

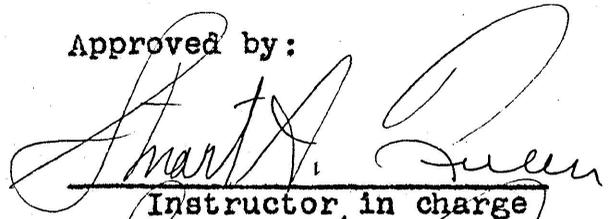
A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF SOCIAL INTERACTION IN THE
CLASSROOM

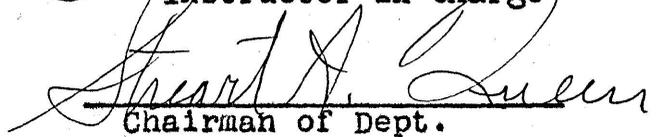
by

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PREFACE

American education has no more important objective than the building of men and women who will carry on and improve the democratic traditions. Ideally, education may be regarded as the process of passing on, through the medium of activities relevant to the lives of the students, that accumulated knowledge of the past which serves as a guide to practical activities now and later. In making this statement, however, one need to give due cognizance to the various new combinations of experiences which each individual must make to meet problem-situations. The phrase "relevant to the lives of the students" seems to be the key to present deficiencies. Anyone intimately acquainted with American college students realizes the overwhelming prevalence of a cynical attitude among them. An intensification of this attitude is fostered by the impractical nature of the "learning" foisted on them.

Like so many products of our schools, the writer is emerging from formal education hotly rebellious, eager to expend his efforts in advancing the cause of educational reform. The many injustices, the tedium, the vapidness of his schooling are too near at hand for him to assume an attitude of resignation. The writer is

wedded firmly to the opinion that a teacher should be a technologist primarily, not working with machines, graphs, or measuring instruments, to be sure, but with human lives possessed of enormous potentialities. It is his belief that education is the supreme technology.

This brief exposition of educational philosophy is given for the purpose of enabling the reader to understand the prepossessions of the writer. In general, one can read more appreciatively if such an understanding of the investigator's viewpoint has been gained beforehand.

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INTRODUCTION

The objective study of social interaction in the classroom was undertaken for several reasons. As a prospective teacher the writer is interested in the classroom and its procedures, while as a prospective sociologist he is interested in social interaction. Although educational problems have been discussed at great length by educators, the writer could find almost no specific investigations of classroom interaction. One might expect to find educational sociologists working on such projects but this does not seem to be the case. Perhaps the following statement represents fairly well the point of view of most educational sociologists at the present time: "Educational sociology has as its chief province the scientific determination of educational objectives".¹ The situation is only slightly better in sociology. Here several concrete investigations more definitely relevant to the present study have been made. One sociologist has made an attempt to record the various aspects of social interaction in the interview as conducted by the social worker.² Another is endeavoring

1-- Snedden, David EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY Page 33.

2-- Queen, Stuart A. "Social interaction in the interview" Journal of Social Forces June 1928.

to work out a technique for recording the interaction occurring in small groups of college students. Here only the initial results have been published.³ More elaborate experimentation in this field has been carried on by the Child Development Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University. These studies deal with interaction in small groups of pre-school children.² Reference will be made to all of these studies in subsequent pages. The material on the audience in Kimball Young's Source Book for Social Psychology also helped the writer orientate himself in the project.³ Of course, more general treatments of social interaction and social processes are available, the best known probably being that developed by Professors R.E.Park and E.W.Burgess.⁴ Later writers have attempted to improve upon the major concepts presented in this text.⁵

A brief consideration of the relation of education in general to the social process may be given here. One writer calls attention to the fact that "Education may be regarded as one of the social processes."⁶

- 1-- Carr, L.J. "Experimental Sociology: A preliminary note on theory and method" Journal of Social Forces September 1929.
- 2-- Thomas, Dorothy SOME NEW TECHNIQUES FOR STUDYING SOCIAL BEHAVIOR
- 3-- Chapter 23.
- 4-- INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF SOCIOLOGY.
- 5-- Lumley, F.E. PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY
Dawson, C.A. and Gettys, W.E. INTRO. TO SOCIOLOGY
- 6-- Lumley op. cit. page 337(footnote).

Of course, the term "process" may be used in several ways: it may be used to describe such a broad type of interaction as education and, at the other extreme, to describe such limited types of interaction as those set forth in this thesis. In other words, there are major and minor processes. Since students of sociology must start somewhere in the investigation of social interaction, such concepts as competition, conflict, accommodation, assimilation, imitation, and differentiation have been suggested to represent major social processes. One may expect to find in the classroom many of these processes, because, in many respects, it is an epitome of society at large. For example, there is competition in the matter of grades. All pupils know that under ordinary conditions only a certain percentage can hope to get grades of A or B. Each may strive to secure a high grade without knowing exactly who are his competitors. In this struggle -- for it may be named thus-- conflicts appear. For instance, every college student has witnessed at one time or another the classroom disputes arising between two aspirants for scholastic honors. The process "differentiation" is also in evidence. A teacher begins to differentiate his pupils as soon as he looks over a new group. Some are pleasing in dress, some in physical appearance, some in both. Others may be more or less repulsive: one pupil may remind an instructor of his dyspeptic old uncle,

another may have unsightly teeth, etc. Later in the semester the teacher has discovered who are the conscientious pupils, the brilliant ones, the dullards. Then, the process of imitation is operative continually in the classroom.¹ Pupils may imitate consciously or unconsciously a teacher's mode of expression or vice versa. In fact, it is not unusual for a pupil to ape a teacher's classroom personality. If the latter is an effulgent type a pupil may display consciously or unconsciously the gay side of his nature. If the teacher has a penchant for critical analysis in class, the pupil very often exhibits a studied thoroughness in his relations to that teacher. Numerous examples of a similar nature may be adduced. Apropos of classroom imitation Lumley states that "conscious imitation operates more or less directly in proportion to the imputed superiority....of the action or idea constituting the stimulus."² Thus it is seen that the adoption of a teacher's ideas by the pupils is not explicable entirely on the basis of the effort to win classroom approval.

If the educational situation be considered in its broader aspects, it becomes evident that "education... represents a program of accommodation or an organization,

1--Social psychologists have by no means said the last word on the subject of suggestion and imitation. Only the simplest sort of discussion is presented here.

2--Lumley Op.Cit. page 240

modification, and culture of original traits."¹ The entire classroom procedure, the teacher taking his position upon a dais, the pupils sitting in rows facing the teacher, the lectures, the recitations, the discussions, the note-books, etc. represents forms of accommodation. "All the social heritages, traditions, sentiments, culture, technique are accommodations--that is, acquired adjustments that are socially and not biologically transmitted."² As Professors Park and Burgess point out, in the field of personal relations the process of accommodation tends to take the form of superordination and subordination. The teacher, by virtue of his assigned role as leader in the classroom, takes the lead in its procedures. The pupils, on the other hand, (with few exceptions) accept fairly readily a subordinate status. Throughout their school days young people strive constantly to satisfy the requirements of older persons who have been placed, wisely or unwisely, in a superordinate relation to them.

These various forms of interaction gain their significance in the social milieu as a description of the development of social control. "All social problems

1-- Park and Burgess Op. Cit. page 665.

2-- Ibid. page 664.

turn out finally to be problems of social control."¹ In education the grading system, the superordination of the teacher and the subordination of the pupils, in general, are means of disciplining the young to the social heritage, of "breaking in" impetuous youth to sedate, conforming maturity.

Now, since such terms as competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation are general in nature, it would seem that more limited studies of social phenomena need to be made. Such investigations probably will result in the identification of many subordinate processes. The classroom affords an opportunity for such a limited study. Here is a comparatively small group, meeting together regularly and carrying on its activities as a group within a very restricted area, namely, the classroom. On the other hand, it must be recognized that the phenomenon is by no means a simple one. Thirty or forty adults may interact in a variety of ways simultaneously and quite often the identification of the more subtle varieties becomes a matter of conjecture. Because of this last consideration together with the paucity of concrete studies in the field previously mentioned, the writer felt obliged to limit his study to one of the simpler aspects of classroom interaction. Accordingly, the problem was defined finally as the

identification and classification of the social processes occurring in the verbal interaction of the classroom, that is, the class discussions.

In abstracting data from the total classroom situation, the writer wishes to emphasize the relationship of the verbal interaction to the remainder of the classroom procedure. This interrelationship is a vital one; in fact, the various aspects of this procedure are inseparable in the world of common sense. Here is given in miniature a picture of the relations of the separate sciences to the phenomenal world in general. Each science approaches a situation from a slightly different angle and, if one wishes to gain a balanced picture, these various contributions need to be synthesized. More specifically, the classroom situation, or indeed, the larger educational situation needs to be studied by the psychologists and psychiatrists who are concerned with the "individual as a unit and the activities of this unit"¹ as well as by the sociologists. Perhaps the physiologists would have a contribution to make as to proper ventilation, type of chairs, lighting, etc. The philosophers attempt to answer the questions, what should be the purposes of education? what are the present deficiencies of the

1-- See Professor Robert Woodworth's article on Psychology in Wilson Gee's RESEARCH IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES.

system? why do these exist? Inevitably these fields overlap but duplication is preferable to omission.

This small piece of research, then, represents an abstraction from the larger problem of education. But the specific problem of this thesis needs to be viewed in its setting: that is, the words spoken in class by students and teachers have definite antecedents and definite consequences. To discover precisely what is back of a statement means tracing back over a chain of events which really does not terminate even with the birth of the particular human organism. On the other hand, who can set limitations to the consequences of a specific act? Thus, there is an infinite regression and projection in the case of each specific act of any individual.¹ Obviously the situation is hopeless so far as research is concerned unless there is delimitation somewhere, and, let it be added, to define the problem satisfactorily-- to know just what the study is and what it is not-- constitutes no mean task. The gradual development of the investigator's viewpoint and method prior to the final definition of the project is of considerable importance. An account of this development follows.

1-- The late Professor Cooley frequently employed "stream of consciousness" to convey this idea.

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

Since this project is exploratory in nature, a detailed history is presented. Perhaps others investigating the same phenomenon subsequently will obtain suggestions as to method of attack from this account. First of all, Park and Burgess' chapters on Contact and Interaction in their INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF SOCIOLOGY were read as was the discussion in Young's Source Book for Social Psychology on the classroom audience. The articles on social interaction in the interview in the Journal of Social Forces were studied carefully, especially Professor Queen's recording of social interaction.¹ It was suggested at the outset that studying several classes intensively probably would be the best procedure. Accordingly, an elementary sociology class, composed exclusively of juniors and seniors, was attended regularly for the remainder of the semester. However, the writer secured many "leads" from observation of the procedure in other classes in some of which he was enrolled.

In the concrete classroom situation the first difficulties were encountered in the recording of the verbal interaction. Since the writer is unable to use

1-- June 1928 and June 1929 numbers.

shorthand, some device needed to be worked out. This was throughout an important item of technique. At first blush one might be inclined to underestimate the difficulty arising here. Class discussions proceed at such a rapid rate of speed that one must write feverishly and use many abbreviations if adequate recordings are to be secured (provided, of course, shorthand is not known). Moreover, the records were in such a scrawly condition that almost immediate transcription into a legible, coherent account was necessary before any analysis was possible. The rapid scribbling and the high degree of concentration required by the exigencies of the situation conduced to a feeling tantamount to aversion on the part of the writer whenever some member of the class opened up a discussion. Naturally the recording proceeded with increasing facility as time went on; consequently this process became less tedious. In all fairness, however, it must be admitted that during the entire period of thesis-gestation seldom did a student provoke a lengthy discussion without incurring the momentary wrath of him who felt obliged to take down the words of wisdom or ineptitude uttered.

From the beginning the writer doubted the advisability of recording gestures. That these are necessary if one is to have a complete picture of the classroom situation is undeniable. On the contrary, it must be

recognized first, that many of the gestures are of a random variety, peculiar to the individuals producing them and second, that many of them are extremely elusive, the description of which requires the facile pen of the literary artist. In addition, early in the pursuance of this study, the writer felt compelled to focus his attention upon some one aspect of the classroom situation-- just what aspect for purposes of a sociological study he did not know at the time.

With this background let us peruse the first materials collected from observation of the elementary class previously mentioned. Before going to this class the writer had decided to look for the effects upon the class of the following things, in addition to securing the actual words spoken: vocal inflection of the teacher, smile of the teacher, his facial, vocal, and bodily gestures, rate of speaking, and repetition. A portion of the day's discussion as recorded follows:

(Is)¹ the "fourhundred" a social group?

P(upil)-- (A group) is those acquainted.

T(eacher)-- These are primary. Aren't there other social groups? ---2

- 1-- Words in parentheses are added to avoid ambiguity.
2-- This represents an attempt to plot roughly the pitch of the voice in the last question.

P--Well, yes.

(Inflection-- Two examples of answer being divined from the teacher's inflection.)

Is the "fourhundred" a conflict (high pitch) or an accommodation group?

"Conflict" was answered by some, "accommodation" by others.

Are they at peace (slightly mocking) with the world or is there intense (deeper voice) rivalry?

Then everybody answered "rivalry".

The last episode recorded this particular day runs as follows:

T-- Suggest contrast.

P-- Gang and Boy Scouts.

T-- Which lasts longer, gang or Boy Scouts?
(no inflection)

P-- (Difference of opinion)

T-- Do Boy Scouts work out their own rules (high)?

P-- No (chorus)

Notes on teacher-- Chair tilted back, informal, enthusiastic manner is contagious. Waving hands, rapid rate of speaking.

Early in the orientation process a list of what were termed "interactions" was collected from observation. Among these were:

(1) Teacher's answer is inferred by pupils from vocal inflection.

(2) Note-taking whenever the teacher speaks slowly.

(3) Teacher implicitly (by brief attention) disparages a pupil's knowledge or suggested idea.

(4) Teacher expands on pupil's suggestion, thereby encouraging the class and complimenting the pupil.

(5) Teacher appends "don't we" to a remark in order to remain in the classroom group(?).

About this time a statement of the proposed project was presented to the sociology department. At that meeting the situation to be studied was adjudged by unanimous consent to be exceedingly complex, in which opinion the writer unhesitatingly concurred. Numerous suggestions as to procedure were given, such as: (1) Get life histories of pupils, (2) Enlist the services of other pupils, (3) Sit in front part of the room sometimes facing the class to note facial gestures, and (4) Get pupil reactions to the classroom outside the class.

At this juncture an article on an experiment with social interaction was read. The experiment dealt with the interaction taking place in small groups of three persons. Although the results therein set forth seemed to possess no great value so far as this study was concerned, the following notation was made: "Instead of centering attention on individuals in an environment, it would

seem desirable to center on situations in which individuals are involved". At the time the full significance of this statement did not dawn on the writer. Three months later, however, the identical distinction was deemed feasible on the basis of the exigencies of the problem. Considerable attention will be devoted to this aspect of the study in subsequent pages.

As heretofore intimated, it had been the writer's tentative belief that a study of classroom gestures would in itself constitute a legitimate project. Professor Sapir's description of the five levels upon which speech must be studied at least partially corroborated this view.¹ These levels are, the dynamics of the voice as exemplified by intonation, rhythm, continuity and speed, pronunciation, vocabulary and style. All of these, says Sapir, are of great importance in the total effect produced by the individual's voice.

After several weeks' observation and recording, an attempt was made to set down the classroom interaction in terms of: first, type of teacher-pupil interaction, second, verbal aspects, third, non-verbal or various types of gestures, fourth, inferences. This was almost a wholesale adoption of Professor Queen's technique.² The obstacles in applying this technique to the classroom

1-- Quoted by Miss Robinson in "Some difficulties in analyzing social interaction in the interview"

Journal of Social Forces June 1928.

2-- See note (2) page 3.

were quite evident. First of all, at this stage no suitable classification of interaction had been worked out. Secondly, the data falling in the non-verbal category were fragmentary and included only such superficial forms of reaction and interaction as smiles, laughs, frowns, murmurs, loud voice, hesitating manner of speaking, waving of hands, leaning forward in chair. Also there was the difficulty of obtaining the words spoken simultaneously with these gestures, which has been referred to above. Thirdly, inferring attitudes from a person's behavior is a hazardous procedure at best. Not that inference carefully labelled has no place in scientific research--for it certainly has-- but with this technique as utilized by the writer, the inferential material was accorded undue prominence.

Attempts were made during this early stage to record the interaction of glances, smiles, etc., although the subtleties involved were recognized from the start. For example, notes show that on November fifteenth the writer sat for the first time in the front of the room facing the class. Hastily had been scribbled "Pupils cast frequent glances of wonder at me" and, a little farther on, "pupils smiling at teacher, sits directly in front of teacher's desk, is very responsive to his smile; inference-- is fond of teacher".

This inference seems obvious enough but does it represent the truth of the matter? There are other possibilities: perhaps this individual has failed in the last quiz and was endeavoring, by a profuse display of responsiveness, to gain or regain a higher status. Perhaps again, this pupil was extraordinarily elated this particular morning. Some piece of good fortune may have been hers-- her lover may have whispered tingling blandishments to her the preceding evening (the writer knows that there is actually a lover in this case); perhaps this, perhaps that. Or possibly this pupil is by nature-nurture very responsive to the smiles of others. Who can say? And should the writer have approached her on the subject, what would have been offered, "good reasons" or "real reasons"?

Let us take another example:

T-- Mr. W., do you know any parallel in this country for "tearing things loose from their context"?

P-- I don't recall. (Slowly)

T-- The religious controversy in the Southwest. You say anything there and they'll pull a Bible on you.

P-- (Makes supplementary remarks). Inference-- speaks to redeem himself in the teacher's estimation.

This sort of thing was noted frequently. Perhaps the make-amends motive is the entire answer in some instances but very often offering such a single motive is oversimplification. Possibly this pupil would have said the

same thing regardless of his previous failure to answer the question put to him. An attempt was made to carry the analysis one step further and the queries were raised, why are all pupils more or less eager to make good recitations and good quiz marks? Is it the effect of parental emphasis on grades? Is it emulation? Attempt to win self-esteem? To gain status in the group? Recognition from the teacher? The writer is strongly of the opinion that an affirmative answer can be given to all of these questions in his own case. He would hesitate, however, to lay down any general formulation.

The enormous complexity of the phenomena being studied tended to early discouragement but opposed to this was the flush of enthusiasm with which the writer had embarked upon the venture. In the endeavor to "pin down" some of the more subtle varieties of interaction, introspection was frequently resorted to. An example of this aspect of the investigation follows.

T-- Did you ever hear me say anything like that before?

(Pause)

P1 and P2--(almost simultaneously) Structure limits function.

The writer was one of the pupils involved here and set down this notation: "Here I was in a tension immediately after the question was asked. As soon as the other pupil said 'structure' I automatically repeated the word aloud, probably to relieve the tension. In other words, I had

not arrived at the same idea independently".

Toward the end of November the study resolved itself rather definitely into a psychological analysis, that is, a study of the separate members of the class. It was felt that if the investigation was to be at all significant the past experiences of the pupils needed to be known as completely as possible. The initial effort to secure this information was made by asking the members of the elementary class first, to give the names of the schools attended during the last five years and, if not in school, to list their activities during this period; second, to give the school enrolled in and major subject in the University; third, amount of college social science taken to date. The pupils were assured that such information as they gave the writer would be considered strictly confidential. From the first considerable effort was made to win the confidence of these pupils. The writer talked to many of them before and after class sessions and on the campus. Everyone of the thirty-seven members of the class gave the information sought. Of these seven were majors in English, six in History, three in Sociology, Fine Arts, Economics, Journalism, two in Business, Home Economics, Chemistry, one in Latin, Spanish, and Engineering. A careful perusal of the contents of these papers was

deferred until fuller information had been secured.

After repeated efforts a tentative classification of verbal interaction was formulated and applied to several class discussions. Again the original notes will be transferred without embellishment:¹ (1) Supplementation, (2) Contradiction, (3) Asking for explanation, (4) Giving explanation--relation of facts, (5) Asking for a fact, (6) Giving a fact, (7) Opinion. The shortcomings of this classification are palpable. (1) and (2) overlap with (4), (6), and (7); (4) with (6) and (7). The question may be properly raised as to what constitutes a fact, particularly in the realm of the social sciences. In general a fact is a well-authenticated opinion. Therefore one who cites a generally accepted opinion to explain something or other is giving both an explanation and a fact. Or is (4) applicable only to cases wherein the pupil has propounded his own views? But how did he obtain his views? By actual formulation from first-hand experience? By wholesale adoption of another's viewpoint? Or was the method a synthesis of these? Very often an individual does not know exactly how he acquired this or that idea. Shall

1-- The writer has chosen this method of presenting the thesis deliberately. The subsequent "touching-up" of original notes conduces to a lack of appreciation on the part of the reader of the development in the investigator's viewpoint and method.

the distinction between (6) and (7) rest upon the memory of the person concerned-- "giving a fact" if he remembers definitely that he read or heard this statement such and such a place and "giving his own opinion" if he knows definitely that he worked the idea out for himself or if he cannot remember whether he did or not. Such a distinction possesses little or no validity. The reader can easily note other difficulties in the example given on the next page. The writer was discovering for himself the poignant truth of Park and Burgess' initial statement concerning social interaction that it "is not a common sense idea". His attention at that time was fixed upon the reactions of the separate individuals comprising the class, not upon their interaction. Not being able to see the forest for the trees describes exactly the bewilderment at this juncture.

One day, about the middle of December, the writer took charge of the elementary class which he was studying intensively. He discussed the nature of social interaction at the outset and especially its applications to classroom procedure. The major portion of the hour, however, was devoted to the bearing of an individual's past upon his present behavior. Since the aim was to secure as much information from these pupils

Type of interaction

Teacher

Pupils¹

My guess as to what will happen to Mussolini is that someone will stick a stiletto in his back and it'll come out the front. Then they'll have a large, ornate funeral.

(Laugh)

SUPPLEMENT-
ATION

1- Someone has given him six years to live.

OPINION

Well, I'm not naming the number of years he has but (laugh)

EXPLANATION

Oh, a person might come to be permanently deceptive. That's true....

2--What about a person using deception?

SUPPLEMENT-
ATION

2- I have in my memory a student who said "all you have to do to get a grade out of that prof. is kid him along, make him think he's right".
(Mild laughter)

(Laugh)

(Teacher had been saying that an individual's affiliation with various groups often lead to contradictions in personality.)

CONTRA-
DICTION

3- But a person has to be congenial if he wants to live in a certain group.

EXPLANATION

Yes, that's true. When in Rome do as the Romans. But in this day and age, we have a choice. That is, suppose we take a hip-flask group; you don't want to drink. Well, you don't have to join that group, do you?...

2- Do instincts play any part in personality?

EXPLANATION

Yes, if you assume there are instincts. Obviously they are the starting point.

1-- Numbers designate persons.

as they were willing to give, the writer could think of no better means of establishing rapport than narrating some of his own past experiences. Probably nothing is so disarming as the attitude "I am willing to do the very thing I am asking you to do and I'll do it first". Afterwards the members of the class were requested to write out within the next several days:

(1) Particular experiences which were believed to have operated to make the present classroom behavior what it was.

(2) A chronological account of past experiences noting especially, (a) location of the home, (b) economic status, education, etc. of the parents, brothers, sisters, (c) educational experiences from the elementary grades up so far as these could be remembered, (d) play and summer activities, (e) jobs held if not attending school all the time. The pupils were told that all this autobiographical material would be considered confidential. Further, it was requested that the accounts be as complete as time would permit. Twenty of the thirty-seven pupils submitted this material. Three of the more interesting papers are given below.

" I. Things that I believe affect my classroom behavior.

"A. Combination of physical and mental abilities. When I was about six years old I had to undergo an adenoidectomy to prevent tuberculosis of the glands of my throat and as a result of the enlarged adenoids, my

tonsils had become infected and it had all drained on my strength. I was physically weaker than the other boys and, besides that, I skipped a couple of grades, three half years to be exact, in grade school and I was consequently unable to cope with the other boys. In Junior high I noticed this apparent weakness of mine and fought for myself. I was always whipped, however, by the tough North Lawrence boys and I developed a shyness that extended even into the classroom. I think that I have overcome it to a great degree, but it has its effect.

"b. Reading-- I have always read voraciously. I have read much of the best literature ever written as well as a good deal not so good and a great deal of very poor quality. I am greatly interested in prose narrative writing, disgusted with most of the poetry that is crammed into me in my literature classes, and practically fed up with all detective stories, save those of S.S. Van Dine. I think my reading has had more effect on my classroom behavior than any other thing.

"c. Loves-- I had three simultaneous loves in grade school. One survived, but after I skipped a grade or two ahead of her, I lost interest and forgot her. There was another that struck me harder. It lasted throughout my Junior high period, but I was so shy that I was afraid to talk to her. I should probably talk too much now. This affair, one-sided as it was, contributed to this shyness of mine. I have been troubled with no such feelings since then, but I believe that I should recognize it quickly if it came along.

"d. Rapid progress in school--I have gained a certain facility for soaking up things given in the classroom so that I spend my study time with those things that I am interested in and get by in the others. I am a junior and will be nineteen next April.

"II My Life

I was born April 30, 1911, near De Soto, Kansas. At the age of ten days I was moved to Lawrence and have lived here since that time. I remember very little of that trip. I have never been farther east than Illinois nor west of Topeka. My parents are of the low middle class economically. My father had a country school education and later a course in the Kansas City business college. My mother had a high school education and was valedictorian of her class. When they came to Lawrence my father worked first for the street car company, then for the Railway Express Company. He has been the latter company for thirteen or fourteen years and is now cashier of this branch and second in command at the Lawrence office. He doesn't understand youth very well and is a bit selfish with my mother, but he tries hard and has

many friends from all classes of life. My mother has even more friends than my father. She has a great understanding and her ability to keep peace in a rather quick tempered family is marvellous. I have a brother who is sixteen, a senior in high school and a sister of fourteen who is in the ninth grade, going to high school next semester. I am largely of German blood but there is a strain of English and Dutch going back, so a lawyer greatuncle of mine claims to have found out, that goes back to one of the original 1620 Mayflower shipment.

"I went through grade school in four years and had a fairly good time there. We used to have to tell stories, rather we did so for enjoyment. There was a girl and myself that was invariably called upon and usually it was I. I made up some of the greatest conglomerations of fairy tale fiction that ever existed. The pupils seemed to like it and since then I have often wondered what the teacher thought of it. I imagine I originated the grade school continued story and usually when I went to tell an installment of my long-winded narrative I had forgotten what I had said the last time so I went ahead with another one. The pupils never knew it but enjoyed it. I don't remember much of it but I have been told all about it. The only thing that I remember is that once when I was allowed to tell a story I said to the class in my most urbane manner "Where were we. Oh yes, the little boy was down by the seashore." Those were my exact words. I don't know why they stand out as they do. I do remember too, that once when this rival of mine--the girl--was called upon, I stuck my fingers in my ears and was soundly slapped by the teacher. As it happens the same girl was my secret love.

"I spent the full time in junior high and lived a miserable life. I fought often and was always whipped. I don't care to hear any more about junior high school--as the two black crows would say.

"High school was better. I began to get interested in other things and went through the three years in two and a half and went into the university at fifteen.

"I have taken one year of piano lessons (ten years of age), two of violin (thirteen and fourteen years of age) and two years of saxophone (sixteen and seventeen years of age and am still taking). The latter is my best love although last year I played violin in the Little Symphony orchestra and am playing a violin in it this year and the director has asked me to play in the K.U. Symphony next semester. I am greatly interested in popular dance music and am taking harmony and trying to teach myself, with the help of a radio and the best recording orchestras, to make dance music.

"I am still a voracious reader and am interested in writing. I am an English major and was a member of Pen and Scroll in my sophomore year.

"The past four years I have worked in a privately-owned cash grocery store on Saturdays. At first I worked in the back room but now my chief occupation, outside of decorating the vegetable window, letting the customers talk, giving everybody a big grin to take out with him, giving the backroom boys an idea of what to put on the shelves, etc., is pounding an adding machine for approximately fourteen hours every Saturday. I am paid well, however, and I enjoy the work because of the varieties of people that I meet and the personal contact with the owner of the store and the two other employes. I could write a book on these three people and have enough left over for a dozen more.

"I am a member of the Leader's tumbling class although, when I was in Junior high, I was the poorest tumbler in the "gym" class.

"I am no psychoanalyst or any other sort of fake character analyzer, so I shan't try to explain my thinking, my imagination, my dream world (not quite as active now as formerly), etc. I don't believe that I will ever, even when I get old, look back and wish to be younger again. I have more fun every year and, although I am not very old, I am very glad that I am not back in my early school years. I think that I will always find plenty to keep me busy and when it is time to move on, there is probably some other world to live in as another stage of existence in this thing people call eternity."

This young man, then, seems rather "bright" but prefers to concentrate his efforts upon non-school activities. He seems to have no ambitions to excel in academic work, made a grade of C in elementary sociology. Further, he participated seldom in discussions.

The next autobiography is not as detailed. It was written by a young lady who failed in this course.

"I was born in a small Kansas town by the name of Ionia in 1908. I moved to Kansas City, Missouri when I was a year old.

"My father is a dentist and, on the whole, we have a very comfortable income, but not too much. We own our own house, have a Ford coupe, which my father

takes down town for work, and a Hudson which is used when the whole family goes riding. This is also paid for. We never buy anything on the installment plan or have a charge account at any of the stores, unless it is in my father's business.

"My father and mother were both teachers in country schools in Kansas. Neither had very much education, because there were large families on both sides. Both had to get out and make their own living, which is not easy to do. They went to normal schools in order to teach.

"I finished ward school, high school, and junior college at Kansas City. This is my first year at K.U.

"I have never worked, so do not know all the hardships of life, but I do know there are plenty of them. I have never been away from home for long periods of time. This is the longest.

"There are four in our family. My sister, who is thirteen months older than I, lives at a sorority house here in Lawrence, while I stay at Corbin. I have always had somebody in the family with me wherever I go. This is the first time I have lived by myself, but it is not exactly by myself. I room with a girl at Corbin whom I like fine.

"There is nothing in my classroom behavior except shyness to talk and readiness to respond. I am very slow in reading and writing, which handicaps me a great deal. It takes a long time for anything to soak into my head. I also have a weakness in failing to understand the questions. I never was very good in school but at least I got this far!"

This young lady's classroom behavior conforms closely to the description given above. Altogether, it is a fair inference that she is passing through a critical period at present.

Here is a very brief one.

"I was born in Topeka. My parents moved to Fort Scott when I was eight months old. Have lived there since. My father and mother were both born in Russia. My father was graduated from high school in Russia, then he came to America. Mother has been in this country since she was three years old. She dropped out of school when she finished the sixth grade.

"My home conditions have been of a general type.

Father has a store and I have spent most of my time there when I wasn't in school. My mother was always prejudiced about letting me go out for any kind of athletics, so my physical life was developed with playmates. When I got older, I took 'gym' at school and spent some time at the Y.M.C.A. My mother also kept after me to read books, which I was loathe to do and at present I am sorry for this because I see that if I read more books, my lessons would be more easier (sic). Mother also saw to it that I should put in an hour's practice on my violin every day.

"As to my education, I went to school in Fort Scott from the first grade till I finished the Junior college there. All through school I have always liked to debate any statement that I think is wrong, whether it came from a student or teacher. But here at the University I find that it is not such a good policy to do (sic), so I just wait to talk until I am called upon."

The last statement is hardly true. This pupil may believe that it would be better to speak only when spoken but his earlier propensity, "I have always liked to debate any statement that I think is wrong", was evidenced rather frequently. Since he spoke in a loud, unabashed manner, some of the pupils seemed to resent it. But one day, in conversation with the writer, he volunteered the information that he did not mean to be argumentative-- just wanted to understand "some of these things".

Space will not permit the inclusion of more of these autobiographies. All of them are interesting and hold a wealth of information to one gifted with unusually keen insight. Excerpts from several others may be included, however.

"I have the tendency to speak only when I feel that I am adding something new. Many contributions of the students seem superfluous." This was from a student

who made an A in the course.

2. "Under some teachers who were eccentric or given to sarcasm, I was always absolutely tongue-tied. Since I have come to K.U., where I am again among absolute strangers, I find it more and more difficult to enter into class discussions or even recite when called. It seems as if I have never been able to talk about anything sensibly to anyone or before anyone I do not know, while I can literally talk an arm off a friend."

3. "Thus, to a certain extent, my life has been a series of ups and downs. The loss of my parents gave me, at an early age, a sense of responsibility. Conditions have not always been the happiest. Contrary to general opinion, living continually in a group has not resulted in making me a very extrovertive type of person. This may be due to the fact that I was always fond of reading and so, when I was especially tired of crowds, I buried myself in my books. Here was an outlet for my feelings; yet I feel most at home in groups. I can now look back on my past life and think how fortunate I have been. People have been most kind and helpful toward helping me fulfill my ambitions. Perhaps this brief generalization of the facts in my life will supply a faint background in regard to my classroom behavior, perhaps not."

Next a classroom experiment was proposed. This was worked out with the assistance of the instructor in charge¹. who made these suggestions:

1. Take fifteen minutes of a period.
2. Have a stenographer record everything said.
3. Note identity of participants.
4. Have part of the class note action of the rest; for example, tensions, anticipation, laughter, etc.
5. After the stenographer writes out the verbal record, undertake to correlate this with the observed action, taking all or part of another class period to do this.
6. Also attempt to correlate the discussion and action with mental action of teacher and students (objectives, inferences, emotions).

1-- Professor Stuart A. Queen.

7. Study relation of discussion to the text material assigned.

8. Study relation of the participation by individual students to their personal history.

Seven pupils were designated as observers. They were asked to look for facial and other gestures, and make inferences relative to the pupils participating in the discussion. On January thirteenth the pupil observers, stenographer, and writer were distributed in the front part of the room and at the sides. The experiment lasted about fifteen minutes. The entire next period was given over to a class discussion of the experiment. The verbal interaction was placed upon the blackboard and the teacher, participants, and observers described the situation from their respective angles. A portion of the results are set forth on pages 32 and 33. The teacher conducting the class set down these objectives:

1. Call first on students who respond readily in order to get the class going quickly in a normal fashion.
2. Choose these from the front row in order that they may be easily observed.
3. Recognize volunteers as usual in order to encourage initiative and participation in the discussion.
4. Call on one or two who do not ordinarily participate much on their own initiative, but who are likely to have something to say.
5. Outline on the blackboard in order to focus attention and aid auditory imagery with visual.

Several days before the end of the semester, the

T- In order to get the distinction of the terms and correlate today's work with what we have done before and to clarify ideas, I thought it might be well to distinguish what is involved in each of these things by outlining them on the blackboard. Miss H, contrast accommodation and assimilation.

P1- Assimilation is a process of interpenetration, in which people of one group acquire the memories and sentiments of another group and in this way they become interpenetrated with them. Accommodation consists in an adjustment of social relations.

T- Is there any difference in the sorts of contacts essential to these, in terms of primary and secondary? Are primary contacts essential to either of these or both? Miss E.

P2- Both of these are essential to primary contacts.

T- Yes. Can you have an accommodation between two nations?

P2- Pardon?

T- (Repeats)

P2- You need primary contacts of representatives of nations, but not with nations.

P3- We have to have them between nations, I think.

P4- I don't think we need primary contacts between nations because they can adjust their affairs without necessarily coming into close relationship on a variety of subjects.

P3- Suppose Germany wants to become a republic like the United States with a president. They naturally would send over people here to look over the government, then they would start their primary contact.

T- Is it possible for people to sit down across the table as delegates and still not have primary contacts?

P2- I think it's more successful on a more free basis and not so formal.

Participant's
comments

Observers'
comments

Called on this pupil deliberately. She is usually well prepared.

Teacher waves chalk hand. Reactions to answers easily observable. Started in rather loud and strained voice which soon became natural.

Had anticipated such a question and had partially worked out the distinction. Slightly nervous. Teacher well pleased with P1's recitation.

Head up and down. Fingering pencil. Eyebrows contracted. Tone halting.

P2 said she was taken off her guard. Question not comprehended, so "stalls for time" by asking for a restatement. Teacher slightly disappointed with P2's answers.

In case of inadequate answer, Teacher looks over class for pupil comments.

P2 laughed nervously, leaned forward in chair. Fingering pen.

Teacher pushed back hair, leaned on chair. Nervous clearing of throat.

P3 stated that his idea here was suggested by previous answer. Aware of observers.

Voice loud. Random hand waving. Easy manner.

P4 was self-conscious at the beginning. Later concentrated on expressing thought.

Used hand to assist in getting idea across.

P3 used Germany here because it flashed in mind first. Had no definite point of view, but wanted to "see the thing through".

P2 saw chance here to redeem herself. Spoke concisely because so many wanted to talk

1-- Several pupils complained to the writer that the presence of so many persons in the front of the room facing the participant pupils made them nervous and thus, they asserted, the results were impaired.

class was asked to turn in a final paper on (1) features of the course which were liked, (2) features disliked. Considerations were to be given to the teacher's methods, personality, the textbooks used, other members of the class. One pupil wrote this criticism:

"Coming as I do from the engineering school, this course is something entirely new to me. I have enjoyed the type of discussions which have been carried on in class, and as a 'flunk' or a 'pass' in the course has meant little to me, I have been an interested spectator of what went on. I like very much the method of instruction used. I am of the opinion that a mixed class helps a great deal in this type of course to get at the major topics. A class composed of only one sex would not respond as this one has. The only fault I have to find with the course is with the text and I am sure this cannot be helped much. I find that reading several different texts does not give so much a broadening of the outlook but only a repetition of what has been covered."

Here is another: "I like very much the simple, clear way that the instructor presents the course. His jolly personality may have had much to do with it, for without a doubt, he is one professor who is human. (It is to be understood that this is sincerity and not 'apple-polishing') The idea of following the syllabus is a good one, I think, because it sort of gives a definite outline to the course. I find it also makes reading sociology easier, since there are definite questions to which one is trying to find answers. There is nothing much that I disliked about the course, I wish there could have been more experiments (as the one on classroom behavior) carried out by the class, but perhaps this is not easily done in an elementary class. I might add, that with the exception of about two or three members of the class, who I must admit get on my nerves with their artificial, 'know-it-all' manner of reciting, the class is a good one."

This terse statement came from a chemistry major:

"Agreeable features of sociology course 50.

(1) Relative unimportance of this course in my curriculum.

(2) Three hours credit.

(3) Wider acquaintance at the University.

(4) Greater perspective.

Disagreeable features.

(1) Tiresome, tedious reading.

(2) Generalizations and terminology about things in which I am not particularly interested.

(3) Buying a Davis-Barnes text for three assignments!"

Thus, the writer completed the investigation of the first semester, confident that certain valuable results had been secured but uncertain as to the relevancy of these to a definitely sociological study of the classroom situation.

The same technique was continued at the opening class of the second semester: another elementary similar to the one studied intensively during the preceding semester, was attended regularly and other classes intermittently. Discussions were recorded as were certain observed and inferred reactions of the members of these classes. However, in the attempt to arrive at a sociological approach to the study of social pathology during the first several weeks of the second semester, the writer discovered important "leads". Commenting upon investigations of social interaction among small children, Thomas states that " Even when these records were made strictly in terms of overt behavior, they were found

to be highly impressionistic and dependent upon the idiosyncrasies of the observer".¹ These experimenters worked with small groups of pre-school children. This being true, one could not expect to describe completely classroom interaction in which thirty or forty college students were involved. Elsewhere Miss Dorothy Thomas says that "Available data in regard to social behavior consist largely of descriptive accounts-- case histories and diary records. These are often very illuminating social behavior documents but they present certain difficulties as material for scientific analysis. The data obtained... are selective, inconsistent, and usually incomparable with other records.... at their worst these records are such an intermixture of facts and interpretation as to be utterly worthless from a scientific point of view. Even at their objective best the selection and emphasis are more or less dependent upon the recorder".²

And again she states, "Overt expressions of any act of behavior are so exceedingly complicated that a complete record is impossible."³

On the basis of his experience with the classroom situation, the writer feels that these quoted statements may be applied quite readily to this project.

Thus, as the foregoing paragraphs attest, the investigator groped into numerous blind alleys in

1-- W.I. and Dorothy Thomas-- THE CHILD IN AMERICA p. 622.

2-- Thomas, Dorothy (and others)-- SOME NEW TECHNIQUES FOR STUDYING SOCIAL BEHAVIOR Introduction: Methodology of Experimental Sociology page 3.

3-- Ibid. page 5.

seeking to define a suitable project. Finally, however, the study was resolved into an identification and classification of the social processes occurring in class discussions. While this definition of the project has not been based directly on suggestions derived from any particular author or line of investigation mentioned in the History of the Project, nevertheless it would have been impossible without these. Following this somewhat lengthy discussion of the preliminary steps, an analysis of the project proper is submitted. The pages that follow, then, are devoted to an exposition of the social processes as they occur in class discussions.

THE SOCIAL PROCESS IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS

In the foregoing pages the steps in the development of the writer's viewpoint and method have been indicated as accurately as possible. However, after the project was limited to an analysis of the social processes occurring in class discussions, steps in the development do not stand out so clearly. Two of the more obvious processes were identified first, "conflict" and "mutual supplementation", and numerous class discussions were recorded¹ in order that additional processes might be discovered. Since most of the class discussions studied during the first semester had been recorded, this material was available for classification also. Out of this more or less confused mass of data, the following processes slowly emerged:

(1) Mutual supplementation

- (a) Spontaneous-- successive statements.
- (b) Stimulated-- Teacher asks questions: "anything else", "other factors", etc.

(2) Controversy

- (a) Conflict-- opposing statements.
- (b) Sparring-- milder than conflict. Interrogations.

1-- Sometimes a stenographer was employed.

(c) Pursuance-resistance.

- (3) Pursuance-Avoidance
- (4) Pursuance-Effort
- (5) Pursuance-Elaboration
- (6) Pursuance Acquiescence¹

In addition, a mere question and answer might be considered a process but the writer prefers to consider it an aborted process. That is to say, many of the processes set forth above start with a question and answer but what follows this question and answer, the further development, determines how the episode shall be classified. More elaborate explanations of these processes follow together with illustrations.

MUTUAL SUPPLEMENTATION

The term "mutual supplementation" has been employed regardless of the seeming tautology to convey the idea of several pupils, or the teacher and one or more pupils, making contributions to the topic under consideration. In the case of the "spontaneous" type the discussion runs along easily, with several pupils and, perhaps, the teacher adding their bits to the discussion. In "stimulated" supplementation, on the other

1-- Hyphenated terms have been utilized so that the processes may not be said to have been characterized from one angle only. The writer has found no single words to express these ideas.

hand, the teacher calls upon pupils in succession or uses such phrases as "other factors", "anything else",¹ These two very often occur together; that is, "spontaneous" supplementation may lull, whereupon the teacher may ask for "other factors", starting up, thereby, another "spontaneous" episode.

Spontaneous

I

P- They (Hillsboro Mennonites) don't believe in voting.

T- Well, you see, they don't want to belong to the larger group.

P2- They don't have automobiles or radios or any of the modern things.

T- They don't like the new inventions.

P2- But lately they have been getting these things-- some of them.

T- Well, that would threaten their group solidarity. Johnny turns on the radio, hears jazz. Says, "that sounds pretty good". How you gonna keep them down on the farm after they've seen Paree.

II

T- What are the various types of controls exercised in our every day life?

P- Driving fifteen miles per hour on the campus. Isn't that control by the University?

T- More or less.

P- Dress?

T- That's a result of control

1-- The second variety of this process has been described as "stimulated" only because the stimulation is more obvious than in the case of the "spontaneous" type.

P2- Wouldn't you say there were three types-- public opinion, religion, (P2 forgets the third one).

P3- Then there's social control through ostracism.

T- Yes, they are tangible things: lift of the eyebrow, not being invited to dinner-- little things.

III

(The advisability of requiring health certificates of those desiring to marry is under discussion.)

P- I think it would improve the race, etc.

T- You think it would give us better people?

P- Yes.

T- Many states have such a law at present. But it's not difficult to get around it.

P2- A law like that causes more corruption sometimes.

T- It often does that, all right, when a physical certificate is necessary.

Stimulated

I

T- Are you aware of any rivalry in this classroom, Miss W?

P- Well, everyone wants to get a better grade.

T- Yes. Anything else?

P- If a person believes a certain thing, he tries to bring others to that view, etc.

T- Can't you do good work without keeping others from it? Sure you can; often your good work makes others work better. What else, Miss K?

P2- I can't think of any but these two.

T- Anything else?

P3- There's competition for seats at the beginning of the semester.

P4- Several people want to talk at once-- that's competition in class.

T- Yes, that's a good example.

II

T- Miss K. asks this question: would it not make marriage more successful to require a physical certificate from the doctor at the time of marriage,... Mr. H?

P- I'm not sure that you'd make much improvement that way. As it is people know each other's health when they are planning to get married.

T- What do you think about it, Mr. C?

P2- Well, they have it in North Dakota and conditions don't seem to be much better.

III

T- Why do the so-called lower classes have larger families, Miss R?

P- Well, funds (pause) and schooling.

T- Anything else?

P- Can't think of others.

T- Miss W ?

P2- People, as they get more money, stay in school longer and get married later.

T- (Supplements)

P3- People can't get around as well if they have kids. Apartment owners don't want them.

CONTROVERSY

"Controversy" is the general term that has been used to describe episodes in class discussions in which there appears to be some difference of opinion. In the

case of "conflict" there is a sharply-defined divergence. Two persons are usually involved. In examples I and II which follow, one of the persons is the teacher; in example III, both are pupils. "Sparring" is milder, the divergence of opinion is implied rather than stated unequivocally. Interrogations of a thought-provoking, rhetorical nature are frequently used here. But-- and herein lies the basis of differentiation between "sparring" and "pursuance-resistance"-- if these interrogations are answered definitely in the negative by another, the process is termed "pursuance-resistance". In the three examples of this last process, the teacher "pursues" but it is easily conceivable that one of the pupils should do the "pursuing" while the teacher "resists".

Conflict

I

T- There are two major divisions of clashes between peoples; competition, which is continuous, impersonal, with^vawareness and conflict, intermittent, personal, awareness. How does the struggle for existence figure in human affairs?

P- Well, there's competition in trade.

T- That's competition in economics but not in the Park and Burgess sense.

P- Men compete for the same positions.

T- That again is conscious.

II

P- That's one thing about the Italians in this country, they live in the underworld and break the laws.

T- I wonder how far it is the foreigner's fault.

P- Well, in Kansas City the Italians make barrels of the stuff.

T- Yes, but they don't drink it.

P- No, but they make it.

T- Well, but don't they need customers?

P- Oh, sure, but.....

T- The only reason more one-hundred-percent Americans don't make it is because their afraid of getting caught.

P- Well, at least they respect the law.

T- I'd hardly call that respect.

III

P- I think the United States ought to stay out of these countries,... They would be just as well off and the other country would be better off.

P2- How can they stay out? Take Cuba for example; we had to step in there to protect our rights.

P- We did not have to take the Philippine Islands, though. We should have left them alone. We have not cared about anybody else. Just like our missionaries going to China. I don't think they have any business going over there.

Sparring

I

P- We are assertive when we are sure of our ground, when we've had experience with the thing.

P2- Yes, but how about a defense mechanism? An inferiority complex?

P3- Don't you think the attitude of the group has a lot to do with it?

P2- How about bull-headedness?.....

P3- You might want to persuade others to your point of view and not be bull-headed.

T- Is that self-assertion?

II

T- What's the difference between nationalism and imperialism? 1914 was the climax of nationalism; perhaps-- we hope so.

P- Imperialism is more aggressive.

T- There can't be anything more aggressive than war.

P2- Germany was imperialistic in the World War, wasn't she?

T- France wasn't. She didn't want territory?

P2- Yes, but Germany was after more in the beginning wasn't she?

III

P- Aren't artists kind of dumb?

T- Are they dumb or only so in some respects?

P- Course, I don't know much about it but aren't they generally people with rather low I.Q.'s?

T- Well now, are they?

Pursuance-resistance

I

P- I think it's a foolish question. The marriage institution seems to be satisfying the needs. Must be satisfactory. The institution has always been changing.

T- You think institutions just change?

P- Sure, things change. People just have a different attitude toward divorce. Marriage institution will change itself.

T- Itself? Some leaders are necessary, aren't they? Who will start the thing?

P- Well, I suppose several leaders are necessary. But take polygamy that we had once....

T- We still have it. Where have you been?

P- Well, where were the leaders in that? It was just an economic matter.

II

P- Women have a maternal instinct, don't they?

T- Well, do they?

P- Sure. You take a little girl with a doll, for instance. They just seem to do it naturally.

T- Mightn't little girls be imitating their mothers?

P- Well, no-- at least not in this case. (Tells of a girl reared in an orphanage.)

III

P- The black and white races should be kept separate and not intermingle. (This pupil was reading a paper to the class which she had written.)

T- Is that what you really believe?

P- Umhuh.

T- Well, is such a scheme practicable, though?

P- It seems to me it's about as practicable as any other program I have heard.....

T- But how about the near whites? You wouldn't know where to draw the line, would you?

P- Oh I think that could be worked out.

PURSUANCE-AVOIDANCE

In the process termed "pursuance-avoidance" there is one person seeking unsuccessfully to evoke a

response from another.¹ The "avoidance" may be of several varieties: first, as in example I, a pupil may make a contribution but refuse to say more when another, usually the teacher, seeks to evoke a fuller response. Second, as the second and third illustrations indicate, there may be a refusal to say anything except "I don't know", etc. The last example is a case where^ein the teacher avoids committing himself by throwing the question back upon the questioner.

I

P- I know a case of a man who is submissive. His parents must have wanted him to be a girl. Parents trained him to a submissive attitude. He was self-assertive at first.

T- You think self assertion is born in a person?

P- Well, I don't know.

II

T- What about self assertion and submission, Miss L ?

P- Oh, I don't know.

T- Ever see that-- assertion and submission?

P- Not by that name but I may have seen the thing.

T- Have you seen examples of assertion?

P- Yes.

1-- It is conceivable that two or even three persons might collaborate in asking successive questions, that is, "pursuing", although no such instances were encountered. Probably this would appear only in classes conducted with a minimum of formality.

T- Submission?

P- Yes.

T- Can you give us several concrete cases?

P- Can't think of any.

T- You're not very assertive now.

III

T- What is nationalism, Miss R ?

P- (Pause) I don't know.

T- Ever hear of it-- this term nationalism?

P- Yes, I suppose I have.

T- Is it anything like patriotism?

P- I don't believe I can define that either.

IV

(Discussion was centered around the case of a Negro girl who lived with, but never married, several men.)

T- But we would hardly call her immoral, would we?

P- Why isn't it immoral?

T- Of course, it does violate the mores.

P- Why isn't it a social violation?

T- Well, what do you think?

P- I think it is.

PURSUANCE-EFFORT

This category seems obvious enough. Here the pupil (usually it is the pupil) makes an effort to recite ultimately whereas he does not in the case of "pur-

suance-avoidance".

I/

T- What would you say a sociological definition of personality was, Mr. B ?

P- I don't know.

T- Too complex?

P- Too complex for me.

T- Well try, after all none of us knows so much about these matters.

P- (Attempts an answer.)

II

P- In population pressure aren't there economic factors?

T- Yes, what are some of these, Miss K ?

P2- (No answer)

T- What about the economic factors in the great war?

P2- Well, we were just discussing these-- desire for political power and for land.

III

T- Miss B, can you think of any other consequences of the War?

P- (Pause) I believe not.

T- There are several other important ones we haven't touched upon. (Pause) You can't think of any at all?

P- Well, there's the whole unrest of the thing, leading to loose morals.....

PURSUANCE-ELABORATION

The more or less extended questioning involved

in "pursuance-elaboration" serves to call forth a fuller response than is given at first. This process occurs frequently. Usually the teacher "pursues" but occasionally a pupil does, as in the second illustration.

I

T- Mr. W asks this question: To what economic or social theory is the American prejudice against clandestine relations after marriage due? Miss C, where'd we get the idea?

P- I wouldn't doubt but that it was the Puritans.

T- Puritanism?

P- That idea that one man should stay with one woman-- we've had it since the country was settled.

T- We've always had it?

P- Uh huh.

T- What does Puritanism mean?

P- It's a religious sect evolved out of Calvinism.

T- Communism?

P- Calvinism.

II

P- How about that: if a sense is not used for a while it can't be regained, can it?

T- Well, that might be true. Animals have keener smell, there's no question about that.

P- Do you think a sense is ever lost or merely lies dormant?

T- I don't know but I imagine.....

III

T- Mr. E asks this question: Does the child born to

parents married late in life have advantages or not? Now we are getting into parent-child relationships.

P- Well, if parents are young, it seems to me the attitudes of the parents and children are more apt to agree. But there's apt to be conflict with older parents.

T- Less conflict with younger parents?

P- Yes.

T- You mention attitudes; what sort of attitudes do you have in mind?

P- Well, any viewpoint on life.

IV

P- I think we have domination only under certain conditions. Now you take the case of two who are very nearly equal-- well, take a man and wife with education very nearly equal. They analyze the situation. No attempt at domination.

T- You think the principle is all right when people are more or less equal?

P- No, when they are unequal.

T- Oh, unequal. Well do agree with the principle of domination in general?

P- I'd want to condition it.

PURSUANCE-ACQUIESCENCE

In this process one person, again usually the teacher, attempts to swing another over to a point of view differing from that first upheld. The "pursuer" accomplishes this by asking questions, in answering which the other appears convinced that his first opinion is incorrect.¹ This process is similar to "pursuance-

1-- The word "appears" is used advisedly. Whether the person is actually convinced is another proposition.

resistance"; in both processes there is a person throwing out questions which serve to demonstrate to the other the untenable character of his first position. The difference between these two obviously lies in the "acquiescence" in the one case and the refusal to do so in the other.² "Pursuance-acquiescence" occurs frequently in Socrates' teachings, as reported in Plato's Republic.

I

T- Which of these do you think is right: races differ in inherited organization of mind or in experience, Mr. O ?

P- Well, I think savages and civilized men differ in organization of the mind.

T- Organization, eh? Do you think..... or..... (presents both sides of the proposition at some length)? Now, is it organization or experience?

P- Well, then I guess it's experience.

II

P- Here's what I think about it: you're born with a good or bad personality and there's not much you can do about it.

T- You don't think a person can develop a pleasing personality?

P- Well, maybe, sometimes.

T- Don't you know any boys, for example, who developed

l-- Very often "pursuance-acquiescence" might be considered a type of "controversy"; at all events, its distinctiveness as a process remains unimpaired.

a different sort of personality after going away from home to college?

P- Uh huh. I know several, all right.

T- Well then.....

P- I guess you're right. I was thinking.....¹

Finally, to augment the reader's understanding of these processes, a somewhat extended class discussion is presented and analyzed. This discussion took place in an elementary class on March 21st. Any one of a number of examples might have been given here; this one was selected because it illustrates a slightly greater variety of concepts.

T- (Reading a pupil's question) Is it a sociological advantage or disadvantage that marriage is being pushed later in life?

Conflict

P- Is it?

T- Yes, is it? The truth of the matter is that people are getting married more and younger.

Isn't Judge Lindsey's companionate marriage the result of people getting married early?

Sparring

T- Yes, for this group.

P2- Just for one group?

T- Well, it was aimed at the college group wasn't it?

Can you tell us something about it?

1-- The writer was unable to secure additional examples of this process.

Mutual
Supplementation

P2- Well, it's not much different from ordinary marriage. They get together and, if they want to, can separate later. But there must be mutual consent in case a child is born.

(spontaneous)

T- Separation must be before a court, must it not? Children are not expected for a while-- nothing new in that is there? Any other factors? The girl may maintain her independence, not supported by the man. Mr. W seem to agree. Anything to say, Mr. W ?

Avoidance

P3- No.

Pursuance-elab-
oration

T- Mr. R asks this question: Should there be a dominant individual in the family or can each have individual rights and maintain unity? Can you offer any satisfactory solution for this equal rights matter? Miss K ?

P4- I hardly know. Looks like if they can agree to have equal rights, all right; but if they can't, I don't know-- maybe let one of them boss.

T- Do you think a boss will make unity?

P4- Seems that way. In the past a man was boss but we are getting away from that now.

T- It always looked as if the man was boss..... How about the rest of you? Ever see equalitarian family? Does the family need a dominant individual for unity?

Mutual
Supplementation₁
(spontaneous)

P5- Depends largely upon the situation. If the mores tolerated it and the children did, all right; if not, the children would fight it.

T- That is, you have the idea of children having ideas of their own. Take case of an immigrant family.....

1-- Of course, the teacher's questions provided the stimulation for the first response (P5)

P6- Well, I think each has his own sphere in which he dominates. The wife takes care of domestic matters and the husband of economic. But they might have a joint bank account.

T- Would the husband dominate in economic matters if there was a joint account? Where does the wife dominate according to your scheme?

Pursuance-
elaboration

P6- Well, she has charge of the servants and the setting of the table. The husband earns the money and maybe they talk over how it is to be spent.

T- (Question not obtained)

P6- She also takes care of the clothing of the children.

T- What do you think about it, Mr. R?

P7- Woman seems to me to be replacing the man as the dominator.

Pussuance-
avoidance

T- Do you think she is?

P7- Well, look around.

T- How do you explain this change?

P7- I don't know.

T- Yes? (indicating another pupil)

Mutual
Supplementation
(spontaneous)

P8- The life insurance policies are being made out to women; they're acquiring the financial power.

T- Is that right? They get the financial power, then the social power.

P9- Well, there's the woman's economic independence. They don't need to rely on the husband any more for support.

T- Yes, I think that's true.

Conflict

P10- That wouldn't make domination, though; that would only make them independent.

T- Any more?

Mutual
Supplementation
(stimulated)

P11- How about equal education?

T- Yes. How about this urbanization and specialization of labor? Take the rural situation-- there the man was always around.....

(Reading another question) Have you ever known a perfectly compatible family? Any one ever know a compatible family? (Pause)

Pursuance-
elaboration

P12- I know one but it wasn't completely compatible.

T- Not completely?

P12- Relatively so.

T- How do you account for it?

P12- Well, they had common interests. A doctor married a nurse. They worked on the same problems.

T- That's often very important.

P13- Sometimes this leads to incompatibility.

T- Why?

Mutual
Supplementation
(stimulated)

P13- Well, they may have different theories about the same thing.

T- Any other reasons for compatibility? Did these people have any children?

P12- No

P6- I know a case where two doctors married. They had children too but they were divorced later. The woman was the better doctor, she had a bigger practice.

T- Yes, the man felt inferior. That was not very pleasant. Anything else?

P14- I know a compatible family. Both are musicians. The wife is the better one.

T- (Makes supplementary remarks.)

During the course of this study it was observed that in one of the classes investigated, the process "pursuance-elaboration" was most prevalent; in another it was "mutual supplementation"; and in a third the question and answer predominated. Other classes did not seem to exhibit a single dominant process.

Since the similarity of class discussions to other types of discussions is patent, the application of the concepts identified in this study need not be confined to the classroom. One would find many, perhaps all of these processes in an informal discussion over a bridge table, in a New England town meeting, a faculty meeting, or in a confabulation at the corner drug store.

The relation of the social processes occurring in classroom discussions to the major social processes

As indicated in the Introduction, all the processes identified in this limited study might be subsumed under the head of more general ones.¹ For

1-- The study of the social process as set forth by Park and Burgess and the later modifications made by Professor Lumley and Professors Dawson and Gettys have been utilized for the reason that these seem more directly applicable to the field of personal relations.

example, the classroom procedure itself may well represent a type of accommodation. Take, for instance, the process "mutual supplementation". Here the pupils have become accommodated to the procedure of supplementing each other's remarks in a more or less orderly fashion, instead of all of them attempting to talk at once. The process designated "conflict" is identical with the concept in Park and Burgess' text bearing the same name. At the same time, the form which classroom conflict takes, is a matter of accommodation; that is, instead of standing up, waving the arms violently, and hurling epithets, the persons involved adjust themselves to the customary restraints manifested by subordinates in the presence of those occupying a superordinate position. Since "sparring" is milder than "conflict", it possesses characteristics similar to the concept "rivalry" as outlined by Park and Burgess.¹ The latter define "rivalry" as a "sublimated form of conflict where the struggle of individuals is subordinated to the welfare of the group".² Just as "it is not always easy to apply with certainty the distinction between rivalry and conflict", so, as

1-- Lumley's concept "antagonistic cooperation" seems identical with "rivalry".

2- Op. Cit. page 577.

previously mentioned by the writer, his concepts, "conflict" and "sparring" tend to merge into one another.

The "pursuance" categories remain to be considered. Offhand it might be suggested that the person "pursuing" is the one superordinate in the superordinate-subordinate relationship. This seems to be the case in the processes defined as "pursuance-avoidance", "pursuance-effort", and "pursuance-acquiescence" when the teacher takes the initiative. On the other hand, an instructor does not lapse into a subordinate role if he "avoids" or "acquiesces" occasionally. It would seem, in general, that the teacher accepts a superordinate and the pupils a subordinate role prior to any class discussions, although, of course, a teacher's ascendancy over the pupils may be lessened by frequent "avoidance" or "acquiescence". Perhaps the relationship existing between these concepts and the form of accommodation called "superordination-subordination" may be summarized as follows: by virtue of his superordinate position, the teacher usually is expected to be on the "pursuance" end of these categories, although this is not his exclusive prerogative. As previously mentioned, a pupil may ask questions and the instructor "elaborate".

CONCLUSION

Since this preliminary study of social interaction in the classroom has been largely exploratory in nature, the investigator found it advisable, in the final definition of the project, to concentrate his efforts upon one of the simpler aspects of the classroom situation. Accordingly, an attempt has been made to analyze the verbal interaction, that is, the class discussions. The pursuit of this line of investigation has resulted in the identification of certain processes:

- (1) Mutual supplementation
 - (a) Spontaneous
 - (b) Stimulated
- (2) Controversy
 - (a) Conflict
 - (b) Sparring
 - (c) Pursuance-resistance
- (3) Pursuance-avoidance
- (4) Pursuance-effort
- (5) Pursuance-elaboration
- (6) Pursuance-acquiescence

The relation of these processes to several classifications of the major social processes has been indicated.

Obviously, this study cannot be expected to give a complete description of classroom interaction. It has merely opened up the subject. Supplementary projects need to be worked out. One of these might very well be a study of classroom motivation, for which, among other

things, the investigator would need full autobiographical materials. Another project might deal with the effects upon the pupils of different types of teaching and teachers. Brief discussions of these topics are set forth in the History of the Project.

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