities of thought or action experienced in relationship with ideas. Ideas about people or things involve a network of strategies that can guide one's interaction. Describing this heuristic network is also the proper subject of action theory.

Hermeneutics is the study or practice of interpretation. Hermeneutics calls for the adoption of an interpretive framework as the expression of a theoretical understanding and its application to the explanation of events. Thus physics is the hermeneutic of nature, and history is the hermeneutic of recorded existence (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). To perform a hermeneutic in this thesis is to interpret the dialogue in terms of the conflict that organizes it. Similarly, action theory seeks to resolve the goal structure that organizes manifest behavior.

I would argue that heuristic and hermeneutic methods correspond to the fundamentally dual position of the subject in research. It is a question of emphasis, on the subject as self or other. While hermeneutics focuses on the experience of other as interpreted by self, heuristics focuses on the experience of self in relation to other. Action theory can combine these two opposite approaches, as they jointly influence the organization of action. In Burthogge's 17th century quotation the poles of discovery and

interpretation are thought to contain all that is involved in research. I would suggest that these are joint aspects of learning, as inseparable as the personal and social nature of action. In an historical and etymological example, we can see these twin methods embodied metaphorically in the figure of Hermes.

3.3 *Hermes*

Later referred to as Mercury in Roman times, the Greek god Hermes possessed cultural attributes suggesting a common ancestor in both discovery and interpretation. This icon of communication was portrayed as a messenger and as a healer. He wore a winged cap and shoes (Bullfinch, 1969), suggesting the thought structures and technologies of communication. He carried the caduceus, a rod entwined with two serpents, which in current times is associated with healthcare. The two serpents suggest combining opposing qualities, an ability identified as hermaphrodite. Hermaphrodite in this sense is expressive of the ability to combine opposite qualities or attributes (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). While typically related to the expression of both anatomical genders in plants, it has also been used to refer to the combination of opposite rigging styles on ships, combining opposite styles of dress on people, and the manner of sexual or gender identity combining male and female characteristics. I use the term here in the sense of combining opposite philosophical and methodological approaches: heuristic and hermeneutic.

Hermeneutics expresses the interpretive aspect of Hermes, as the messenger of the gods (Byrne, 1987). A hermeneut is considered a derivative of Hermes “in his character of tutelary deity of speech, writing and traffic” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 168). In the late 17th century, hermeneutics referred to principles developed in the context of exegesis,

leading others by translating and explaining the spiritual teaching in forms such as the Bible (Pearsall & Hanks, 2001). Hermeneutic principles were instrumental in that they had the power to control people, via interpretations of the bible, at a time when the church was the sole ruler of the state.

The subject of hermeneutics is no longer solely represented by exegesis, and has generally been extended to the interpretation of literary texts. In my use of this method, I would extend it to the texts of counseling. The most self-evident text is the everyday communication of one person to another. Thus, counselors might interpret people (as clients or texts) to understand what people are saying, what they mean, how people feel saying or hearing this, and what they want to do with their knowledge of each other. Less evident, but as important in this thesis, I include theories of human relations as texts, subject to interpretation.

Heuristics expresses the discovery aspect of Hermes, referring to that which aids in finding out (Klein, 1966). Heuristics was used to describe the logic of the art of discovery (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). I contend there is a linguistic relationship in that heuristics was associated with finding way signs. Hermes was also associated with blunt columns, and even earlier to piles of rock. The Greek *herma* meaning 'heap of stones', were mounds of rocks (Pearsall, 1998), like the rock piles used even today as signs of a path, made by travelers to cross unpopulated lands. For such a traveler, a heuristic would be to discover or find piles of rock. Heuristics links *indirectly* to Hermes, once removed from the subject position assumed by the hermeneut. The indirection is by place, in that a heuristic wayfarer would find Hermes as signposts on the way, while a hermeneut identifies with guidance by illumination.

Guiding and finding suggest activities as different as teaching and learning, yet they depend on each other. Once this key idea is accepted, historical forms expressive of this joint relationship appear in the methodological squabbles over truth claims of each approach. As though emphasizing differences in the relationship to subjecthood, hermeneuts have resisted the influence of self, considering it a contaminant in describing the intentions of actors in a text. Heuristic approaches in turn have elevated the self as subject, encouraging a rejection of knowledge authorities in favor of universal and personal experience (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). So if the reader will accept the plausibility that discovery and interpretation form joint aspects of learning, it will be no great step to jointly consider hermeneutic and heuristic methods in an integrated study of conflict as action.

3.4 *Heuristics*

Moustakas (1990) lays out a program for heuristic research involving general steps of inquiry. Consistent with this approach, I work with a transcript as a manifest sample of the conflict subject, and the theories of conflict serve as my co-researchers. I proceeded by immersing myself in the sample, until I felt I had a comprehensive grasp of all the relevant details. After immersing myself in the transcript I set it aside for rest and fresh approach. I followed this by a period of introspection, in which I cultivated personal connections to universal and essential aspects of the subject. In this case, for each conflict theory I recorded a personal depiction of the essential features of the conflict, and then assessed its fit with the manifest sample. I also conceived a therapeutic stance, illustrated in a simulated account of how therapeutic intervention might proceed. I returned to the personal depiction to introduce and redefine essential features of the experience until fit

occurred. After completing this process with each theory, all the depictions were brought together, to create a composite of core meanings in the depictions. The composite was then used to depict the characteristics of the key representatives. The final step involves a synthesis of the learning in a creative form that may be freely chosen. I created graphic models which allowed me to express my sense of how all three theories fit with each other.

3.5 *Hermeneutics*

Packer (1985a) outlines the character of a hermeneutic account as “a progressive uncovering and explication ... of the researcher’s practical understanding” (p. 1089). An interpretation begins with a “detailed, progressive description of episodes of social interchange, and gradually articulates more and more of their organization.” (p. 1089) As the practical understanding is organized, it becomes “accessible to thematic description”, appearing then as an expression of principles and conceptual knowledge. For Packer, this shift defines the movement of interpretation, as providing “a detailed account of what is going on in a way which lays out its organization so that others can recognize it” (Packer, 1985b, p. 9) As events are organized, we do so on the basis of our understanding. At the same time, we become aware of contradictions and gaps in our understanding, leading to corrections and explanation. By this process of interpretation we “notice aspects of the experience which were not apparent before; uncover new ways of regarding what was already familiar to us; and raise our understanding of conflict from a practical to a more reflective level.” (Packer, 1985b, p. 9) Of note here, is the idea that during interpretation, the organization of events in a text elicits both understanding and contradiction.

In accounting for contradictions, an interpreter reflects upon the underlying organizing principles. The tendency at this point is to simply modify the principles to match the data being explained. This is considered the process through which science grows, as principles of science gain explanatory power (Kuhn, 1965). The check on this process however, occurs when the principle is applied generally. In some cases the theory will have improved by the modification, while in others, when the tinkering works only for the one case, its value is sharply reduced. This process supports the gradual development of explanatory principles.

An alternate approach to contradiction is theory that supposes the necessity of contradiction, as a result of the unconscious pressing upon the conscious. This echoes Steele's (1989) approach of reading for conflict as a means of uncovering meaning. In order to use it however, one requires a conscious theory of the unconscious in order to interpret the contradictory elements. One must for example, assert that a false dominance is present in the text, and note the contradictions as brief insertions that attempt to unsettle control that is exerted to organize the text in support of power. This form of explanation handles contradictions in the text well, yet it too is subject to the vanity of believing itself to fully interpret. One wonders if any such an approach can be sensitive to new forms of unconscious assertion, or only those for which its theory prepares it to see.

This philosophical question may not be answerable. As such I propose to limit the scope of the claims this research might make. Interpretive approaches need not be evaluated in terms of revealing truths. Rather, they can be evaluated as technologies that are used because of the understanding they deliver. Within this conception, perhaps it is

sufficient for the task of interpretation to note the interpretive limits of particular explanatory principles, in highlighting the boundaries of the understood.

3.5.1 Procedure

Tappan (2001) describes some of the requirements of interpretive research. To begin with, one must have an expression of “the experience as such” - the lived experience of the subject – in the symbolic form of a text. Lived experience is a term developed by Dilthey to convey the cognitive, emotional, and volitional aspects of subjective life as recorded in the thoughts, feelings and actions found in a text. While it is assumed that the researcher never enters into the private experience of the subject (subjective phenomena), what entry is possible, is by virtue of the expression of that experience in the form of a text. Given this expression, one can then move to understanding, through the process of interpretation.

According to Tappan (2001), “turning a ‘special personal giftedness’ for understanding” the spirit of the text into an articulation of method constitutes one of the contributions of interpretive inquiry. The method of interpretation requires an orientation of the interpreter between two threats: Veering in one direction the text becomes utterly alien - since subjectivity is reduced by objectification in a text - making the project of interpretation impossible. Veering in the other direction, when there is nothing alien in the text, interpretation becomes unnecessary. Such a condition occurs when the interpreter claims authority to understand the text based on personal identification and proceeds under the illusion of utterly shared subjectivity. Given these threats, an interpretive heuristic appears to steer between these poles. Interpretation seeks to identify aspects of the text that appear alien and therefore necessitates an attempt to understand,

while employing the shared understandings of interpretive communities to make meanings that convincingly explain the specifics of the text. In this thesis, the three theories stand as shared understandings within the counseling community.

Packer and Addison (1989) describe the interpretive process as having three critical phases: First, the author must articulate grounds from which to interpret. Second, the author applies the theoretical standpoint to the data, and makes an interpretation. Finally, the interpretation is evaluated in terms of how well the explanation fits the data and what aspects of the data eluded interpretation.

3.5.2 The Cycle of Interpretation

According to Packer (1989), interpretive research involves *two arcs of inquiry*: First, the *outgoing arc*, which asks “what is a suitable text, and what structures of interpretation will be brought to bear on it?” Second, *the arc of return*, which asks, “what of the actor’s original meaning can be preserved in the process of interpretation?” Throughout the process of interpretation one seeks coherency of meaning within the text. Coherency is assessed in terms of the internal consistency of meanings found throughout the text, and in terms of the external agreement the interpretation receives in a discourse community.

3.5.3 The Transcript

On the outgoing arc, I propose that a suitable text will necessarily be a record in which the participants take the opportunity to express themselves, containing interpersonal conflict that it is reasonably free of contaminating external influences. The text I propose to analyze is suitable in these respects: The text is a transcript of a

conversation between a father and his adolescent son drawn from research on the subject of career development (Young, Valach, Ball, Paseluikho, Wong, DeVries, McLean & Turkel, 2001).

The demographic information on the participants is as follows: The father is 43 years old, separated, and employed as a research associate. The son is 16 years old, in the tenth grade of high school. They are both born in Canada, and no racial or ethnic background is available.

During the conversation, interpersonal conflict enters the transcript in a series of spontaneous interruptions. Conflict was not the intended subject of the conversation, nor was its presence censored or made the focus of attention. The natural context in which the interpersonal conflict occurred makes this text particularly suitable for analysis. After a brief warm-up with a research assistant, the conversation continued without the intervention of a third party. They were free to continue their discussion in whatever way they saw fit. In this case the participants exercised their freedom to discuss the observer's presence in the form of the video camera! They discuss and then disregard the camera's influence. While self-censorship is probably always present to some degree, this text is suitable in that the participants demonstrate a relatively high level of spontaneity and realism in their interaction. The text is also suitable in that the speakers reviewed their taped conversation and shared their thoughts on the dialogue in a self-confrontation interview, thus providing some guidance with which to check interpretation.

The structures of interpretation that are brought to bear on this text are suitable in that they constitute theory about interpersonal conflict. Each theory finds support within an established community: Structural analysis is psychiatric and research based.

Communications theory is used in mediation. Process theory is used in community development. All three are used in individual and family therapy. Each is suitable from a counseling perspective in its orientation toward the resolution of conflict. Finally, each theory is distinct and well articulated, representing significant influences broadly employed in contemporary counseling.

Action theory seems to support the methodological principles of interpretive and heuristic inquiry, since the perspectives of action theory (manifest, social, and subjective meaning) are accessible through these methods. Interpretive methods explain the manifest text by employing shared meanings for the purpose of understanding action. Heuristic methods invite the researcher to experience the subject, to relate individual and social experience, and to act from this awareness. Both inquiry approaches contribute information about the systems of action by looking at the project and career of conflict as experienced by each individual and as a social dyad. Interpretive approaches would describe the particular state of conflict in relation to an immediate intention (project), and deduce context from the way conflict is being used generally (career). It would look at each person's intrapsychic conflict, and the group conflict. Heuristic approaches would include my own understanding of conflict (individual), and how I intervene (social), given this particular session with the dyad (project), and in terms of my overall influence (career).

3.6 *Limitations*

The results of investigating conflict in the way I have described have the potential to be applied more generally than I intend. It is important therefore to be explicit about the scope of this research, by noting the following kinds of limitation.

3.6.1 Sampling Error

I don't think of my selection of the tools and theories presented here as the only ones I would ever need, nor even as the best available. The three theories are prominent approaches in my community of discourse that invite investigation. Similarly, the material, a transcript of dialogue, to which I apply the interpretive tools, is not specifically designed to represent conflict. Rather, a conversation on the subject of career was the intended purpose when the conversation was recorded. While conflict seems to have been an important dimension of this career related conversation, the conflict might be classified as an unintended byproduct – one which the original researchers neither encourages nor censored. The conflict in this transcript is particular to this dyad, and thus may limit the range of features which the models can demonstrate. Therefore the theories cannot be fully evaluated on the basis of this particular application, as all aspects of the theory may not be fully represented.

3.6.2 Application Error

I would want to limit claims as to my skill in using the interpretive tools: my demonstration may not represent the best, or even the intended use of the tool. This application is the result of my reading combined with autodidactic exploration. Although I base my efforts on published guidelines, my selection of these guidelines is partial, reflecting a personal understanding. By soliciting comment on the application of each theory from counselors recognized for their work with the theory in question, I sought to prevent inadvertent departures from generally recognized premises of the theory. In this regard, I note that the structural reading is not SASB compliant in that I work with a transcript, but SASB requires a video recording as well. Nor can my intervention be IRT

compliant, in that I have no detailed family histories. In general the logic of reading for conflict (of revealing it within a text), is contrary to Benjamin's approach which is strictly limited to descriptive statements. This application of structural analysis is more inferential than normal, since it posits an a priori conflict in the relationship to explain the text.

3.6.3 Limitations of the Interpretive Process

Much of the work of interpretation involves describing the concepts that make up the theory of conflict I am using. As I use the theory, I cite parts of the conversation to illustrate concepts the theory employs. Finally, I assemble the illustrations together and allow the theory to drop out - leaving only a story. The story, in the form of a portrayal of the conflict, will be the creation of an idea, cultivated through an interpretive process. My goal is to link the actors in the dialogue to the actors representing the theoretical ideas. In taking on this challenge, I feel both enthusiasm for understanding and perhaps helping this couple, and a desire to demonstrate the power and elegance of the analytic strategies. However, I encounter limits in the power of both observation and interpretation. Thus, in the question "How do people understand conflict?" there are two distinct kinds of 'people'. Participants and interpreters are involved; and there are factors that limit my ability to understand both.

3.6.4 Observational Restrictions

Central to observation are the 'people' who came into the record I study. How did these individuals understand their conflict in the moment they were recorded? Although I can wonder and suppose what this was, I am limited in knowing their experience. Not

only is it impossible to faithfully represent private experience in the public domain, but in this case even a facsimile, such as asking participants to share their experience, is also impossible. I did not attend when the dyad was recorded, nor was I present at the time the transcript was made. As a secondary analysis of the text, I have no context with which to relate preceding events that influenced the actors. Their representation of all the issues over which they conflict is limited to the boundaries of the interview, and much must have been left out as the interview was recorded.

This transcript stands on its own, permanently severed from its creators. The original researchers conformed to ethical constraints and did not preserve the authorship of the participants, in order to protect confidentiality. Thus, there can be no member check to ensure that my interpretation meets with the approval of the actors. However, I can look for how the text resists interpretation, and mentally prepare a place for the actor's protest. Fortunately, the record includes a self-confrontation component, which provides some direction on how the actors wish their social representation to be interpreted.

3.6.5 Interpretive Reliability

Central to the interpretation, we have the ideas on which the interpretation is based. These are the 'people' whose understanding of conflict is part of a general theory about human relations. Even though there is a wealth of information describing these ideas, the fidelity of my representation and the economy of my selection introduce limits. The ideas themselves are represented variously; while some have a single well-defined spokesperson, others are best represented through groups of thinkers. Although I invited comment, the representatives of these ideas are not expected to provide a member check

on my selection of the concepts used to represent 'their' ideas. However, by describing my selection, I create a means for the reader to assess how comprehensively each model represents the theory.

3.6.6 Summary of Limitations

These limitations of representation and interpretation can combine. For the people whose theories of conflict I use, my interpretation is limited by my understanding of the idea. For the people in the conflict, my attention to the specific details instantiating conflict is limited by my perception of their relevance to the concepts on which the theory is based. The type of conflict the dyad experienced only account for a fraction of the kinds of conflict possible. The transcript representation accounts for a fraction of the conflict in the relationship. These reductions compound when an interpretation uses a general theory to account for a specific instance. Together, these factors combine to introduce interpretive distortion.

3.7 *Compensation*

Even if an interpretation of a transcript cannot be expected to fully represent conflict, I believe it serves as a practical exercise to demonstrate these theories of conflict. Interpretive distortion seems analogous to the quality of pigment; absorbing some frequencies of white light, and reflecting the rest as a range of color. It might be helpful to extend this idea to the metaphor of a colored lens filter: The theory is like the color component of the lens. My observation is like the clear glass substrate of the lens - yet scratched or unpolished to some degree. The lives of the people in the transcript are like a brief sample of full spectrum light entering the lens. Alternately, one might imagine

the transcript like figures sculpted in stone, while the theories act like colored spotlights, allowing viewers to grasp more detail, but also changing the art by casting a mood.

It have suggested that interpretive distortion suffers from selection bias, allowing one to see some features, but ignoring others. Although interpretive inquiry does not attempt to prove the cause of conflict, and therefore does not claim to eliminate selection bias, the combination of diverse theories has a curious side-effect. The use of three different theoretical approaches helps to control the selection bias related to any single theory.

3.8 *Looking Ahead*

We turn now to the interpretive act itself, beginning with an orientation to the theories and describing concepts with which to interpret. From this launch, three following chapters analyze the conflict using different methods and unique representations appropriate to that specific theory of conflict. At the head of each interpretation I lay out a procedure to implement the theory, and then document the analysis. In a final chapter, I draw out essential features of each analysis, and compare the accounts and my experience in creating them.

4 Conflict Theory

Having introduced conflict as a general subject, I now turn to the three specific theories, beginning with some overarching observations that provide a context for the detailed descriptions which follow. Although each idea emerged from a complex social and historical context, I think it is helpful to begin by describing each theory in broad strokes, in spite of the reduction this involves. At a general and abstract level, the three approaches differ in terms of focus: structure, system, and process. In the case of the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB), Benjamin (2003) seeks to reveal the structure underlying an individual's attempts to meet security needs. In the case of Pearce & Littlejohn's (1997) Systemic Communications model, this approach looks at how people speak as they pursue a path of the possible, defined in terms of the values they hold. The process oriented approach (Mindell, 2000) looks at how complex awareness manifests in the experience of conflict. Action Theory provides a framework with which to compare all three. We now consider some concepts representing each theory.

4.1 Introduction

In this section I introduce some key ideas on which each theory is based. A more detailed review with some historical context will be found later in this chapter.

4.1.1 Structural

Structural approaches are represented in psychoanalysis. In this case I am using a conception of interpersonal relations represented and developed by Lorna Benjamin (1996; 2000; 2003). Her work sought to operationalize object relations, for which she developed measures of interpersonal relationship in the Structural Analysis of Social

Behavior (SASB). The structural approach offers an analysis of personality to account for how conflict forms. It posits that personality is influenced through general learning as a child. If a child experiences deformations of love in relation to the primary care giver(s), then these deformations can subsequently be chosen to secure love in the future. The patterns with which an individual seeks affiliation form the basis for descriptions of the structure of personality. An adult can change personality by recognizing these patterns and learning how to form moderately loving relationships with healthy boundaries. Therapy involves developing awareness of the malformed patterns, and developing the expression of more congruent, mutual, direct, and context sensitive expressions of love.

4.1.2 Systemic

A particular variant of systems oriented approaches is represented in mediation (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2001). Pearce and Littlejohn (1997) present a communications model of conflict, using linguistic patterns of discourse to identify stages of conflict. This systems approach offers individuals a way to develop cognitive and behavioral awareness derived from the rhetorical means the parties employ in conflict. By helping a person see what they are doing (in terms of speech and movement), a client can gain access the beliefs, moods, and values that drive their behavior. Conflict is conceived as expressive of a relationship between incommensurate values. By introducing conceptual alternatives in the form of transcendent values for which there are shared goals, a person may be able to identify options for behavior with outcomes that are preferable in comparison to conflict. Although this communications theory shares many similarities with family systems theory, it is distinguished by its behavioral focus on rhetorical status, and by a focus beyond families to groups in general.

4.1.3 Process

From the process-oriented perspective, I am employing Arnold Mindell's conception of conflict, developed in the context of personal therapy and organizational development (1987; 1990; 1993; 1995; 2000). The process approach seeks to understand conflict as a source of learning about undiscovered personal resources. Processwork posits that awareness is constantly being modulated as we direct attention to preferred processes and away from aversive or disavowed processes - but disavowed processes don't go away. Process theory predicts that as long as a person doesn't integrate an inner message, they will dream about it. Dreaming takes a variety of forms: there is the typical form during sleep, but dreaming also happens through the body in forms such as disease, through social involvements and relationship. Conflict, disease, and aversion are all seen as examples of the dreaming process. If the therapist can help a person hear and understand the dreaming message, then with that person's interest and exploration, the message can surface into conscious awareness. When this is the case, congruence can emerge and conflict becomes unnecessary.

4.1.4 Action Theory

Action theory provides a structure with which to analyze the application of each theory of conflict. Each conception of conflict derives from a practical engagement with people who present conflict in a counseling context – yet the methods and results of each approach have widely different intent. Creating an analysis of conflict involves a series of steps, each of which requires observations for specific purposes. Describing the intent of each theory, the functional steps on which an analysis is based, and the specific details which become relevant to observe, each belong to a separate kind of activity. These

levels of analysis conform to conceptual categories derived from action theory. Its view of action in terms of the sequence and organization of steps provides a way to describe each theory as an interpretive action.

4.2 *Interpersonal Relations Theory*

There is a broad background of influence in the development of interpersonal relations theory. Object relations theory (Sullivan, 1953) is premised on the idea that one's self-concept is based on perceptions of early social educational experience. Leary (1957) developed a method of analyzing motives underlying interpersonal relations, with the functional goal of personality evaluation. Benjamin (1996) refined this analysis in the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior, and developed Interpersonal Reconstructive Therapy (2003) that sought to bring awareness of these patterns into therapy. Psychoanalysts have employed these premises in the development of Operational Psychodynamic Diagnosis (OPD, 2000). I hope to briefly trace this history as an introduction to this theory.

4.2.1 The Interpersonal Circumplex

Leary (1957) describes Freud's conception of the psyche as following a fourfold classification, in which the individual is motivated by love and hate, and social interaction is organized in terms of strong versus weak. Leary offered a formal model, called the interpersonal circumplex, in which varying degrees of these fundamental influences were to account for the range of interpersonal relationships he observed. Two polar dimensions (hostile-friendly, strong-weak) were oriented perpendicularly

(horizontal and vertical respectively) to create a matrix that Leary refers to as interpersonal space (1957, p. 67).

Leary (1957) remarks that this system shows similarities with the classical humors theory of Hippocrates:

The upper left quadrant (hostile strength) equates with the choleric temperament, the lower left (hostile weakness) with the melancholic, the lower right (friendly weakness) with the phlegmatic, and the upper right (friendly strength) with the sanguine. (p. 71)

Leary assembled a list of several hundred terms describing interpersonal behavior, and sorted these according to motive. The terms were also organized within three categories representing a mechanism of interaction. Initially there is 1) an adaptive reflex, which 2) pulls for or provokes a response in others. Finally there are 3) extreme and rigid (maladaptive) expressions of the reflex. Leary gives the example of the adaptive reflex to manage, which pulls for obedience, and in extreme form is domination. In Table 4-1, I summarize the mechanisms Leary proposes as one travels around the nodes of the interpersonal circumplex. The terms in this table include behaviors (ask for help), as well as cognition (skepticism), and affect (shy). This combination of three experiential domains was an aspect that later developers would choose to separate (Benjamin, 1996).

Table 4-1 Leary's Interpersonal Circumplex

Adaptive behavior	Provokes	Extreme form	Node
Manage	Obedience	Domination	Power
Independent action	Inferiority	Boastful exhibitionism	
Competitive	Distrust	Exploit	
Firm action	Passive resistance	Punitive, sarcastic	
Forthright critical	Hostility	Attack	Hate
Justified rebellion	Punishment	Bitter rebellion, complaint	
Wariness, skepticism	Rejection	Act suspicious	
Shy, sensitive, modest	Arrogance	Anxious self effacement	
Obey duty	Leadership	Spineless submission	Weak
Respectfully conform	Advice	Docile conformity	
Ask for help	Help	Cling dependently	
Cooperate	Tenderness	Over-conventional	
Affectionate	Love	Effusive, seeking friendliness	Love
Support	Acceptance	Pity, dote, soft-hearted	
Offer help	Trust	Compulsive responsibility	
Advise, teach	Respect	Pedantic, dogmatic	Power

Leary employed the circumplex to map interpersonal space according to contributions of love and dominance that vary in a sinusoidal manner (90 degrees out of phase with each other) as one travels around the circle. Leary employed this in a clinical context, by categorizing a series of a patient's behavioral events according to their position on the interpersonal circumplex, resulting in measures of the statistical frequency of various combinations of love and dominance. A single vector was then calculated to represent the mean, central tendency, or center of gravity of the circumplex.

Leary (1957) described the functional value of the circumplex description of interpersonal behavior "in terms of the predictive value for facilitating the future clinical relationship" (p. 55). Leary is specific about the domain for which the interpersonal circumplex was developed, limiting it

to the task of understanding and predicting the subject's interpersonal behavior in one specific environmental context – his relationship to a psychiatric clinic (p. 6).

4.2.2 The Structural Analysis of Social Behavior

Lorna Benjamin (1996) developed a model of interpersonal relations called the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB). This model acknowledges an intellectual heritage leading back to object relations and Leary's interpersonal circumplex. However, it sought to develop a more rigorously operationalized and behaviorally specified format. The SASB codifies relationship in terms of the subject's experience of two primitive and basic relationship dimensions: affiliation and interdependence (Benjamin, 2003). The horizontal axis of affiliation is defined as love/hate or friendliness/hostility, while the vertical axis of interdependence refers to enmeshment/differentiation, submission/autonomy, or freedom/control. These dimensions organize a two-dimensional matrix called a surface, which can be subdivided at a level of detail most useful for analysis. Conflict occurs on the left side, while peace qualifies the right half.

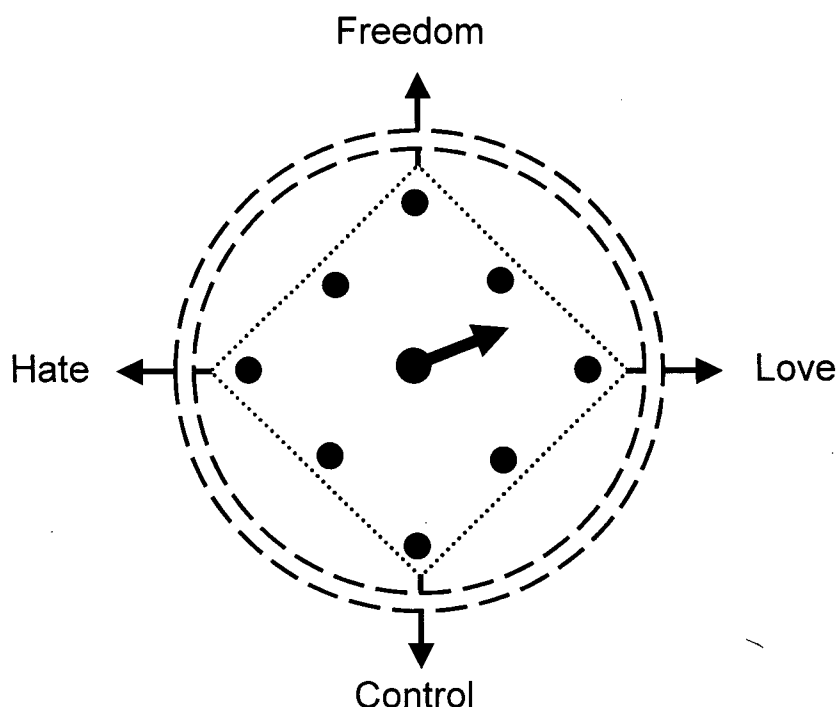


Figure 4-1 **Circumplex of the Primitive Basics**

In Figure 4-1, the simplest surface is the quadrant model (4 nodes, the primitive basics, represented by the quadrant arrows), which is subdivided to create the cluster model (8 nodes, represented by dots on the diamond shape), or divided in 9 gradations per quadrant in the full model (36 nodes, represented by the circle). A vector within the circumplex, represented by the center arrow, indicates a particular ratio of the primitives. The circumplex surface is used to describe relationship in three fundamental contexts: self to other, other to self, and self to self (see Table 4-2). A word or phrase that describes the relationship and behavior is associated with each node. Although Benjamin (1996) initially oriented the SASB to observable behavior, later development (Benjamin, 2003) introduced corresponding cognitive (SACB) and affective (SAAB) models.

Table 4-2 SASB Full Circumplex

Self to Other	Other to Self	Self to Self
Tender sexuality	Ecstatic response	Love, cherish self
Friendly invite	Follow, maintain contact	Seek best for self
Provide for, nurture	Accept caretaking	Nurture, restore self
Protect, back up	Ask, trust, count on	Protect self
Sensible analysis	Accept reason	Examine, analyze self
Constructively stimulate	Take in, learn from	Practice, become accomplished
Pamper, overindulge	Cling, depend on	Pamper, indulge self
Benevolently monitor, remind	Defer, overconform	Benevolent eye on self
Specify what's best	Submerge into role	Force ideal identity
Manage, control	Yield, submit, give in	Control, manage self
Enforce conformity	Follow rules, proper	Force propriety
Intrude, block, restrict	Apathetic compliance	Restrain, hold back self
Put down, act superior	Sulk, act put upon	Doubt, put down self
Accuse, blame	Appease, scurry	Guilt, blame, bad self
Delude, divert, mislead	Uncomprehendingly agree	Deceive, divert self
Punish, take revenge	Whine, defend, justify	Vengefully punish self
Rip off, drain	Sacrifice greatly	Drain, overburden self
Approach menacingly	Wary, fearful	Menace to self
Annihilating attack	Desperate protest	Torture, annihilate self
Angrily dismiss, reject	Flee, escape, withdraw	Reject, dismiss self
Starve, cut out	Refuse assistance, care	Ignore own basic needs
Abandon, leave in lurch	Detach, weep alone	Reckless
Illogical initiation	Noncontingent reaction	Undefined, unknown self
Neglect interests, needs	Wall off, nondisclose	Neglect own potential
Ignore, pretend not there	Busy with own thing	Fantasy, dream
Forget	Defy, do opposite	Neglect options
Uncaringly let go	Go own separate way	Drift with the moment
Endorse freedom	Freely come and go	Happy-go-lucky
Encourage separate identity	Own identity, standards	Let nature unfold
You can do it fine	Assert on own	Let self do it, confident
Carefully, fairly consider	Put cards on the table	Balanced, self acceptance
Friendly listen	Openly disclose, reveal	Explore, listen to inner self
Show empathy, understand	Clearly express	Integrated, solid core
Confirm as OK as is	Enthusiastic showing	Protect self
Stroke, soothe, calm	Relax, flow, enjoy	Stroke, soothe self
Warmly welcome	Joyful approach	Entertain, enjoy self

Benjamin (2003) used the SASB codes in interpersonal reconstructive therapy (IRT) to describe the client's past, present and expected relationship with caregivers. Caregivers are given the more general term "important persons and their internal representations" (IPIR). IRT is built on the premise that people relate to the world on the basis of three copy processes that occur in relation to IPIRs. A person may 1) act like the IPIR, 2) react to the IPIR, and/or 3) treat him or herself as the IPIR did. This learning is expressed in patterns which the therapist identifies using structural analysis codes. If these patterns are destructive, the therapist works to help the client recognize the pattern, to understand the attachment needs they serve, to develop the will to change, and to cultivate behavior leading toward healthy, moderate, context sensitive relationships.

Benjamin and Pugh (2001) identified four links in the behavior dynamics between individuals and their IPIRs: introjection, complementarity, opposition, and antithesis. Introjection represents the transitive state 'self to self', in which an individual treats him or her self just as the IPIR did. For example, if the IPIR treated an individual in a controlling manner, the individual could in turn develop a self-controlling style. Complementarity involves two codes at the same angle on the circumplex, with opposite transitive states (self to other, and other to self). This corresponds to active and passive relations, such as the IPIR's control eliciting the individual's submit response. Opposition involves the same transitive state and the opposite angular position on the circumplex. Imagine for example, a parent refusing to limit or discipline a child (endorse freedom) as a response to the controlling style of the parent's parent (or the child's grandparent). The final link, antithesis combines the opposite angle on the circumplex with the opposite transitive state. An example of this type of response to a controlling parent, would be the

separated style of a person who persistently chooses freedom from commitment to protect against the expectation of control.

Benjamin (1996) employs metaphors from the field of music to describe applying the SASB to client interactions. Like the musical notes (do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do), which form chords with each other, the SASB identifies basic codes for relationship dynamics, and portrays interpersonal response patterns as harmonics. The process of therapy (or in this case, of reading relationship) involves identifying interpersonal dynamics as basic notes and chords, and then assembling the series of notes as a kind of interpersonal music. Benjamin then identified particular SASB phrases, like the melodies of music, to identify personality styles. Identifying these repeating patterns would allow the therapist to anticipate the client's presentation, and thereby "implement the next intervention skillfully and correctly" (p. 27).

While Benjamin (1996) was primarily focused on identifying the repetitive interpersonal dynamics associated with personality disorders, she saw this as just one application of the SASB. The model could also be used to analyze the therapist's relations, relations among group members, as well as everyday encounters. In addition to the directional component of the circumplex, there is an intensity component, which serves to distinguish the 'normal' flexible and moderate expression of interpersonal dynamics that are responsive to context, from 'pathological' forms which are viewed as narrow, rigid, intense and performed without regard for context.

Although I have not yet found examples of Benjamin's writing which explicitly describes a model of conflict, the SASB does provide a context with which to analyze the general case of interpersonal relations, which includes conflict. For example, in a

discussion of anger, Benjamin advises that it “be interpreted in terms of whether it is in service of wishes for control or for distance” (p. 89). Thus, within this framework, emotions associated with conflict such as anger, are approached as a symptom of a problem with enmeshment and individuation. In this manner, the SASB model articulates underlying factors associated with conflict, and identifies their manifestation in forms such as rebelling, ignoring, attacking, blaming, and controlling.

For Benjamin (2003) conflict is fundamental to the intrapsychic and interpersonal relationship between pathological and normative styles of relating. Using allegory, she refers to therapy as a conflict between the Red and the Green. The Red, or the Regressive Loyalist, refers to problem behavior stemming from the wish to regain the love of important caregivers by showing loyalty to their perceived rules and values, in spite of the suffering that results. The Green, or the growth collaborator, refers to normative behavior that generates rewards for the person as they engage in realistic and healthy interactions. The therapist aligns with the green against the red, and solicits the client’s engagement in discovering red patterns, extinguishing the doomed hopes that motivate them, and replacing them with green behavior. For Benjamin, social conflict is seen as one of the many symptoms expressive of an intrapsychic conflict motivated by the pursuit of love.

4.2.3 Operational Psychodynamic Diagnosis

Many of the ideas represented by Benjamin appear in the collective work of a group of European psychoanalysts. The operational psychodynamic diagnosis working group (OPD Working Group, 2001) met in response to the need to develop “definitions and systematic guidelines for diagnosing conflicts and formulating them in

psychodynamic terms” (p 35). In their work to operationalize mental health diagnosis, conflict and interpersonal relations assume primary roles in the description of a case. A case diagnosis involves descriptions along four axes: 1) the experience of illness and prerequisites for treatment, 2) Interpersonal relations, 3) Conflicts, 4) Structure, and 5) Mental and Psychosomatic Disorders (using ICD-10 categories).

The interpersonal relations section of a diagnosis draws significantly from the SASB. However, they have made the following modifications: Expanding the SASB cluster model, they identify 15 points. They restrict their analysis to dysfunctional relationships, and so have removed love from this list of descriptors. The “basic modes [represented in the SASB] are refined by means of spectra of clinically relevant shades” (OPD Working Group, 2001, p. 83). Thus more items populate the hostile side of the circumplex than the friendly side, by a ratio of 2 to 1. They also use only two of Benjamin’s three surfaces (dropping the introjective plane), referring to the effect of self on others as active, and the effect of others on self as reactive.

The conflicts section of a diagnosis is drawn from a codified set of nine basic types of long-term conflict occurring in active or passive modes. Table 4-3 summarizes the key features of an exhaustive array of conflict types, highlighting the wide range of situations in which conflict can appear. It provides a useful set of guidelines with which to recognize and categorize conflict. The OPD handbook provides an example of the therapeutic practice of reading for conflict and shows an alternative implementation of the interpersonal dynamics revealed in the SASB.

Table 4-3 OPD Conflict Summary

Conflict Category	Passive	Active
Dependence versus Autonomy: Characterized by fear of nearness or distance.	Subordinating one's own needs to avoid endangering the relationship. Often trivializing or denying conflict, which might otherwise threaten a relationship	Exaggerated emotional and existential independence, suppressing one's own needs for supports and bonds. Self reliance is the ideal, expressed through financial independence or detachment.
Submission versus Control: Characterized by the relationship with internalized behavioral norms.	Subordinating oneself, acting as duty and orders prescribe, but resisting through forgetfulness or dawdling. Difficulty saying "no" or maintaining own views against those of reference persons. Conventional and formal.	Constant rebellion against duties, obligations and control, which are experienced as interference with one's rights. Self-willed, stubborn, radically terminating those relationships which threaten to impose.
Desire for care versus autarchy: Characterized by threats to security needs.	Relationships providing care are made impossible to interrupt (by financial tangles and obligations) resulting in a torturing tightness. Things and people are possessed to secure care, but are never enough. The partner's fantasies of separation set off depression and feelings of inadequacy, leading to clinging and control.	The appearance of ascetic abstinence or denial of security needs serves to induce prospective compensation. Often seeking positions where their service is irreplaceable, in the expectation of exclusive protection or permanent goodwill.
Self-value conflicts: Narcissistic Conflicts, Self-value versus Object-value.	A critical collapse of self-value, characterized by shame. Relationships serve to humiliate, and in response to a perceived lack of respect, compensation is sought, often in vain.	Overcompensation for feared crisis in self worth, takes the form of self assuredness, belying insecurity. Quick to take offence. Excessive regulation of uncertainty in arrogance, use of money and possessions as fetish symbols of prosperity (often in imagination rather than fact).
Guilt conflicts: Egoistic versus Altruistic Tendency.	Exaggerated shouldering of guilt, reproaching self, and rejecting excuses when offered. Takes intense form in masochism, where guilt is balanced by self-inflicted or	Repression or denial of guilt by the shifting of responsibility onto others. Self serving behavior is often felt to be justified; privileges and ruling roles are assumed without reflection. Faults of others

	accepted punishment.	are collected and mentioned to make others feel guilty.
Oedipal-sexual conflicts.	Marked repression of sexuality from perception, cognition, and feeling – resulting in the impression of childlike innocence. Avoidance of rivalry.	Forced importance of sex into all areas of life, while inhibiting one's own sexual relations and scope for satisfaction. Frequent insinuation, obscenity, boasting.
Identity conflicts: Identity versus Dissonance.	Chronic or recurrent lack of identity, and avoidance of those with clear and admired qualities, beside whom the discrepancy is too hard to bear. Lack of constancy in roles, often appearing self-contradictory.	Active concealment of insecurity and identity. Assuming roles, group membership, possessions, and fictional history as a way to compensate for and avoid dissonances with their own defective identity.
Limited perception of conflicts and feelings.	Lack of awareness of conflict within oneself or others. Failure to describe emotions, reporting difficult life experiences as normal fact or hardly worth comment. Characterized by an ultimately and uniformly positive basic mood.	Suppression of awareness of their own or others feelings, keeping conflict out. Conflict is stripped of emotion and interpreted in rational, logical, or technical terms, appearing to depend upon external causes and neutral laws.
External Conflict	Passive coping in the form of retreat of self, adaptation and resignation.	Coping with conflict and compensation is directed toward the object. Active mastery of conditions.

4.3 Systemic Communications Theory

An analysis of conflict from a communications perspective is presented as the collision of social worlds (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2001; Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997). This model identifies the rhetorical patterns emerging from the meeting of incommensurate moral views. These authors describe the negative relationships that develop in moral conflict, characterized by mutually devaluing, misinterpreting, and castigating the other. Conflict is recognized when communication enters a downward spiral of deepening

poverty in the quality of discourse (Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997). Their analysis looks at conflict as a pattern of response to difference.

4.3.1 Relations to Difference

The model of systemic communications employs the metaphor of a ladder to describe conflict. A series of four levels characterizes this model (see figure 4-2), and at each level, the relationship to difference is characterized by the means of influence and the rhetorical forms associated with it. A graded series of binary decisions marks the descent into increasing levels of conflict. At each level a more restricted range of rhetorical forms are available, resulting in a gradual impoverishment of the quality of discourse.

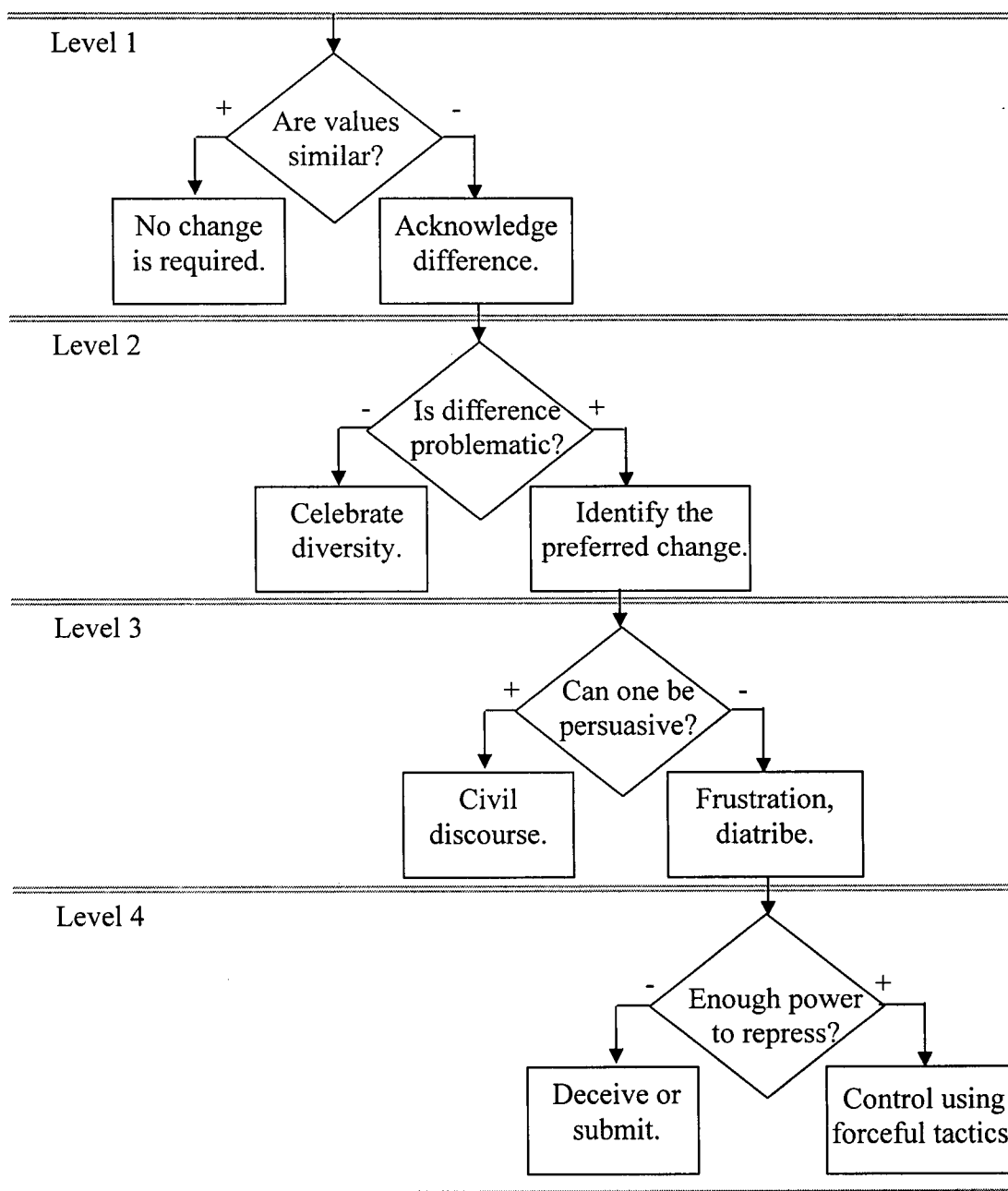


Figure 4-2 Levels of Systemic Communication in Conflict.

At the first level, the speaker attends to the question of whether difference exists. No difference implies similarity, allowing the parties to continue in a parallel fashion along lines of agreement. Rhetorical forms of question and answer, communicating the details of shared activity, sharing thoughts, and mutually supportive expressions of

shared values are examples of communication at this level. If amidst this often casual conversation some difference is discovered, it is simply acknowledged and the parties must then assess whether the difference matters at all.

At the second level, the parties come to terms with how the difference might impact their relationship. Some effects are trivial and these are quickly forgotten. Some differences have a significant effect, serving to identify features that distinguish a person's individuality. However, if a difference presents no threat to the values of the other person, then there is no need for the difference to matter. If it doesn't matter, then difference can be recognized and even celebrated as an aspect of diversity. Difference that doesn't matter can be highlighted with pleasure, often serving as a source of lighthearted humor, and reinforcing the sense of a person's unique identity. If it does matter, then difference becomes problematic, and one is likely to express displeasure, encounter misunderstanding, or otherwise be faced with the need to adjust or defend one's values. The emergence of a conscious intention to influence the other marks the existence of a difference that matters, and one passes to the third level.

At the third level, the selection of rhetorical forms depends upon one's effectiveness in influencing the other's values. If one can be persuasive, then forms such as argument, debate, reasoning, and inducement are invoked. These forms imply respect for the other's autonomous rights, and are observant of guidelines for civility. However, in the event that one's arguments are unpersuasive, frustration typically results. For many this leads to degradation in the relationship, as respect for the other's authority, autonomy, and identity are diminished. The variety of rhetorical forms associated with persuasion is no longer available, leaving the speaker with a relatively restricted set of

tools. Shaming, nagging, negative criticism, and attempts to coerce with words are the poor substitutes brought in when persuasion has failed. The rhetorical form of diatribe is employed at this stage, with devices such as name-calling, aspersion, ridicule, and hate. At this stage, the importance of the value difference is fed by beliefs that one's psychological or physical security is seriously threatened. As this realization descends, one stands upon the threshold of a 'you or me' decision, with its threat of force, and the potential for violence.

The fourth and final stage of conflict is now entered, at which point it becomes a question of power. While power is often enacted through force, a great variety of coercive means may be employed, such as financial, social, or psychological pressure. If one person has the power to control the other, a struggle ensues in order to suppress the difference. For the one that lacks power in this struggle, some form of submission will be required, or else one continues to suffer. Although value change on the part of the weaker party is the intended outcome of the one with power, submission is usually the best that can be expected. Submission can be communicated through rhetorical forms such as apology, admission and self-criticism. If the weaker party retains their contrary values, but admits defeat in the moment, rhetorical forms such as deception, non-disclosure, deference, and flattery could be used. Such false overt displays of submission might then be accompanied by anonymous or suicidal acts of aggression. Extending further, violence is used as a form of coercion, leading into torture. This communications based description of conflict does not extend to this stage, as it is no longer mediated through speech.

In summary, a systemic communications approach to conflict looks for the rhetorical forms used to communicate one's relations to difference: similarity, acknowledgement, celebration, problematisation, persuasion, diatribe, dominance, and submission are key forms. In describing conflict, one looks for the value upon which the difference is recognized, the degree to which it matters, and the means of influence or coercion. As communication descends into conflict, the range of rhetorical forms is narrowed, and this contributes to the increasingly difficulty of restoring peaceful or constructive relations.

4.3.2 Mediation

If the parties to a conflict present themselves within a context of mediation, conflict resolution, reconciliation and so on, then an attempt is made to reverse the process. After first identifying the values upon which difference is recognized, one seeks to discover transcendental values which permit an expansion of each party's world view. Attention is given to helping each side increase the range of rhetorical forms used in the discourse, and new forms such as face-saving are introduced (Littlejohn & Domenici, 2001). When these two forms of expansion occur, it becomes increasingly possible for each party to include critical elements of the other's value system. The conflict moves to resolution when the perceived value difference no longer matters.

Within this framework, conflict resolution involves the discovery of transcendent values that both parties share. For example, Pearce and Littlejohn (1997) relate the moral arguments in a child custody conflict where the mother holds to the sanctity of the mother-child relationship, while the father holds that he must take responsibility as the mother has shown herself as unfit to parent. In such a case, a mediator might appeal to a

transcendent value, the best interests of the child, as a way to help the conflicting parties discover grounds for cooperation (p. 164). This approach to conflict resolution privileges the creation of transcendent discourse as a means of rising out of the normal discourse in which an individual's framework cannot account for perceived difference.

This communications model has many similarities with the psychological description of awareness described by Lewin (1936). Lewin's "whole situation" consists of a life space topologically composed of a person and their environment. Lewin posits that at every life space, certain behaviors appear possible and others impossible. These polarities shift as one transitions through life. These binary points create a field in the life space, making some activities easy and others hard. The function of connecting psychological points in a manner that does not intersect the boundaries of the impossible, results in the connection of spaces and the topological formation of a path (p. 54). What Lewin might describe as topological islands, Pearce and Littlejohn describe as social worlds. In both cases, the metaphor of territory is used to describe differing qualities within wholes of experience.

4.4 *Process Theory*

Mindell is the founder of the school of process oriented psychology. He studied physics at MIT, and then became a Jungian analyst. He considers Process Oriented Psychology distinct from Jung's analytic psychology, although many similarities can be found.

4.4.1 Field

According to Mindell (1993; 1995), a process oriented facilitator works with the field as the client. In order to introduce Process work concepts, it is necessary to build an understanding of what the field is. A field is an organized arrangement of force operating on a group, individual or space. In physics for example, a magnetic field can exert force on space. We recognize this invisible field, by the effect it has in bringing the initially random arrangement of charge in matter, into alignment with the lines of force in the field. In psychology, a field is a transpersonal structure exerting force on thought.

For Mindell, a psychological field, like a magnetic field, exerts force to organize people in its midst. We recognize a psychological field by its effect on the beliefs people hold, and the capacity of shared beliefs to bring people into alignment with each other. Mindell conceives the field as the primary organizing force, and within it, people are positioned by their identification with groups that share beliefs.

The effect of a field may be temporary, but when it is active, people who share common beliefs experience a kind of identity with each other. Groups of people in a field identify themselves as *involved* in some way: as students and teachers in the process of education, or ruled and rulers in the process of government, for example. Although individuals in such groups might otherwise have found each other very different, the force of the field aligns them. In cases where people share alignment with each other, their shared beliefs can have a unifying effect. In cases where people are aligned with opposite poles in a field, their beliefs have a divisive effect. Similarly, a field can organize a dyad, and their opposing beliefs can organize and structure their interaction.

4.4.2 Polarity

Although we can see a field as a unity from outside field space, the experience within the field more closely resembles a polarity. Field forces commit one to being for one idea and against another. For those committed to one side of the field, it seems inexplicable or wrong that there is a counterbalancing group committed to the other side. To understand how an idea can be good to some and bad to others, it is helpful to recall the optical phenomena of reflection.

In physics, after reflection a polarity is reversed. Thus a right pointing arrow becomes left pointing after reflection. Similarly, a polarized idea is reflected in its polar opposite. Good ideas become bad ideas when transformed across a field by reflection. Because polarization creates two reflections of an idea, one particular thing can have different, opposing meanings for people whose awareness is drawn to opposite poles of the field. The opposition between these two sides at the site of conflict is a function of the field strength.

Looking at the beliefs on both sides helps the viewer perceive the field as a whole. This involves moving perspective from that of the pole, to the field. From the field perspective, common themes emerge in the issues that are important to both sides, and these are called field lines. Field lines are ideas, issues or themes that concentrate the polarizing effect of the field. Orientation with respect to polarity serves to constitute the field; and themes which polarize easily serve to concentrate force in field lines. Each issue serves to construct a line of force, and the whole set of issues collectively constitute the field.

4.4.3 Anthropos

While beliefs appear to provide structure to the field, emotion and dream also connect a person to the field. Mindell conceives of fields as dreamlike processes, as masses of unconscious abilities, which, through conscious appreciation and intervention, are brought into awareness. Mindell (1993) points out that the field has human-like characteristics: it appears to dream, has concerns, and evolves the terms of its thought. In Greek times, the image of a human-like influence structuring people's awareness was referred to as an Anthropos. Mindell (1993) reminds us how in other cultures, fields have been conceived as having human characteristics. Consider for example, the early Christian Anima Mundi, conceived as an architectural intelligence behind the world. Or the Hindu form of Shiva, continuously pursuing the creation and destruction of the world through the thoughts and feelings of sentient beings. This transpersonal organizing structure is conceived as possessing a rudimentary intelligence and evolving over long spans of time.

Mindell points out that fields evolve over time as people process their awareness in the field. Over the course of history, fields have formed around concepts such as freedom and governance, charging polarized groups brought into its sway, and gradually changing as the concepts constituting the field evolve. In this analysis, career constitutes such a field, and as each person temporarily claims a set of beliefs or feelings related to it, aspects of the career concept are given awareness in the field. Consider for example, the evolution of the field concept of 'work' from the serf of medieval times to the wage laborer of the present. Concepts such as wage, sick time, vacation time, and worker's rights have evolved within the field.

Within Mindell's theory of group or interpersonal conflict, the field is the unit of analysis, and it is through conflict that the field becomes aware of itself. The polar alignment of associative thoughts plays out between individuals through conflict, but it can also be found within an individual. This transpersonal view stands in contrast with the psychological approach that says an individual's moods and different needs create conflict.

4.4.4 Edge

Within an individual, one can strongly identify with a particular trait or frame of mind, while marginalized awareness of an opposing quality plays out in unconscious or incongruent behavior. Mindell (1987) contends that people hold some experience out of consciousness, and in so doing experience an edge. The term edge communicates the way one identifies with one side, but feels one has no basis or is without support on the other side, beyond the edge.

Personal identification with the conscious process identifies it as primary, and distinction or contrast ('it is unlike me') allows the therapist to identify the other process as secondary. Process work identifies these primary and secondary processes as occurring in channels: within the world, relationships, and the self, as movement, audition, visualization, and sensation (Goodbread, 1987; Mindell, 1990).

The edge serves an essential function in distinguishing the tolerated from the intolerable. Secondary personal qualities that one prefers not to identify with are situated beyond one's edge. Edge activity is marked by efforts to deny or suppress the secondary. These qualities can be projected onto others, where the traits can be admired or despised. Emotional experience around the edge is varied, but could include avoidance, anger,

suspicion, hatred, and so on. Feelings of disgust, disbelief, disregard, disrepute, and so on can be used to introduce psychological distance between everyday primary awareness and the intrusive awareness of the secondary process. With repetition the edge can become easily recognized, reified and ritualized. Then some types of people, places of living, kinds of conversation, and so on, act to cue the person to the presence of an edge.

Characteristic of the edge is an aversive quality that polarizes the individual such that the edge appears to exert a repulsive force in a charged field. Even if one decides to investigate what lies beyond the edge, one requires increasing energy and concentration, as though surmounting a magnetic force of repulsion as one approaches an edge.

Alternately people take large amounts of time to approach edges, such as one finds in the mid life crisis, when fundamental reorientations take place, or in the long time periods associated with resolving chronic conflict. Such a process also accompanies personal growth, as one gradually integrates qualities one could not previously identify with.

4.4.5 Incongruence

When one is up against an edge, conflict seems to occur within the self, because a person identifies with one process, but also partly acts upon another unconscious process. Mindell describes such a situation as a double signal. The secondary part of the double signal is unwelcome, and as such its message is never completely delivered. Mindell (1987) notes that the incongruence between the primary and secondary processes in a double signal can cause others to misunderstand or feel irritated. Double signals can provoke conflict as others sense buried messages, which the author then angrily rebuffs.

Mindell (1987) identified some typical doubles signals. In projection, the speaker might be unaware of their anger, yet complain about another's anger in an angry tone of

voice. In gossip, when the speaker focuses on qualities they resent in others, which they secretly desire, yet fear to possess themselves. In talking about qualities unwelcome in the present, by bringing them up from the past. In dreams and wishes: such as an interest in adventure when boredom has been accepted. In symptoms: such as a throbbing, demanding, 'lion' of a headache, when the person's opinions are being suppressed. In positions of the body: such as turning the trunk and legs to the side while the head maintains an appearance of interest in a conversation one finds boring. Or in mistakes: such as forgetting to do something one didn't want to do, or accidentally referring to something one's conscience would prefer to forget.

As a therapist, one cannot interpret double signals. They are inherently confusing, often fleetingly brief, and a person honestly may not know where they came from. The therapist may guess at the interpretation, but the client would typically disagree or resist. Rather, the therapist can bring awareness to it. Mindell suggests several means of working with double signals: Amplification, in which the secondary signal is enhanced to the point where the client becomes aware of its message. Forbidding, when the signal is censored, so that the impulse to make the signal can be recognized. Mirroring, when the therapist represents the double signal so the client can read it. And taking over, where the therapist takes on the role of the secondary, allowing the client to temporarily assume the primary and assess the therapist's role.

4.4.6 Complex Manifestation

Mindell (2000) uses mathematical operations as metaphors for psychological processes. The mathematical function of multiplication is a metaphor for manifestation. Intentional manifestation, when a person decides to do something and then consciously

proceeds to do it, is represented by the squaring operation. Similarly, when a line is multiplied by itself, it becomes a square, and begins to occupy area or manifest.

Mindell (2000) describes perception and behavior as having two components: A consensus reality interpretation that the actor shares with social interpreters, and a non-consensus subjective experience characterized by idiosyncratic personal meanings. Mindell combines these in the definition of process, which like the complex number from mathematics, combines real and imaginary components in a single complex number. From the social perspective, the consensus reality component of perception is referred to as the real, while the non-consensus reality components are referred to as the imaginary factor. Together they create the personal process or experience, from which observable behavior precipitates. Thus, process is a complex entity composed of real and imaginary components.

4.4.7 Complex Numbers

The complex mathematical number is represented in a two-part expression: $a + ib$. The 'a' part of a complex number refers to its magnitude along the dimension of real numbers, while the 'b' part is the real magnitude along the imaginary dimension. The imaginary dimension is referenced by 'i', a symbol for the square root of negative one. In ordinary mathematics only positive numbers can have square roots, but in complex math, imaginary numbers permit square roots of negative numbers too.

Using complex mathematics, a positive real number has several kinds of square root. Thus the square roots of 25 are ± 5 in ordinary math, but also $(4 \pm 3i)$ or $(3 \pm 4i)$ in complex terms¹.

The mathematical operation of multiplying two complex numbers with imaginary components of opposite sign is called conjugation. When the imaginary components of two complex numbers are of opposite sign, and they are multiplied together in conjugation, the imaginary components cancel out, resulting in a real number without imaginary components. For example $(3 + i4)$ multiplied by $(3 - i4)$ is $9 - 3i4 + 3i4 - i^2 16$. However, since i^2 equals -1 , and the imaginary factors cancel, the product becomes $9 + 16$, which is equal to 25.

Conjugation represents the way a process oriented analysis conceptualizes conflict. It is a metaphor for the interaction of two human processes, in which individuals share perception of a real component, but hold opposite interpretations in subjective terms. I would express this as a formula as follows:

$$N^2 = (N+i)(N-i)$$

Where N^2 is a conflict, the compound of perceiving a real (N) with personal associations (i) of opposite sign.

¹ The skeptical reader may inspect the following steps: $(4 + 3(\sqrt{-1})) * (4 - 3(\sqrt{-1}))$
 $= (4 * 4) + (4 * -3(\sqrt{-1})) + (3(\sqrt{-1}) * 4) + (3(\sqrt{-1}) * -3(\sqrt{-1}))$
 $= (16) + (-12(\sqrt{-1})) + (12(\sqrt{-1})) + (9 * (\sqrt{-1}) * (\sqrt{-1}))$
 $= (16) + (9 * 1)$
 $= 16 + 9$
 $= 25$

The appeal of this somewhat complicated metaphor is its similarity with the challenges that face the conflict resolution mediator. One can easily perceive the conflict (25), and from that deduce the apparent roots of the conflict (5). However, it is only by identifying the complex conjugative roots of the conflict ($3 + i4$) and ($3 - i4$) that the mediator can access the imaginary components in a conflict. In summary, conflict is described as a manifestation in which the conjugative roots are processes that share equal real components, and in which the imaginary components are of opposite sign.

When there are dual processes with imaginary components of opposite sign, we have the basis for conjugation in the form of a conflict. Mindell (2000) gives the example of conflict over a tree from the point of view of a logger and an environmentalist. The logger sees the tree with imaginary components that relate cutting down the tree to prosperity (his income depends on cutting down trees), while an environmentalist sees the tree with imaginary components in which cutting down the tree is related to the opposite of prosperity, to devastation and environmental loss. As the logger and environmentalist meet in conflict over the tree, we can identify roadblocks, protests, and tree spiking as real manifestations of conflict. Typically this kind of conflict is halted by issuing an injunction preventing protesters from interrupting the logging operation. Stopping protests by legal means is akin to solving the problem at the level of the real roots to the conflict. Such a solution does not however, address the imaginary roots to the conflict.

By including the imaginary components, the description of the conflict is enriched, as we begin to investigate the associations being made to logging. Mindell (2000) suggested that environmentalists associated the experience of logging with hurting

oneself, as though when identifying their own body with the land, logging was scarring and cutting one's body.

Although perhaps a temporary balance, this kind of conflict has been resolved to some degree with selective logging practices. These guidelines affirm environmental protection values, while recognizing the long-term economic value of sustainable forests. Under this resolution, mature trees are selectively harvested and replaced with seedlings, without burdening the ecosystem. Drawing on the imaginary factor of scarring, we need to recognize that even selective logging damages the forest's appearance. The question remains as to what degree we are willing to tolerate this.

4.4.8 Intervention

In a simple representation of pure conflict, two parties cannot agree about the same thing. They cannot agree because the associations they make to the thing are polarized and opposite. The polarization is energized by the field. When one person's experience of a thing (wealth, for example) is characterized by imaginary elements (awe, desire, happiness) which are opposed by the imaginary elements of another person (hoarding, desperation, unfairness) then the combination of the two results in conflict. A process oriented intervention in times of conflict is to bring out the associations each side is making and relate the polarization to the field. At the level of the field, it is sometimes possible to see how an opponent balances one's own one-sidedness.

Sometimes people recognize within themselves the reflection of their polarized thoughts, although perhaps in a marginalized or distorted form. If they are able to connect with the polarized other within themselves, then the unifying perspective of field

awareness begins to dawn. If a person can see this absented quality within themselves, then the opponent is no longer needed, and the experience of (outer) conflict fades away.

Goodbread (1987) emphasizes the need for an indirect approach in the initial stage of identifying the secondary or imaginary components. He characterizes the secondary as easily dismissed, overlooked, or denied by the primary process. Primary actions are conscious, allowing the person to report the thinking with which they identify. Secondary actions occur outside, against, and unknown to the primary. The secondary may be mute, silenced, invisible or hidden. Drawing attention to it directly from the primary will cause it to vanish. Then the client becomes heavy (in the therapist's experience) and the process is lost. Goodbread recommends an indirect approach when the therapist identifies a secondary process. For example, he suggest stopping an expression that manifests a secondary process, introducing another expression in the same channel, then asking the client to return to the secondary action and ask "What's different about the two?" The goal of the intervention is to bring awareness to the secondary as a step toward integrating the secondary. In general the therapist would help the client unfold the message of the secondary, allowing it to integrate consciously in the person's life.

Goodbread (1987) relates the role of internal conflict in personal change. He describes the polarity-like identification of a person entering therapy "with 'the one who wants to become himself' rather than 'the one who is preventing him becoming himself'" (p. 18). In response to the difficulty people have in bringing awareness to this disowned aspect of their experience, Goodbread notes the tendency to project self-defeating aspects of oneself onto others, the world, or one's sorry fate. When this kind of conflict is

processed, the therapist looks for opportunities to make these disowned processes accessible to the person's awareness.

4.4.9 Conflict Resolution

One way in which a person can remain in relationship with the unconscious and edged out material, is in the form of conflict with the person, system, group, or idea represented by it. A conflictive relationship seems to provide repeated opportunity to give attention to the secondary processes involved. Within therapy, interventions designed to bring awareness and appreciation to the secondary can help a person integrate the secondary within the primary. As the primary relates to the secondary with awareness, coherence is the result.

In describing some of the ramifications of Mindell's conceptualization, Summers (1995) reframes the typical view of conflict as a basis for separation, by describing how the tension of conflict effectively holds people together. She notes how:

Sitting in the tension of conflict can be a first step towards creating more authentic relationships and community life. In fact, the need for more authentic relationships is often a powerful, though unconscious, motivating force behind much conflict, irrespective of stated problems and final outcomes. (p. 9)

Summers (1995) applies the field concept at the level of individuals processing a conflictive relationship in noting that "both sides need each other to grow, learn and solve their problems." She describes the value of processing conflict in that we "learn to connect with our opponents as parts of our own humanity and as repressed aspects of ourselves" (p. 9).

4.4.10 Summary

The field is a transpersonal structure with conscious and unconscious aspects, it has its own questions and problems, which it can gradually work out through the conflicts people have. Ideas that are relevant to the field are polarized when people first become aware of the field. The effect of the field is to charge the imaginary component of people's perception of real things. As people identify and relate to other people who have picked up on the opposite side of the field, they begin to relate to this difference. However, since the imaginary component may not be well articulated, its message can go unheard. The frustration of listeners in trying to grasp these associations often result in conflict. One benefit of this is that when conflict erupts and the imaginary components are finally expressed, then the field is being supported to process a polarized conflict. Such conflict can also be found within the self, in an experience of one's edge. The edge describes from an experiential perspective, what was previously described as the meeting of opposite imaginary factors found in the complex roots of conflict.

4.5 A Comparison of Metaphor

I have presented salient features of three theoretical approaches, and identified metaphors representing concepts within each theory. The interpersonal relations model uses the metaphor of music, including the basic notes of relationship dynamics, the harmonics of interpersonal relations, and the melodies of interpersonal patterns. The systemic communications perspective locates conflict based on value difference in the rhetorical patterns that result as social worlds built on these values collide. Its metaphors suggest the topology of worlds, and the protection of one's moral territory against the threat of encroachment. The process oriented perspective uses metaphors from physics

(fields) and mathematics (complexity) to describe conflict as the product of imaginary processes of opposite sign.

4.6 Action Theory Concepts

In the preceding chapter on method, I described my implementation of action theory concepts as an overarching container for each interpretive exercise. Now I would like to introduce some concepts developed within action theory, and show how they relate to conflict.

4.6.1 Organization

Action theory makes fundamental observations about the directive aspects of human experience. Since action is directed to some degree, it has a systemic quality which can be analyzed over a range of scale. As though “nature could be carved at the joints”, temporal and physical factors combine to produce intrinsic features of direction unique to the level of scale. Thus at the lowest level of action elements, direction appears automatic in the monitoring of coordinated movement. Rising up to the level of functional steps, direction involves cognitive features defining the order of action elements, their initiation and completion. At the level of project, direction takes the form of conscious goals and the use of strategies which draw upon a network of skills and resources. At the level of career, concepts of purpose and the philosophical ideas supporting them serve to orient the overall direction of a life.

Action theory posits that meaning articulates with reference to context. Individual and social perspectives are fundamental contextual influences jointly determining the meaning of action. Social perspectives are further distinguished as representing naïve and

specialized points of view. Naïve in this sense does not imply a pejorative evaluation, referring rather to the expected, common, or typical meanings, as opposed to specialized knowledge which may be relatively unknown, rare, or obscure. Studies of action make reference to these fundamental qualities in the description of human behavior, using methods designed to demonstrate meaning within a particular scale and context.

For example, in a study of the rehabilitation field, principles of action theory are present in the practitioner's description of the goals organizing therapy, in a client's conception of directing their rehabilitation process, and in awareness of how naïve social interpretations of rehabilitation orient the therapist's interaction with the client's family and friends (Valach & Wald, 2002). In a study that asked participants to identify the beginning and end of children's interpersonal conflicts, researchers developed schemata of naïve criteria that were reliably present in conflict recognition (von Cranach, Kalbermatten, Indermuehle, Gubler, 1982). Describing intrapersonal conflict in the analysis of narratives, researchers identified goals in the social and personal meanings of drug abuse (Valach, Young, & Lynam, 2002) and suicide (Valach, Michel, Young, & Dey, 2002).

4.6.2 The Domain of Action Theory

In this thesis, an action theoretical analysis of conflict involves describing how an underlying theory of conflict guides the counselor in observing the conflict and in directing the attention of the parties in ways that increase potential for conflict resolution. The question remains however, as to whether conflict itself is a suitable subject for analysis from an action theoretical perspective. Unlike goal directed activity, conflict (and particularly intractable conflict) appears to stall action - often resulting in the

unintended loss of time and effort. While individuals may be conscious of entering conflict, they may experience doing so in spite of themselves, and thus conflict seems to lack the intentionality of goal directed action. While some conflict may be planned, the type of conflict that a counselor is called to deal with, is usually an unplanned and undesired, but persistent and conspicuous problem in the person's life.

Von Cranach (1982) makes the point that action theory must restrict its domain to something less than the domain of behavior. Von Cranach qualifies the domain of action as "an actor's goal-directed, planned, intended and conscious behavior, which is socially directed (or controlled)." (p. 36). These qualities identify causal characteristics which distinguish actions from non-actions. Harré (1982) points out that action excludes behavior that is automatic, such as the unconscious physiological process of digestion. However, the domain includes deliberate inaction, which fulfills Cranach's four criteria.

Some behavior may combine aspects of both action and non-action. Harré (1982) gives the example of forced error, as when a tennis player mis-hits the ball as a result of spin introduced by the opponent. Here the player's intended action (hitting the ball into the other's court) is identified by distinguishing it from the actual behavior (hitting it outside the other's court). The mis-hit takes the status of a non-action resulting from the forced elements introduced by the opponent. Alternately, the forced elements which deform the actor's performance, serve to identify and highlight action which exists virtually in the expectations of the actor and observers.

4.6.3 The Absence of Conflict in Concrete Action

The domain of an actor's goal directed, planned, intentional, conscious behavior which is at least partly socially controlled, initially appears to exclude conflict as a focus

of study. Concrete action came to represent the prototypical form of action study. In studies of concrete action, attention is directed to the relevant functional, causal, communicative and cognitive processes which result in the successful completion of action.

An example of concrete action is an analysis of the turn of a sailboat (Von Cranach, Ochsenein & Valach, 1986). Here the authors describe the conceptual and procedural features of how a sailboat crew executes a turn in direction. This involves decision making on the part of the captain, followed by communication of intention. The crew then prepares to execute the turn by taking places. Upon orders, parts of the crew sequentially execute the functional steps related to the rigging, while maintaining communication between themselves. Once the desired result is secured they communicate the completion of their task to the captain, who co-ordinates the various operations and responds to any difficulties until the turn is complete.

In descriptions of concrete action (such as the turn of a sailboat) little attention is paid to the multitude of distracting problems that resist the idealized execution of plan. In the concrete conception of action, goals are clear and attention biases toward successful action. While this serves to isolate the productive class of action upon which the success of the action is defined, it inadvertently introduces a tendency to overlook the class of action dealing with resistance, interruption, and blockage. This is the neglected field of action characterized by conflict. As a result of this theoretically induced bias, conflict initially appears to be situated outside the domain of action theoretical study. I would like to briefly account for this development, and address attempts to counter this unnecessary restriction.

4.6.4 Conflict at the Boundary of Goals

Von Cranach, Kalbermatten, Indermuhle & Gugler (1982) described various studies of action investigating the manner in which naïve observers perceive the stream of behavior of daily life. Segments of behavior emerged with statistical reliability, which were structured on the basis of goal attribution. Boundaries of behavior segments emerged when observers were able to recognize when goals were pursued and transformed into accomplishment. Observers watching tapes of a parent-child interaction found that when an individual met with conflict from others in the environment, this was the moment that allowed goals to be identified. Thus conflict entered indirectly into action theory as a contextual element serving to reveal an actor's goals. In these studies, conflict did not express goal-directed behavior per se - it served indirectly to reveal it. Initially conflict itself was not conceived as a goal directed action in itself, and so remained at the periphery of action studies.

4.6.5 Conflict as a Constraint in Cognitive Steering

Conflict also enters action theory in the process of cognitive steering. Von Cranach et al (1982) offered a conceptual organization of action in which goals were counter-balanced by the influence of norms. Norms were defined as social conventions that individuals adopt as rules, and obey by threat of sanction. Thus, as an individual considers the pursuit of goals, a cognitive dialogue ensues with respect to the norms that bear upon the goal. Internal conflict appears in the steering of action so as to avoid sanctions resulting from the transgression of norms. In this case, conflict is not directly the object of study, but becomes a relevant factor. The conflict between goal and norm is identified as a factor that introduces inefficiency in the execution of action. Thus Von

Cranach et al (1986) report that group efficiency is correlated with the identification of the group with its task and its communicative hierarchy, and inversely coordinated with the degree of conflict related to these.

In these studies conflict serves to demarcate the boundary of goal directed action. According to this conception, once conflict emerges, goals become visible, yet conflict reduces effectiveness in the pursuit of goals, ultimately degrading the ability of goals to clearly raise behavior to the status of action. The attempt to investigate conflict as an action on its own thus appears counter-intuitive. Nevertheless, research began that directed attention to the function conflict plays in the pursuit of goals.

4.6.6 The Bifurcative Nature of Conflict

In a study applying action theory to life span development, the outcome of conflict was treated as the determining variable in the tenacious pursuit of goals (Brandtstädter, Wentura & Rothermund, 1999). As goals are adopted and conflict is encountered in their pursuit, the dual processes of assimilation and accommodation are repeatedly exercised, as conflict is either overcome or suffered. Assimilation is associated with accessing resources or otherwise gaining the ability to overcome barriers encountered in conflict. Accommodation is related to the psychological adjustments of devaluing and abandoning goals when conflicts prove impossible to overcome. The tenacious pursuit of goals involves repeated cycles in which an individual encounters this bifurcating effect of conflict. In this example, conflict serves to identify meaningful segments along the life course, in much the same way as the attribution of goals had served to segment the stream of behavior in earlier studies. This conception suggests a role for conflict alongside goal as a structuring concept in the analysis of action.

4.6.7 Indeterminacy

Difficulty emerges however in describing the process of conflict as an action in its own right. Von Cranach (2000) describes the indeterminate quality of conflict in relation to the difficulty of describing conflict in terms of goal. He identified the quality of unpredictability as characteristic of action in conflict. Here we find a reference to Dörner (1996) describing conflict in terms of its unique volitional character. Conflict begins as an “equilibrium of competing motives which, to the frustration of the would-be agent, impedes action” (p. 63). At this point rather than precluding or denying the presence of intentionality,

his aim is to show that the processes of freedom of volition are fully determined, but that the details of this determination are not given in advance, but that they unfold during the process and are unpredictable (crypto-determinism) (p. 63).

4.6.8 Summary

A necessarily emergent design characterizes action in conflict, in contrast to the planned quality corresponding to concrete goal directed action. Intention may be present in both concrete goal directed action and conflict encountering action, but they differ in the degree of moment to moment predictability of the course of action. Crypto-determinism suggests the concept that awareness of the meaning of behavior may evolve during the course of action. Plans unfold in relation to contingencies that must emerge during the course of action, and thus a goal may more fully emerge into consciousness as a result of the process of conflict.

5 Structural Analysis

Benjamin and Cushing (2000) recommend that small segments of interaction be taken for detailed coding and analysis. By carefully reviewing behavioral samples that represent the process under study, it is thought that interpersonal patterns are revealed which are representative of the broader interaction. Benjamin refers to this as the “pond water theory”, drawing an analogy to biological analysis in which microscopic organisms are distributed at an approximately constant rate throughout a pond. In such a biological analysis, measurements of the life in a small fraction of the pond are very similar to measuring the life throughout the entire pond. In human interactions, however, the analogy doesn’t apply directly. In comparing samples of interpersonal relations at random periods over the course of a day, we would expect to see great variety, and thus the pond analogy seems misleading. In a structural analysis however, to the extent that interpersonal relations are repetitive, occurring in a great variety of form, but based on similar themes, the analogy provides some guidance. Clinical judgment in selecting samples of interpersonal dynamics that are representative of long standing relationships and personality patterns is required to generate relevant results. On this basis, I have selected three segments of the dyad conversation for detailed analysis.

The coding procedure uses the following steps:

- 1) The speaking turn is divided into units. A unit is the minimal series of words explicitly or implicitly containing a subject acting on an object.
- 2) The unit is analyzed to identify one of three directions in focus (see figures 5-1, 2 & 3). Transitive is a focus on other (you are ...). Intransitive is a focus on self in

relation to other (I feel ...). Introject is a focus by self upon self, employing beliefs learned from others (I should ...).

3) The unit is evaluated in terms of the degree to which the primitive basics of affiliation and interdependence are present. Affiliation is characterized in terms of the friendliness or hostility of the action. Interdependence is an expression of the degree to which autonomy and control are active. A circumplex (in which the primitive basics are mapped to the vertical and horizontal dimensions) allows a single directional vector to express combinations of these fundamental relational dynamics for the unit.

4) The vector is compared with the SASB full model (table 4-2), requiring one to make a clinical judgment on the applicability of the code. A brief phrase describing the vector location (such as “sensible analysis” or “put down, act superior”) is compared with the original unit to assess its fit. Neighboring vector locations are also considered, until the best match is determined.

5) Using the location on the full model (table 4-2), a corresponding point is then located on the cluster model (see figures 5-1, 2 & 3). The cluster model has one quarter the number of specific locations of the full model, representing a more general expression of the dynamic.

6) The unit is initially evaluated in terms of process; the “here and now” effect it has on interpersonal relations. If the process code fails to describe all the effects, then an additional code is assigned to the remaining process. No content codes are assigned.

In summary, a simple statement is classified in terms of its focus, affiliation, and interdependence based on the information content and interpersonal process effect, resulting in one or more locations on the following surfaces.

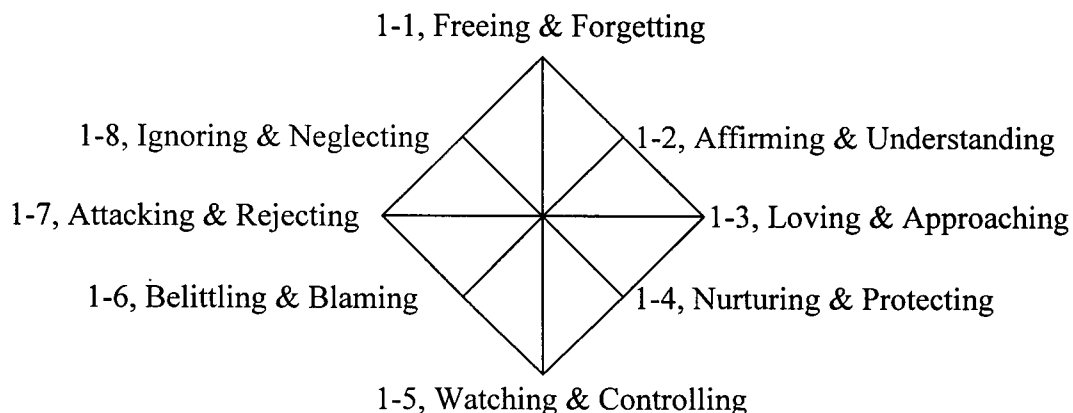


Figure 5-1 Transitive Surface: Focus on Other

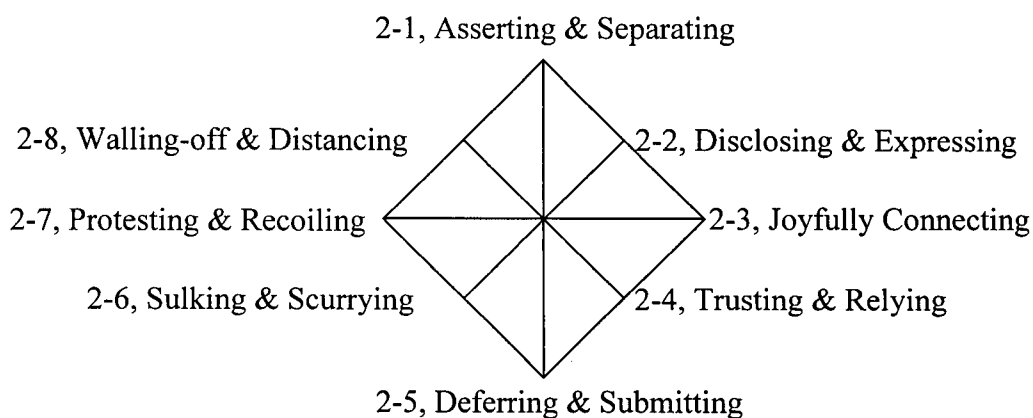


Figure 5-2 Intransitive Surface: Focus on Self in Relation to Other

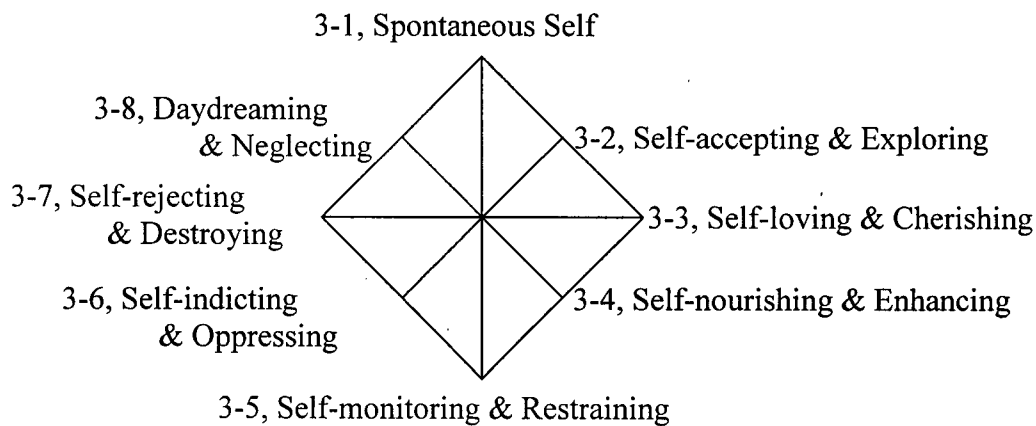


Figure 5-3 Introject Surface: Focus of Self on Self

The three surfaces each have eight points, resulting in 24 possible codes to describe the process or content of a speech unit. As graphic shorthand, I have combined the three surfaces in a compact form. In Figure 5-4 I show the primitive basics, using symbol of the square for control, the bubble for autonomy, the circle for love and the arrow for hate. The square creates a circumplex extending across these dimensions, with extreme forms at the cardinal angles, and more moderate combined forms at the cross angles. The outer circumplex is used to locate transitive (other focused) codes, the middle circumplex represents intransitive (self oriented) focus, and the center square represents the introjected focus of other on self. With this single glyph, the process codes can be mapped for each speaking turn.

Imagine for example, a context in which two people are working on building a house and it's starting to get dark. The first person wants to keep working, but the second person replies "Let's finish it tomorrow when there's more light." The image of the house finished tomorrow is content and goes uncoded in this analysis. The effect of the statement, its process, is to disagree. At least some part of the statement has the effect of saying, "No, I want to stop". It focuses on self in relation to other. It is neutral in affiliation, and strongly autonomous. I would code the process as asserting & separating (2-1). Because a reason is provided based on care for the work, a second code is needed for the part that says "When there's more light, you and I can work better and easier." It focuses on other, has a friendly quality, and seeks cooperation. I would assign this a second code of nurturing & protecting (1-4).

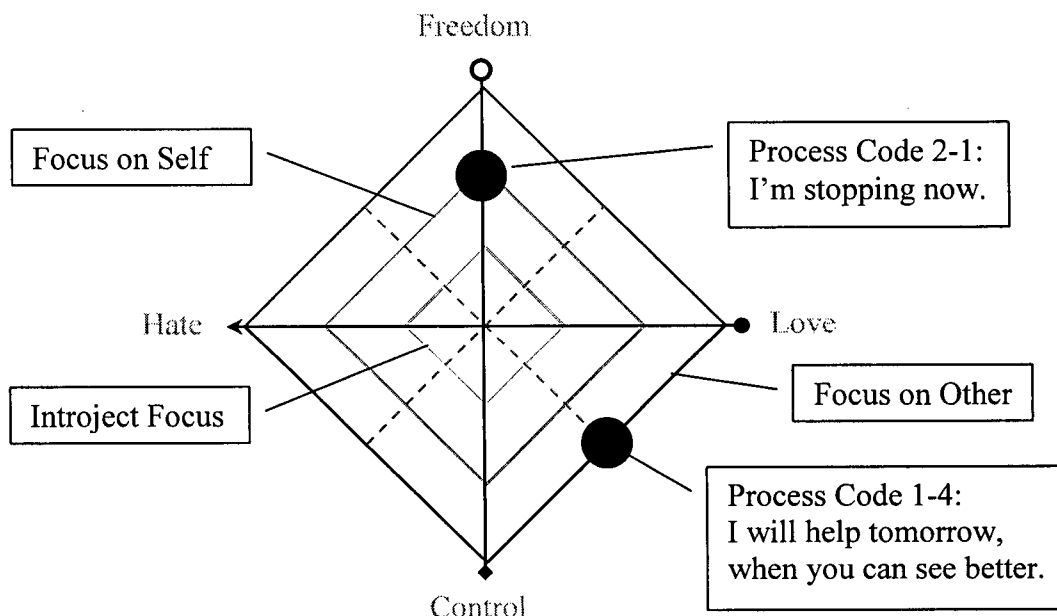


Figure 5-4 Coding Displayed on Combined Surfaces

To analyze each sample I conduct the following steps:

- 1) I describe each statement according to a SASB analysis, and specify SASB code for each speaking turn (an example follows in table 5-1).
- 2) Following each coded sample I present a summary (see figure 5-5), showing what codes were used by each person and how frequently. On the left of each graphic summary, I have computed the central tendency of the codes for each surface². These averages are represented by vectors on transitive (V1), intransitive (V2) and introject (V3) surfaces.

² The central tendency for each surface is computed by first taking the sum of the affiliative and interdependent factors (cosine and sine components respectively) of each entry on the surface, and dividing each horizontal and vertical total by the number of entries on that surface. By applying the arctan function to the resulting weighted horizontal and vertical factors, the angle generating these points is derived. This angle is mapped to the SASB format, a range from 1 at the top vertical point counting up to (but not including) 9 in a clockwise direction. Although this procedure is non-standard, Critchfield (personal communication, February 12, 2004) found this a satisfactory measure for descriptive purposes.

3) I present a graphic display of the series of coded turns (see figure 5-6). In this sequence I group codes according to conversational topic, using a brief paraphrase to remind the reader of the original statement. I place each circumplex with reference to a center line, to show how a turn seems to cross into the other's space, or retreat from the interaction. In a commentary on this grouped interaction sequence I identify patterns each individual demonstrates.

4) I filter the sequence by merging similar turns into one condensed code and identify links characterizing the interpersonal interaction. I do this in two steps in Section 1, and one step for the remaining sections (see Figure 5-7, 5-8).

5) After making this analysis of the dyad conversation, I turn to the self-confrontation interviews for remarks each individual made on their own behavior, as a means to check or deepen the interpretation made by SASB coding.

After completing this procedure with three samples, I develop a case conceptualization synthesizing the identified patterns. Using concepts developed within Interpersonal Reconstructive Therapy (IRT), a prominent application of SASB theory (Benjamin, 2003), I conceptualize how the conflictive interpersonal patterns demonstrate a way of seeking love. To the extent that more optimal means of seeking love are possible, IRT provides a basis for developing a course of therapy. Therapy activities are based on recognizing regressive patterns, understanding the purposes they served, identifying growth patterns better suited to achieving love, and developing skills that stabilize growth and block regression.

5.1 Section 1

The following sample of dialogue occurs as soon as the father and son have been left alone to discuss the subjects they touched upon with a research assistant.

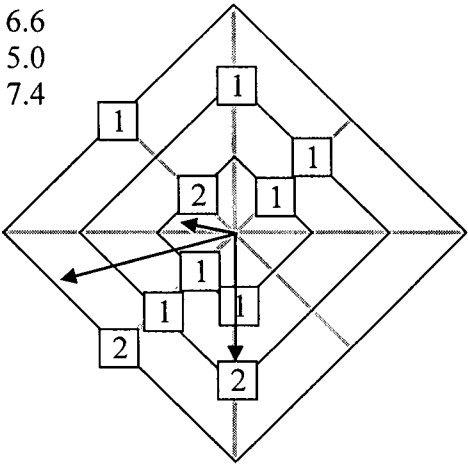
Table 5-1 Section 1 Coded Interaction

#	Son	Father	SASB analysis	Coding
1	I want to say something but I'm on video so I can't.		Son shares his reaction to the video camera, by relating an introject in which he controls himself by silencing.	Intransitive process of sharing (2-2), combined with an introject of restraint (3-5).
2		Go ahead.	On the surface this appears supportive. However at the level of process, the father manages the son by telling him what to do, while ignoring how the son's experience impacts his ability to follow these directions.	Transitive content of nurturing (1-4), with a complex process of managing (1-5) and ignoring (1-8).
3	Um, (pause) I'm stuck now.		Son complies by sharing an experience, but also refuses to cooperate, by describing his inability to disclose his thoughts.	Intransitive complex process of submission (2-5), and disagree (2-1).
4		You're stuck now. Um, how are you going to get to the occupation.	Father reflects the son literally. Then in the next unit, the father implicitly ignores the son's situation, while moving to manage the son by setting the topic of conversation.	Surface listening (1-2), with an effect of ignoring (1-8). Transitive process of managing (1-5).
5	Occupations.		Son acts superior by correcting the father's language, while ignoring the question.	Transitive content of belittling (1-6), and process of ignoring (1-8).
6		What do you see as being your path to an occupation?	Father modifies and repeats the question.	Surface process of understanding (1-2) with effect process of managing (1-5).
7	School seems to be the only		The son accedes to the father's direction. The son	Intransitive process of submission (2-5),

	clearly defined path I can see.		suggests that only clearly defined content is worth recognition; less defined content is being ignored.	with a complex introject combining self acceptance (3-2) and neglect (3-8).
8		All right. Um, how do you feel about school these days?	Father ignores the important qualification. Then in the next unit, affirms part of the son's response, and asks for an elaboration of feelings.	Complex transitive process of ignoring (1-8) and affirming (1-2), with content of nurturing (1-4).
9	Don't like it.		Son complies by attending school, expressing hostility in relation to it.	Intransitive sulking (2-6).
10		You don't like it. And yet you see it as being the only path to the occupations that you might want?	Father reflects the son literally. Father challenges the son's statement as incongruent, using a distortion of the son's words (school wasn't the path the son <i>wanted</i> ; it was merely the one he could <i>clearly see</i>).	Surface process of listening (1-2) combined with an accusation of self-contradiction (1-6).
11	Yeah.		Son affirms the father's estimation of incongruence, but doesn't explain.	Implied process of self-indictment (3-6).
12		So what is it about school that you find ...	Father seeks to understand by asking the son to explain his dislike of school.	Transitive process of understanding (1-2).
13	They don't treat me like a person. They treat me like a number. They don't give me personal instruction, they talk to the class. If I fall behind I cut.		The son rails against school for neglecting his personal identity. He describes using avoidance to deal with the difficulty he faces.	Transitive process of blaming (1-6), followed by an introject of neglecting his potential (3-8).
14		Well yeah but you have outside sources that you can talk to about	While acknowledging the truth of the son's complaint, he diminishes it by pointing out that the	Transitive complex process of affirming (1-2) and blaming (1-6).

		the information that goes on in the classroom right? I mean it is true. This happens in universities too.	son could correct the problem himself and that the problem is so widespread that it is considered normal.	
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Son
V1 6.6
V2 5.0
V3 7.4



Father
V1 2.7
V2 n/a
V3 n/a

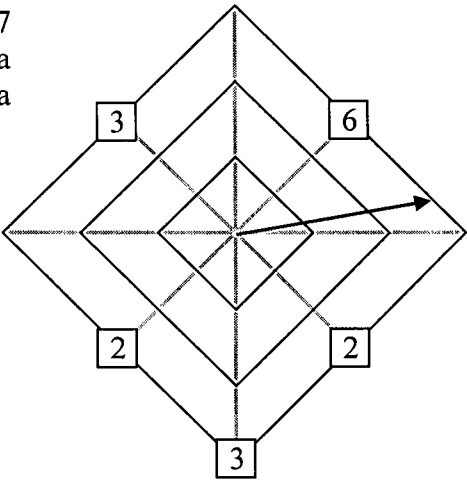


Figure 5-5 Section 1 Code Summary

A visual inspection of figure 5-5 shows that the father speaks only in the transitive mode, reflecting a consistent focus upon the son. The son employs all three modes, with a predominant focus upon his actions toward himself, and his reactions to others. The transitive modes of the two speakers complement each other - reflecting the general form in which the father interviews the son. Half the father's codes fall on the friendly right side of the circumplex, reflecting the high number of questions and literal reflections the father directs toward the son. A second pattern, in contrast to the interview structure apparent at the surface, finds a hostile quality found in the father's response.

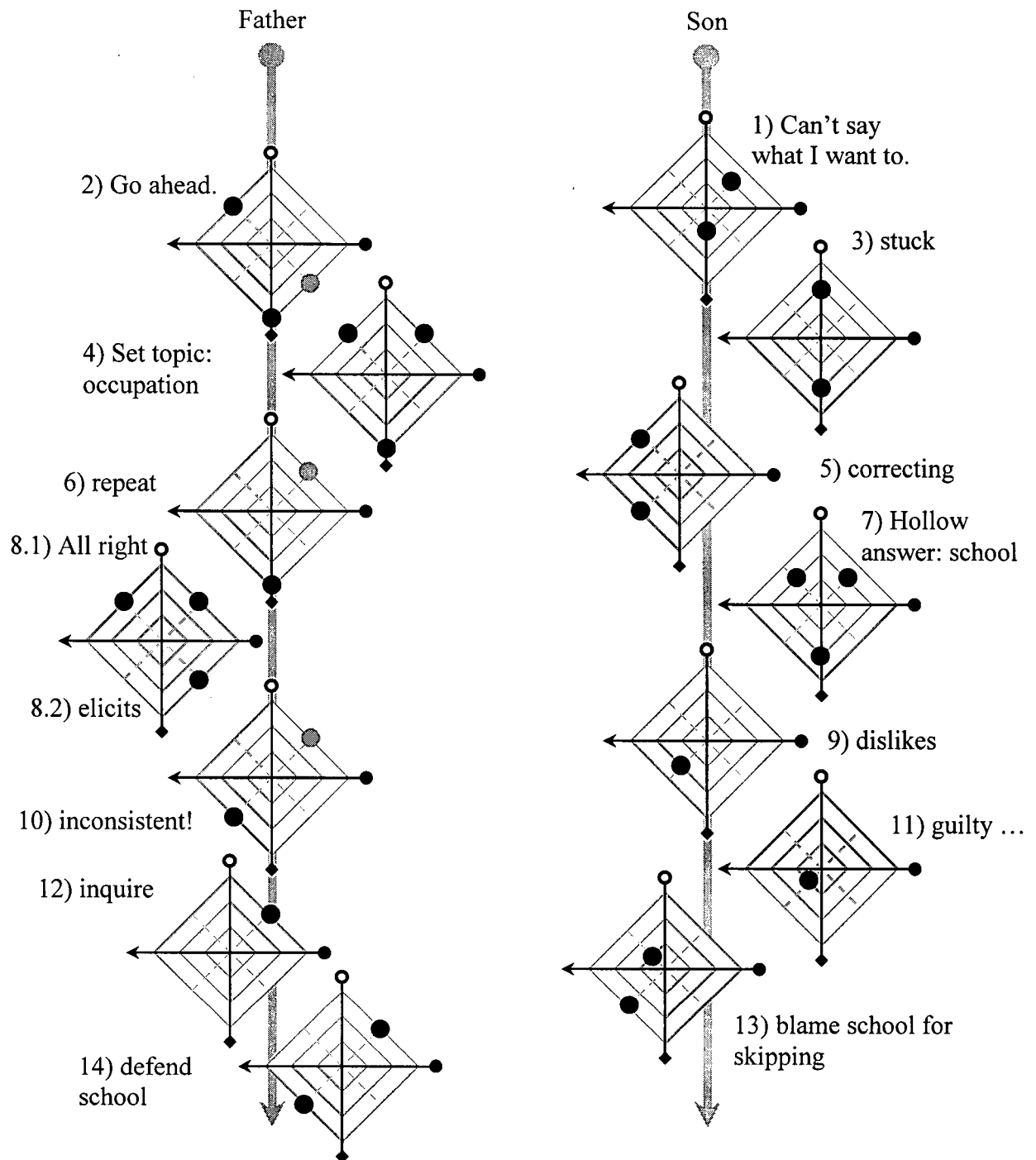


Figure 5-6 Section 1 Grouped Interpersonal Relations

In figure 5-6, the father manages the course of the dialogue (Father 2, 4, 6). He ignores how the son's reported experience impacts the son (Father 2, 4, 8). He moves to blame the son for experience the son reports (Father 10, 14). In the context of an

invitation to share, suggested by the father's questioning, the less supportive manner in which the son's answers are received appears to induce confusion. A complex interaction results, in which sharing combines with blame and ignoring. Two examples reflecting this in the son's experience can be found in this section.

As the dyad begin their discussion alone, the topic initially turns to the video camera, which the son perceives as restricting him from saying something. The father ignores the effect of this inhibiting impact, and tells the son to carry on, as though this experience was of no consequence. After initial resistance, the son complies with the father's prod to continue, and *never reveals* what it was he intended to say.

The father manages the conversation by directing the son to discuss plans for developing a career. The son complies, but subtly communicates his resistance by correcting minor errors in the father's language, and answering in ways that emphasize the partial or hollow nature of his disclosure. The father overlooks these resistant messages, to focus on the role of school in the son's development. The son criticizes school for its impersonality, describing various ways it ignores him as an individual. I note that, in the relationship the son has with his father, the dynamic of feeling ignored is replicated in the son's relationship with school. The son experienced his inhibiting emotion and his obscure career paths being ignored by his father, and the son describes school as ignoring his individuality. While the son may inhibit direct criticism of his father, he speaks relatively freely in criticizing the school.

While a career related interview generates the content of this sample, a relationship process simultaneously influences its course. In order to reveal the underlying conflict processes more clearly, I have filtered the original sequence from

figure 5-6, by graying those codes that support the interview content in the conversation. What remains in black emphasizes the antagonistic elements in the relationship process. In this sequence we see a progression that begins with a struggle for control and moves to assignment of blame.

From the perspective of reading *for* conflict, the son begins with a struggle to manage himself (S1), which the father ignores, preferring to manage the conversation (F2). The son submits with disagreement (S3, S5), and the father overlooks the protest in an effort to control (F4, F6). The son provides the answer the father wants (S7), allowing the father to relinquish control and nurture a hollow response (F8). Now the dynamic changes from a contest of control, to alignment in blame. The son dislikes a situation he unwillingly accepts (S9), which the father holds the son responsible for (F10). The son takes on the blame (S11), and the father inquires about this (F12). The son moves the fault onto the school (S13), and the father moves the fault back to the son (F14).

In the following diagram (figure 5-7), I have used grouping to identify the basic interpersonal action. Where there are similar basic dynamics, I have combined groups of coded sections. If the dynamics are various, but related, I have maintained the individual codes but portrayed them in a group. I have paraphrased the dialogue as a reminder of the issues at hand.

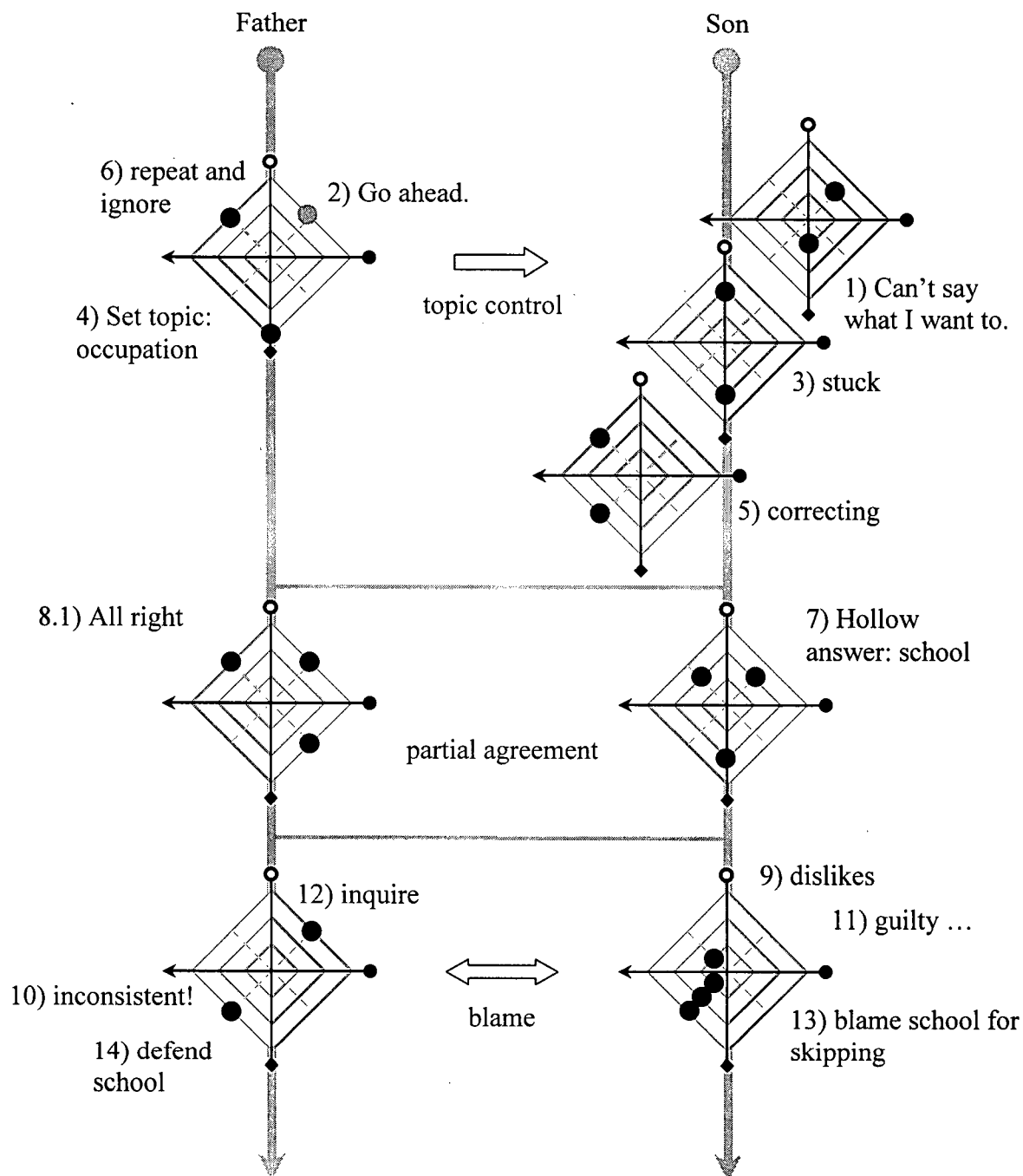


Figure 5-7 Section 1 Grouped & Filtered Sequence

In figure 5-8, a most basic summary of the interaction links suggests the following sequence: In response to the father's control, the son provides an initial protest. When the son *complements* the father's control by moving to submission, he does so while

communicating neglect of self. As neglect is *similarly* unacceptable to both parties, the school serves as a third party to hold the blame.

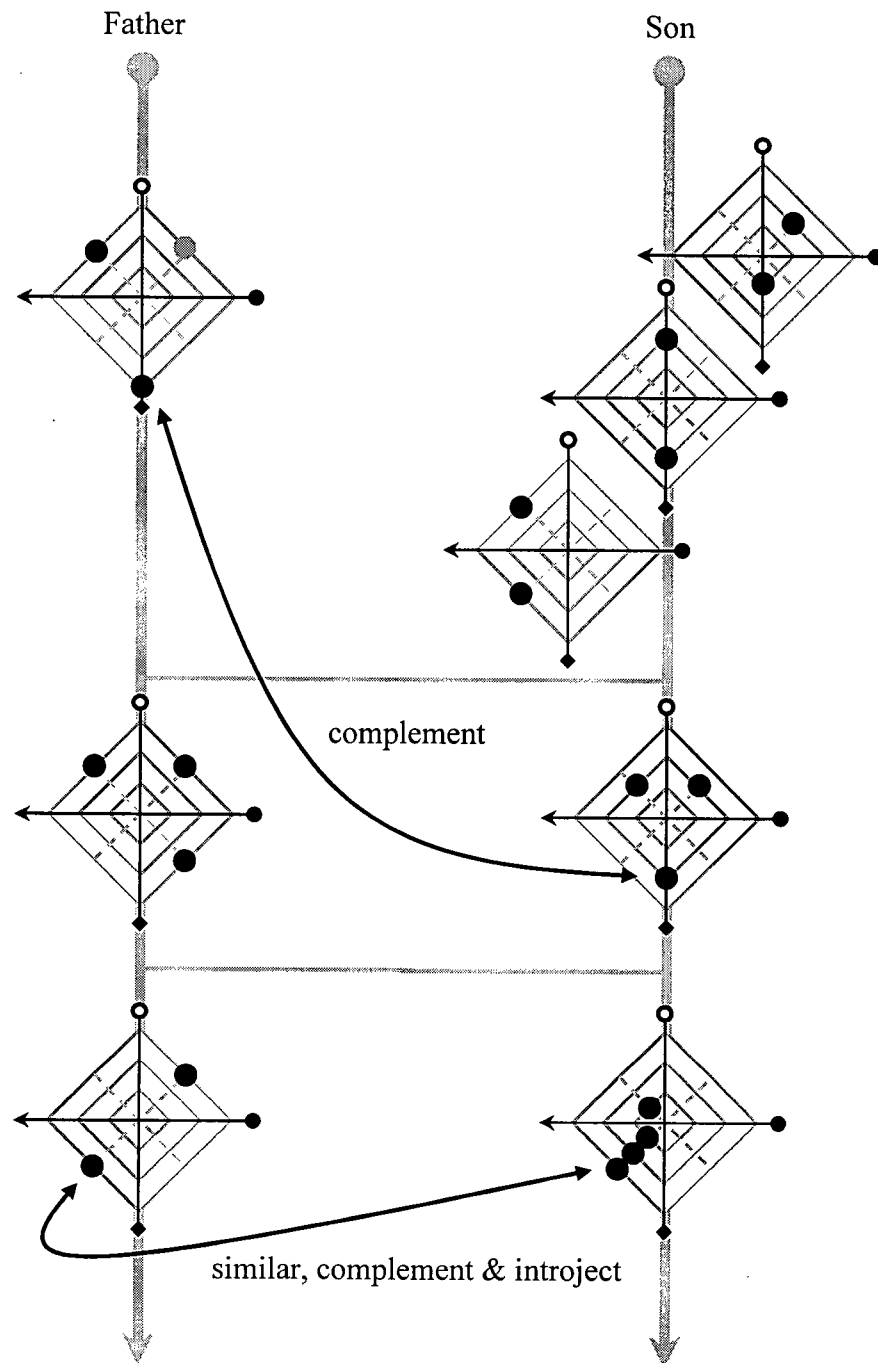


Figure 5-8 Section 1 Links

Equipped with this fundamental interpersonal dynamic, I would venture to make the following IRT elaboration. The son has strong feelings, but if he notices that his feelings are being overlooked, then he protests by not sharing his feelings, by going along with the conversation in a detached state. When the son perceives the school and the father treating him in ways that seem to ignore his needs, he leaves the scene by skipping school or partially dropping out of the conversation.

Some aspects of this structural interpretation are supported by the son's comments as he reviews this section on video. In the self confrontation interview, the son describes his experience of challenging others when he doesn't believe what they say, and how he feels punished by their reactions³. One way of dealing with his challenging opinions is to present them partially or transiently and then to disown them, creating a condition he might describe as instability⁴. One unintended consequence of joining with others in ignoring his feelings⁵ is externalizing his pain in acts of self harm⁶.

³ Most of my teachers have a problem with me. I have a brain and I'll challenge them. If they say something and I don't think it's right I'll call them on it and they don't like that. I get in a lot of trouble for that. And so I get marked a little bit harder than everyone else. Some of them respect me but a good portion of them just see me as being a menace. (Adolescent self confrontation line 9)

⁴ When school comes up I tend to get a little quiet. Yeah I have opinions but they are not stable. They switch around. I don't like to commit myself. (Adolescent self confrontation line 1)

⁵ I don't mind talking about it [drug use and school problems], I just get defensive. Pretty much. Um, yeah it just makes me feel a little uneasy. I don't like to think about it if I don't have to. (Adolescent self confrontation line 17)

⁶ Well last year I had a lot of problems. I got pretty heavy into drugs, um, it wasn't a very pleasant year. Nothing got done. I totally destroyed my life and I hit a pretty heavy depression too and that was it. The pie on the cherry or the cherry on the pie. Then at the end of the summer I almost died (laughs) and yeah I made my turn around and here I am. (Adolescent self confrontation line 13)

5.2 Section 2

This section is taken from the second half of the dyad conversation, after a lengthy disagreement about the degree of risk the son should take in selecting a career objective. The father would like the son to take more risk, while the son would prefer to retain what little security he has. We resume their discussion at the conclusion of a relatively long lecture the father gives on the nature of career risk.

Table 5-2 Section 2 Coded Interaction

#	Son	Father	SASB analysis	Coding
1		The biggest kind of security you can have is an internal one and you never lose that one.	As content this amounts to kindly advice in a lecture.	Transitive process of benevolent reminding falls under the cluster of nurturing and protecting (1-4).
2	Sure you do, I've lost it many times.		Son rejects the advice as untrue to the son's experience.	Intransitive process of disclosing (2-2) combined with transitive process of rejecting the advice (1-1).
3		When?	Father asks for detail.	Implied nurturing (1-4).
4	When I get really depressed I lose my internal security. I lose everything.		Son shares a personal experience, in which he relates a self-annihilating experience.	Intransitive process of disclosing (2-2), combined with content relating an introject of self-rejection and destroying (3-7).
5		What do you get really depressed about? That's not everything.	Without empathy, the father challenges the rationality of the son's experience.	Complex transitive action of appearing to nurture (1-4), while rejecting and attacking (1-7)
6	Everything usually goes		Son asserts his experience, sharing more detail.	Intransitive disclosure (2-2).

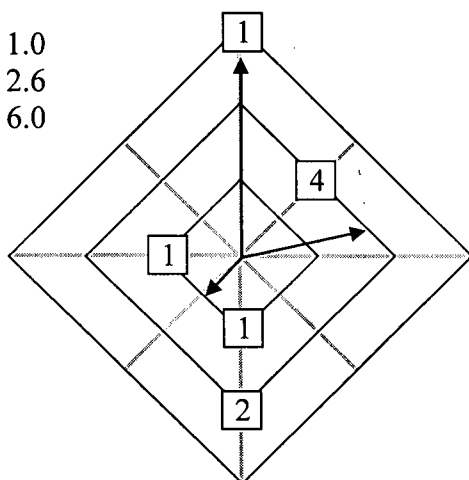
	all gray and black.			
7		(pause) How often does that happen?	Father asks for detail.	Transitive process of nurturing (1-4).
8	Once or twice a week.		Son answers directly.	Intransitive disclosure (2-2).
9		week? (sigh) We need to talk more about that some time too. Um, all right, in terms of getting to an occupation there is going to school and getting the training for it, how important do you think that is?	Father reflects part of the son's statement literally. The father indirectly declares his unwillingness to respond in the moment. In the next unit, he changes the topic, and asks the son to declare his involvement with the new subject.	A transitive process of neglecting the son's opening to deal with the impact of depression (1-8). Subsequently, a complex code in which the father manages the topic of discussion (1-5) while affirming the son's role in supporting the topic change (1-2).
10	Pretty important.		Son complies with the subject change, abandoning the importance of his emotional disclosure.	Intransitive process of deferring to subject change (2-5).
11		Okay. Now what does that mean in terms of what you are going to be doing with school?	Father controls the conversation, and invokes the son's self control.	Complex transitive process of control (1-5) and affirmation (1-2).
12	I'm going to have to do it.		Son controls himself.	Introject of self control (3-5).
13		Do you actually believe that's important?	Father tests the son's compliance, seeking a sign of commitment.	Control (1-5).
14	Yeah.		Son provides the sign.	Implied deference (2-5).

Son

V1 1.0

V2 2.6

V3 6.0



Father

V1 4.0

V2 n/a

V3 n/a

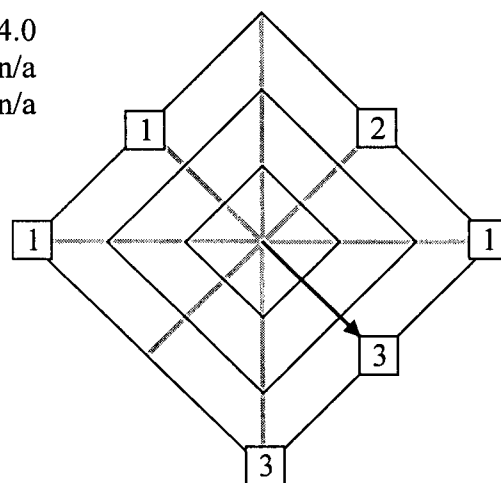


Figure 5-9 Section 2 Code Summary

The code summation in figure 5-9 shows the same modal pattern found in section 1, in which the father uses only the transitive mode (focusing on the son), while the son uses a range of mode.

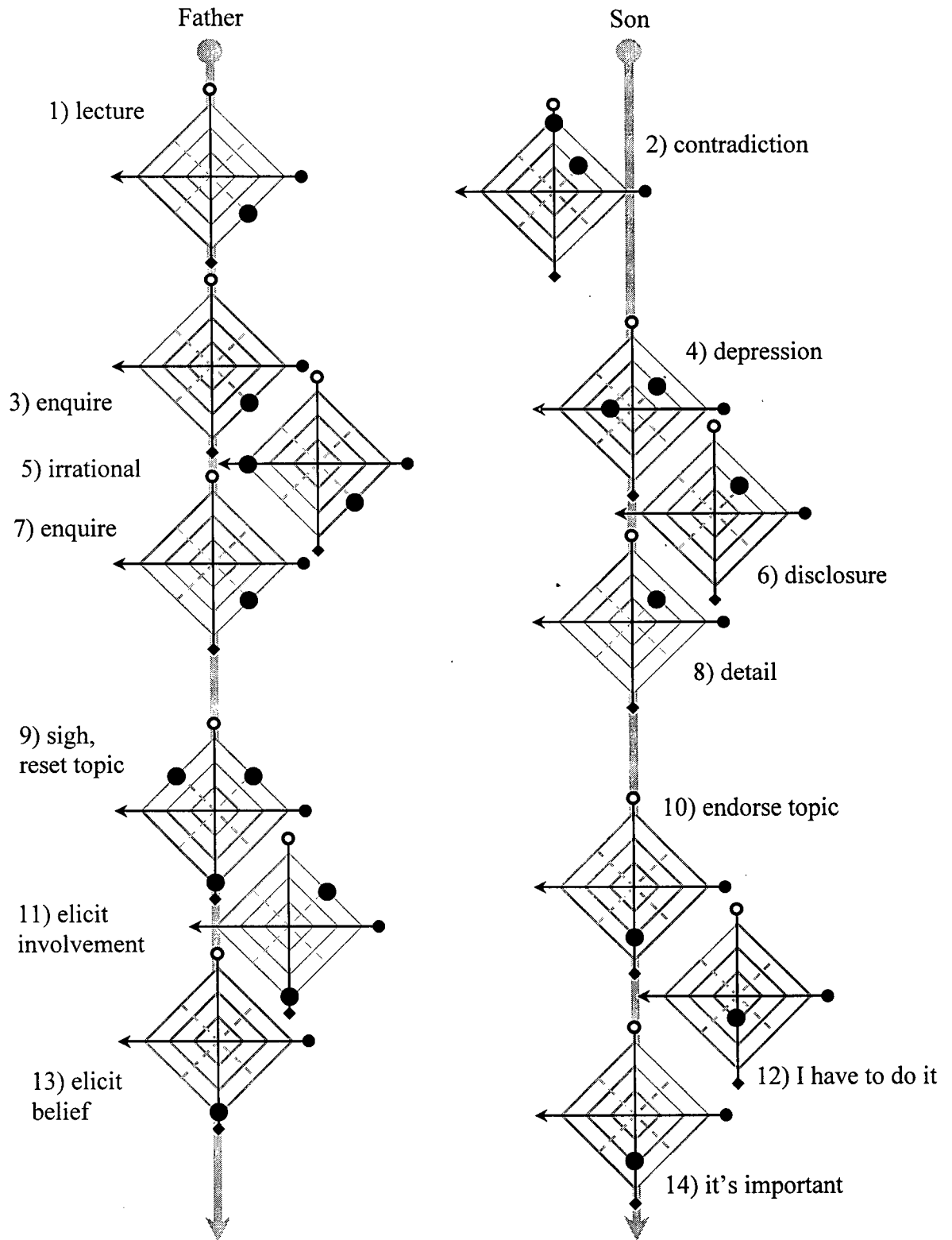


Figure 5-10 Section 2 Grouped Interpersonal Relations

In this section (figure 5-10), the son is open about his emotional experience (Son 2, 4, 6, 8). The father provides some cursory attention by asking for some details (Father 3, 5, 7), then dismisses it on the basis of irrationality (Father 5), and finally suggesting the subject should wait until later (Father 9). The father changes the subject to the son's commitment to school (Father 9, 11). The son complies with this control of topic (Son 10, 12, 14), abandoning the importance of his emotional state (Son 10), in favor of strict self-control (Son 12).

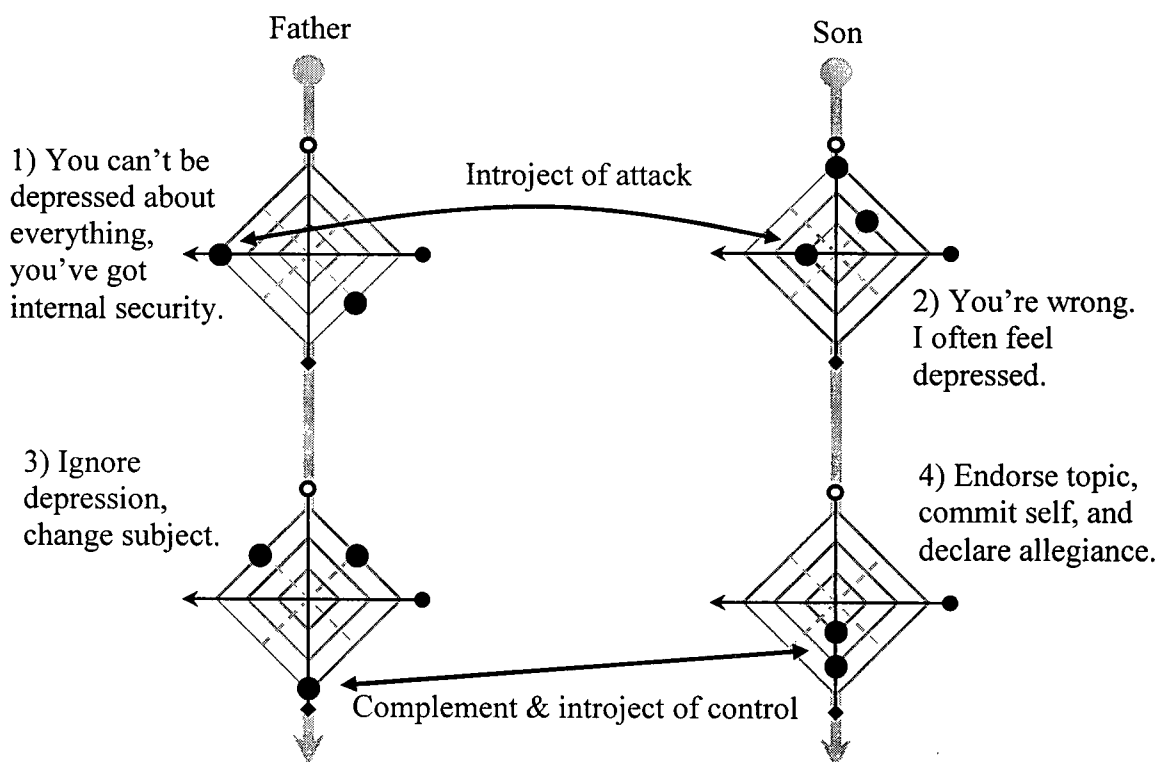


Figure 5-11 Section 2 Grouped & Filtered Sequence with Links

The linkages in figure 5-11 show the following pattern: After the father's lecture on security, the son demands attention for his emotional state, but receives a complex message containing both nurturance in the form of questions for detail, and an attack on the validity of his feeling. The father demonstrates an absence of empathy, but makes an

effort to control the conversation topic, to which the son complies by abandoning his own process and responding in ways that indicate he has internalized the father's control.

The son internalizes the father's absence of care for emotional process, by *similarly* treating himself in a self annihilating way through depression. The father responds with control of the topic, and the son *complements* this with statements that reflect compliance and (perhaps hollow) enthusiasm.

The self confrontation interview provides some support for the idea that the son's experience of depression is treated with an introject of his father's unsympathetic control, as something he must simply endure, as the alternative is worse⁷. The self confrontation interview provides some guidance in interpreting the father's unwillingness to discuss the topic of the son's depression. It would seem the father is not deliberately neglecting, but does so from a sense of helplessness⁸. Nor should one interpret the father's change of topic as motivated by concerns for privacy, rather the father indicates that discussion of depression is best left to professionals⁹.

⁷ When I get depressed I get in some pretty bad moods and everything. Makes for some pretty hard nights. It sucks. But it's stuff you just have to do you know. Other than that you die which isn't any fun. (Adolescent Self confrontation line 196)

⁸ That's [the son's darkness] a little tricky. I'm not sure how to deal with that one yet. (Parent Self confrontation interview line 156)

⁹ With regard to the sudden change of topic, the father is asked "Was there some anxiety about wanting to deal with that here and now?" to which the father replies "No, I don't think there was any anxiety about it. It was, that's just something that we talk about from time to time. I was thinking more in terms of maybe I need to go and see his counselor and stuff again." (Parent self confrontation line 162)

5.3 Section 3

Continuing from the previous section, the father describes the process of graduating and completing post-secondary education. After agreeing that the son would complete school, the son describes his next step as going out to get a job, and the transcript continues.

Table 5-3 Section 3 Coded Interaction

#	Son	Father	SASB analysis	Coding
1		How do you feel about all that stuff?	Father invites the son to share his feelings (about committing to the educational plan the father has spelled out).	Complex code of encouraging friendly autonomy (1-2), while serving a process of control (1-5).
2	Takes a long time and I don't really want to invest the time because I get really bored with the whole thing.		Son rejects the father's plan on the basis of the son's lack of enthusiasm.	Walling off and distancing (2-8).
3		Why do you get bored?	The father asks the son to account for the feeling, in a form that holds the son responsible for his action.	Complex code involving the appearance of friendly influence (1-4), with an underlying message of blame (1-6).
4	Because I do something and I do it again, and I do it again, and I do it again, and it's boring.		Son provides a vivid account, perhaps insulting in that it states the obvious.	Neglecting of self (3-8).
5		I know, what if you didn't do the same	Father advises the son on how to change his	Complex code involving the

		thing over and over again, but every time you did something it was something different.	perspective.	appearance of friendly influence (1-4), with an underlying message of blame (1-6).
6	You can't do everything different with a career. You have to do it the same way. It's all syntax.		Son rejects the idea of a stimulating career as this is incompatible with his expectation of how he must behave.	Introject of self control and conformity (3-5).
7		Well maybe that's not the kind of career you want?	Father affirms the son's authority to decide, while undermining his position.	Complex transitive process of affirmation (1-2) and belittling (1-6).
8	What do I want? The only good thing I can do is art. And art I don't consider it to be a career.		Son responds to the recognition of his own authority to decide. He values one skill (amidst a field of devaluation), but he dismisses this skill as unsuitable for the task at hand.	Complex introject process of self nourishing (3-4) and self indicting (3-6).
9		I have to go out to use the bathroom. Why don't you sit here, you can read that, you can talk into the camera.	Father leaves. Tells son what to do.	Process of ignoring & neglecting (1-8), followed by control (1-5).
10	Well we've been here for 45 minutes.		Son protests the suggestion that the interview will continue.	Separating (2-1)
11		Well I'll be back. I'm not finished yet.	Father warns the son that the process isn't finished until the father wishes.	Control (1-5)
12	Quit looking at me. (to camera)		Son directs his anger toward the camera.	Attack (1-7)
13		(after returning) I mean what are we talking about. I mean hardware development? Are	Father returns and fails to address the topic of how the son might develop skill in art as a career. He sets out a	Transitive process of ignoring (1-8), while presenting the content of nurturing (1-4).

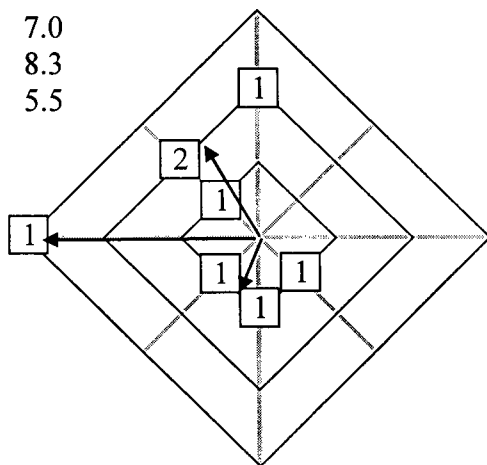
		we talking software development? Are we talking repairs?	topic of conversation and demands the son's involvement with it.	
14	Software or repairs.		Son follows impassively.	Implied process of Distancing (2-8).

Son

V1 7.0

V2 8.3

V3 5.5



Father

V1 5.0

V2 n/a

V3 n/a

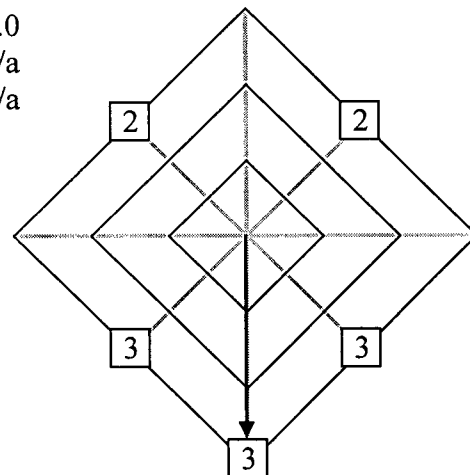


Figure 5-12 Section 3 Code Summary

As in the two previous sections, figure 5-12 shows that the father uses the transitive mode exclusively to focus solely on the son, while the son uses a broad range of mode. The kinds of codes the father uses in Figure 5-12 are identical to those used Figure 5-5, although there are differences in the specific frequencies.

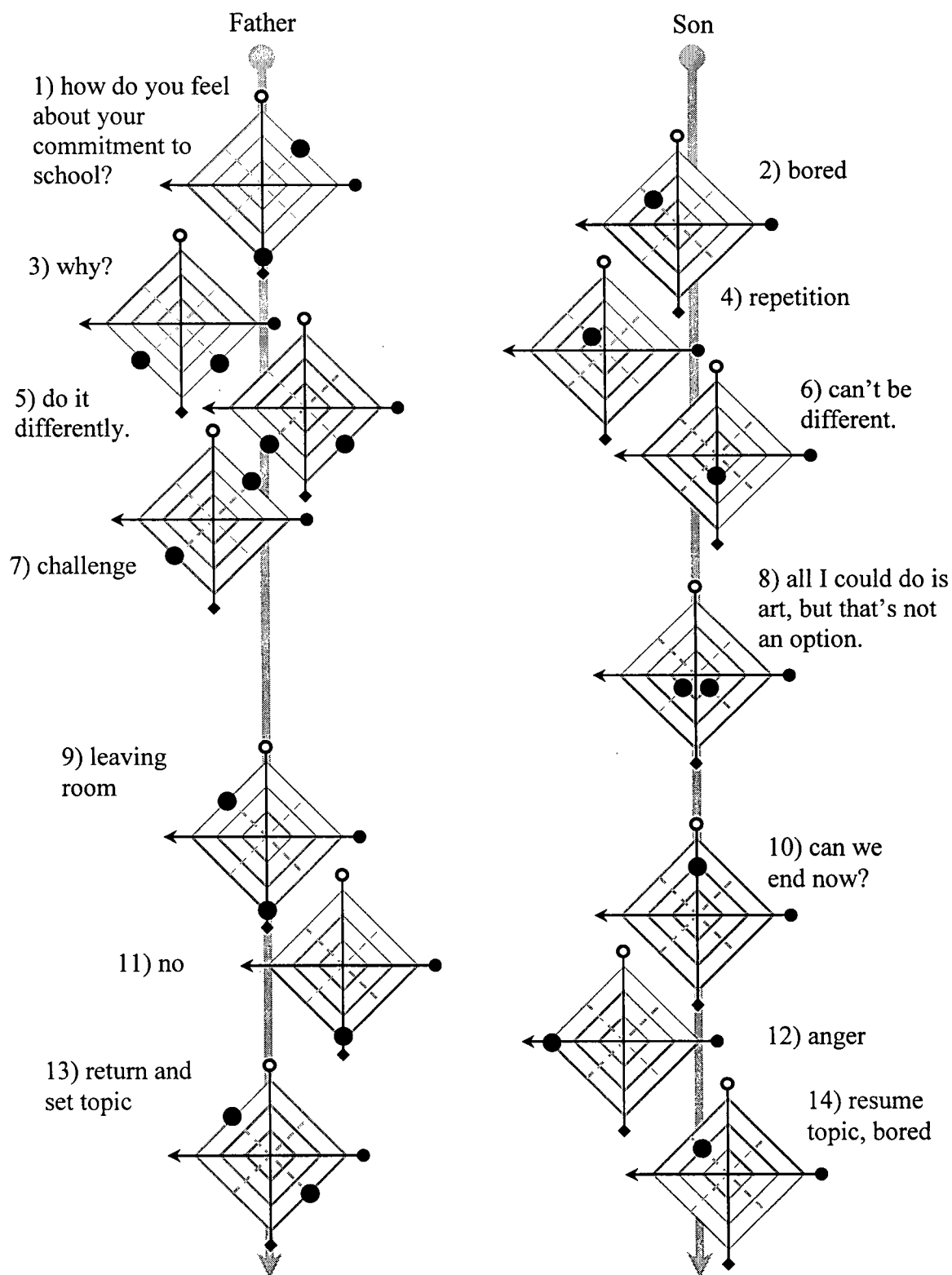


Figure 5-13 Section 3 Grouped Interpersonal Relations

In this section (see figure 5-13), the son stops holding up the father's imposed vision of the son's career path (Son 2). The son confronts the father with a consequence of that route; the experience of performing in a compliant but passionless manner (Son 2, 4). When the father 'turns the table', and holds the son responsible for the boredom he complains of (Father 3, 5, 7), the son reveals his passion (Son 8). He does so in a tentative way, awkwardly acknowledging an internalized and dominant rejection of one authentic path, perhaps hoping against experience that his father might join in resistance by offering nurturing support. The father physically leaves the space (Father 9), perhaps dashing the son's faint hope, and the son moves to abandon the exercise of the interview (Son 10). In his father's absence rage floods in (Son 12), and the son directs anger toward the impassive camera. On the father's return, the father launches an old familiar topic (Father 13) to which the son provides a lackluster reply (Son 14), as though confirming the son's expectation of boredom.

An analysis of the links in this section (see following figure 5-15), shows that when the son is confronting his father with the consequences of the father's plan, this could be described as the son showing an introject of the father. When the father suggests the son's thinking is unsuitable, the son introjects this in declaring his interest in art is also unsuitable. When the father controls the son by telling the son he must remain in the interview while the father goes to the washroom, the son responds in antithesis, independently reacting to the lengthiness of the interview. This reaction is effective, in that the father soon agrees to end the interview. On return from the washroom, the father resets the topic, and the son complements this with bored compliance.

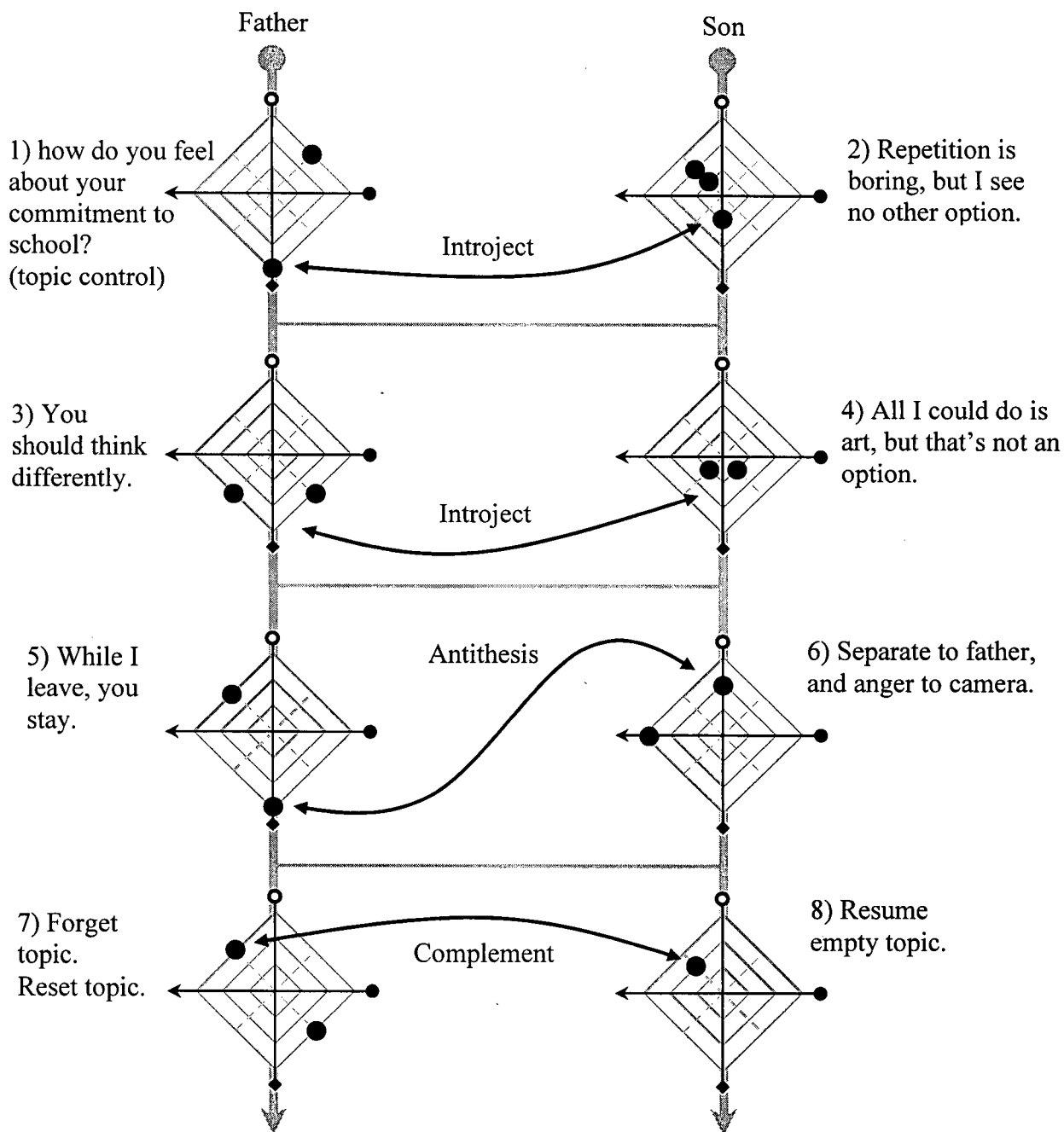


Figure 5-14 Section 3 Grouped & Filtered Sequence with Links

The son is in internal conflict, struggling to behave according to two incompatible principles. He can follow his father's plans, in which case he compliantly appears to be enthusiastic, but is held responsible for eliminating an overpowering experience of

boredom. Or he can investigate the skills he values within himself, but he must do so without the father's support, and he must overcome the daunting internalized belief that this skill is unacceptable as the basis of a career. This linkage appears in the form of an internal *opposition* between abandoning and nurturing. The situation is complex in that the way others treat him and the way he treats himself have opposite effects. If his father is to be nurturing, he is expected to treat himself with neglect (being bored). If he treats himself in a nurturing way, he has learned to expect neglect (father is uninvolved or leaves).

The self-confrontation interview provides some guidance in interpreting the particular timing of father's departure, and his failure to resume the discussion of art as a career. It would seem that the father holds no malice towards art, but simply has little awareness of how important this might be for his son¹⁰. The son's self-confrontation interview provides some insight into his conflicting views on the role of art in a career. He sees art as an essential and viable aspect of jobs such as web design¹¹, but finds the idea of charging money for art as incompatible with the appreciation of art¹².

¹⁰ I never actually thought of [son's name] as being an artist. I'm not so sure I've really ever thought of art as being a career anyway but that shouldn't really bother me particularly (Parent self confrontation line 171). He does draw some although I don't know as I've never seen any of his drawings (Parent self confrontation line 173).

¹¹ ... like web page design. People do that for money and it's easy and if you have artistic talent which I don't really but I'm sure I could develop something. (Adolescent self confrontation line 231)

¹² I wouldn't rip the world off like that. I don't believe in art as a career. I don't think it's fair to accept money for art because, unless you have spent a long time at it. I think that the artists that sell their stuff I don't agree with that. I think it's art and you shouldn't have to pay for art. (Adolescent self confrontation line 233)

5.4 Synthesis

Some patterns are strikingly consistent in these three samples of interpersonal relations. The father generally employs the transitive mode, and thus provides little access for the son to understand the father's own thoughts and impressions on the subjects they discuss.

In the following figure 5-15, I illustrate some of the typical interactions in the three sections I reviewed. The father interacts with the son on three predominant notes, which are often combined in a complex manner. He expresses a general interest in the son's welfare in the form of advice and questions designed to elicit the son's values. Yet the absence of a genuine response to the son's comments (particularly those with emotional concerns) creates a situation in which he seems to neglect the son's emotional process. Rather than facilitating the son's emotional experience, the father's substitutes preferred educational paths and solicits the son's involvement with that. This often takes on a controlling aspect.

The son responds to the father's benevolent control in three related processes. In most cases the son complements the father's control with compliance. The son also presents acts of self neglect, perhaps in the hope that his father will intervene with nurturing care. In moments of heightened tension, the son rejects himself or his abilities, escalating his protest against his father's seeming disregard.

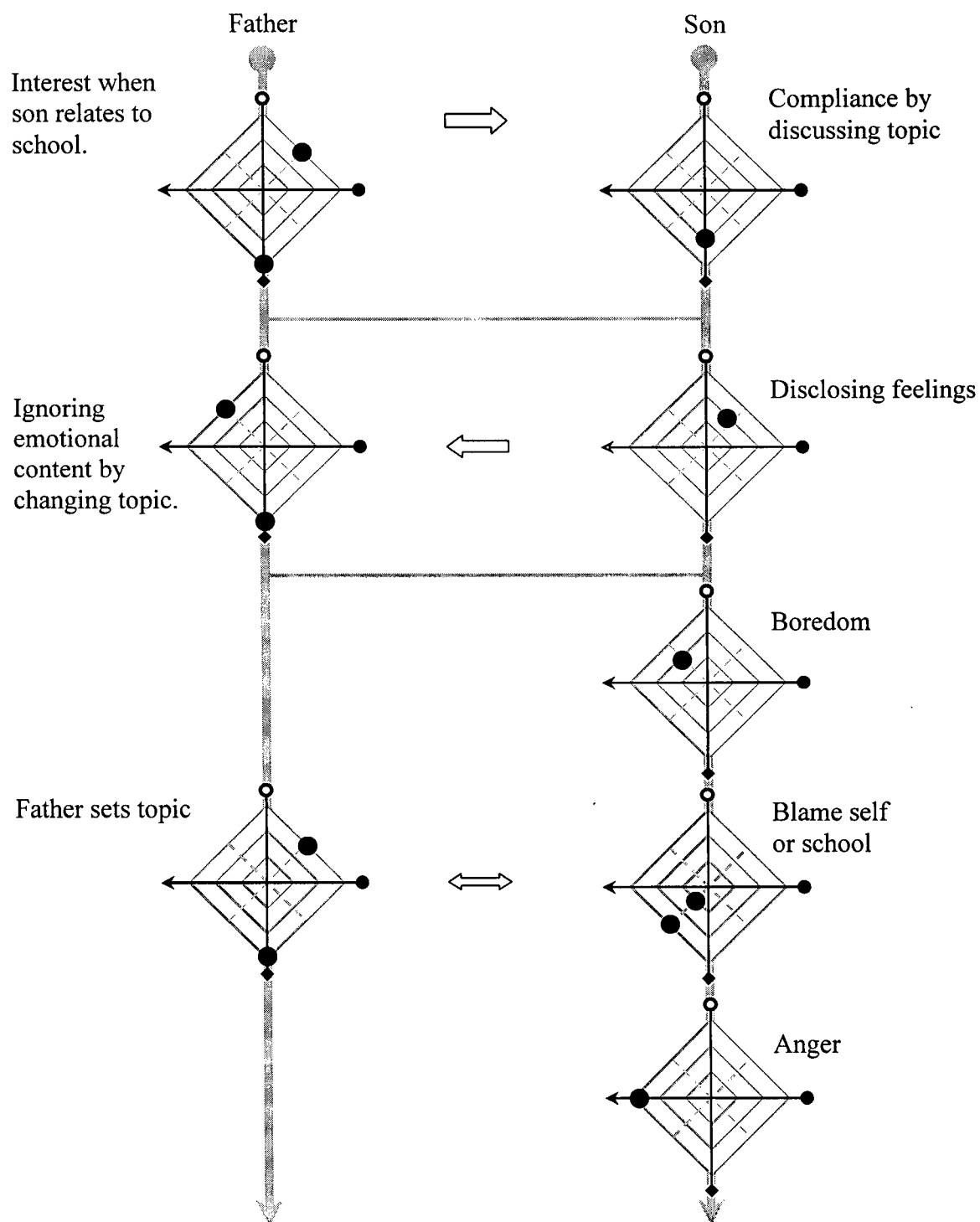


Figure 5-15 Summary of Typical Interactions

5.5 Intervention

An IRT case conceptualization of the son's experience is that he treats himself as others do. In his interactions with his father and school, he sees his feeling as being ignored, yet he wishes others would attend to his feeling. In seeking love, he is motivated to elicit the other's recognition of his feelings. Harming himself, ignoring his own interests, silencing himself in noticeable ways are pleas for the loving attention and concern of others. At the same time, treating himself in this way acts as an indictment of the poor teaching others have provided in their dealings with him. In this context, silencing himself can be seen as an angry action, with a hostile and distancing effect on others, perhaps in the hope that others will reach out towards him.

In therapy, once this pattern was clearly described, the son could develop understanding of his motivation by asking himself what he hoped his anger would secure or serve. Perhaps he might discover that in silencing his challenging opinions, he hoped others would love him enough to break through their pattern of distancing him (in control), and really try to understand him and value his thinking.

Once this motivation was uncovered and understood, the IRT therapist might move to a collaborative recognition of the doomed prospect that others would express their love by persisting in attempts to draw him out, while he resists by silencing himself. This would be followed by the development of new patterns, such as learning to express his feelings as an act of love for himself. Skills might then be developed that support this. The therapist might invite his response to learning skills such as assertiveness as a way to resist giving up on his feelings and thoughts. He might feel enriched in developing

awareness of his inner feelings through art therapy, authentic movement, journaling, and other practices that help to support the development of articulation and authenticity.

Little information is available to develop a case conceptualization for the father. It would require additional interviewing in order to identify the thoughts and hopes which support his exclusive focus on others, and his dependence upon control as a means of addressing the uncertainties his son presents.

6 Systemic Communications Analysis

In this analysis I begin by reviewing how key premises of the theory are represented in observational criteria. I apply the theory by tracing parts of the conversation between the father and son, noting how the rhetorical forms they use relate to the level of effectiveness they experience in their attempts to influence each other's value system.

6.1 Procedure

This systemic communications analysis constructs conflict by looking at the rhetorical forms that actors employ as they communicate their relationship to value differences. This analysis is based on the following observations: Interpersonal difference is based on the values people hold, and these values matter to varying degree. Conflict arises when a difference in values matters to the speaker, and its intensity grows as a speaker's attempts to influence the listener's value system begin to fail. Rhetorical forms such as persuasion and civility characterize communication when there is some prospect of influencing the listener's values. If a listener's value system resists the change a speaker demands, rhetorical forms such as disparagement and diatribe are employed and the conflict begins to escalate. As conflict escalates, the means of persuasion and the effectiveness of influence are diminished until finally arriving at a communications terminus where speech is abandoned and force is employed. Conflict resolution based on this analysis aims to restore the effectiveness of communication and broaden the range of rhetorical forms available for communicating influence. It also investigates the

relationship between the conflicting value systems, in order to discover a transcendent value which addresses the intent of the subordinate values.

With this brief description of the model of conflict, we shift to its application by interpreting the transcript. As I describe the rhetorical forms the dyad use as they engage in conflict, these form the basis for inferences about differences between value systems and the degree to which these matter.

6.2 Account

The transcript begins as a research assistant (RA) warms up a conversation about career between the father and son. The RA begins with an open question, inviting the dyad to describe “what’s important in your life?” Immediately the son employs the form of complaint (a weak form of diatribe), describing how “school dominates” his time, and what time remains is “occupied talking to him [the father].” The father also complains that although the son “spends a lot of time listening”, the son doesn’t “do much time talking to his dad.” The son criticizes his father’s discussion style, saying “I get talked out a lot.” The son shares his views openly with the RA, and the father expresses enthusiasm for being approached “at the right time” to discuss career, so it seems they both value communication in general. However, it seems the father and son both devalue how the other communicates, it’s a problem for them, and they haven’t been successful in getting what they want from their discussions.

An example of how they discuss their different values soon follows, after the research assistant asks the son what he sees himself doing with his time. A brief sample of this conversation is presented in Table 6-1. For each speaking turn, I make an assignment of the conflict level, and I highlight (in italics) the rhetorical form employed.

Table 6-1 Systemic Communications Analysis

Speaker and content.	Conflict level and rhetorical forms.
(Son 1) Um, I figure I'll get into a field I enjoy. I'll probably work quite a bit and I'll probably play quite a bit too.	Level 1. Openly <i>sharing</i> thoughts and values.
(Father 2) What is the difference between work and play?	Level 2. Notices the possibility of a difference in value. Asks a <i>platonic question</i> to invite reasoning based on values.
(Son 3) (long pause) Work is stuff you have to do. Play is stuff you want to do but you don't necessarily have to do.	Level 2. Provides the <i>rationale</i> that a voluntary quality distinguishes play from work.
(Father 4) How would you like to work at something that you like to do and you didn't particularly have to do?	Level 3. Implies awareness of a value difference and moves to <i>persuade</i> that work can be voluntary.
(Son 5) That would be okay.	Level 2. <i>Accepting</i> of diversity as long as the father is defining his own values.
(Father 6) That's what I would like you to think of as a career. But you know. And it's not something that you need to make your mind up about right away. You don't have to get all panicky about it.	Level 3. Value difference and attempt to <i>influence</i> is explicit. Followed by reminders of civility: respect for the son's decision making autonomy, and advice to remain calm.
(Son 7) That would be interesting but I don't know if that happens.	Level 3. Recognition of difference and resistance to persuasion. Politely, the son is <i>unconvinced</i> by the father's assertion.
(Father 8) Well it can but it doesn't necessarily though. A lot of times you have to do stuff you don't like to do.	Level 3. Father recognizes his argument has not persuaded the son. Changing position, he <i>argues</i> a concept of work that involves both voluntary and forced parts.
(Son 9) Well I would like to do something that I DO like to do. I don't care if I get paid for it or not.	Level 3. Son moves to <i>persuade</i> , detailing the way he could work, based on the value of it being voluntary.
(Father 10) Oh that's good. Just play all the time. That's what I do.	Level 3. Implicit acknowledgement that neither person has been persuasive. In frustration the father becomes <i>sarcastic</i> .

The dialogue in table 6-1 shows the development of conflict predicted by the systemic communications model of conflict. It begins with an open sharing of the son's thoughts, within which the father recognizes a potential difference in value concerning

the division of work and play. The father helps make this difference explicit by asking for details of the son's thinking process. The son shares how the value of voluntary living seems compromised by the forced nature of work, while the father refers to a conception of work that is voluntary. At this point they have stayed at level 2, acknowledging their difference and finding out if it matters. For the son, it would seem preferable to simply accept the difference as "okay." For the father, the difference matters too much to accept, so he moves to influence. They enter level 3 by putting arguments designed to persuade the other, but neither becomes convinced. In frustration the father gives up on persuasion and descends to ridicule.

A description of the underlying value systems suggests the following topology (see figure 6-1). My use of pattern indicates relationship. Where one pattern is superimposed upon another and the lines become denser (as in the son's 'what you enjoy doing'), this indicates a compatible combination of values with the background ('what you don't have to do'). A completely different pattern (white) compared to a background pattern, indicates an incompatible value.

Figure 6-1 represents the moment before the father becomes sarcastic, when he is explaining his view about how he enjoys his work as a whole, even if it includes some parts that he dislikes. For the son, work and play are separate. The topology represents his expression in line 3.

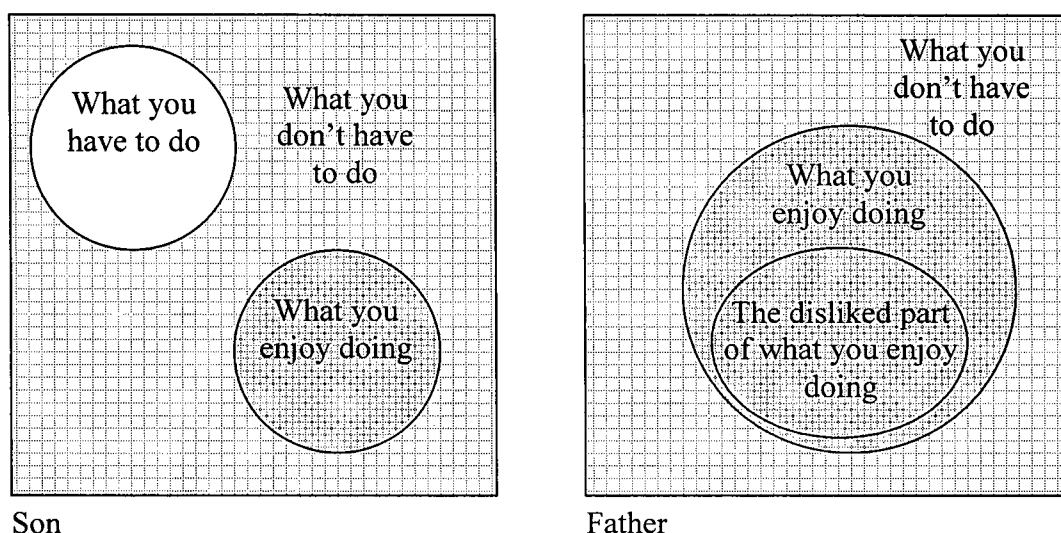


Figure 6-1 **Topology of Voluntary and Involuntary Action**

For the son, the value of doing something that he really wants to do is a non-negotiable condition, incompatible with work which is done out of compulsion. For the father, work can include activities that are compelled, within those which are desired. For the son, fusing these incompatibles simply isn't possible. Interpreting the conflict requires identifying a block, such as this incompatibility; while resolving it involves finding ways around it. In the absence of such a discovery, frustration sets in, and with it diatribe.

This description of the conflict seems consistent with comments the two make later in the transcript. As the son discusses this interaction with his father, the son tells the RA, "I don't agree with a lot of his positions on things." He explains to his father "I don't believe in your thing on that careers can be fun too. I don't buy that." The father seems incredulous that the son doesn't believe the father. Although the son's disbelief seems to be the problem, the son himself becomes the problem when the father turns to the RA to complain "See, he does this all the time."

This model of conflict would acknowledge how frustrated the father feels, but recognize that it is frustration with the failure to persuade, rather than with the son as a person. Ultimately the model would seek to identify transcendent value systems, which when understood, removes the basis of incompatibility. For example, perhaps it would help to tune the father's point to address the son's concern.

It would be important to articulate ways in which compulsory and voluntary activity can combine. For example, the son might be invited to imagine the job of feeding a pet. No one *has* to have a pet, so it belongs in the set of "what you don't have to do". It's voluntary, in that one wants to have the pet and is willing to provide what the pet needs to live. However, it includes compulsory parts in that one has to feed the pet or else the pet will die. Perhaps this concept might be named, explicitly described as willing sacrifice, the transcendental concept. It would be important to collaboratively join the son in reviewing his own life to discover similar examples. It could be helpful to distinguish this concept from unwilling sacrifice, which is compulsory and involuntary activity, something father and son can both agree they do not value. If the son claimed the value of willing sacrifice for himself, he might feel it was possible to remain true to an image of himself in which he does what he wants to do, and feels this is compatible with giving up his time serving the needs and interests of others.

I turn now to a later section of the transcript, after the RA has left and the father and son are talking alone, to interpret a conflict that repeatedly enters into their conversation. As they try to address the question of what the son plans to do for his career, they seem to approach the subject from several angles, often coming upon disagreement. The various approaches to the subject are often interrupted by other

concerns or temporarily abandoned, but its central importance causes the issue to cycle back. I will provide a condensed summary of the issue, omitting details that concern interruptions.

6.3 *The Role of Independence in Career*

After the father admonishes the son to “keep focused”, the son shares his sense of the conversation so far: it’s about “the basis” of career and “what you need to get there”. The father criticizes that “we haven’t gone very far with how to get there,” charging that “all we said was that you think you need to go to school.” The son objects that this was really the father’s idea, saying “That’s what *you* think you need to do.” The father pulls back, commenting on the imbalance in the conversation by saying “I’ve been doing lots of talking,” and turns the responsibility for keeping the conversation going over to the son. They seem to hold each other jointly responsible for the principles of discussion: it should be relevant, people should speak for themselves, and both parties need to contribute equally.

The son reveals that he can’t contribute much since he has almost no experience with career, but nor does he have high expectations of the father’s ability in this regard. The son says “... I don’t have a career. I’ve had one job okay. I don’t know what I’m talking about. You have some clue, although it may not be very much of one...” The father admits he has little to offer, and then deftly returns to the subject by asking the son “How do you think you are going to go about picking an occupation?” The son repeats his conception of following interests, but when the father asks for an example, the son responds with irritation “I have already told you that. Computers, electronics.” In response to the father’s persistent prompts for detail about what the son would do with

his interests, the son describes a process of applying for jobs in computer stores to do sales, repairs, or “whatever they want you to do.” Then the son proposes to “quit your computer store job and go somewhere larger like the ones that make computers.” After a brief interruption, the son returns to the subject by offering a definition of career as the gradual rise through a series of successively larger companies: “You want to get yourself with a big corporation that has lots of money and is worth a lot.” until finally arriving at a position of power, when “you try and buy out all their shares.” The father responds to the son’s plans: “I think the idea of quitting the job and moving up is a great idea. I think the idea of your final goal being working for a big corporation is a bad idea.” The son defends himself, saying “that’s what a career is.” The father begins to retort, “No that’s ...” but the son interrupts, clarifying “That’s what *my* idea of a career is.” When the father replies “It’s not a career” the markers of conflict are clear.

A review of this section shows the son beginning to describe his views on career, but he does so with the anticipation of criticism that his views lack the authority of experience. Deprecating his father’s experience seems to even the balance enough that the son begins to talk, and he lays out a career plan. When the father diminishes the legitimacy of part of the son’s plan by calling it bad, the son in turn rejects the legitimacy of the father’s attempt to define terms unilaterally. Here the conversation has moved from level 2 (sharing views in the context of recognizing difference), to level 3 (criticizing the other’s views or their conversational process). The son implicitly argues that his father’s criticism is uncivil: the son’s authority to describe career was denied the respect it deserves based on their shared principle of conversational equality. A power play will

now unfold (moving from level 3 to 4), as the father responds to this charge with a series of arguments designed to make the son change his mind.

The father moves to introduce evidence (of the badness of the son's description of career), by asking the son to recall an article from the authoritative New York Times, which the father had told the son to read. The son resists this use of power by denying conversational access to the article, since he has no recollection of it. Power seems to equalize when the father experiences difficulty making his argument without the son's support - after which the son seems to gradually recover his memory of the article. (I note this level 4 use of deception in response to the symbolic introduction of power.) The father then recounts the article, about the founding developers of the innovative line of computers produced by Apple. The son moves to thwart, by interrupting the story to comment on the severe financial difficulties currently facing the Apple Corporation. The father denies this, and continues by emphasizing the point of the story: one doesn't need to rely upon corporations; individuals with bright ideas can change the world and rise to positions of great power. Although the argument is convincing of the father's point, the son argues that it is unreasonable to apply it in this case. The son mounts a reasoned argument that there are certain requirements to be able to change the world, and as he is in the ninth grade, the son lacks the education. The father rebuts, pointing out that Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, dropped out of university. For the father the key to success is the willingness to take hold of an idea and run with it.

During this series of arguments and counter-arguments, it would be easy to forget the son's point about his right to hold his own opinion. Perhaps the son tries to resolve this unfinished conflict, by referring to a previous conversation in which the son had

presented an inventive idea of his own. The son had discussed the possibility of making video cards, but at that time the father had dismissed the idea, since it was impossible to manufacture electronics out of the home. In the present conversation, the father resists and dismisses this change of topic, wanting the son to acknowledge the point of his argument, but overlooking the purpose of the son's resistance. The son gives up in frustration, protesting that the father doesn't understand. When the father returns to his praise of inventors, the son decries the father for wanting the son to repeat some example, as opposed to letting the son find his own way.

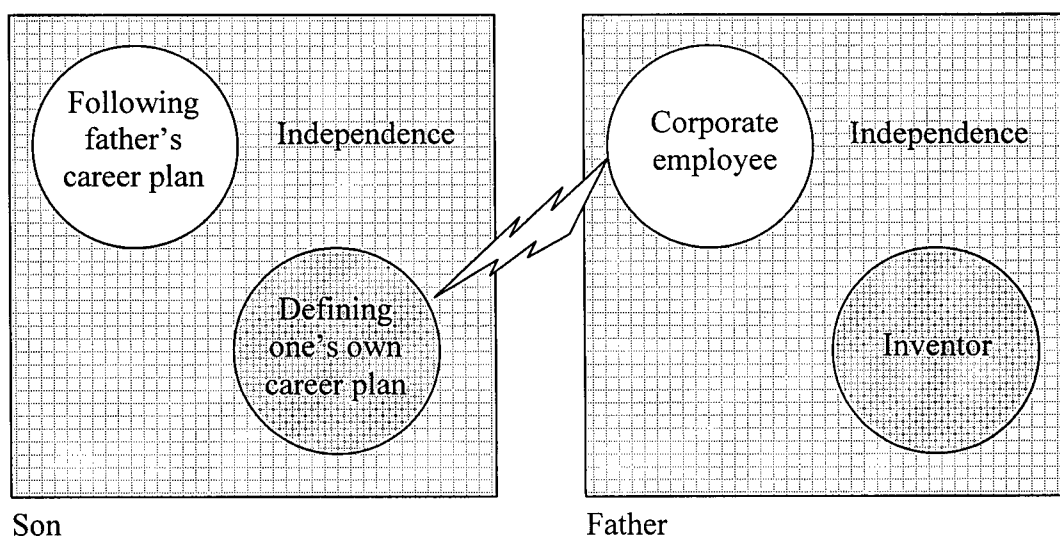


Figure 6-2 Topology of Independence in Career

Analyzing this section from a systemic communications perspective, it seems that for both parties the value of independence matters very much. Thus, in figure 6-2, the value of independence is common to the topology of values of both the father and son. When the father sees the son's independence threatened by a career plan that depends upon a corporation, he objects. When the son sees his independence of thought threatened by the dictates or arguments of his father, he resists. Conflict occurs when the son's idea

of joining a corporation offends the father's value of independence. This is represented graphically by the lightning bolt icon. At the same time, the suggestion that the son should follow the father's example of becoming an inventor, offends the son's desire to find his own independent direction. Similarly, a lightening bolt could also have been placed between the two furthest circles, but as this is too cluttering, the reader should assume it.

An intervention oriented towards recognizing this shared value of independence has the potential to transform this situation in which both feel frustrated, into one in which they are able to support each other in a collaborative context. The counselor might ask "in what way does your idea of career promote independence?" Once both parties recognized this as a shared value, it becomes a question of the degree of independence; a personal preference for which more latitude is available.

Resuming our review of the conversation, at this point the father begins to recognize how his use of language communicates a devaluing of the son's independence. When the son complains "You just want another ..." the father denies it, saying "No. I don't just want another anything." He reiterates that "what I want is a ..." and then corrects his rhetorical construction to that of offering an alternative, indicating a recognition of the son's right to decide for himself. He repeats his value concisely: "rather than working for a large corporation is to develop an idea that you have." He acknowledges the son's refusal to accept his idea, attributes this refusal to the son's ignorance of the world, and excuses the problem as a developmental limitation of youth. He insists that the son should "think" the idea of "changing the world" as an inventor is ... (unspecified), but then moderates himself to acknowledge the son's authority over his

own thinking by suggesting that the son should “find” the idea (unspecified). Finally the father critiques this communication style as “wrong”, and begins again with an ‘I statement’: “I find it a really attractive idea.” Here the father demonstrated deliberate control of rhetorical form in an effort to rise out of conflict. After distancing himself from the culture of the developers, the father emphasizes that what he most admires is their willingness to risk everything in an effort to manifest their idea.

6.4 The Role of Risk in Career Development

It seemed the father made a conscious effort to contain his esteem for taking risk in developing one’s career - as a *personal* value. Yet perhaps previous attitudes exert momentum, because the son seems to interpret the father’s words as a value that the father is applying to him, and the son erupts in protest. The son strongly resists the implication that he too should risk everything, describing it as something he simply cannot do. An open conflict breaks out, in which two opposing perspectives on the nature of risk collide.

In my portrayal of the topology in the ensuing conflict (see figure 6-3), I highlight a value difference in relation to risk arising from contrasting developmental priorities. For the father, youth is a time when the cost of failure is relatively low in comparison with adulthood, and so the benefit of risk is correspondingly high. For the son, who possesses so few things as yet, the impact of any loss is prohibitively high. Level 3 conflict proceeds as they try to convince each other of the perspective each holds, never rising to consider the level 2 possibility that holding different perspectives is appropriate to their different stages of life.

The father asks “what have you got to lose?” and the son refers to his connections to family. The father denies this is ever at risk, and prods the son for evidence that anything is really at risk. The son finds an irrefutable example in his relationship with the cat, which will die, but then in seriousness, reveals that his internal security is at risk. The son points to qualities of his emerging personality, independence (“piss and vinegar”) and enthusiasm (“vim and vigor”) that seem vulnerable as a teenager. The father continues to contest the possibility of losing aspects of personality, until the son confronts the father with the simple and probably universal experience of discouragement, in which the risky consequence of failure is the loss of confidence.

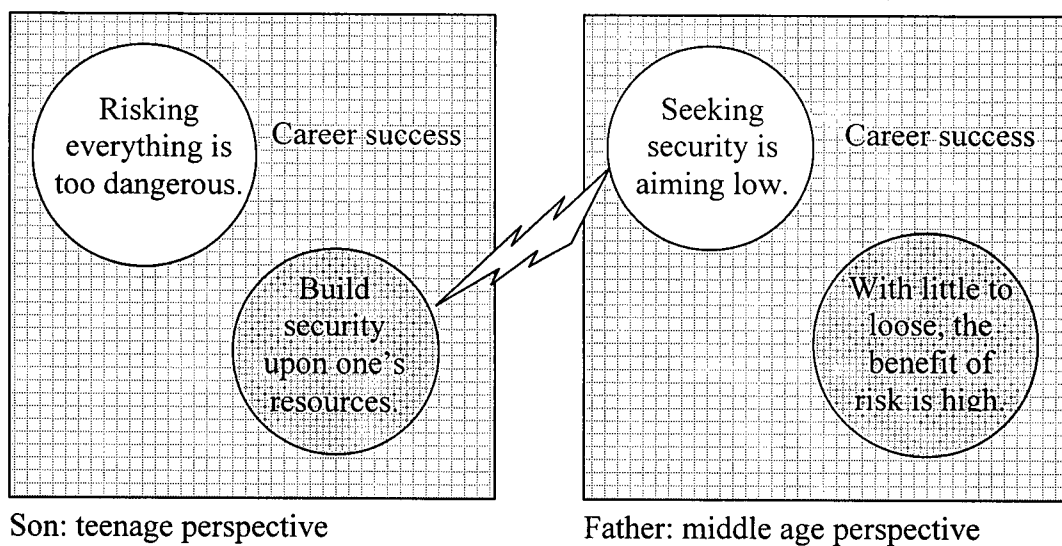


Figure 6-3 Topology of Risk in Relation to Career Success

The value of aiming high, and taking risk to get there, is so important for the father, that he cannot take in the validity of the fact that people can get discouraged. Instead he disparages the son's willingness to try, noting the likelihood of failure if one begins in a state of discouragement. The son retorts that his point was not that he would try and fail, but that he wouldn't try, thereby continuing to retain and build up security.

The quality of discourse is moving lower as attempts to convince turn into misunderstanding and shaming. Perhaps the father begins to doubt the success he will have in convincing his son, because he changes direction and tentatively begins to acknowledge the value of security. This concession is still too little for the son, who expresses outrage at the father's insistence on risking everything. The father entrenches his position in a relatively long monologue, arguing at first that the fear of loss of self or relationship is illusory, but then conceding that there are instances when it is possible. Then he discusses the conditions under which being cautious is a good thing, but denies that such conditions apply to the son. Finally he states that "the biggest kind of security you can have is an internal one and you can never lose that one."

Completely unconvinced, the son contradicts the father with his own irrefutable personal experience. The son reveals that his internal security is at risk when he feels depressed. At such times, the son reports feeling that he loses everything. The father rationally disputes the generalization of the word everything, but the son insists that the subjective experience is a pervasive loss of color such that "everything goes all gray and black." The father cannot argue with this, and I imagine he feels touched with concern for his son's well being. When the father learns that his son suffers feelings of depression as often as once or twice a week, the father commits to discussing this at a later time, and both pull back from their conflict.

It would appear some value has emerged that trumps the importance the father places upon changing his son's relationship to risk. One can speculate that perhaps the father feels he has spent all his arguments and has little to gain by persisting, or perhaps the value of privacy asserts itself as more important than pursuing his argument. In any

case, some greater value has emerged that reorients the two. They abandon their conflict in an unresolved condition, and launch a fresh start on the basis of their co-operative relationship. The father again reviews their objective of 'getting to an occupation', and identifies school and training as a means of approach.

In terms of intervention, it would be important to point out that risk is being framed as an all or nothing condition. Identifying a transcendent value might emerge by considering risk as an option when there is sufficient security. Noting the gradual increase in security with development as an adult, might make it easier for the son to consider taking risk later, and for the father to accept the son's current focus on security.

6.5 *The Purpose of Career*

"Getting to an occupation" is up for discussion again. This is the fourth time that they have returned to this launching point in their conversation. This speaks to the importance the father gives to the subject, and implicitly raises questions as to the effectiveness of their discussion. Considering the subject, but not the manner of discussion, the father asks for some assurance from the son that choosing an occupation is important to the son. The son says it is "pretty important" and the father asks what "getting to an occupation" will "mean in terms of what you are going to be doing with school?" The son recommits himself to school, but the father seems to doubt this, asking "Do you actually believe that's important?" When the son reassures him, the father lays out a plan for the next few years involving the son's passage through high school and post secondary training. The father reveals the value he places on awareness of purpose, when he asks what the son will do with his education.

Purpose seems to be a problematic concept for the son, one that he has temporarily resolved by delaying the question. The son reports that once he finishes his education, he plans to “get a job.” The conversation threatens to repeat the course it took earlier, when the father demanded details of the son’s job plans, and ended up imposing a career of developing computers to change the world. The father takes a different approach this time, asking how the son “feels about all that stuff.” The son responds generously to this open question, and shares his difficulty. The son recognizes that career involves a long term commitment, and is troubled by the experience of boredom that characterizes his relationship with it. For the son, career involves repetition by its nature, as though some structural quality of career denies the possibility of variety. Both father and son value variety. The father challenges the son to consider a career where “every time you did something, it was something different.” This brings the son face to face with the painful consequences of a belief. The son declares that his real skill is art, but that he doesn’t believe art can be considered as a career. No wonder then, that after foreclosing on his true interest, everything else is tainted with recriminating messages of disinterest. The idea that art cannot be a career has so much power for the son, that no counter argument is made, and he surrenders his sense of purpose.

Unfortunately the father does not offer support in this moment when the son has difficulty trusting his interest in art. For some reason, the father cannot help the son work through this problem at this time. The father responds to a need to visit the washroom, and upon return he does not address the subject again. While the son is left alone, he protests the video camera - angrily (and vainly) telling it to “quit looking at me.” The son probably feels powerless to affect the impassive camera or the inflexible unfair

conditions dominating his freedom of choice. The experience of powerlessness helps to identify a descent into the fourth level of discourse, with its characteristic non-disclosure and shiftiness.

When the father returns and launches into discussing the son's choice of supporting software or hardware, the son complies without protest. Yet the conversation has a distracted tone and follows a disorganized course. At first the son discusses writing software in terms of its advantage of being shielded from the frustrations and complexity of hardware. When the father points out that software can be similar, the son scraps the idea of writing software, since it is boring, inflexible, and drives him crazy. The son settles on repair, since it satisfies the two values he feels certain about. Repair satisfies one purpose of work in that it provides money, and it is easy to do since it only requires knowledge of mechanics. The reader may anticipate that a conflict will follow (see figure 6-4) since the son's planning on the basis of expediency offends the father's high esteem for the value of purposeful work.

At first the father comments favorably on the son's choice and acknowledges the value of monetary reward. However, the absence of the father's esteem for this work matters too much to be ignored. Perhaps the father doubts his ability to persuade the son to adopt his high value for purposeful work, since he uses a series of subtle put downs to communicate his opposition. The father criticizes ease of access as a value in selecting a career, calling this a "lowest common denominator" approach. He tries to soften his reproach, noting that mechanics don't take the worries of their job home with them - a point the son contests. When the father tentatively acknowledges that the son might take this career direction, he subtly communicates his displeasure by reminding the son of a

previous conversation in which they criticized the career of mechanics. Specifically, the father calls up the image of a local mechanic, who also seems to be alcoholic. The father provides faint praise for the rate of pay, converting it into cases of beer per hour. After the father emphasizes this as the result of choosing a career on the “lowest common denominator” basis, the son protests the devaluation. He defends people’s right to choose this course, saying it’s good enough for some people. Perhaps the son is not fully committed to becoming a mechanic, but he sides with their right to choose this path and defends their dignity. A gulf forms between the positions the two are taking, and they begin to talk across it.

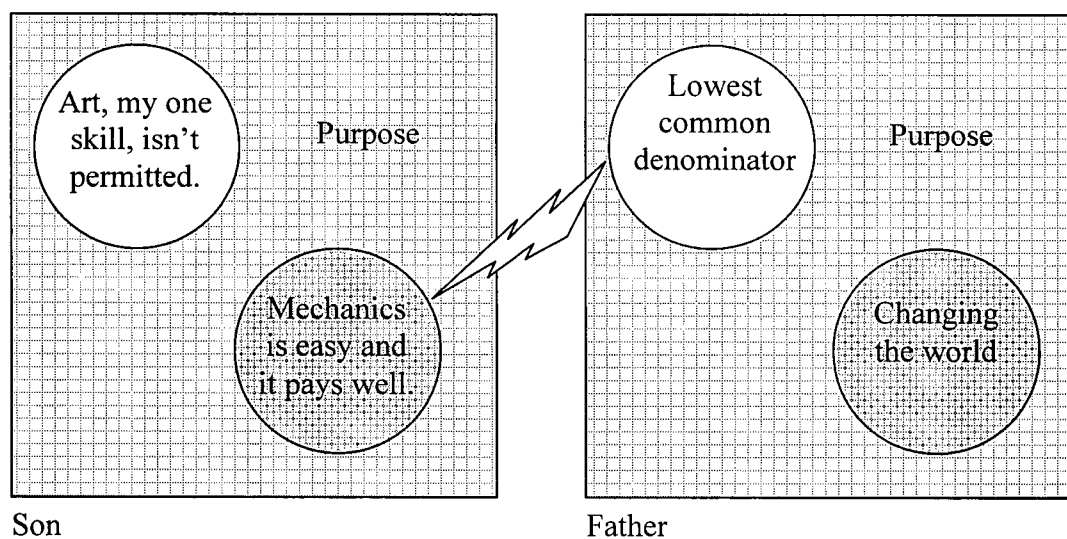


Figure 6-4 **Topology of Purpose in Career**

As an intervention in this example, I would want to emphasize the shared value of high purpose, and perhaps emphasize that finding a way to live this out can sometimes be a slow process. Perhaps if the father acknowledged the role of art as close to the son’s high purpose, he would be able to correct what seems to be a misunderstanding (that the son aspires to mechanics). I suspect the father would have less problem with the son’s

working with mechanics, if it were clear that the money earned could support a high purpose (such as art).

In fact they don't come to an understanding; instead they begin to manage the expectations each other holds in order to avoid further disappointment. The father tries to clarify his intentions: he denies wanting the son to aim too high, and he retracts his expectation that the son should change the world, but he cannot resist reminding the son not to eliminate the possibility of changing the world. The son suggests the problem lies with the father's worry that the son is eliminating this possibility – changing the world never was one of the son's goals. The son puts the father on notice that he won't be held accountable for anything he agrees to in the interview. The father denies holding the son to anything, and defends his intentions in having the conversation. The father affirms the son's authority to decide his career for himself, and explains that he only wants to “spur” the son to “thinking new thoughts.” When the father denies forcing the son to make up his mind, the son repeats with irony, that it is the son's mind to make up, not the father's. Here we see an echo of the conflict in figure 6-2, concerning the role of independence in selecting a career.

The father struggles with how to balance the competing values that compel him. He values the son's autonomy and assures the son that he respects the son's right to make up his mind for himself. However, he fears the son will be short changed since, although the son has great potential, he doubts the son's ability to commit to the work it takes to develop it. The father offers a permissive attitude towards the son's indecision, but asserts his authority to demand that the son talk about his decision making process. The son sarcastically acknowledges this authority, by sharing his desire to change the subject.

This provides an example of how conflict that remains unresolved, and has suffered the effect of power, moves the weaker party toward an unwillingness to communicate at all. The level of discourse descends from level 4 to a hard silence, when communication fails.

The father asks what the son might have found interesting in the conversation, and after criticism that the conversation lacked applicability to the son's concerns the son provides faint praise for a distant event. The father praises the son for having talked more than usual, and then swears at himself for talking more than he feels he should have. The son reprimands the father for swearing. The son can't contribute anything more to the conversation, and they both seem exhausted. They both implicitly affirm the value they place on relevant conversation, but now find themselves lacking in this regard. The father releases the son from having to continue, and the son quickly takes the opportunity to move on to the next thing.

6.6 The Relationship to Values in the Construction of Conflict

Through the analysis of this conversation I hope to have shown how conflict appeared when either side of the dyad recognized a difference in values between them. After considering the rhetorical forms they employ to communicate their relationship to the other's world view and the values on which they are based, I distinguished the level of conflict in terms of how they try to influence the other. Ideally, the desire to influence is met through persuasion. However, if the listener experiences difficulty in accommodating the speaker's value system, the speaker is likely to feel frustrated and misunderstandings began to occur. If the speaker's value system is perceived to present some threat to the listener, then persuasion is likely to fail. If the speaker doesn't perceive the other's values are changing appropriately, then persuasion is abandoned. It is often

replaced by an unwillingness to communicate, by depreciative criticism, or by appeals to coercive power. There is little likelihood that this kind of argument will have an intended persuasive effect; more often it results in a communications gulf and hardened positions.

7 Process Analysis

Although Process Oriented Psychology employs a wide range of concepts to describe awareness manifest in experience, this analytic procedure draws upon a subset of process concepts related to conflict: complexity in the transpersonal field, highly conductive field lines, and the individual experience of the edge. These three concepts provide entry points for this process oriented analysis. By drawing evidence from the transcript, I 'populate' these concepts with observations to create a portrayal of process and the construction of conflict contained within it.

7.1.1 Field

Concepts about work support a field in this conversation. The field is polarized in terms of the purpose, enjoyment, interest, and utility of work. At one end the idea of interesting¹³ work, which is personally fulfilling, and at the other the idea of boring work that is a drudgery¹⁴ motivated solely by money.

Career is complex for this dyad. It has imaginary components of opposite sign, resulting in conflict about the nature of career. Using a format borrowed from complex mathematics, this would be coded as follows:

$$(\text{career} + \text{fulfillment}) (\text{career} - \text{drudgery}) = (\text{who is a career serving?})$$

Both the father and the son share their awareness of this field, and each expresses some awareness of both poles. However, the father identifies more strongly with the

¹³ What if you didn't do the same thing over and over again, but every time you did something it was something different (dyad conversation, parent line 380)?

¹⁴ ... I do something and I do it again, and I do it again, and I do it again, and it's boring (dyad conversation, adolescent line 379). You can't do everything different with a career. You have to do it the same way (dyad conversation, adolescent line 381).

fulfilling side, while the son identifies more with the drudgery side. Similarly it might be expected that the son disowns the fulfillment associations, and the father discounts the drudgery aspect.

7.1.2 Process

In this section I synthesize the essential process that seems to underlie how the father and son experience their conversation. Although I try to base my hypothesis on statements the individuals make, I present a common theme as a result of sensing. In interpretation I infer their process, although in therapy it would preferable to ask the participants to formulate their own sense of the underlying experience.

For the father there is a frustrating¹⁵ experience of not believing the son really knows what he wants to do¹⁶. In general he finds the son doesn't talk enough¹⁷. Even though the son puts out some ideas¹⁸, the father can't believe the son really wants to pursue these paths¹⁹. He doesn't feel successful in directly confronting the son with his disbelief²⁰, so he is indirect²¹: He challenges the son to dig deeper²² and discover an

¹⁵ I think probably I get a little frustrated with, it's a side issue, it's not actually dealing with what the problem is (parent self confrontation, line 8).

¹⁶ I don't think you have ever seen anything that you have really wanted to do (dyad conversation, parent line 415).

¹⁷ No this is a conversation and conversations go two ways. I want to know what you want to talk about. You never want to tell me what you want to talk about. You never want to talk either. I'm the one talking all the time and I get tired of it. (dyad conversation, parent line 191).

¹⁸ He just described what he thought a career path was and it wound up in exactly the place, doing exactly the things that he hates doing (parent self confrontation, line 81).

¹⁹ I just don't want you short changing yourself (dyad conversation, parent line 415).

²⁰ I do [challenge the son] but so far it hasn't gotten through (parent self confrontation, line 32).

authentic path²³. He offers attractive alternatives for the son to consider²⁴. He warns the son of the consequences of the unfulfilling jobs the son claims to want²⁵. By recounting his own history, he tries to model the discovery experience he wishes his son would have²⁶. Unfortunately nothing seems to work²⁷, in getting his son to state his *real* career interest²⁸.

For the son there is an experience of boredom²⁹. He finds discussing career tedious³⁰. He finds his father talks too much³¹, and distrusts the way his father engages

²¹ But it's an alternative and it should be one that you think, no it should be one that you find, no that's wrong too, personally I find it a really attractive idea (dyad conversation, parent line 334).

²² I'm just trying to spur you on to thinking new thoughts (dyad conversation, parent line 413).

²³ I keep saying that instead of doing that think about what it is you really want to do in the long term (parent self confrontation, line 30).

²⁴ I want him to have an interesting life. I want him to be engaged in his life. I want him to actually care what happens to him rather than just letting things happen to him (parent self confrontation, line 217).

²⁵ I only want to caution you about this. Don't aim for the lowest common denominator (dyad conversation, parent line 407).

²⁶ I didn't know what I wanted to do when I was 16. I didn't know what I wanted to do when I was 22. I didn't find out what I wanted to do until I was about 25. So nobody is saying you have to decide today but we do have to talk about it (dyad conversation, parent line 415).

²⁷ I'm trying to push him, but [son's name] tends to not respond terribly well and all I end up doing is pushing and pushing and pushing (parent self confrontation, line 142). I think I'm pushing him again and he wants me to back off (parent self confrontation, line 50).

²⁸ I guess, mostly what I'm trying to do in most of these things is I'm trying to find out, and I'm trying to get him to think about the things that he's interested in not the things that he feels he has skills in (parent self confrontation, line 39).

²⁹ Takes a long time and I don't really want to invest the time because I get really bored with the whole thing (dyad conversation, adolescent line 377)

³⁰ [career] requires a lot of thought and stuff which isn't necessarily a bad thing but it does get a little tedious after awhile (adolescent self confrontation, line 259).

him in conversation³². Although he endures the conversation³³, he yawns³⁴ and fidgets³⁵. The question of career is difficult and he wants to drop it³⁶. He would prefer to do things that are fun³⁷ and which give him the option of jumping out³⁸. Career seems like a long term commitment³⁹, and he doesn't want to dedicate himself to something he expects will sour in obligation⁴⁰. He feels he is bright and has an imagination⁴¹, but that it is important to hide it⁴², to keep it under wraps⁴³. He sometimes feels afraid of the real world⁴⁴, and

³¹ He rambles on at the mouth. So it's sort of yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir until he shuts up (adolescent self confrontation, line 27).

³² ... he puts me in these situations where it is just a catch 22. If I say one thing he'll just say another. So I guess I was feeling a little cornered (adolescent self confrontation, line 21).

³³ Nothing happened there. That was just (pause) ugh, it makes me sick to watch it, it's depressing. Nothing happened there, absolutely nothing. It was just sort of one of our little ramblings (adolescent self confrontation, line 72).

³⁴ A lot of times when [son's name] and I have conversations [son's name] ends up yawning (parent self confrontation, line 17). Don't yawn. (dyad conversation, parent line 232). (yawn) Sorry (dyad conversation, adolescent line 283).

³⁵ I was getting a little bit bored there. I was starting to get a little fidgety (adolescent self confrontation, line 183).

³⁶ ... it just makes me feel a little uneasy. I don't like to think about it if I don't have to (adolescent self confrontation, line 17).

³⁷ Like go bungee jumping, nude (dyad conversation, adolescent line 145).

³⁸ I like to jump out at any time (dyad conversation, adolescent line 15).

³⁹ I figure careers aren't necessarily one thing I want right now. I sort of view them as being this really long standing thing that you sort of have to do for a long time. I don't really like doing things like that (dyad conversation, adolescent line 15).

⁴⁰ It's just one of those really long standing commitments and you sort of put a lot of time into it and there is no point in turning back, so just go and do it. I don't really like that mentality. I think if things go sour I want a way out. And it's not for me (son self confrontation, line 122).

⁴¹ I'm smart and I'm never challenged so I just get bored (son self confrontation, line 3).

⁴² [referring to imagination] Tried to hide that one (dyad conversation, adolescent line 247).

often feels vulnerable⁴⁵. Rather than facing discouragement⁴⁶, it seems better not to try⁴⁷. But boredom has its own frustrations and loss⁴⁸, and now the only thing he feels really motivates him is money⁴⁹.

7.2 Projections

In this section I have identified some of the objects and activities that the two discuss. The father and son both agree on what a particular thing or activity is, but they make associations with these shared objects, which they compare with each other. If we were to identify the objects in consensus reality terms, they are neutral, but as vessels for projections, the objects become charged. The meaning each person gives an object is expressive of their internal process. Common themes in the way these meanings are organized, speaks to how a field is energizing their awareness. Polarity in this field,

⁴³ I can still do it [be bright], but you have to do it under cover. You can't let everyone know you are a brain (son self confrontation, line 244).

⁴⁴ The real world was scary when I came into it. It's interesting but there is a lot of stuff you are not prepared for too (son self confrontation, line 240).

⁴⁵ I've lost it [internal security] many times (dyad conversation, adolescent line 359). When I get really depressed I lose my internal security, I lose everything. (dyad conversation, adolescent line 361). Everything usually goes all gray and black. (dyad conversation, adolescent line 363).

⁴⁶ You get discouraged (dyad conversation, adolescent line 353). Um, there is nothing like being discouraged before you ever try and do something (dyad conversation, parent line 354).

⁴⁷ Actually I was saying I wouldn't try [doing something] (dyad conversation, adolescent line 355).

⁴⁸ I would say more often than not, on the things I'm not interested in they sort of fall through. (son self confrontation, line 49).

⁴⁹ [referring to motivators] Nothing really works. Um, well yeah I'm here. Hundred bucks man, cash on the stick. (son self confrontation, line 51). Well it was a kick in the ass. It got me here (son self confrontation, line 53).

results in contrary meanings being assigned to the objects. As they contrast their associations, they conflict.

7.2.1 Computers

Corresponding with the field, there is a high dream about the role of computers in fulfilling one's needs, and a low dream in which computers serve one's enslavement.

For the father⁵⁰, computer design is associated with the excitement of changing the world and esteem for inventors like Steve Jobs⁵¹ who ran with their ideas⁵². But for the son⁵³, computer design is difficult⁵⁴ with rigid syntax that drives him 'crazy'⁵⁵.

For the son, computer repair provides easy access to money⁵⁶, and he trusts the long-term utility of the work⁵⁷, believing it will always be in demand⁵⁸. For the father, computer repair is a dead end job⁵⁹, with little personal connection to the work⁶⁰.

⁵⁰ Do you want to be repairing the world or do you want to design the world? (dyad conversation, parent line 240).

⁵¹ Those guys that started Apple, they changed the way the world works (dyad conversation, parent line 318). Those guys were all designing what the new world was going to look like. They were developing things that they thought were going to change everything about the world. You know, the people who designed the first Macs were amongst those people. Not the people at IBM. (dyad conversation, parent line 316).

⁵² I would say to design the world you need to have an imagination (dyad conversation, parent line 246).

⁵³ I don't want to really design the world I don't think. I don't think I have what it takes to design the world (dyad conversation, adolescent line 241). A lot of technical garbage (dyad conversation, adolescent line 243).

⁵⁴ You have to know what all the (indecipherable), the pentium 2's, the actual, you can trace their leads. It just takes too much time. It seems frustrating. I hate following the diagrams (dyad conversation, adolescent line 402).

⁵⁵ I don't like writing software per se. It can be kind of boring too. I don't like the syntax of the software It drives you crazy. (dyad conversation, adolescent line 404).

⁵⁶ Repair is great because you get paid money for that. All you need to know is the mechanics (dyad conversation, adolescent line 406).

In figure 7-1, I summarize how the field structures the dyad, and how individual associations take contrary roles in the field.

Field:	(career + fulfillment)	(career – drudgery)	= (who is a career serving?)
Father:	(computer design) (invention)	(computer repair) (alcoholic)	= (change the world) = (Apple Computer)
Son:	(computer repair) (steady pay)	(computer design) (crazy)	= (getting a job) = (Packard Bell and IBM)

Figure 7-1 **Imaginary Associations to Computers**

⁵⁷ Okay. So you quit your job at the little computer store and then you apply to someone like Packard Bell and then you quit your job at Packard Bell and then you go to IBM. Then when IBM hires you you're set. That's what I think a career is. (dyad conversation, adolescent line 297).

⁵⁸ Computers, electronics, like I said, sort of high techy. Anything that has a niche in this sort of world, the world cannot live without but will always be breaking down and needs repair. People will always have questions about it (dyad conversation, adolescent line 239).

⁵⁹ [Referring to mechanics as a computer repair skill, and a local mechanic who lives to drink] You can be a mechanic and make \$26/hour. I mean hey that's 4 cases of beer an hour. That's the lowest common denominator stuff (dyad conversation, parent line 407).

⁶⁰ Don't aim for the lowest common denominator. If you aim for the lowest common denominator then that's what you'll get. You'll get a job where you get to go into work at 8:00 am and you leave at 5:00 (dyad conversation, parent line 407).

7.2.2 School

Corresponding with the field, there is a high dream of hope in which schools help in discovering one's interests, and a low dream of dread in which schools train people with the skills employers use (see Figure 7-2). It's an issue they often fight about⁶¹.

For the son school is boring⁶² and it doesn't meet his needs⁶³. Since schools don't provide individual instruction⁶⁴, they can't help him develop his interests⁶⁵. When schools teach to groups⁶⁶ he feels treated like a number⁶⁷. Nevertheless, school provides some sort of a path⁶⁸, and at least he sees the utility of school⁶⁹ in providing entry to real education later⁷⁰, so he forces himself to attend⁷¹.

⁶¹ Yeah. I can't stand it [school]. He thinks it's a really good thing. I think it's a good thing but I just don't respect it. I don't think I learn anything. I'm smart and I'm never challenged so I just get bored (son self confrontation, line 3)

⁶² Boredom. Yeah we talk about school a lot. I get really bored with school and I can't stand it (son self confrontation, line 205)

⁶³ Father asks: what are you getting out of school currently with regards to what you might be wanting to do in the future? Son replies: Nothing (dyad conversation, line 183-184).

⁶⁴ I want to get into different things and for that you need one on one instruction. But for that, it's just the way they teach it I guess so. You can't do anything about it (dyad conversation, adolescent line 23).

⁶⁵ ... the whole school one on one thing with, um, with that I don't actually know where I'm going to get that. I think I need one on one for other stuff. (dyad conversation, adolescent line 21).

⁶⁶ Where do I get my idea of careers from? I guess society imposes it upon you (dyad conversation, adolescent line 113). I think I have been brainwashed. (dyad conversation, adolescent line 115).

⁶⁷ They don't treat me like a person. They treat me like a number. They don't give me personal instruction, they talk to the class. If I fall behind I cut. (dyad conversation, adolescent line 231).

⁶⁸ School seems to be the only clearly defined path I can see. (dyad conversation, adolescent line 225).

For the father school is a place to develop interests into skills⁷², and once one discovers this, having a career is easy⁷³. It doesn't matter that schools teach to groups⁷⁴, since individual instruction is available to the son elsewhere⁷⁵, perhaps from himself. He believes schools have an important role in developing interest, and skill should support interest⁷⁶.

⁶⁹ [about career and] methods of acquiring one. You have to go to school and get a background first (dyad conversation, adolescent line 202).

⁷⁰ I'm sort of hoping that I'll get through school and then go on to university and do something that I want (dyad conversation, adolescent line 21).

⁷¹ Father asks: what does that mean in terms of what you are going to be doing with school? Son replies: I'm going to have to do it (dyad conversation, line 368-369).

⁷² I mean when I walked into a university I didn't have any skills. What I did is that I took things that I found interesting and I tried to see whether or not I was any good at them. If I was good at them and I was interested in them then I pursued them. . (dyad conversation, parent line 252).

⁷³ ... that's why I spent all my time in education, finding out what I was skilled at. And then to find the things that I was skilled at that interested me. Then when I found something that I was skilled at and that I was interested in I did really well. It wasn't hard. (dyad conversation, parent line 250).

⁷⁴ You come into first year university and you are going to walk into classes that have 500-1000 people in them. Well you are not going to get any personal instruction from the guy up in front. (dyad conversation, parent line 232).

⁷⁵ So you can get personal instruction from people you know. (dyad conversation, parent line 234).

⁷⁶ I guess, mostly what I'm trying to do in most of these things is I'm trying to find out, and I'm trying to get him to think about the things that he's interested in not the things that he feels he has skills in. But I was also contradicting myself. I guess I feel that if you have things that you are interested in, you need to find things that you are interested in and once you have things that you find yourself interested in you can find out whether you have the skills to pursue those things. But if you don't ever have anything that you are interested in you are kind of lost (parent self confrontation, line 39).

Field:	(career + fulfillment)	(career – drudgery)	= (who is a career serving?)
Father:	(discover interest)	(possess skill)	= (school helps me)
	(crucial; makes easy)	(not a concern)	= (school is necessary)
Son:	(overlook individual)	(group teaching)	= (school serves society)
	(being different)	(seen as a number)	= (have to get through it)

Figure 7-2 Imaginary Associations to School

7.2.3 Video

Perceptions of the video camera also seem charged by the field; it serves as the means by which a career study is captured, and society enters the room through it.

Although not as evident as the previous two examples, how they imagine the camera has a relationship with their thinking about career (see Figure 7-3).

For the son the camera is an important presence in the room. It bothers him that it is always watching⁷⁷ and he doesn't like it⁷⁸. When the camera is watching⁷⁹ he can't be himself⁸⁰. He keeps his thoughts private⁸¹, and he has limits on what skills he allows to be

⁷⁷ Quit looking at me. (to camera) (dyad conversation, adolescent line 387).

⁷⁸ I don't like being on the camera. (son self confrontation, line 220)

⁷⁹ [to the camera] Hi mom (dyad conversation, adolescent line 423).

⁸⁰ When the father asks why the son feels nervous, the son replies: Because I'm being watched (dyad conversation, adolescent line 289).

⁸¹ I want to say something but I'm on video so I can't (dyad conversation, adolescent line 219).

public⁸². The camera demands propriety⁸³, but he volunteers references to his off-screen life⁸⁴ and those around him⁸⁵.

For the father, awareness of the camera is insignificant⁸⁶, but it may still affect him. When the issue of depression comes up, the subject is deferred to an off-screen time⁸⁷. After the father is told of the son's interest in art, he goes off-screen⁸⁸ and forgets about it⁸⁹. When the camera serves to remind him of his performance⁹⁰, it is critical⁹¹.

⁸² The only good thing I can do is art. And art I don't consider it to be a career. (dyad conversation, adolescent line 383).

⁸³ You shouldn't swear, you're on tape (dyad conversation, adolescent line 422).

⁸⁴ And then just whatever I sort of want to do. Stuff on the side (dyad conversation, adolescent line 2).

⁸⁵ Or did you meet her [the RA] in the bathroom? (dyad conversation, adolescent line 428).

⁸⁶ [referring to being watched by the camera] Father: You can't tell. Son: Sure you can. Father: No you can't. Son: There is a little box up there. Father: So? (dyad conversation, lines 290-294).

⁸⁷ [referring to the frequency of the son's depression] Every week? (sigh) We need to talk more about that some time too. Um, all right in terms of getting to an occupation there is going to school and getting the training for it, how important do you think that is? (dyad conversation, parent line 366).

⁸⁸ I have to go out to use the bathroom ... you can talk into the camera. . (dyad conversation, parent line 384).

⁸⁹ [after the son introduced the subject of art, and upon the father's return from the bathroom] I mean what are we talking about? I mean hardware development? Are we talking software development? Are we talking repairs? (dyad conversation, parent line 393). When asked about overlooking art, the father explains: I don't even remember it being said the first time (parent self confrontation, line 180)

⁹⁰ I'm actually not terribly pleased with it (parent self confrontation, line 109).

⁹¹ It looks much worse because of the camera angle (parent self confrontation, line 177)

Field:	(career + fulfillment)	(career – drudgery)	= (who is a career serving?)
Father:	(worthy of study) (open to gaze)	(unfit for career) (missing)	= (union of social and personal) = ('nothing' hidden)
Son:	(broadcasting) (proper subjects)	(keeping private) (art isn't a career)	= (limiting social claims) = (editing)

Figure 7-3 Imaginary Associations to the Camera

7.3 Intervention

Process oriented therapy is particularly based upon subtle body language and hints emerging within the session, so intervention can't be framed in a programmatic way. Some principles and suggestions for exploration are possible however.

Although one might be interested in bringing awareness to the way they polarize the field, it would be important to continually assess how willing they are, by listening and responding to feedback to the intervention. If feedback was positive, one could look for ways to balance one-sidedness. Sometimes this begins by acknowledging and amplifying one-sidedness until it flips naturally.

For example, if the son were to emphasize his subservience to the needs of society, he might flip to a stronger voice for his own desires. He could amplify his 'good behavior', play with being as bored as possible, act like a mindless computer robot, or a butler whose only care is his master's every need. As these roles were played out, one could notice (and forbid!) any hint of individuality and rebelliousness. Then he would stop and turn inward to become sensitive to his inner process; a dialogue might emerge

allowing one to interview these impulses and learn about the aims and needs they serve. Perhaps we could discover how knowing about subservience and social claims is a good skill to help a person with strong individuality negotiate his way through society. If he could use his sensitivity to protect a tiny bit of his individuality, what would that let him do?

Similarly, perhaps in a private session, the father could explore his disbelief in the son's career aims. He could amplify this by acting the virtuous role of someone who is always honest, who always knows what is right to do, who wants to save the world and knows how to make it better. After playing it up to a ridiculous degree, he could stop and listen for an inner process. Did something in playing those roles feel good? Was any need for acknowledgment feeling nourished by the play? Is there a critic that prevents him from feeling this acknowledged in everyday life, or in the story of his own life? Does he ever feel like a slouch? If he slouched more, were sloppier, even lazy, what would happen? If he didn't know what to do, didn't try to make things happen, who would fill the void?

These kinds of questions might be evocative if either party wanted to work on themselves, and these explorations might decrease the need each party has for the other to hold a counter balancing role. If they were working on their relationship together, it would be important to recognize that each holds an important message for the other, and it is their conflict that draws them toward understanding it. Together they can have vivid arguments about moral philosophy, laying out reasons for primary allegiance to self or

society, but it can all be done without harming their relationship⁹². If they see each other as holding roles in an argument that humanity is fascinated with, then their conflict can serve as a way for them to connect in a vibrant and authentic way⁹³. As such, the conflict isn't a problem; it can even be encouraged if they both feel they are exploring their one-sidedness as a way to learn about a complex and important human problem.

⁹² that was mostly just argument I thought. Yeah back to the sort of his higher standards than mine. We get a lot of that which I guess, that probably screws up communication a bit but. (son self confrontation, line 245)

⁹³ I'm sure, there is competition between us I think. Well, not so much competition, but I don't know we bring things to each other that we think is interesting and sort of go over them. I don't know. It's pretty cool. I like my dad. (son self confrontation, line 253)

8 Action Relations

In this section I compare the three portrayals in the context of action theory concepts. My findings are drawn from an analysis of the portrayals in the following respects: Under hermeneutics, I attribute conflict to the dyad using each theory as a lens. Under heuristics, I compare the conflict resolution interventions, discuss my graphic portrayal of the model and look at how these might relate to each other. Under interpretive inquiry, I review the observational characteristics of each procedure and look critically at the reliability of my interpretations and the limits to the applicability of each approach. Under a discussion of the context of theory, I discuss relationships I discovered between the theories and the wider discussion of conflict found in the literature review. Finally, under action theory, I summarize distinguishing aspects of each theory from the perspective of the goals and steps that define the theory in practice.

I will begin by reviewing the basic terms I use in action analysis. Goal and step are two aspects of action, found at four levels of time. Goal refers to the cognitive aspect while step refers to the experiential aspect. Step and goal have the same relationship with each other as doing and intending. The relationship is mutually dependent. Without steps, goals cannot be realized. Without goals, steps have no value. Action refers to the entire domain in which goals and steps are found. I characterize action along a logical dimension of time scale. These range from brief elements, the steps of functions, to the longer term goals constituting projects that evolve over the course of a career.

Elements refer to the discrete movements, words, measurements, and sensations of experience. Elements are not necessarily conscious, but they may become conscious if attention is directed toward them. Typically they go unobserved in personal and social

situations, only drawing attention if a problem occurs. They are the most frequent and brief class of action. A series of elements form a function.

Elements are joined together to complete the steps necessary to accomplish a functional goal. Functions connect action elements. Functions are cognitive in that they have criteria, uses, and concerns. Functions alone are not complete; they too serve as steps in completing the goals of a project.

Projects have an underlying goal, usually conscious, that allows for completion. Over a longer period of time, a series of projects forms the basis of career. At this level we are most aware of the project as a step in a career, and often less aware of the goals of the career.

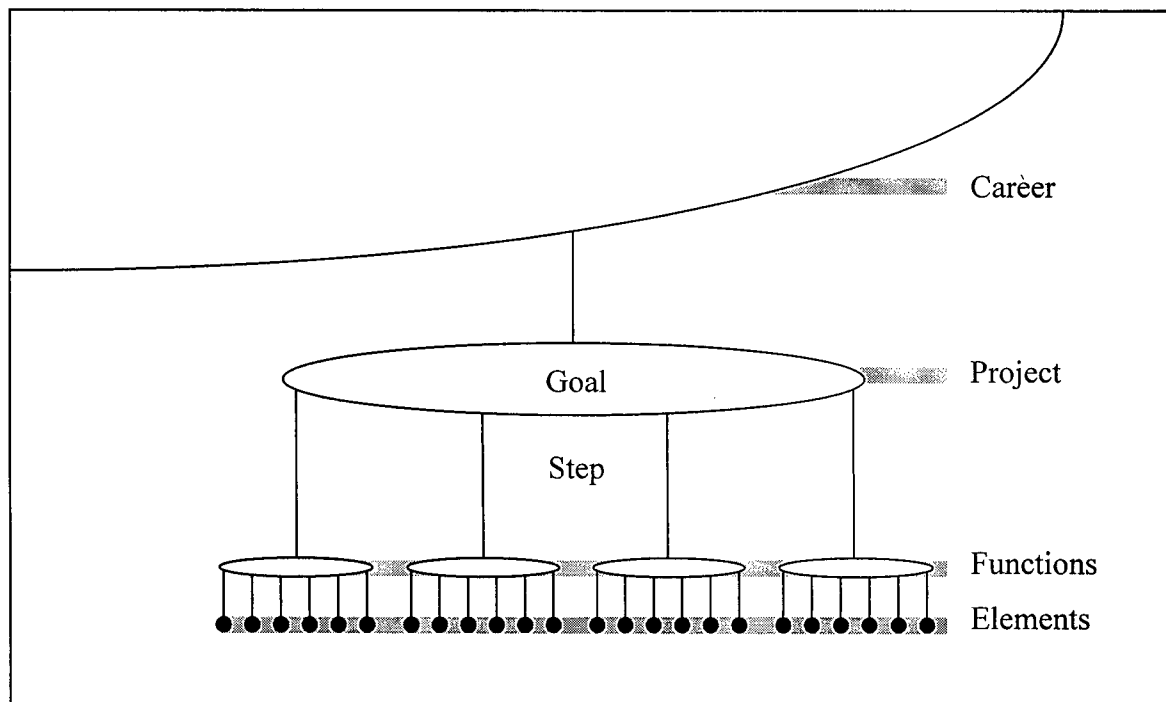


Figure 8-1 Organization of Action

In Figure 8-1, I summarize these inter-related categories. Action has four levels: elements, functions, projects, and careers. These are logically and temporally organized in successively inclusive units. At each level the relationship to levels above and below is

characterized in terms of a goal (serving a higher unit) and multiple steps (enacted through lower units).

Action theory can be used to organize the observation of behavior and intention in human science. I apply action theory in my analysis of the hermeneutic, heuristic, and interpretive results of each conflict theory. As each theory treats the text differently, comparing these treatments is an example of action relations. I use this term as an analogy to the comparison of personal interaction styles as described by interpersonal relations. Thus, as an example of action relations, I bring the models into relation with each other. Here, I review the portraits and my experience of creating them. I use the observational techniques, my experience of reading, and the interventions, as common categories across which to describe and compare the models. I relate these categories to action theoretical categories: manifest behavior is being demonstrated by the dyad and registered by the model through observational data. Functional steps relate to making sense of the observations, fitting them meaningfully into stories, in the process of reading. At the level of intervention, I am responding to a series of stories, joining as a counselor in the project of facilitating change. At a higher level of analysis, I look at how the theory conceptualizes conflict, as this corresponds to a career level concept.

The findings are presented in relation to the method I employed to generate the data. I begin with hermeneutic results; concisely describing the key features of the story of conflict I created using each model. This is followed by findings drawn from heuristic methods; I looked for common themes diversely applied, and creatively visualized each model and its intervention. In a third section, I draw from both hermeneutic and heuristic methods to describe my interpretive findings; I look at how the experience of reading

with a model affects me, what I notice about the experience, and the limitations I encounter. Finally I focus directly on action theory; describing dimensions of each model with respect to the four levels or categories of analysis. In conclusion, I return to Dörner's (1996) idea of "crypto-determinism", and review how the theoretical approaches I covered contribute to action theoretical concepts of conflict.

8.1 Hermeneutic Analysis of Procedure and Story

In this section I begin with a summary of the hermeneutic procedure I applied to the transcript, and then demonstrate the conception of conflict which resulted, by concisely recounting key points in the story of conflict.

8.1.1 Structural

Structural analysis codes speaking turns with respect to the primitive basics of love, attack, autonomy, and control. It looks for the focus of speech, using the basic objects of self, other and introject. Patterns emerge which link two parties in similar, complementary, opposite, and antithetical forms. The interaction characterizes an attachment style. Conflict indicates an attempt to change the relationship, to achieve more enmeshment or more differentiation. When a more optimal means of experiencing love is sought, the counselor's role is to help the client recognize that although damaging patterns are familiar, it is within their power to choose to practice a more adaptive interaction style that is moderately friendly, moderately involved, and context sensitive.

In the samples I analyzed, I found the father focused entirely upon the son in a manner which used questions and literal reflection for the purpose of control. The son often complements this with compliant hollow answers; if he opposes this in protest, he

meets with his father's blame. The son introjects his father's views in self blame, and they both redirect blame toward school. For the son, reaching for his father's love means being more authentic, but when he does, his emotions meet with indifference. The son has internalized this pattern, treating his own gifts as an artist, with a similar neglect. The son uses anger in the hope that others will offer nurturance, but this often results in his being ignored or controlled.

8.1.2 Systemic

Systemic analysis identifies the type of rhetorical communication being used, as a means of inferring a relationship to difference in values. Diversity rhetoric is used if the difference is acknowledged, but doesn't matter. Persuasion rhetoric is employed if the difference creates a problem that matters. Complaint or diatribe rhetoric is introduced when one fails to influence the other. If power is unequal, the rhetoric of authority is used to eliminate difference, and the rhetoric of deceit may be used to conceal it. At each downward step the range of rhetorical tools serving communication is reduced, resulting in impoverished discourse. Recovering from such conflict depends on agreement to use persuasion, and success in discovering transcendental values to which both parties subscribe.

Both father and son are skilled communicators and often engage in humor as they highlight differences between each other. They share a value for independent thinking, and this leads to frequent use of persuasion when the other disagrees. When they find it difficult to persuade, as for example over the value of risk, their positions become rigid and their arguments are adamant. In such situations they feel frustrated by their inability to persuade, and begin to misunderstand and insult each other. The father has more power

in this situation, and sometimes resorts to authority to define what is good and bad, as well as controlling the length of the interview. The son resists this power by responding with a listless 'whatever' attitude, by changing the subject, and by 'temporarily' agreeing when necessary.

8.1.3 Process

Process analysis turns attention to the transpersonal field. Parties in conflict are seen as representing polarity in the field. Inner conflict is conceived as personal awareness of the field in polarized form. Conflict occurring across these polarities allows awareness in the transpersonal field to evolve. Process is that experience an individual has in relation to another, grounded in the feeling and awareness they experience as they relate. Within personal process, the polarized transpersonal concept is initially represented in one-sided forms. One-sidedness is found in those qualities the person identifies with. The counterbalancing quality is then found both in conflict with the opponent, and in the dawning awareness of a previously unnoticed aspect of the person's own behavior. The opponent then, brings what had been missing in the person's awareness of themselves more directly into view, but with a negative charge. Process analysis looks for how conflict serves a person's growing awareness, and considers the magnetic quality of interpersonal conflict as purposeful in this respect.

For this dyad, career brings up the quality of doing something to something, and how to be the one doing, not the one being done to. The son identifies with getting out of the race if possible, by making himself unavailable to the effects of career. He would jump out of the conversation, and he does this through a pervasive experience of boredom. The father identifies with the doing, and fears for his son's success if he

doesn't get busy with it. The father talks like he respects his son's autonomy, but he acts like he is in charge. He denies he is 'hyper-ambitious', but he wants his son to consider changing the world. The father has a quality of urgency about the son's planning, which makes the son's laissez-fair attitude an insufferable irritant. Still, in their arguing, there seems to be a kind of shyness they both share. The father never became a world famous inventor himself, but seems to have gradually overcome difficulty in finding his own skills, and then settled into a job that was available. The son is nurturing his skill as an artist, while keeping this development private and unavailable for sale. Eventually, he might benefit from a fraction of his father's willingness to champion one's skills. The father in turn, might benefit from a fraction of the son's trust that one can manage life's challenges as they arise. They both seem to value each other's way of being, in spite of the challenges they evoke in each other.

8.1.4 Summary of Conflict Accounts

In the following summary (table 8-1), I use action theory to organize distinctive features of the different conflict stories.

Table 8-1 Story Outline

Level	Structural	Systemic	Process
Action Elements: examples of interaction on which a conflict story is based.	Identified a modal inflexibility in the father's exclusive focus on the son. Identified a complementary link between the father's topic control and the son's submission and resistance. Identified the father's tendency to ignore emotion, and	Identified rhetorical samples at each level, moving down the rhetorical ladder into conflict: Similarity ("schools need better teachers and facilities"), celebration of diversity ("I won't be following in your career footsteps"), persuasion ("find an interest on which to build	Discovered incongruent behavior. For example, the father persistently asks for the son's interests, but then when the son brings up an interest in art, the father leaves the room and upon return he forgets

	the son's similar introject in self ignoring (manifest in relation to his interest in art).	a career"), deprecation ("you don't have much of a clue"), frustrated communication ("he does this all the time"), the use of power ("stay here and talk to the camera"), and deceit ("I never read that article").	what he was just told. The son is incongruent in that he identifies with computers and electronics, but also reports that working with the syntax makes him crazy because it is rigid.
Functional Steps: Connecting aspects of the interaction to formulate a hypothesis.	The counselor might try to uncover what purpose the son's anger serves, by saying "I notice you are pushing school away, how do you hope others would react?"	A mediator could reflect their comments on the way they interact: "You don't value the way you talk together. You would like to get some better communication."	A process worker could comment: "Work seems to be a drudgery. What is heavy about work?"
Project: introducing conflict resolution.	How can we support the artist to speak? Are you being heard? And if not, either how can you be clear and direct enough to get the message through, or how long are you willing to try if the other is trying not to hear?	What aspects of work would you enjoy, even if it requires a sacrifice? What occupations could give the level of independence you want? How much risk serves your purposes as you imagine your current and future stages of life?	Both value independence and dislike slavery. What areas of your life feel slave-like? If you could be more independent in these areas, what would you do?
Career: the broad conception of conflict and the purpose it might serve.	I wonder if hiding one's talent serves to demonstrate allegiance to some ideal or person. How does deprecating one's talent seem to safeguard or ensure love? What kind of love depends upon one having a problem, in order for them to express that love?	The son doesn't yet have the words to describe his interests in terms that suggest a career, so this is frustrating. Just expressing the frustration can make conflict worse, but cultivating awareness of values (such as career interest, independence, and purpose) supports the development of language, allowing beliefs to become apparent, and expressive behavior to follow.	Are you sensitive to the slavery in work? Would you like for people to enjoy work more? If your career was to make work easier and more enjoyable for the world, even if you only did this in some small way, what might that be?

8.2 *Heuristic Intervention*

The primary heuristic result is the identification of shared qualities expressive of the nature of conflict, which are uniquely implemented by each model. I found that in each model there is an underlying commonality in recognizing the role of need in the emergence of conflict. Conflict helps to identify an unmet need, and each model is tuned to recognize aspects of need with different emphasis: structurally it is the need for love, systemically it is the need for respect and understanding of one's values, and in process it is the need to address the press of growing awareness. Each model has been developed in the context of facilitating a resolution of conflict. The models vary in terms of the scope of conflict they address.

8.2.1 Structural

In interpersonal reconstructive therapy the intervention is drawn from structural analysis. Intervention begins by noting the existing patterns and the problems that result from those patterns, and then collaboratively uncovering the original conditions in which those patterns made sense - often related to pathology within the family of origin. The intervention involves steady support for learning adaptive patterns and giving up ineffective patterns. An exercise or activity drawn from any therapeutic modality can be used, as long as it supports the development of the new pattern. So for example, a person (such as the son) who regularly submits would benefit by learning skills and concepts related to developing his own authority to speak for himself. Journaling, art therapy, sand play, singing, or even assertiveness training might appeal to him. However, assertiveness

exercises could exacerbate the pattern of a person who regularly blames (such as the father). Learning to focus on the sufficiency of stating one's own thoughts simply and clearly, while emphasizing listening and empathy, supports learning the nurturing skills needed in the second case.

8.2.2 Systemic

In systemic analysis, a cognitive style of intervention is used. The mediator can direct a participant's attention to their choice of rhetorical style, and then discuss how their speech style is impacting the other. If this impact is inconsistent with their intent (ordering someone to do something of their own accord for example), then a dialogue can be introduced to clarify intent and means of achieving it. Typically, the mediator encourages persuasion as the preferred means of influence in conflict resolution. In situations where different value systems make persuasion impossible, the intervention involves expanding the value system. I found for example, that the opposing value systems, which elevate the importance of radical risking or conservatively retaining security, can be integrated within a value system which prefers to modulate risk in relation to developmental conditions. Thus, risk is neither good nor bad by itself; it becomes a question of how risk serves or delays one's growth at a particular stage of development. The intervention works at the level of beliefs, helping participants recognize (through an expansion of the value system) those situations in which diversity is actually acceptable.

8.2.3 Process

In process analysis, I found intervention involves a transformation of the basis on which conflict is defined. From an initial perspective that another's being is somehow

offensive or objectionable; a process intervention aims for a perspective in which the other holds information that is vitally important for discovering areas of unawareness about oneself. The intervention involves imaginative explorations of exactly what is most bothersome about the other, regardless of the facticity of the imaginary charges. The bothersome quality is then unfolded, interviewed and studied to bring out the essential characteristic it is deemed to possess. Reactivity to this quality is then related to the person's own self awareness. In some small way, the intervention moves to discover how a disowned quality (found over-abundantly in the opponent) is important and needed in the person's own life. So for example, the open mindedness in the son's laziness might be what the father needs to balance his single mindedness and tendency to repeat.

8.2.4 Summary of Conflict Resolution Strategies

In the following summary (table 8-2) I identify heuristics that a counselor might use for conflict resolution. These took the form of questions that support interventions, components of which are organized according to the four levels of action analysis.

Table 8-2 Conflict Resolution

Level	Structural	Systemic	Process
Manifest behavior: what the counselor notices.	Anger. Simple components of complex messages. Needs for more love, more freedom.	Reasons for disagreement, rhetoric of distress, and relative levels of power.	What isn't understood, what shouldn't be seen, what can't be said.
Cognition: how the counselor frames it.	What does the anger serve? How is love being sought, who's love is important?	What is the value, what is the problem, what matters? Who has what kind of power?	Compared with your normal experience, what don't you like about your opponent, or what you just did?
Goal: what the counselor seeks to	Did you ever feel this way with your parents or caregiver(s)? How	Do you mean (state understanding)? Clarify what change is wanted,	Amplify this quality, so we understand why it is here. What

uncover.	did it work then?	and the value on which this is based.	might it teach you?
Purpose: what these investigations are for.	That helped you feel loved then, but now it is doomed. Let's collaboratively discover alternative ways of seeking love that you think might serve you better.	A new transcendent value emerges, that contains or integrates the two original values, so that both parties have a basis for cooperation.	How does this relate to what is happening in the world? What does having this conflict let you speak for or about?

8.3 Graphics as Heuristic Creation

The second heuristic result is the creative visualization of each model as a graphic symbol. Moustakas (1990) makes a place within heuristic research for "a creative act, freely chosen." Within heuristic research I felt free to combine the three models in ways that wouldn't make sense from within a purely hermeneutic method. In addition to the creative act of designing an intervention, I visually represented the models I drew from each author's ideas. I was able to visualize these, within the constraints of my word processor, as graphics symbols.

I found making graphic symbols useful to summarize key features, but also because it allowed me to imagine how the models might fit together. So, for example, process looks to context for lessons to learn from, systems identifies a particular issue and the values that animate it, while structure looks at how patterns link individuals as they seek love. I find that the relationship among these is easier to see within the gestalt of the figures that follow. First I introduce the figures individually, followed by a portrait of the models together. These diagrams emerged as I thought about the analysis, and are illustrated with whatever words seemed to fit best with the model.

In figure 8-2, I visualize a systemic view of the mechanic/inventor issue introduced by the parent. It uses topology to describe a psychological landscape. The cylinders are meant to indicate the positive and negative press of particular values.

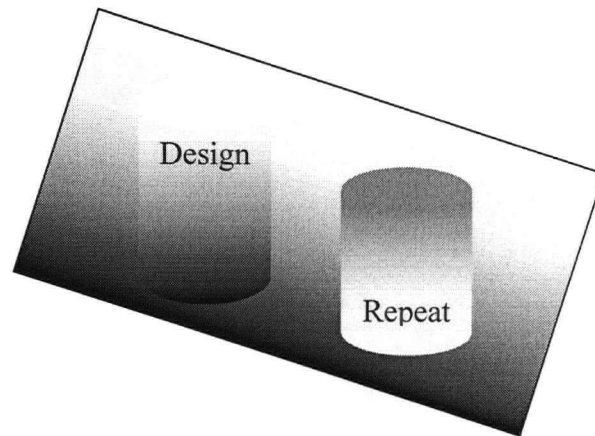


Figure 8-2 **Conflict as Topology**

In figure 8-3, a process view, I visualize the field of career from the son's point of view, when the dyad is charged up in conflict. The dipole magnet stands for the real thing, computer, while the field around it stimulates imaginary associations.

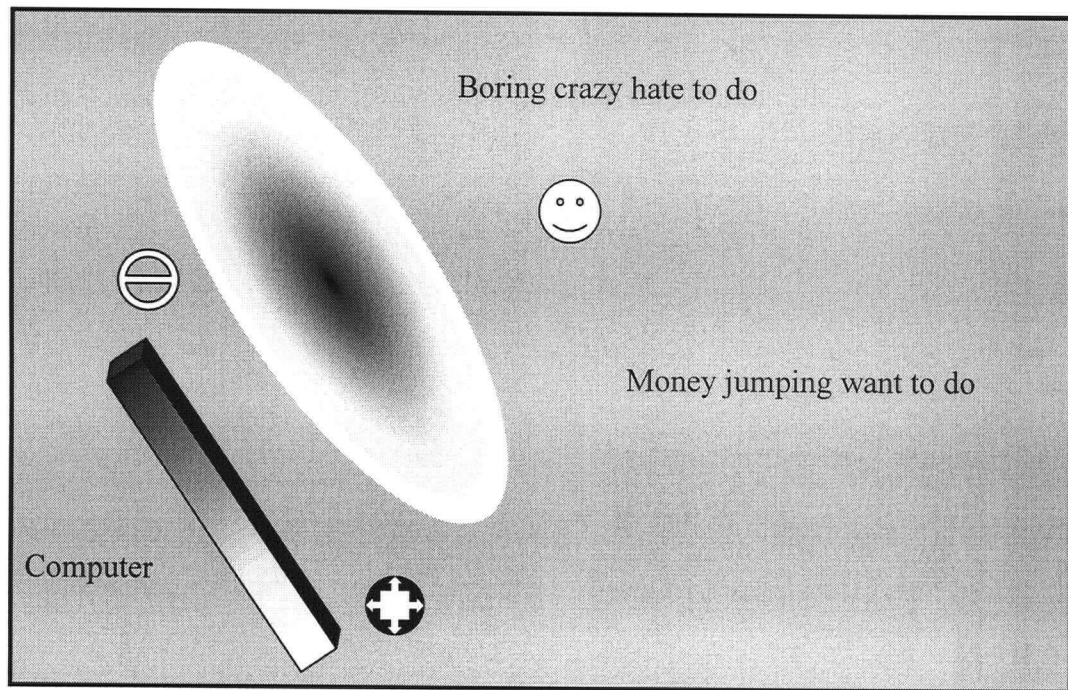


Figure 8-3 Conflict as Field

In figure 8-4, a structural view, I show the meeting of two circumplex. In this case I present the interpersonal, personal, and intrapersonal circumplex combined in a 3D arrangement as one cylinder.

Like a single frame from a video, this image shows one moment from a constantly moving set of relationships. This model shows the fathers benevolent control and the son's self torturing compliance. A link connects the father's outward oriented command being complemented by the son's introject.

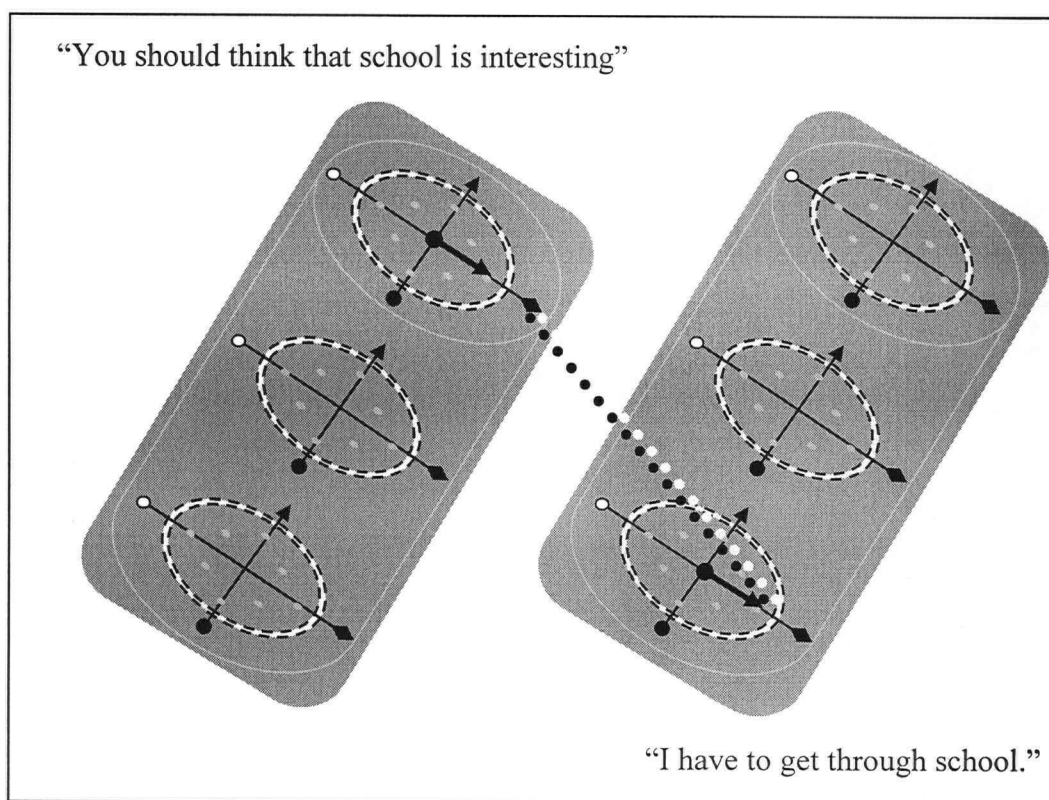


Figure 8-4 **Conflict as Interpersonal Relations**

In the following graphic, figure 8-5, I show a scene in which the two individuals are looking at the same thing, but seeing differently. The bar stands for the real, a thing, a computer for example. The cylinders stand for the individuals in relationship with each other. As they both look at the thing, they are influenced by the field. What they see is an issue, within which values make some aspects positive and others negative. What I find interesting about this combination of the three models, is how a relationship seems to appear among them, when viewed as a gestalt. The structural view suggests individuals with personality patterns interacting with others. The process oriented perspective seems to emphasize an existential quality of nature in which experience is constituted by reflected, opposite, energy expressing a field. The systemic model highlights how, when the dyad interacts, they use value based issues mediated by speech. Together, they each seem to express a part of some larger conception of conflict. Within this larger conception, conflict seems to express a transpersonal identity process, using individuals whose sensitivities and patterns make them willing representatives, and communicated as issues at the binary boundaries of values.

The graphic represents an illustration of the creative and active imagination of text. It portrays a moment when the father says "If you chose the lowest common denominator, you'll be making a bad choice. You should choose the option of changing the world, like Steve Jobs did. I'm trying not to control you, so I want to remind you that it's your choice, but please don't choose the bad." The son is portrayed in saying: "I have the right to chose for myself. You said so yourself, so leave it to me. If I want to choose being a retail computer support person, then I might have my reasons. You don't seem to recognize this, so why would I want to tell you anyway?"

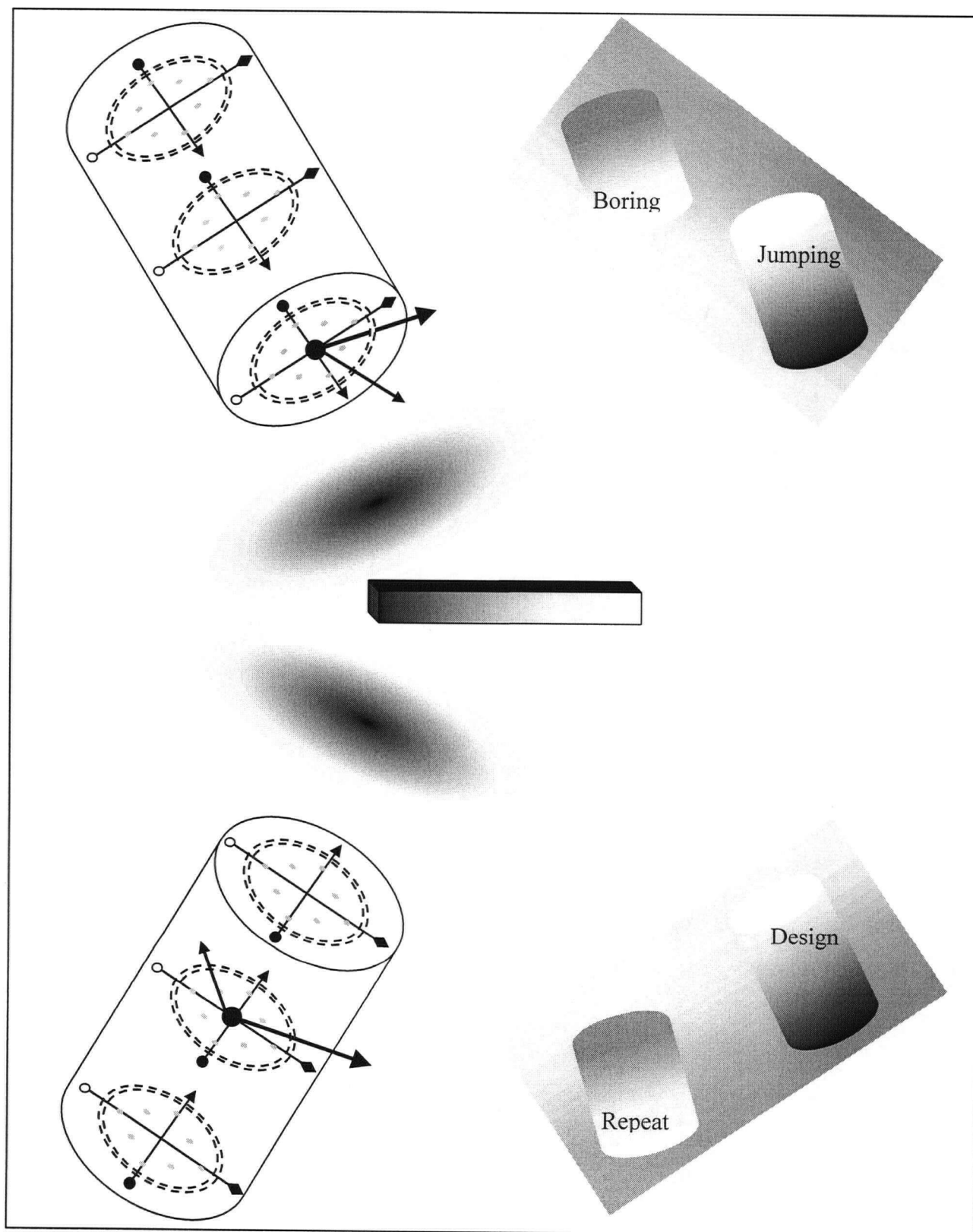


Figure 8-5 Gestalt Showing a Relationship between the Models

8.4 Interpretation

In this section I describe the way I read the text, how this affects my experience of the text, and how this is reflected in an analysis. Although perhaps an example of computer jargon, these interpretive actions are aspects of parsing, of chunking action to refine meaning. In each model the reading style demonstrates the range of action theory domain: from the automatic elements, to the cognizable patterns of functional steps, to the goals of observation and the purpose of therapeutic analysis. In comparing parsing among the models, the units of time relevant to each approach become apparent.

8.4.1 Structural

At a procedural level, structural analysis iteratively compares a speech turn with a set of social interactions to identify the closest fit. Initially a set of 96 descriptors is used, and the selection is then translated to a corresponding location in a reduced set of 24 descriptors. The structural model is definite in its procedure, providing a clear decision path, and providing results as a ratio of primitive basics. Reading in a structural context, my view feels narrow and precise; I monitor the text for telltale signs, and code in a series of micro steps, as a brief operation with a specific final outcome. I check the operation to discover any remaining uncoded process, recode if necessary, and then move on. Ambiguity arises as I expand the boundary defining the relevant social and temporal context of the behavior.

I note the mathematical qualities of the analysis, as an expression of this quantitative style of reading. Within this approach it makes sense to reduce communication to its average. The series of coded samples do indeed resemble sheet music, and within them repeating refrains are possible to see. Movement from a baseline

set of interaction constitutes either regression as rigidity, hostility and control increase, or adaptation as context sensitive friendliness and autonomy increase. The overall goal of this kind of reading is to create support for the gradual substitution of adaptive behavior in place of regressive behavior. Its final goal is the transformation of the person's relationships, personality, and course of life. Thus, although the temporal frame of reading is at the micro level of a single speaking turn, the analysis of that reading is directed at the macro level of the person's whole life.

8.4.2 Systemic

To read for a systemic analysis, I select for consistent speech style of indefinite length and categorize it in terms of its rhetorical function. The functional categories are binary states defined in terms of: the desire to, the ability to, and the power to influence the values of another. The systemic model provides a consistent feature with respect to its analysis of influence. It moves to put conditions in place for the discovery of transcendent values. The creativity of the mediator and needs of the participants are relevant to a meaningful resolution.

When I read with a systemic model in mind, I pay more attention to *how* a person speaks than to *what* they say. Above all I read to understand the person's position with regard to their sense of influence. Secondly I read for content that relates to a core value. This style of reading seems relatively unconcerned with the specifics and details of content, listening more for the distress or confidence a person uses as they make an argument.

The analysis reflects this by presenting the text as a kind of theater piece. So and so says, argues, replies, asks, objects, retorts, denies, insists, refuses, and so on. The

analysis traces the action, loosely following the chronological flow, to show how arguments build, crash, and then drop out.

8.4.3 Process

Process analysis attends to the associations with neutral objects and activities which spontaneously occur in a person's awareness. Repeating qualities shared among the associations with which a person identifies and disidentifies, constellate the outline or pattern of transpersonal concepts emerging in awareness. The process model provides seemingly unlimited freedom in describing the qualities constituting awareness. However, its fundamental structure of polarized awareness, defined by the identifications of self and other, and synthesized in transpersonal awareness, provides a definite and repeating structure.

When I read with a process oriented mindset, I listen carefully for complexity. Ambiguity, reference, association, tone, body state, hints, and mystery are examples of where my attention is directed. I listen for the details of the objective content, but mainly as a carrier for the imaginary associations. I look for relationships between the imaginary content of one person, disowned qualities of that person, and imaginary qualities of the person identified as a conflict. From these three sources I triangulate to the issue that makes the conflict a concern for that person.

The analysis reflects this in its description of the text as though it were built on underlying questions. The actors slowly attend to the mundane issues of machines and places. Meanwhile, their imagination flits in and out in a flurry of associations, each too brief for scrutiny. Like cubist art, the actors say one thing, but we see a multitude of

different meanings that interrupt and fracture the text. Organizing this hyper-text involves a trans-temporal perspective, drawing moments from anywhere in time.

8.4.4 Summary of Parsing Characteristics

In the following summary (table 8-3) I use the four levels of action theory to highlight the characteristics of reading for conflict with each model in mind.

Table 8-3 Parsing Summary

Level	Structural	Systemic	Process
Action elements: Datum and time scale.	Focus, affiliation and interdependence in a pond water sample.	Rhetorical category, in a continuous series of arguments.	Incongruence or disturbance. Drawing moments from any point in time, to express an ongoing state.
Cognitive unit of analysis.	Interpersonal links of complement, introject, opposite and antithesis.	Topology of value.	Field and Edge
Goals for a period of time as the basis of a project.	Within therapy, identify patterns, as regressive or adaptive, in order to reconstruct personal relations.	During speech, seek to understand and persuade. Communicate well. Transcend the limits a value imposes.	Acknowledge one's fate. Integrate the qualities that life brings with conflict.
Career: life influence	Become moderately loving, moderately involved, and respond context sensitively.	Live more effectively with a style that is cooperative and assertive, drawing robust strategies from diverse sets of values.	Personal and global transformation.

8.5 Interpretive Distortion

As part of the 'arc of return' in the interpretive process suggested by Packer (1989), I sought external validation of my implementation of each theory of conflict

analysis. In various ways, I shared each portrayal with readers whose experience allowed them to comment on my approach.

In the process oriented interpretation, I worked with a counselor who received the Certified Process Worker designation from the School of Process Oriented Psychology. Over a series of five sessions we worked with the transcript to develop a process oriented analysis. She declined to be personally identified in this thesis. My experience in those sessions gives me confidence that the portrait reflects a process oriented perspective. I say this is in spite of becoming aware that, in principle, process work doesn't make interpretation. The very act of interpretation is thought to impose, and this goes against the guiding principle of following the client's process, and of working with feedback. Although process oriented psychology doesn't interpret, a process worker does form hypotheses, and it is this internal hypothesizing that I demonstrate in the portrayal.

I contacted Pearce and Benjamin by email, asking whether they or someone they recommend would be willing to read the interpretation chapter. I said that since I had used their ideas, I wanted to know whether my interpretation in their name could be confirmed or would need correction.

Pearce (personal communication, February 24, 2004) responded "I'd be delighted to review your work (it sounds fascinating)." I sent the chapter, but have not received a reply by the publication deadline. The systemic approach was closest to my supervisor's perspective, so I considered Dr. Young's response an adequate indication that this approach was implemented without obviously problematic flaws. Lorna Smith Benjamin responded with encouragement, describing the thesis as an "ambitious, interesting and challenging project", but was personally unable to afford the time. She recommended her

“closest associate” Dr. Ken Critchfield, who is a postdoctoral fellow of Psychology at the University of Utah Neuropsychiatric Institute. Benjamin wrote:

Ken is superb in research and in clinical practice, and he knows SASB and IRT well. We work together in the IRT clinic at the University of Utah IRT clinic. He is uniquely and completely qualified to help you with your project. (personal communication, February 24, 2004)

I contacted Dr. Critchfield and employed his services for two hours to review and comment on the chapter. He identified errors in my use of language and coding, which are corrected in the version presented here. He also identified a logical error which cannot be corrected, but must be accounted for.

While I intended to do a SASB coding and IRT conceptualization of the case, Critchfield (personal communication, March 9, 2004) pointed out critical aspects of interpreting a transcript that prevent it from being SASB based or IRT compliant. At a very basic level, I do not have the required material: SASB requires a video tape in order to narrow the coding possibilities the text indicates. IRT requires a detailed family history, including the father's relationship with his own parent(s). I accept this as valid criticism of my procedure. In spite of the misapplication to an isolated transcript, I was still able to exercise many of the concepts related to coding. However, in making the assumption of a conflict in the text and coding how I saw that expressed, I made a logical error, which Critchfield pointed out.

At a logical level, I use the transcript to evidence an a priori conception of conflict, whereas SASB does not. SASB demands data-based coding, and keeps

hypothesis separate from the process of data interpretation, whereas (for the purpose of demonstrating an assumed conflict) I fused the two.

The logical error then, is that I am not drawing my interpretation from the behavior evidenced (as would be the assumption under SASB). Rather, I am coding a narrative of conflict of my own creation, using the text as evidence. Coding my own conception of the conflict in the transcript is a closer description of the interpersonal relations chapter. This must be distinguished from SASB coding. At the most, all I can say is that I attribute to the text a conception of conflict, which the interpersonal relations model allowed me to describe.

Critchfield wrote that "Despite areas of disagreement, there is still much that you have coded well." And "Despite my generally negative comments so far, I am actually sympathetic to what you are trying to do and applaud you for this most difficult and challenging of tasks!!" By integrating Critchfield's comments, I was able to correct some coding errors, and distinguished a feature of my work which departs from the theory. In reviewing all three portrayals, I do not believe that the story I tell *is* what is happening, even though each does reflect what I *see* happening. Even more to the point, I am not portraying what I see, just what I am able to see with my limited apprehension of the theory. Aspiring to the claim that what I see is 'correct' is in vain, and any hope to this effect is rightly discouraged as an example of "extreme inference." Even the claim that my interpretation is consistent with the theories is tenuous, given that there may be other unchecked errors. Still, I would assert that, regardless of hindrance by misapplication, the theories I used permitted different stories precisely because the theories themselves have different characteristics.

Given these external responses to the portrayals, I turn now to reflect critically on my experience of using each theoretical framework. While I benefit from the contributions of each approach, each model also seems to have its own problems in particular situations. I present my experience of this not to invalidate the model, but to give attention to those contexts in which the strengths of the model become inappropriate to the needs of particular kinds of people. If anything, my focus on limitations reflects my own difficulty in using the model. Each model requires skill in use, and errors make the model tricky, possibly even dangerous to use. I offer learning about my own deficits in this regard, both as a reminder to myself, and as a warning.

8.5.1 Structural

Structural analysis has a particularly strong clinical focus, but as a result, the vision it offers can be saturated with pathology. Although this approach can be used to analyze a wide range of interactions, it seems haunted by Leary's warning that it should be used in one context only: the mental hospital. Interpersonal reconstructive therapy carries this message on in the emphasis it gives to the analysis of personality disorders and treatment resistant individuals. While this is certainly one of its strengths, it can be difficult to use it with people who experience 'mental health' but also 'problems in living.' The emphasis on what is wrong, introduces friction when it is used to understand interactions of the everyday world outside the hospital. Using it requires a conscious effort to resist what I experience as the model's tendency to pathologize. In addition, I found the practice of basing analysis on the pond water conception of human behavior to be an assumption which doesn't deal well with exceptions. One can come to narrow

conclusions which fail to recognize the extent of variability in the full range of interaction.

I found a tendency to read into the text an explanation of the words, which others would simply not see. Such non-consensus reading points to my own projection. This suggests a rich field of study for future research. This would involve an investigation with the goal of learning to filter one's self insertion from an interpretation. Thus a transcript coding could begin with a naïve coding, and then be sent for coding by others who show high reliability. The difference in interpretation would identify projection, which could serve both in self-analysis, and in the development of a custom designed filter, with which to correct my interpersonal vision.

8.5.2 Systemic

The systemic model seems limited in its relativism. Conflict only appears if the participants speak from that basis; and it disappears when they no longer perceive a value difference that matters. While this might meet the needs of resolving a particular conflict in a particular context, one wonders if the participants can sufficiently integrate the skill of transcendence that it will transfer into different situations. In cases where individuals (such as children) have not developed the ability to identify and assert their values, this model would have difficulty linking behavior to the underlying value. In families where verbal argument is inhibited, and an air of total agreement is imposed, this model could be misleading. This approach requires that participants possess the intellectual development and freedom to argue for concepts. In conditions where there are crippling imbalances of power, it requires the less powerful party to take risk that the other party doesn't bear, and should not be used at all.

I imagine in some cases I could find it difficult to discover transcendent values, particularly if I am myself invested in a limited conception. I might find it difficult to resist persuading the parties to my own values, when the situation only requires an accommodation between the parties.

8.5.3 Process

Although the process model can be used rationally, in misuse it may be vulnerable to the effects of mysticism. The concept of a field which energizes and polarizes human awareness, posited as a transpersonal influence structuring thought in groups and individuals, is both explanatory and unprovable. While it may be helpful in personal discovery; like religion, it is probably unsuitable for those who demand a rational and provable explanation. And for those who tend to anthropomorphize the concept of a transpersonal structuring influence, one might easily slip toward an image of God defining actions in terms of good and evil. This would certainly be misuse. The model requires a high level of maturity from participants, and it demands the humility to look at one's own part in conflict, that many may find too demanding.

I generally find a process oriented analysis difficult to convey. It tends to feel unconvincing, and yet I experience no difficulty in my own understanding. This suggests I am unaware in some way, of my ability to describe it in sensible, grounded, and popularly understood ways. The perplexed, suspicious, or disbelieving response I sometimes encounter, suggests perhaps, that I want to develop more gravity in my analysis.

8.5.4 Summary of Contextual Limitations to Meaning

In the following summary (table 8-4) I access features that affect the reliability of the meanings I found in relation to each theory. I access these through the action theory categories of social and personal meanings. Social meanings are further distinguished in terms of strength and weakness associated with the model. Personal meanings are described in terms of my own conflicts that bear upon my reading.

Table 8-4 **Summary of Limitations to Reliability**

Level	Structural	Systemic	Process
Cultural Stronghold and the conception of the subject.	The clinic, the psychiatrist, the hospital, and the analyst deal with the subject as patient. Highly operationalized and suitable for research.	The psychologist's office, the mediator, the lawyer, and the dispute resolution department deal with parties to a conflict.	The community forum, experiential psychotherapy workshops, and the private practitioner work with a client.
Cultural Limitation	Analysis may appear to emphasize pathology. The essentializing character of analysis may not handle variance well.	Issues of conflict are particular to the dispute. Only useful for those who articulate their values. Power imbalance may obscure values.	Reference to a transpersonal entity seems mystical. Concepts lack proof. Anthropomorphic projection can be used to deny personal accountability.
Personal Distortion.	I impose my own understanding, based on my own experience of conflict to explain what I see. I am dependent on the authority and reliability of other interpreters to recognize my own projections.	My expression of a transcendent value may not assimilate the client's values enough to be convincing. My own values may intrude, even if they don't matter to the parties.	I am in the field, and my own attractions and repulsions can distort my perception. If I protect my own blind spots, by overlooking painful material, the field can seem painful as it demands that I process it.

8.6 Contextual Considerations

By conducting an intensive and comparative investigation of three theories of conflict, I believe I have identified relations between them and highlighted characteristics on which to make distinctions. As an example, I would like to point out how tradition and history has informed these theories. In the following summary (table 8-5) I refer to the underlying development of theory by illustrating representatives of core concepts today, along with examples of the earlier theory from which they emerged. Finally I draw some connections between the theories I focused on, and the general approaches to the subject of conflict, as they appeared in the literature review.

Table 8-5 Development of Conflict Theory

Context	Structural	Systemic	Process
Therapeutic modality.	Interpersonal Relations.	Cognitive Behavioral Psychology.	Transpersonal Analysis.
Contemporary professional representatives	Psychiatry: IRT (Benjamin); Operational Psychodynamic Diagnosis.	Mediation: Systemic Communications (Pearce & Littlejohn; Littlejohn & Domenici), Mayer.	Process Oriented Analysis: Mindell, Goodbread, Summers.
Historical representatives	Freudian analysis; Leary; Hippocrates.	Lewin's gestalt psychology.	Jungian analysis.
Connections to similar examples from the Literature Review.	Core Conflictual Relationship Themes by Luborsky (Book). Primitive responses to conflict in evolutionary psychology (Heitler). The counterbalance between the fear of weapons (control) and reparability of relationships (affiliation) governing the expression of conflict in the primate relational model (de Waal).	The cognitive role of values in moving from position to interest (Fisher & Ury). Conflict as a learning opportunity to articulate reason in education (Shanz, Chen). The concept of assertiveness as a skill for persuasion (Patterson).	The expectation of conflict from adversarial clients (McFarland). The experience of reconciliation as an outcome of conflict (Ferch). The pervasive and social nature of conflict (Machiavelli).

8.7 Action Theory

This thesis brought up the question of conflict as action, and noted how the conception of action as *jointly social and personal goal directed behavior* might have difficulty including conflict within its field of study. A naïve conception of conflict is that it prevents a goal being realized. The specialized forms of conflict analysis here seem to support and extend Dörner's (1996) conception of the goal of action in conflict as being both fully determined and continuously unfolding. How is it determined and what factors influence its unfolding, are the subject of this section.

In the following summary (table 8-6), I have condensed aspects of each theory, to show how conflict is identified. Later I draw upon what the models identify, to propose ways the theory defines conflict.

Table 8-6 **Description of Conflict**

Level	Structural	Systemic	Process
Action Elements: automatic behavior recognized by the model.	SASB units measured in terms of affiliation and interdependence. Hostility (blame and shame, walling off or ignore, hatred or attack) is the fundamental quality of conflict, as registered on the left side of the circumplex.	Rhetorical forms including complaint, put downs, repression, deceit, negative criticism, shouting and misunderstanding characterize examples of the conflict recognized by this model.	Notice double signals, which show incongruence between what one says or believes and what one does or acts like. Divergence between the continuous primary identity and secondary associations occurring in brief interruptions.
Functional steps, as a theory specific pattern recognition algorithm,	From a baseline set of behavior, regression or 'red' behavior is associated with increased hostility, while 'green' or adaptive behavior	The model assigns speech to a rhetorical category reflecting the desire to, ability to, and power to influence the other's expression of their values. Conflict	Encourage recognition of secondary processes, as for example in the client's observation "I don't know why that bothers me so."

and its associated metaphor.	generates its own rewards. Conflict as a theme represented in a musical score.	suggests the image of a funnel shaped well. As one descends into conflict, rhetorical range is reduced and discourse is impoverished.	Conflict as an electromagnetic field, stimulating imaginary associations of opposite sign in the shared perception of real objects.
Project level goals of therapeutic intervention.	Uncover how Red patterns developed in early learning are connected to the doomed hope of securing love. Block Red interaction, and develop skill that supports Green patterns.	Recover communication flexibility by introducing persuasion. Starting with positions in conflict, abstract interests and the values supporting them. Communicate values, identify difference, and reorient to transcendent values.	Process in to the essential quality that is disturbing about the opponent, to discover the personal meaning of information contained in the opponent's message. Match to areas of one's own life that are unoccupied in terms of awareness.
Career level: the role of conflict in relation to the purpose of therapy.	Personality is reflected by relationships. Less conflict occurs as relationships become moderately loving, moderately involved, and context sensitive.	Help relationships become cooperative and effective. Under transcendent values, earlier value differences matter less. Diversity of values contributes to creative and robust solutions.	The world and the concepts organizing it are being processed as people conflict. People discover ways they need each other and strong community relationships emerge, as they learn about themselves by working through conflict.

Earlier I presented von Cranach's (2000) translation of Dörner's (1996) description of conflict. I would paraphrase Dörner's definition of conflict as follows:

From the frustration of goals in non-action, the actor enters into action through conflict.

The outcome of conflict is governed by the fully determined intention found in the interpretation of unpredictable events as encountered.

In the following summary (table 8-7) I show how the theories of conflict in this study contribute to a description of conflict as action.

Table 8-7 Conflict as Action

Action	Structural	Systemic	Process
Defining Features.	Conflict reflects the pursuit of needs along dimensions related to affiliation and interdependence. Hostility towards one self or another, demonstrates allegiance to the misguided hope for love. We struggle with the question 'who is in control' and 'whose love is sought?' These can combine in questions such as "If I show love to the one in power, is that really love?"	In conflict, the desire, ability and power to influence others is evoked by value difference and mediated through communication. The range of means for communicating influence narrows in conflict. Conflict disappears when an expansion of concept leads to the mutual incorporation of individual values. In such cases, conflict leads to cooperation.	Conflict represents a magnetic attraction to a repelling quality. Conflict relationships are the product of two complex processes, reflecting polar opposite imaginary qualities. The reflection of concepts (as found in conflict) is the means of evolution for the awareness of a transpersonal field.

In conclusion, I am able to consider how each approach directs attention to a quality that unfolds through conflict. If I were to synthesize these: goal directed conflict mediates counterbalancing needs for love and control, is drawn to personally or socially unoccupied domain, and presses values communicated through issues.

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