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1.

## DON'T DISCLOSE IDENTITIES

From the beginning of these studies, the identities of the persons under study have been kept confidential. We look to you to carry on this trust. Please guard the privacy of the persons involved by substituting fictitious names, or code symbols for real names.

August 8, 1930.

### METHOD OF INTERVIEWING By F. J. Rothlisberger

#### I. Kinds of Interviewing

As in this paper I wish to speak of a certain type of interviewing I shall contrast it with other kinds. Four kinds of interview technique present themselves if we are to differentiate them on the basis of their purpose or aim.

##### (a) Informative

In the first class I shall put all interviews in which the main purpose is to obtain and to determine the quality or attributes which a certain individual possesses. Generally this is done with a specific purpose in mind. For example, an employer wishes a certain kind of individual for a certain kind of job. This job, in his opinion, requires certain qualifications such as age, education, religion, and training. The interviewer judges the person on the basis of the kind of qualifications which the job demands.

##### (b) Diagnostic

But frequently interviewing is employed in order to diagnose a complaint from which a person suffers. The aim in this case is to judge the complaint on the basis of symptoms. The presupposition in this case is that certain disease entities have certain characteristics called symptoms. From the symptoms one can diagnose the complaint. Although this kind of interview works very well in assessing certain organic ailments, it is employed



less and less in the case of functional disorder. The reason for this lies in the nature of a functional disorder. In the latter case the symptom is ~~not~~ an organic disorder. It has to *an expression of a much wider situation than* take into account a social factor as well as an individual factor. Hence a diagnosis of such a complicated situation on the basis of symptoms leads to a "Babel of nomenclature," as one doctor so aptly put it, in which certain labels are attached to the patient which leave him, as well as the therapist, just as much in the dark as to what the matter really is or what should be done.

Nevertheless the adequate diagnosis of such complaints is highly necessary. In the handling and treatment of psychoneurotics, of criminals, of juvenile delinquents, of disciplinary cases in educational institutions, or of dissatisfied employees in industry, the need of adequate diagnosis is keenly felt.

One would expect to find indiscriminate therapies galore where it is difficult to obtain an adequate diagnosis, and this seems to be borne out if we take a look at the fields I have just mentioned. By an indiscriminate therapy I mean a general method of treatment given to a group of individuals regardless of differences in individual situations. In the case of criminals, a large number are herded together in one institution and given practically the same kind of treatment, if in many cases it can even be called treatment. But even in the other fields

the same condition prevails. There are a number of therapies advocated for psycho-neurosis, everything from rest-cures, fresh air, sea voyages, and a simple life in the country to early marriage, religion, and philosophy. In some educational institutions every student whose marks are low is "bawled out" by the dean, the underlying theory being that all students are naturally lazy and shirk work, so that a periodic reprimand will help to pep them up and to toe the mark. In industry a problem employee is frequently handled by attaching labels such as "grouch," "radical," "highbrow," etc. It is not infrequent to find that no attempt is made to determine why the man has a grouch, is radical, or has difficulty in mixing with his co-workers. He is labeled and treated accordingly, depending on what the general policy of the concern is about cranks and radicals. Industry presents various schemes of treating general dissatisfaction among employees, of which bonus systems, wage incentive plans, and recreation plans are some.

In all this I do not wish to imply that there has never been any successful results obtained from any of these therapies. In each of them there is unquestionably an element of truth, and hence in certain cases its application is bound to be successful. All I wish to show is that indiscriminate therapies follow as a corollary from inadequate diagnoses and that inadequate diagnoses seem to issue from an attempt to diagnose by symptoms, especially in the case of individuals whose complaints and difficulties are

functional rather than organic.

(c) Therapeutic

Interviewing is still employed in other ways. In this case its function is plainly therapeutic and not diagnostic. This kind of interviewing might be listed as an example of an indiscriminate therapy which I have just described. In this class I should put all interviews in which the aim is to help an individual by suggestion, persuasion, coercion, moralization, or advice. It can be anything from a pep talk to a sermon. It presupposes that an individual can be changed for the better by encouragement, inspiration, good and sound advice, etc. Again let me say that much excellent work has been done by such a method. Nevertheless I want to distinguish this kind from the rest in order to make clear the kind of interview with which this may be concerned and of which I now speak.

(d) Analytical

This kind of interview I shall call analytical to differentiate it from the rest. Although its aim corresponds in some respects to the second and third kinds just mentioned, having a diagnostic as well as a therapeutic element, it has important and significant differences.

II. The Aim of Analytical Interviewing

In the first place its aim is to try and diagnose a situation, rather than to classify a certain kind of disorder or complaint. It is a method of assessing a human situation, whether it be normal

or abnormal, simple or complex, good or bad. It attempts to minutely describe the situation and to understand the individual's behavior in terms of it. Its objective may be either theoretical, practical, or both. That is to say, it may be used as an instrument of research in order to better understand kinds of personal situations or it may be used as a practical tool for finding out what the matter is in a particular instance in order that a certain individual may be assisted with his difficulties by such understanding.

In this sense it is also therapeutic. This expresses itself in two ways, one indirectly and the other directly. In the first case it provides an "emotional release" which any frank expression of a problem to a sympathetic listener offers, but this is a by-product rather than a direct therapeutic aim. It does not seek to elicit such cathartic explosions except as they naturally come up in the course of events, as they are apt to when some one is discussing his personal difficulties. In a more direct way it is beneficial by assisting the individual to re-evaluate his experiences, but this re-evaluation proceeds in a certain channel. It does not elicit or coerce the individual to adopt more positive attitudes or more optimistic modes of thinking or more fruitful ways of behaving. It tries to understand the reasons for the individual's present way of evaluating and interpreting his experiences whether they be good or bad, right or wrong, and it presupposes that such an analysis helps the individual to make the

necessary corrections, that is to say, to correctly interpret ultimate means, to re-interpret, and to re-evaluate.

### III. Its Material Objective

The questions immediately arise as to just how the interview is to accomplish its aim, what material is to be assessed, what rules of procedure are to be followed, what assumptions is it making, and what are its rules of interpretation. It will be with these questions that the rest of the paper shall be concerned.

#### (a) Analysis of a Situation

The material to be collected depends largely on our understanding of a situation. In every human situation there is a personal element of interpretation. This is an important element to determine because the kind of response which the individual makes to his environment is dictated by the kind of meaning he assigns to it, that is to say, the interpretation. It is needless to say that every situation is a situation for an individual. It is absurd to consider what the "real" situation is if by the "real" situation we mean that something is apart from any human interpretation. Such a situation is an intellectual abstraction. It does not exist. What do exist are concrete situations from which we can abstract a factor of interpretation. Nor does it follow that because there is an element of interpretation in every human situation that there is one and only one true interpretation in comparison with which all others are false. There are "levels of interpretation" and although a primitive

level of analysis may look false from a higher level, it nevertheless remains true at its own level if at that level it leads to effective behavior. In short the criterion of truth I shall assume is pragmatic; that is to say, successful behavior is true. As any further analysis of what I mean here would lead into a long philosophical digression, I shall merely state it dogmatically as an assumption which this method makes.

A situation, therefore, can be analyzed into two parts, (1) a world to which the individual is attending and adapting, and (2) the individual's world of thought by means of which he is (a) passively assimilating this world to himself and (b) actively discriminating from himself. This passive assimilation must be taken into account as well as the active differentiation when we consider the element of interpretation. It is to this passive element of assimilation that I refer when I speak of a "total situation." In a sense there are only total situations to which an individual responds, so that there should not be any need of making this distinction. But as the older schools of psychology have only attempted to consider the individual's active states of discrimination, it has been necessary to coin the term "total situation" in order to point out that man is not only actively attending and discriminating, but that he also is passively reflecting and dreaming, creating mental schemes by means of which he assimilates his experience.

In short, the old time conception of "presentational situation" is as much of a fiction in modern psychology as the old time conception of point-instant is in modern physics.

If this analysis of a situation be correct, then we have a clue as to what material needs to be collected in the interview. We want to explore and study in minute detail this passive process of assimilation in relation to the individual's processes of discrimination and adaptation. It means a study of how these mental schemes are formed and constructed, and how they operate, successfully or adversely, in assisting the individual to adjust himself to his environment. This study includes two factors, (1) a study of the <sup>ant</sup>dominate and crucial social situations under which an individual's interpretations have been formulated and (2) what the individual has contributed himself to the interpretation. The first study I shall call objective analysis; the second subjective analysis of an individual's situation. The first study is a social one, the latter an individual and psychological one. In the first case of study, the individual's life is observed in relation to his surroundings, that is, the different social situations under which he has developed, as for example his early family life. In the second case we study the preoccupations and reflections which the individual's experiences in these situations have aroused. As this is more intimate and personal material, it is more difficult to obtain. The technique of the analyti-

cal interview is largely concerned with eliciting just such material. I shall now turn to the rules of procedure by means of which the interview is conducted.

#### IV. Rules of Procedure

I should not wish to have these rules considered too rigidly so that they may never be violated. They are rules which follow from a scientific attitude towards the understanding of human behavior and are useful only as guiding posts for the beginner. If used in this manner they are useful but if they are employed so rigorously that they prevent any new illumination they degenerate merely into rituals of procedure.

- (a) In the first place the interviewer should be friendly, but intelligently critical. By being friendly I mean that he should put the person interviewed at ease and that his attitude should be one of patiently listening to what the person has to say before making any comment himself. Listening and not talking until the person has made a complete statement is the first rule. Probably the quickest way to stop a person from expressing himself completely is to interrupt. No matter how irrelevant the material may seem to be the interviewer must remember that the person interviewed probably cannot easily state what is really important to him.
- (b) Of course it follows that besides attentive listening and not interrupting, the interviewer should try to understand what is being said. Nothing irritates an individual more than the



feeling that he is misunderstood.

- (c) The interviewer should not give advice or moral admonition. If an individual, for example, wants to commit suicide or leave his wife or obtain extra-marital sexual experiences, the attitude of the interviewer should be, "Why?" In this way the interviewer allows the individual being interviewed to express his opinions on these subjects more frankly; that is to say, he will assist him to specify more carefully his own thinking. The interviewer does not pose as having any superior knowledge on any of the questions raised. He need not be an authority on marriage, on sex relations, or morals. All he can do is to set by example the attitude he wishes to present to the person being interviewed. It is an attitude of fact finding, of facing yourself frankly, your bad points as well as your good. If the interviewer violates this attitude, the discrepancy is easily noted by the person being interviewed. The interviewer, therefore, should guard himself carefully from rushing <sup>in</sup> with advice, moral whistles, Pollyanna suggestions, etc., before he is acquainted with the actual situation. If one follows this procedure the interview tends to be turned to a concrete study of a situation and does not degenerate into a bombardment of good advice.
- (d) The fourth rule which is good to follow is never to argue with the individual about his opinions, prejudices, irrationalities, etc. No attempt should be made to modify his opinions by sug-

gestion or coercion. In fact, in many instances it is a good plan to go in the opposite direction, that is, to restate his position even more strongly than he has done in order that he will do his own restating and own modification. The interviewer never defends or justifies himself. If the individual, for example, criticizes him he must be ready to ask, "Why do you think this?" If he calls the interviewer names, the interviewer must be ready to keep up the same objective attitude. It is for this reason more than for any other that the interviewer should have considerable knowledge of himself, that is to say, he, too, should know his own shortcomings and limitations. Otherwise he is in a position of having them painfully exposed.

- (e) Although the method is essentially one of listening, nevertheless the interviewer does and should break in with questions. It would be difficult to state the rules which the interviewer should follow in asking questions, largely because this is developed by training. If one remembers that the main objective is to get the individual talking about anything which he wants to talk about there are a number of stock phrases which one can use in order to assist this process, such as, "Isn't that interesting?", "What do you mean?", "Why?", "Isn't that curious?", "Tell me more about it."

Of course many times the interviewer would like the discussion centered around a certain topic which the individual seems to have omitted. Generally there are a number of opportunities in what the person says which offer themselves as leads for the

Interviewer in order to turn the topic in a particular direction. Again no rigid rules can be stated. The more training an interviewer has the more skill he develops in this direction.

The other body of questions which the interviewer asks are largely determined by his understanding of the nature of the interview. Of course the interviewer is not just listening with no rules of interpretation in his own mind. Naturally he is putting to himself certain questions. He has certain ideas and hypotheses. One might object to this by saying that he, therefore, only finds what he is looking for, but as this is a criticism which could be directed against any scientific inquiry it is pointless. The important thing is not that you do not have any questions with which to guide the inquiry, but that you have made explicit your questions or hypotheses which are directing your attention in certain areas. Many of the questions, therefore, which the interviewer asks are dictated by these rules of interpretation of which I shall now speak.

#### V. Rules of Interpretation

So far we have considered the kind of material we are trying to elicit and the rules of procedure by means of which it is to be obtained. The question now arises, "How is it to be interpreted?" This is by far the most important question. It is on this question that the success or failure of the clinical method depends.

The clinical method tries to combine the method of questions with the method of pure observation. It differs from the method of tests

*What are the directions? Some days we must try to set them down.*

*In fact, one is nearly always surprised. This because the ideas + hypotheses are:-  
a - methodological  
b - geographical  
c - in what human does the chief difficulty rest?*

in that it does not ask the same set of standard questions to an individual under alleged standard conditions. Questions are asked, but they differ and vary with each case. They arise from what the person interviewed says. Naturally such a method taxes the interviewer's ingenuity and intelligence. He has to guard against the two extreme dangers, either of asking too many questions and thereby distorting the free and spontaneous material which he is trying to elicit, or asking too few questions so that only by-product and insignificant material is obtained. He cannot have too fixed and preconceived ideas which prevent him from catching anything new, and on the other hand he must guard himself from allowing the interview to become too incoherent because of no guiding hypotheses. Besides giving complete credence and giving no credence to what the person says, (between assigning a maximum value or a minimum) the interviewer must steer a middle course. This presupposes rules of interpretation which must not be rigid or too vague. This is the crux of the analytical method.

Immediately certain difficulties arise. The one most frequently mentioned is, "How do you know whether the individual is telling the truth or not?" This statement may be interpreted in two ways; (1) "How do you know whether the statement which the individual makes is true?" and (2) "How do you know whether what he says is what he really believes?" I shall consider these in turn.

The first interpretation is the most common pitfall for many interviewers and arises from a complete misunderstanding with regard

to analytical interviewing. The fact of importance in this kind of interview is not whether or not the judgment which the individual makes is true or false. The fact is that he does hold such an opinion or belief. For example, an individual speaks about his mother. He tells you that she is this, that, and the other thing. The interviewer at this point might raise the question in mind, "Is the individual justified in having this opinion about his mother?", that is to say, is his mother as he says she is; in short is he giving a true picture of his mother? Maybe the interviewer thinks it might be well to see the mother or get other opinions about her in order to check up the son's opinion. As I have said, such digressions completely fail to understand this method. The assumption in every case is always that a personal judgment is a composite of two elements: (1) that which comprises the total effects from the object and (2) that which comes from the specific reaction of the individual himself. To quote Jung here, "It is naturally not conscious to the naive man that those who belong to him in the nearest and most intimate relations create in him an image with which they only partly coincide, in that its other part is taken from material which originates within the subject himself." It is this latter material for which the interviewer is listening. If it does not come up with reference to his mother, it may come up with reference to his father, brothers, sisters, wife, professors, friends, and lastly and not any the less important with the interviewer himself.

For example, the individual says his mother is so and so. The question for the interviewer is not whether the student's assertion about his mother is true but rather, "Why does he hold this opinion about his mother?" If the discussion is kept in this vein the distortion, if there be one, will gradually come out because the individual will begin to justify himself. For example, he might say, "Perhaps I feel this way about my mother because she did this and that." But "this and that" often times becomes rather vague and indefinite. By proceeding with relentless questions in this area the student is forced to state his case more explicitly. The discussion reduces itself to the fact that the individual is making such and such demands or has such and such expectations with regard to his mother, friends, etc. These are the analytical facts which the interviewer can assess with the individual interviewed.

But the second interpretation, "Is the individual saying what he really believes?" cannot be answered so easily. It is not so easy to differentiate what is an integral part of a person's thought from what has been superficially swallowed ad hoc from the social environment.

If the interviewer had to determine in any one point in the interview whether or not the statement which the individual is making constitutes an integral part of his thinking or is merely a superficial appendage he would not be able to do it. But fortunately this is not demanded of the interviewer. After the course of a number of interviews he has collected considerable material; (1) material

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which has been freely expressed and (2) material which was given in answer to specific questions raised. No one judgment can be interpreted except by putting it into this wider context. Everything that the person says during the hour he is being interviewed cannot be put at the same psychological level. There are times when he is just making conversation, when he is not thinking and replying at random to questions, when he is fatigued, and when he is poking fun at the interviewer. At other times one feels that he is more in earnest, he is attending to and reflecting on what is being said. Naturally the material obtained in the latter context is more significant and important than in the former. Of course, the former is useless and valueless if we assess it from the point of view of the topic being talked about. Nevertheless, frequently it does throw light on the individual's underlying attitudes or tendencies. For example, if one notices a number of poking fun responses to questions one can assume that the attitude of the individual towards personal questions is material which needs to be exploited and which will be more vital to the understanding of the individual's situation than the specific answers to the questions themselves.

In order to answer the above question it may be well to understand more clearly the relation between what a person says and what he thinks. The assumption of this method is that most people do not say what they think. This is probably a difficult achievement and distinguishes the immature from the mature type of mind. Many people wish to get things "off their chest;" they are ready to explode to



any sympathetic listener about their grievances, imaginary or otherwise, but it is well to remember that even in such explanations there is a great deal that has been left unsaid, and it is necessary for the interviewer to attend to what the person has left unsaid as well as to what he is saying.

But besides remembering that an individual is consciously omitting many things that he does not want to say there are also many things which the individual apprehends but cannot verbally express. Many of us have probably had the experience after reading a book which we express by saying, "That's just what I wanted to say." Many people derogate such a book, assuming that because they might have said it they did say it, but it is highly questionable in most cases that they could have said it. As it has often been said, "To know how to say what other people only think is what makes men poets and sages." Probably for the most of us the most intimate portion of our thoughts is never expressed. In order to arrive, therefore, at a person's intimate convictions and beliefs, it is necessary to make three categories:

- (1) What he wants to say.
- (2) What he does not want to say.
- (3) What he cannot say without assistance.

- (a) because repressed,
- (b) because underdeveloped.

The first rule of interpretation is, therefore, to treat everything that the person says as a symptom rather than as a reality or fact. Only by such a method can we elicit material from the second and third categories. In other words, we assume that each statement he makes has some relation either to what he does not want to say or

what he cannot say. In the rest of the paper I shall try to make the meaning of this statement clear.

(a) What he says.

Let us first analyze what he says. Here there are two large bodies of material - judgments and demands which the individual makes of his environment. As we shall later see, this is not a clear distinction as in many judgments there lies a hidden demand which has not been made explicit. As what an individual says is largely conscious differentiation and discrimination it may be well to classify the four large groups of judgments which he makes. These I shall call:

- (1) hedonistic judgments
- (2) evaluational judgments
- (3) intuitional judgments
- (4) thinking judgments

(1) In the first group I shall put all judgments which when analyzed reduce themselves to pleasant or unpleasant sensations, that is when it means, "I have such and such aches and pains or such and such pleasant or unpleasant sensations." Of course for all specific aches and pains one should see a doctor. It is not of these of which I shall speak. But frequently such symptoms cannot be reduced to any organic cause. They seem to be symptoms without organic basis.

(2) In the second group I shall put all judgments which when analyzed mean something in the nature of, "I approve or disapprove." It cannot be reduced to a sensation. It generally reduces to the statement that a person "feels" this way about

so and so, sometimes referring to an object, sometimes to a person, and sometimes to an idea. Such judgments generally involve an element of value, that is, good or bad, right or wrong. This value is generally not made explicit but lies implicitly in the judgment. I, therefore, call these evaluational judgments. All self criticism as well as criticism of others falls into this group, all judgments of approval and disapproval and more explicit ethical judgments of right and wrong.

- (3) In the third group I shall put all judgments in which there is a vague apprehension or discernment of a totality which the individual cannot quite analyze. I have, therefore, called these intuitional judgments. It includes hunches, syntheses, connections, generalizations, and relations of one sort and other.

At this point it may be well to note that the word "feel" is frequently used for all three types of the above judgments. The word "feel" is probably one of the vaguest in the English language. Sometimes it refers to an organic sensation, as when a person says, "I feel badly," meaning he has a stomach ache. Sometimes it means, "I approve" or "I disapprove" or "I like" or "I dislike," as when, for example, a person says, "I feel this way about Jones," and then goes on to criticize Jones rather severely. Then again it sometimes means, "I have a hunch or intuition," when, for example, a person says, "I

feel that this should be done," For the expressions, "I sense," "I intuit," "I like or dislike," "I approve or disapprove," we frequently use the word "feel." It is important to note this because the use of such a word is generally synonymous with vagueness and indefiniteness on the part of the subject, and its correct analysis throws much light on the mental makeup of the individual.

- (4) In the fourth class I shall put all judgments in which there is displayed, strictly speaking, a logical process. It occurs in the individual's way of explaining, of justifying, and of logically elaborating his intuitions. It includes not only logical implications from ideas, but also empirical verifications of ideas.

Here, then, are the four large groups into which most of what the individual says can be put. Of course, besides this there is also a body of material which I shall call demands. These are never so explicitly stated. In most cases they lie deeply buried and require a special technique in order to unearth them. It would be difficult to classify the demands which the individual makes of his environment. Nevertheless it is an important element in the analysis, as the individual's equilibrium is largely a balance between the demands he is making of his environment and the opportunities which the environment offers for their fulfillment. I shall speak more of demands under the third category of "That he cannot say," as it

is there that they are found more easily.

I have said that one should treat all that a person says as a symptom. By that I mean it should not be taken as something which exists in itself but as something which has meaning only in a wider context. For example, if an individual says, "The English Public School System tends to make men brutal," a judgment which I have termed evaluational, we do not discuss the English Public School System, its merits and demerits. Just the other evening I was in a social group where this statement was made. This statement was taken at its face value and discussed at that level. The interesting thing which no one caught in the discussion was that the woman who made the statement had married an Englishman who had received such an education and from whom she was divorced. For the analytical interview this is important material to obtain. I do not advocate this method for social intercourse.

But just when does this critical reduction cease? When do we consider a statement to be fact and no longer a symptom? On this point I am sure there could be considerable philosophical discussion so again I shall state this distinction dogmatically. It presupposes that there is no brute stubborn fact if by that we mean something which exists independent of an individual's interpretation. Facts are largely dictated by and relative to the method which one uses. In this method a fact is something which manifests itself in a variety of different ways. The multiple appearances of this fact I have

called symptoms. The thing of which it is a manifestation I shall call arbitrarily a fact. Let me illustrate. An individual may be very critical with regard to a large number of people in his surroundings. The individual judgments are, "A is so and so; B is so and so," etc. These I treat as symptoms in order to find out whether there be a single demand which the individual is making of which all these critical judgments are a manifestation. This, as I have said, frequently, is generally material that does not exist in what a person says. It is something he assumes but does not express. Therefore, this critical reductive process continues until a point is reached, both in the material freely expressed during the interview and in responses to questions, where one can see operating a single unexpressed tendency. Frequently many diverse things upon analysis have considerable resemblance. For example, I can point to the attitudes of the Puritan and the libertine who both make the same assumption that evil is attractive and interesting.

In this paper I am merely proposing a tentative method of interpretation. I want to make more clear the clinical setting from which material for analytical psychology is obtained. The frequently abstract psychoanalytical theories have been presented in popular books to the layman out of all consideration to the setting in which they were evolved. It is no wonder that the critical reader accuses them of clever and arbitrary facts

of interpretation. If their theories are to have any denotation it must be somewhere in the kind of material I have just outlined. A tremendous amount of research is necessary before this material can be properly organized, interpreted, and understood.

(b) What he does not want to say.

As I have said before many things are not expressed in what a person says. This is for one of two reasons, (1) it may be because it is painful to arouse such material or (2) because it lies so implicitly in his thinking that it has not as yet been achieved as a conscious discrimination. I shall only consider the first in this heading. During the interview the interviewer has probably noticed many significant omissions of certain topics which the individual has chosen to speak about. It is only natural to wonder whether these have been omitted because he has never thought about them or because he does not care to speak about them. A skillful interviewer is offered in the course of a number of interviews frequent leads for breaking into these critical areas.

For example, the interviewer notices a discrepancy between the judgments which the individual makes and his behavior. When his behavior does not conform to what he thinks, the interviewer can elicit more material by pointing out the discrepancy, and asking why. This arouses generally explanations and justifications, judgments of the fourth kind which I mentioned above. Explanations and justifications are a most important group and deserve to be studied very minutely for presuppositions which are not being exposed. It frequently throws light on how the individual sees himself and also

of what factors his explanation fails to take account. This group also throws light on the limitations or defects of the individual of which he is sensitive. Here too we hear echoes of ego-centric demands which the individual is not explicitly expressing.

(c) What he cannot say without assistance.

As I have said, many things are not expressed, not merely because they are painful, but because although they be vaguely apprehended they cannot be explicitly formulated. What are the clues in what the person says for this material? If we go over the body of his judgments we shall find many evaluational judgments which cannot be justified. The individual will say he felt this way about it, but he does not know why, or, on the other hand, there may be built up a system of justifications for these evaluations. Among his intuitional judgments we find many unfounded generalizations, irrelevant syntheses, "syncretic" connections. A workman may explain that he works better when he has his watch on the bench. A young man is sensitive about the height of the girl to whom he is engaged. In his explanations and justifications we can discern an irrational core which is being logically elaborated and which is not expressed. Here then is the material which needs to be exploited over and over again.

Probably the most important "facts" to unearth are the demands which the individual is making. This is material which is apt to be most disguised, most unconscious, and at the basis of much of the distortion in judgments which we have previously noted. Where are these demands found? The most important recent discovery in psychology has been that these demands lie in man's preoccupation and undirected



thinking, and not in his directed and attentive thinking. The reason for this is not so difficult to understand. Thought is not merely a medium of communication, but an instrument for the satisfaction of desires. Man can create in thought the things which he desires. But unfortunately this often leads to dissatisfied behavior. The root of much dissatisfaction lies in the perpetuation of infantile and adolescent demands which the adult surrounding cannot possibly fulfill. Unless the individual is made aware of these demands his life is one of continuous discontent and frustration without knowing why.

As I have said the first place to look in order to determine these demands is in the individual preoccupations and dreams. Nevertheless, they also can be found outside. That is, they are disguised as projections. It can be stated as a general rule that anything which remains undiscriminated and undifferentiated is projected. Let me explain what I mean. Probably the most common example of this is where a person finds outside of himself those things that he has not discovered within himself. The virtuous man who prides himself on his upright life is apt to find all the wickedness in his surroundings. The man who has not recognized his own intolerances and prejudices is apt to see them clearly in other people. In all these cases of projection there is a confusion between the self and the external world. Man attributes things to the non-self which belong to the self.

In this paper I shall not attempt to classify the specific demands which an individual can make of his environment. We find

demands for superiority, for security, for success, for power, for virility, for affection, for understanding, for self-improvement, for a certain kind of life, for ideals, and for God.

What I should like to point out are those demands which can be termed ego-centric. By ego-centric I mean a confusion between the self and the external world. Therefore, by an ego-centric demand I mean a demand which the individual is making of his environment, which he has falsified because of this ego-centricity. That is to say, he is not sufficiently aware of the demands that he is making of his environment in order to account for his dissatisfaction or disillusionment. It is because a man does not know himself that he distorts his demands. These lie in the root of his vague dissatisfactions, his hopes and his fears, and is the cause of much of his difficulty in making social adjustments.

Once we obtain this material we have the material necessary for adequately assessing an individual's situation. Until we make minute study of these demands, how they were formed and perpetuated, we cannot properly assess the total situation. These ego-centric demands with the assumptions that they make about the individual and the world in which he lives are what I call "facts." That is to say, they are facts of this method, and this does not imply that these are the facts for physics or biology.

#### VI. Usefulness and Limitations of Method.

In this paper I have tried to present a general broad scheme of interviewing as an instrument of research. I have, therefore, not attempted to make the procedure and rules of interpretation too rigid, but to put

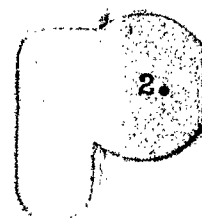
them in such a form so as to allow the individual investigator to make them more explicit and articulate.

It is obvious to anyone who is acquainted with this field that this method has been patterned after the clinical method, a method employed by psychoanalysts. It would be impossible for me to acknowledge all that I have obtained. I have given it another name merely because I did not wish to attribute to the above methods things which I have added and which they might not wish to acknowledge as part of their method. I have tried to make the method a more general method of psychological research than merely a therapeutic method which the psychoanalytic method seems to convey.

Its limitations lie in the fact that this material so far cannot be obtained in one or even a few interviews. It generally requires a considerable length of time. Nevertheless, I feel that even if one interviews a person only once, the attitude of the interviewer and the material to be looked for should remain the same, even though one cannot carry it very far. To the skilled interviewer who has had several years training many of these things can be detected at the first interview. Nevertheless he has no right to consider them as facts until they are actually unearthed and acknowledged by the individual himself. At this point they merely constitute leads and hypotheses for further interviews.

This method will only reach a state of adequacy when such rules of interpretation are sufficiently expressed in order to allow a number of these investigators to reach the same conclusion. As I

have said before, I have not attempted to give the last word on the rules of interpretation. I have merely pointed out certain large volumes of material which need to be further organized and from which psychology about human behavior can be elaborated if they are to have a concrete denotation. In a future paper I shall endeavor to give an application of this method in a particular case with a more specific discussion of these ego-centric demands and their common presuppositions.



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In attempting to formulate plans for 1931, we find ourselves confronted with several questions which have grown out of interviewing experience and which, to us, indicate the desirability of making possible changes in the present plan. It seems, therefore, appropriate to present these problems for discussion at this time inasmuch as budget requirements will need to be ascertained early in the fall, even though we must necessarily present them in a rather nebulous form.

The questions referred to might be grouped as follows:

1. Those involving the objectives of the work.
2. Those regarding the interviewing technique.
3. Those involving changes in the mechanical set-up.
4. Those regarding problems of personnel.

For the purpose of clarity we shall attempt to develop the problems as listed although, of course, there is considerable overlapping.

#### DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERVIEWING OBJECTIVES

There is no doubt but what the general objective of our work is to increase our understanding of human behavior. However, those of us who have been actively engaged in the interviewing program are aware of its ever broadening significance and therefore our attention has been re-directed several times. We have described this as a "confused" state and yet it is apparent that we are progressing and developing rapidly, especially if we compare our present objectives with those we had during the early months of our work. For this reason a brief chronological account is presented.

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It will be recalled that the original objectives were built around the "Need for Inventory of Employees' Feelings about Supervision and Working Conditions."\* We sought to obtain data from employees to serve three purposes:

1. To improve plant and general working conditions.
2. To determine relative importance of existing employee relations policies and to serve as a guide in formulating new ones.
3. To be used as a basis for supervisory training.

These were the values mentioned when we started the program in the Operating Branch and they still form the basic part of our approach to the employee. However, because of later developments, interviewers now place less emphasis on this phase of their work as they have become more interested in other values which they see in the interview. These so called "values" we talk of as personal values and they include the benefits to the employee and to the Company resulting from a thorough "talking-out" process in which the interviewer's role is one of critical listening. The realization of this part of the work has materially changed the direction of our thinking and we have come to look at these things (in our thinking) as the prime function of interviewing, subordinating the original objective of seeking data relative to the industrial situation. While this seems to have been a very natural development, it presents what appears to be a conflict in our point of view.

To make the point clearer, let us turn again to the Test Room experience. At the time the interviewing program was set up we had in

\*See Chart of Development

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mind dealing with the objective situation in industry. By making improvements on the basis of what employees liked or disliked we hoped, in some measure at least, to obtain results similar to those noted in the test room. Our reasoning was based on a consideration of what the test room operators told us with respect to their former working situation, and in the comparisons they made between it and the test room environment. In other words, we concluded that the important factor involved in the improved mental attitude, health and production of the girls on the test, was the improved industrial situation. Thus, the interviewing program was instituted to provide machinery for dealing with objective situations.

After interviewing experience had demonstrated the personal values of free expression, we were able to see that "interviewing" had also been introduced in the test room technique from the beginning of the tests, and therefore, we were at a loss to understand just which factor (the changed environment or the interviewing) could best explain the results. It appears to me that a decision in this direction is unnecessary, the important thing being to clearly recognize the presence of both factors and to let this recognition guide us in the future. It is important, though, to realize that relieving preoccupation through the process of verbalization is a new view point in industry, and as such, represents a "finding" of our work. As a new conception, it should be emphasized by us until it is more generally accepted.

It is, of course, possible to criticize such a hasty acceptance of a factor which we cannot as yet assess quantitatively. However, in



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the interviews already taken, there is evidence enough to convince the most skeptical that we are dealing with something which has a practical application to industry. Verification of these conclusions can be found also in the field of psychiatry where the psycho-analytical methods have been widely accepted.

At the beginning of this discussion it was mentioned that our general objective in industrial research was to increase our understanding of human situations. In the interviewing part of the program, this has often been rather vague, due to our interest in applying some of the new ideas gained. However, if we accept the foregoing conclusions, we can see that interviewing employees performs two functions (securing information and relieving preoccupations) which are a necessary part of an industrial relations program and, therefore, we have developed a "Plan" out of what was formerly purely a research venture. This element, unless kept clearly in mind, is apt to confuse us in making plans for future activities. By that is meant that there may be a tendency to focus all attention on a "Plan for Improving Employee Relations" - subordinating the research possibilities. It seems obvious that both functions are important, the problem suggested is the advisability of separating them in an organization way.

Up to the present time, those things which might be termed results of research, have come from observations and experience. To me, one of the outstanding observations of this sort has been the realization that we have in industry a large number of maladjusted individuals who are unable to make a satisfactory adjustment to their

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situation. They are plodding along from day to day without help or understanding. Interviews with these people have indicated that we can begin to understand them as we learn their history and that a great deal can be done toward helping them by the use of interviewing technique. Inasmuch as we have as yet no criteria of maladjustment, we cannot say just how many such individuals there are, but by using our own stenographic department as a sample, we are convinced that the problem of maladjustment constitutes a tremendous drain on industry. For this reason, we believe that future research activities should be directed toward a concentrated study of several maladjusted individuals. The most promising way to do this would be to select individuals who we know constitute a problem and interview them frequently over a period of time so that accurate data can be obtained. It seems that this procedure should throw considerable light upon the relationship of the various factors in the total situation, the symptoms of maladjustment, and what industry can do to alleviate the problem. As a result of this study, we should be able to determine more accurate definitions so that both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of industrial society can be made. In other words, we should obtain an entirely new viewpoint of personnel problems and develop adequate machinery to cope with them. This, it seems to me, is the real objective of our work.

In summary form, we can trace the development of the interviewing objectives through three phases:

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1. To secure information from employees which will help us to improve the industrial environment and leadership.
2. To provide for employees a channel for free expression, to relieve and check the development of morbid preoccupation.
3. To study the problem of maladjustment in an effort to learn more about the factors involved and to develop adequate machinery to cope with them.

We have seen that the first objective is the one we set out with, the second is a by-product of our experience and these two now seem to have developed into functions which form a practical part of an industrial relations program. The third is also a by-product, but is still somewhat vague and is presented at this time to serve as a guide in planning future research studies.

The problem presented in this discussion is a consideration of grouping the first two functions of interviewing and continuing to interview all employees for the accomplishment of these two objectives, and to supplement this work with complete studies of maladjusted individuals.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUE

It is hardly necessary to give a detailed account of the development of interviewing technique, as we are all familiar with the original "direct" approach which has been followed by the present "indirect" method in which the employee takes the lead in the selection of topics. It is interesting to note that the present technique has been worked out to fulfill the requirements of the first two

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objectives mentioned earlier. There are, however, several problems confronting us with reference to the technique which may alter the plans for 1931. It therefore seems wise to consider critically the present method of interviewing and its use in accomplishing our objectives.

As a Method of Securing Data on Working Conditions and Supervision

That part of the technique which is aimed to provide data on the basis of which we can institute improvements in supervision and working conditions has been based largely on the method of Piaget who showed that the spontaneous conviction (a thought which is already in mind and is released when given opportunity for verbalization) is the most valid material for research study. It is obvious that where we ask questions which are aimed to get a response to some definite subject, our data are quite apt to be something which we ourselves have suggested. Therefore, the technique which leaves the selection of topics up to the interviewee, while it may not provide comments on all the subjects we should like, will at least give us data which we may assume <sup>of</sup> is of importance to the employee.

There are, however, some difficulties encountered in the present technique which are worthy of consideration.

The first of these is a possible challenge of the validity of the data so obtained due to distortion occurring at any one or all places where it is handled. There are at present four such points: (1) the employee gives his interpretation which we know

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is subject to exaggeration, (2) the interviewer rewrites the employee's statements and quite often projects his own preoccupations in the write up, (3) the analyzer is faced with the problem of interpreting them again and placing them in a classification and, (4) the investigating departments must interpret them for use in an investigation.

We have attempted to meet these difficulties in various ways:

(1) employee's exaggerations can be understood by considering the comment in relation to the employee's total situation, (2) interviewers are periodically shifted from one department to another to prevent distortion of a picture of one department, (3) the analyzers make very few changes in the content of the comment so that interpretation will not be altered, and (4) the investigating organization checks the comment against the result of an actual investigation.

The solution which suggests itself, however, is to simplify the process materially, so that distortion is of less importance. I believe that the greatest problem involved is in the write up of the interview. We have long recognized that the present method is somewhat costly, but we have been reluctant to countenance a change because of the fact that we have considered it essential to record as much of the conversation as possible. In research it is apparent that all information or data should be gathered until experience demonstrates that some things are more significant than others. In other words, not knowing just what we were after and being convinced

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that the interviews were providing material for research study, we have attempted to make the write up as complete as possible. It now appears that there are ways in which we can accurately report all of the information necessary and at the same time effect economies. (This is discussed more fully later in the report.)

Another possible simplification would be to have the interviewers keep an account of the comments received from employees in each department and periodically report them on the situation to a central organization. There are indications from the present analysis that the percentage of comments on any one subject to the number of interviews is remaining constant. If this is true, then obviously it will not be necessary to continue with the present write up.

Another difficulty with the present undirected method of interviewing is due to the fact that in dealing with "what" the employee says we are not necessarily dealing with what that "means" to him. Consequently, studies resulting from a consideration of the subject matter of an interview are apt to be misleading. One of the major "findings" of our work thus far is the realization of the interrelation of the various phases of an individual's total situation. That is, we may have before us a complaint on rates and the fundamental cause of that complaint may not be that the rate is unfair, but rather due to the individual's inability to successfully adjust himself in a financial way. We have seen time and again

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both in the interviews and in the test room, the relation between the individual's attitude on the job and his home situation. Therefore, we are convinced that to present accurate data from employees we must find a way to relate what he says <sup>to</sup> his total situation.

We have under consideration at the present time, a project which we hope to work on in an experimental way to develop a technique which will overcome these difficulties. Briefly outlined, the interview will consist of three parts; (1) an undirected phase where we attempt to get the unsolicited comments on the industrial situation and a complete expression of preoccupation, (2) a directed phase in which we attempt to develop a picture of the total situation and, (3) a semi-directed phase in which we attempt to relate the statements made in the first part with the total situation and wherever possible to lead the employee in a reevaluation of these statements where distortion is evident. If successful, this experiment may guide us materially in planning activities for 1931.

In this discussion of the interviewing technique and its use in gathering data, we have brought out three problems which may be summarized as follows:

1. The problem of distortion due to write up and handling.
2. The question of continuing to report working condition comments or of letting the interviewer report them periodically.
3. The problem of reporting the "why" of a statement as well as the "what".

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The Technique as a Method of Relieving Preoccupation by Expression.

It is rather interesting to note that the technique required to get complete expression is basically the same as that required for obtaining unsolicited comments. It is based on the assumption that with free expression, that which is uppermost in one's mind will come to the surface. Consequently, our aim to get a release of pent-up feelings is to let the employee take the lead in the selection of topics; but occasionally it is necessary, after getting our clue with this method, to press the conversation in the proper direction to develop the subject. This, of course, requires skill on the part of the interviewer and therefore the results are proportionate to this skill. This question of the interviewer's skill presents for consideration a problem in technique. It might be better worded as a problem to develop a technique which will aid the interviewer to detect preoccupation. In many cases it is difficult to talk about those things which have an emotional connotation and skillful help is necessary. We have, I believe, been unusually successful in the number of disturbing preoccupations which we have uncovered in the interviews, but it is impossible to say how many have gone by unnoticed. As an aid in this direction, we are conducting an experiment in applying the word association test as an indicator of where preoccupation lies which will help in turning the conversation in this direction. While final conclusions have not been drawn up for presentation, experience thus far has demonstrated that the test would be a valuable tool for



the interviewer to possess in some cases.

Another project which has to do with improving our technique in getting a complete expression from the employee, is to determine the value of providing the interviewer with as much data on the employee as possible prior to the interview. Personnel records, employment records, bogey performance, and Medical Division and Service Division records would all tend to provide a background of information which would make the interview more complete and accurate. Whether this can be accomplished economically is an open question, but experimentation is indicated.

#### PROBLEMS WITH REFERENCE TO MECHANICAL SET UP

We have discussed the development of objectives and interviewing technique and the problems connected with these phases of the work. There are other problems arising out of the plan of procedure which we call the mechanical set up.

As is already known, our present plan is to interview during 1930 all employees in the Manufacturing Department at Hawthorne, with the exception of the Engineer of Manufacture Branches, who were employed prior to January 1, 1929. The interviews take place at miscellaneous locations throughout the Works.

Because of the increasing length of time of the interview and its growing complexity, we have not been able to take as many interviews as originally planned, in fact, at the present rate, the

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total number of interviews for the year will be about 10,000. If we consider our sole objective to be that of getting information on working conditions, it would not seem necessary to interview all employees, but when we add the function of relieving preoccupation, it appears necessary that we should interview all, in fact, the new employee may present a more interesting problem than the one with longer service. It therefore is essential to consider carefully the size of the interviewing staff for 1931.

The second problem with reference to the mechanical set up, refers to the fact that our present plan calls for interviewing each employee once during the year. Experience has shown that those employees who are considerably preoccupied, require subsequent interviewing, and under our present system this is difficult to arrange. A third problem closely allied to the second, is the fact that more can be done to relieve preoccupation effectively if the interview occurs before preoccupation becomes too obsessive.

The possible remedy for all of these questions is to assign interviewers to a particular group of employees and, without changing the status of the interviewer, let him become acquainted with the problems in the group and with the individuals. It would then become customary for an individual who wants to express his thoughts to arrange for an interview. An experiment in this direction has been conducted this year by permanently assigning Mr. O'Brien to the Specialty Products Branch. Results have been encouraging. On

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one occasion a request for subsequent interview came to him through a supervisor and other employees customarily stop him as he walks through the department. This experience indicates the desirability of having an interviewer assigned to a particular group. Another benefit from such an arrangement is the fact that subsequent interviews would become more than a "rehash" of the first.

The fourth problem in this connection is the question of securing suitable locations and equipment for interviewing. In getting an employee to express his preoccupations, it is desirable to have him physically relaxed and the interview should be free from external interruptions. The reason for this is that the expression is usually a reconstruction of the stream of reverie thinking. Our present system affords little opportunity to accomplish this and therefore the problem is presented for consideration. The most practical solution is the installation of interviewing booths, either in a central location or scattered throughout the Plant. While this seems like a large original investment, if the interest on that investment were allocated to the cost of each interview, it would be a small charge compared with the values gained.

Arrangements are being made to use the Cold Treatment Room for interviewing during the next few months and after this experience we should know more about the requirements of such equipment and the benefits to be derived. It should also be mentioned that if we decide to make case studies of maladjusted individuals, booths would be

essential.

PROBLEMS REFERRING TO PERSONNEL

The original plans for the personnel of the interviewing staff was to temporarily transfer to this organization, supervisors and potential supervisors from other branches for the purpose of training them in the techniques of our work. The value of this is obvious, but for some time we have seen the need for people who are able to specialize in this field and as the foregoing discussion has shown, this need is becoming more and more paramount as the work becomes more complex.

It seems that for 1931 we should plan to develop a permanent staff by replacing the temporary people one by one, even though the training value must be sacrificed.

SUMMARY

In all of the foregoing discussion we have aimed to present the problems which require consideration before plans for 1931 can be made and to give the observations and experience which support these problems. These may be summarized as follows:

1. The question of adding to the two functions of interviewing - securing data and relieving preoccupations - a third objective which would be fulfilled by a supplementary study of maladjusted individuals to be conducted by specially trained personnel.
2. The problem of distortion due to write up and handling.
3. The question of continuing to report working

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condition comments or of letting the interviewer report the employees' problems to a central organization.

4. The problem of reporting the "why" of a statement as well as the "what".
5. The value of a word association test in detecting preoccupation.
6. The problem of improving the interview by furnishing the interviewer with information on the employee.
7. The question of how many employees we shall interview in 1931.
8. The question of assigning the interviewers to particular groups of employees.
9. The problem of securing interviewing booths.
10. The question of replacing temporary interviewers with permanent employees.

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In attempting to outline our studies for 1951, we have experienced considerable difficulty in finding a working basis for our thinking, consequently the process of presenting a report which would give the contemplated studies some concrete form has been retarded. However, in our discussions in the organization and in the preparation of the report which Mr. Dickson is writing, certain ideas and concepts have been brought out which I believe can be summarized to give us that "common ground" on which we may meet to discuss the future developments.

The following is a brief summarization of these things which seem to be relevant to the subject:

1. What is the purpose of our work?

We want to institute an intelligent control over the human instrument in industry - a control based on knowledge and understanding of human situations - for the purpose of increasing individual effectiveness. To achieve this with a statement that our objective is to acquire knowledge and understanding of human situations.

2. What have we accomplished?

Our progress to date might be expressed in two ways: (1) Progress in developing a method of conducting our studies, and (2) progress in defining and directing the studies.

The method referred to, of course, is interviewing. We believe we have developed a technique which is applicable to investigating concrete human situations in industry without creating serious influences in the minds of the employees. We have become convinced that interviewing, besides being a method of conducting research studies, also has some factors which make it a method of control. This element has come up more as a by-product, but nevertheless it makes an small part of the accomplishment to date. More will be said about this later.

With reference to direction and definition, our progress, it seems to me, can be summarized by saying that we are satisfied that human behavior can be best understood by considering the individual in his total situation. The area for study, therefore, is confined to a study of total situation.

3. What direction for the future is indicated by our experiences?

Considering what has just been said, our future plans can logically follow in three directions.

- 3.1 An investigation of interviewing as a method of control.
- 3.2 An investigation of "total situation."
- 3.3 An investigation of pertinent management problems involving the human element.

Inasmuch as these statements are somewhat vague, some elucidation as to what is meant might be in order.

3.1 How can we investigate interviewing as a method of control?

We have previously spoken of this element of interviewing under the heading of "Personal or Psychological Values" resulting from free expression and have listed these values as (1) modification of distortion and exaggeration, (2) emotional release, and (3) giving to the employee a feeling of recognition and participation. Underlying all these, however, is the ability to deal with individuals effectively through an understanding gained by an interviewing process. This suggests the possibility of interviewing as a supervisory technique or method of control, and when stated this way it is clear that further study along these lines should provide us with valuable information which might give rise to a practical application in industry.

In order to conduct such an investigation, it might be best to place an interviewer in an organization in one of two relationships with the employees, either as a supervisor or as a personnel man. The greatest difficulty would, of course, arise in trying to measure the effect of the methods pursued, but experience should help us in this direction.



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3.2 How can we conduct an investigation of "total situation."

The possible studies referred to under this heading might be classed as pure research. If, as we have said, the area for study is total situation, more must be known about this particular field. In other words, we must know how to assess a situation, how to understand the factors entering into and conditioning the situation, etc. No attempt will be made here to discuss these technical aspects inasmuch as they are being included in Mr. Dickson's report. The point we are more particularly interested in at this time is how can we conduct studies in this particular field.

The plan which has already been suggested in the preparation of a budget includes conducting a more intensive study of some three to five hundred employees using interviewing as the basic method of approach, but also taking into account production, attendance, physical condition, and any other factors we can record. To do this work, interviewing booths will be essential as the interviewing must be as effective as possible. The objective of this study must remain rather broad inasmuch as we are not attempting to answer specific questions.

3.3 What is meant by an investigation of personnel management problems?

We have all, I believe, been aware of the possibility of using the interview to investigate specific problems, such as accident proneness, problem cases, vocational guidance, etc. While our present set-up does not allow our working on these things, it might be well to consider these possibilities in our discussions. Most of these problems should be investigated in cooperation with other organizations, such as Hospital and Psychological Testing. Studies such as the ones suggested give some promise of yielding information of a very practical nature. The one drawback, as I see it, lies in selecting the problems to work on. There is as yet no guide to use in making the selection and, therefore, the work would proceed in a rather hit or miss fashion. The end result would probably be to force us into studies such as suggested under 3.2.

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Conclusions

While no attempt has been made here to come to any conclusion as to which direction we should follow in the future, it is hoped we can use this outline as a basis in discussing plans for 1931.

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In what way can we measure the benefit received by employees from the Interviewing Program at the present time? Although undoubtedly many months will pass before we can fully answer this question we can always take cognizance of their attitude towards the Program and the interviewer. The former is achieved in our "Comments and Reactions", but we haven't as yet any definite means for reproducing the rapid-growing intimate relationship between the interviewer and the members of any one department. Every day we have friendly experiences with men which may be retold to someone interested in our work; seldom are they recorded. Because these are frequently so illustrative of expressed confidence in the interviewer himself and play a great part in making our job interesting to us, referring, of course, to the human element involved, and furthermore because these experiences are indicative of an almost conscious effort on the part of a large group of men to make a definite place for the interviewer in their organization, it seems well worth while to bring to the surface in this paper a few of our experiences amongst a specified group of employees.

Taking a division where the majority of the men have been interviewed and working in collaboration with Mr. Edwards, who was assigned to one of the three departments in the division, we will proceed by giving our impressions of the type of men we had to deal with, thus inserting a little of the local color which is somewhat lacking in the written interview. The latter part of the paper will consist of our experiences summarized and divided into three groups, as follows: general experiences within a department, voluntary conversations, and exploited conversations. To make the stories complete, we will bring in any previous encounters with the individuals which have a direct bearing on the incident we are interested in, eliminating the dialogue for the sake of brevity.

Let us glance for a moment at the men we have reference to, first reminding the reader that this group is not an abnormal one, but that we use it to exemplify the tendency in many departments to welcome the interviewer as their advisor, confidant, and authority on company policy, etc. Examples will also be given to reveal the natural impulse on the part of the interviewer in occasionally taking the initiatory step in opening the conversation.

In regard to numbers, there are 436 in the division, 370 of whom started working in the plant before January 1, 1929. To date 175 have become acquainted with us through the medium of interviewing. Practically all of them are skilled machinists who have served an

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apprenticeship either in Europe or America. Almost every nation has its representatives in the organization, which in reality does not noticeably affect their efficiency and progress. As a matter of fact, when we turn back to their early history we can see that they have a great deal in common. They selected the trade in order to be independent as far as work was concerned, there being a constant demand for trained machinists all over the world. In their boyhood days the trade school was a haven for those who couldn't afford an education. Varied practical experience having been emphasized by their employers, they travelled from shop to shop until about twenty-five years of age when marital ties began to anchor them down.

Gradually, and sometimes unwillingly, they accepted the added responsibilities which accompany married life, satisfied to work permanently in one shop. The average age of the group is over thirty-five years; their thinking and reasoning, consequently, mature. Their attitude towards this Company is, on the whole, satisfactory as evidenced by the small turnover, 75% of the ones eligible for interviewing having at least five years service. Fair wages, steady and interesting work, good supervision, and the consideration given to employee welfare, are given as reasons for their stability.

Although most of them have had but little schooling, they are intelligent and good specimens of all that the "school of experience" can offer. As a result, their viewpoint is broad; their minds keen to absorb any new experiences. Even though realizing that the years they served as apprentices with a meagre monetary reward repaid them in later years, we can perceive an underlying note of regret that they were unable to secure a better education. This has served to stimulate in them an ambition to give their children the best that our schools have to offer, while the objective they have established for themselves is a comfortable life in retirement when too old to continue working.

What is the usual trend of their conversations with the interviewer? During the first stages of the interview they seem to go back to early youth and apprentice days, recalling their most impressive experiences up to their first years with the Western Electric Company. Their life stories are often quite unique and as thrilling as old sea yarns or tales of the wild west. True enough, there are a number of cases of maladjustment on the job and dissatisfaction with supervisory conditions, etc., but often they have sound reasoning behind their arguments. The most striking part of their conversation seems to center around personal and domestic discord. Note, however, that the trouble is not, as a rule, financial, but involves sickness, death, personal relationships, etc.

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Turning first to the reactions we get upon entering one of the departments, we find that we are received most cordially by the supervisors down to the newest men. Practically all of them, whether previously interviewed or not, speak or nod in recognition as we walk down the aisle. Obviously we are obliged to keep alert lest someone be overlooked who might feel that we are being "high hat". Seldom do we stand alone in a department for some employee is almost certain to walk over and joke with us or gossip about some recent event in the plant or outside world. Then, when taking a man out for an interview we are usually spurred on with jocular remarks such as, "Leave that guy over in the restaurant", "Hang him", or to the interviewee, "Your turn to take a rest now", "Make him buy your lunch", and "Don't smoke too much". All this repartee, of course, provides an excellent opportunity for further strengthening our position in the department by retorting with a few appropriate remarks of our own. Once in awhile we stop at a man's bench merely to be congenial or, again, perhaps because we are interested in the individual and his troubles and wish to sustain the interest expressed at the time we first listened to his story - a natural reaction on the interviewer.

A word in regard to the supervisors; a growing inclination on their part to chat with the interviewers about the weather, business conditions, the Interviewing Program, etc. is quite evident and worth observing. This, too, seems indicative of the general acceptance of the interviewer as an essential unit in the plant organization.

When the employee seeks the interviewer of his own volition, we get a positive indication of his confidence in the latter and in the Program. In some degree the interviewer's personality must enter into the experience; that fact cannot be overlooked. Probably some of the following cases have been recorded as supplementary interviews. Nevertheless, we believe that if we look at them now as a demonstration of confidence, human interest, and an acceptance of the interviewer as the employee's friend and confidant, we can better determine the value of the program in their eyes, also securing a more complete picture of the interviewer's place in the departmental setting. Our actual experiences can speak far better than an account of our impressions. Let it be understood beforehand that all names used are fictitious.

#### Case I.

Throughout a talk with the interviewer last January, Mr. Hulbert stressed the fact that he was running a grinding machine in the shop which was not equipped with the usual exhaust for removing the emery dust and other foreign particles away from the operator.

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While running the machine, Hulbert had to wear a muzzle-type mask over his nose and mouth in order to protect himself from the dust. Not only was this device clumsy and uncomfortable, but in the meantime he was also laboring under the impression that sooner or later he would become afflicted with tuberculosis.

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When the interviewer was walking through the same department one day about seven months later, Hulbert called him over to his machine. Excitedly he began to demonstrate the new exhaust system which had recently been installed. "Mr. \_\_\_\_\_", said Hulbert, "I've got a real job now. That exhaust has been needed for a long time. See how it takes all the dust away? Now there isn't any danger of the operator contracting T.B. I have often thought of that talk I had with you, but never did I dream that you fellows would get results so soon. I am certainly glad that I had that talk with you."

#### Case II.

This is quite similar to Case I. The interview lasted two and one-half hours in which time the employee, Mr. Nelson, vividly described his family troubles. A seventeen year old daughter who had graduated from high school with honors a few months before had suddenly died and his wife, at the time of the burial, was confined in the hospital for an operation. The attending doctors also discovered at that time that she was pregnant. On top of all this Nelson was being troubled by his supervisor who continually nagged him. Strange to say, he and the supervisor had always been staunch friends, working in several shops together before coming here. Nelson had gone to him for sympathy and condolence and instead had received abuse.

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From time to time the interviewer stopped to inquire about the health of his family, for which the employee was grateful. A month or two later Nelson was placed on a different machine and when he saw the interviewer he remarked that he was not only pleased with the change of jobs, but also with the improved attitude of the supervisor who "had become more sociable and considerate".

"Mr. \_\_\_\_\_", he said, "I never thought when I had that talk with you that it would do so much good in a short time. This fellow isn't a bad lad to work for after all."

The friendly feeling between the interviewer and the employee still exists. Only last week the latter stopped the interviewer to tell him about the wonderful vacation he had had with his family.

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Case III.

When Mr. Black was interviewed during the early part of the year he talked for sometime about the stomach trouble he was having. He was afraid that it would develop into something serious and had become discouraged when doctors told him that it would be some time before the diet he was placed under would show results. As far as the Company was concerned, Black considered it to be the only place to work because of the consideration given its employees.

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Whenever the interviewer met the man thereafter the latter would relate his experiences with various doctors in diagnosing his ailment. One day, after Black had been home ill for quite a time, the interviewer met him in the Pay Roll Department getting his pay. When Black saw the interviewer he was highly elated.

"Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, you are just the man I have been looking for! My doctor just told me that an operation will be necessary. What do you think about it?"

The interviewer told him that his doctor was the one to determine whether or not such a procedure was feasible, but Black insisted that the interviewer introduce him to Dr. Smith at the Company Hospital. If Dr. Smith and the interviewer would say that it was all-right to have the operation he would go through with it. After a long talk, Black was convinced that he should abide by the decision of his own doctor. Occasionally he still tells the interviewer about his illness which to all outward appearances is slowly disappearing.

Case IV.

Although only thirty-three years old, Moody has eighteen years service with the Company. His chief complaint when he talked to the interviewer last February was that he had neither made much progress on the job nor in rate of pay; therefore his criticism of his supervisors was quite severe. In the meantime, his younger brother who had been taking care of a farm for his parents in Colorado was seriously ill with pneumonia in a Denver hospital. Moody was eager to get a leave of absence for two or three months so that he could help out on the farm until the brother recovered. However, he was afraid to request the leave because of the treatment he had received in the past at the hands of his supervisors. Towards the end of the interview he seemed to feel relieved and took a more optimistic slant at his problems.



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On several occasions after that the interviewer stopped for a few moments to inquire how Moody was getting along. The reply was always very pleasant and he had even begun to notice an improvement in supervision. One day last June he called the interviewer over to where he was working and bubbling over with enthusiasm, told him that he was getting a six month leave of absence along with his two weeks vacation money.

"That's what I call shooting square. Maybe it hasn't been anyone's fault but my own. Since I had that talk with you I made some effort to look at things differently. I am tickled to death the way things turned out and I want to thank you for it. That plan of talking to each man is great stuff."

#### Case V.

The interviewer spent about two hours with a man who had been having a very disagreeable time with his supervisors. He was bitter; so much so that he stayed with this Company only because he had a wife and four children to support. He was well satisfied with everything else and, in conclusion, he offered to sign his name to everything he had said.

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The next morning he stopped the interviewer and asked him if he could spare a few minutes. They had another talk which lasted about an hour, during which he told the interviewer that he had described the Program to his wife who thought "it was wonderful". After talking it over with her he wanted to expand on what he had said the day before.

At least once a week since then he has stopped the interviewer to tell him how pleased he is with the change that has taken place in the department as far as supervision is concerned, since the Program started.

#### Case VI.

Mr. Hall revealed in an interview that he had been troubled for several years with insomnia and certain nervous disorders which a number of physicians had been unable to remedy. Finally another employee in his department persuaded him to go to an osteopath. The latter helped him considerably so now Hall is an ardent rooster for osteopathy. Several times in the interview he returned to this subject and concluded by suggesting that the interviewer make "a special

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investigation" to determine the feasibility of having an osteopath placed on the Company's hospital staff for those in need of that sort of treatment. He even insisted on bringing a book on this subject down the next day for the interviewer to study and made him promise to call for it "to read for your own information anyway".

The following morning the interviewer got the book and another lecture on osteopathy.

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Several times later Hall conversed with the interviewer about other employees who had been successfully treated by osteopaths. Although in every instance he has been very congenial he has not mentioned "the special investigation" recently. The interviewer, of course, insinuated that he would be unable to put the plan through.

#### Case VII.

For over two hours the interviewer listened to Brown's story in which a picture of his life on the job and at home was very distinctly portrayed. A wife and daughter had died from tuberculosis and another girl was confined to a hospital with tuberculosis of the hip. She apparently was his favorite and any spare time that he had was spent with her. One of the leading Chicago newspapers ran a beauty contest for crippled children of her age who were confined to the hospital permanently. Brown's daughter was chosen the winner. Her father, of course, was delighted and proudly showed the interviewer a newspaper clipping of the story and several pictures of the girl. Upon seeing that the interviewer was interested in his problems, Brown entreated him to visit his daughter, remarking that "she was like an angel".

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In a few days the interviewer carried out Brown's request and when he saw how delighted the man was, felt fully repaid for the time he had taken.

#### Case VIII.

Wood is an old timer whom the interviewer talked to soon after starting his assignment in the division. During the last two years he has been bothered with pains around his back and kidneys which the physicians were unable to diagnose. In the interviewer's opinion he is one of those individuals who take joy in having afflictions to talk about. Several times the interviewer met him and the subject discussed was always the same.

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One day shortly after vacation, Wood approached the interviewer while en route to the hospital, and after greetings were exchanged went into great detail about his ailments.

Case IX.

One of the most optimistic men we ran into in the division was also one of the most congenial in his attitude toward the interviewer. His conversation was marked by a tone of altruism, generosity, and interest in life. He has been very fond of fine music and has played an instrument himself for years. At present, he is a member of the Shriners' Orchestra, an organization which he joined because he wanted to get in with a group of good musicians. He was quite enthused over the Program and according to his own statement recited more of his life history than he had told to anyone in the last decade. The interviewer showed so much interest in the employee's hobbies that the latter offered to send tickets to his new friend for the huge Pageant staged by the Shriners every fall.

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About once a week he comes over to chat with the interviewer and occasionally reiterates his promise to give him tickets for the Pageant because "I know you will enjoy it".

Case X.

Every now and then a man will stop the interviewer to seek information. For example, soon after short hours went into effect an employee approached the interviewer to ask "Say, who's in charge of the Transportation Committee around here anyway? Now that we get through at four fifteen we have to wait until five o'clock to get a train going west. We lose money and then don't even get the benefit out of the extra time. Maybe you can tell him about it, or else find out his name so I can see him". From there the conversation drifted to local and general business conditions for fifteen or twenty minutes.

Case XI.

One interviewer happened to injure a finger and for two or three weeks various men in the department in which he was working would stop him to comment on it. Good-naturedly, one fellow said, "Don't tell me you got that in the office. What did you do, hit it with a pencil?"

Another came up one day with a bandage on one of his fingers. "Well", he said, "It's my turn now. I don't think mine is as bad as

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Just before the vacation period, the interviewer visited Murphy, knowing that the man had hoped to take his daughter to the Clinic in July. By then Murphy had formulated his plans and was prepared to spend the two weeks near Rochester with the entire family. He was highly pleased when the interviewer remarked that he would be interested in hearing how the examination turned out.

On July 29, the interviewer again stopped at Murphy's machine. The man was very cheerful and immediately told his story. Following a thorough examination the physicians at Rochester reported that they couldn't do anything for his daughter, but that she might regain the use of the arm if she was trained to exercise it. However, Murphy was greatly relieved because now everything humanly possible has been done.

#### Case II.

In interviewing John Adams, an elderly man of seventy years, the interviewer found that Mrs. Adams was seriously ill following a paralytic stroke. Confined to her bed and wheel chair, little hope was given for her recovery although Adams still had a longing to take her back on a long-planned trip to the Old Country. Every evening after work he faithfully wheeled her around, hating to admit defeat.

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During the course of an interview with another employee immediately after the vacation, the interviewer learned that Mrs. Adams had died a few days before. Seeing Adams at his bench as usual, he went over to offer his sympathy which apparently was appreciated.

D. D. DAVISSON - 6088-1B.

EH



November 14, 1930.

MR. W. J. DICKSON - 6088-1:

Subject: Observations and impressions resulting from the  
interviewing of departments 6797 and 6798 in the  
Specialty Products Branch

Purpose:

To give a clearer insight into the ideas, problems, and  
attitudes of the employees in the above mentioned departments.

Introduction:

This paper is merely a statement of my impressions, and  
no attempt of proof has been made. In the conclusion of this  
paper, I will give some factual data furnished me by department  
6088-4, which tends to add weight to my conclusions. When this  
factual material is used, it is in all cases contrasted with  
similar comments from the Operating Branch, which, from the class  
of work, more nearly approaches the Specialty Products Branch  
than any other branch at Hawthorne. A factual comparison has  
been difficult, due to the fact that at this time (November 10,  
1930), department 6088-4 has completed the analysis of only 175  
interviews (approximately) in the Specialty Products Branch, and  
we are unable to say whether the ratio of favorable to unfavor-  
able comments will remain the same during the analysis of the  
entire branch.

General:

Department 6797 is split into three sections not because  
the work done in these sections is not related but because of

lack of space. At the first of the current year, the department roll was 297. At the present time it is 113. These 113 employees are divided between buildings 23-2, 24-2, and 29-4, the proportion being approximately 20%, 50%, and 30%, respectively. There are five group chiefs, two section chiefs, an assistant foreman and a foreman at the present time, which means that there are approximately twenty-three employees reporting directly to each supervisor. The work in this department comprises assembly work (especially on movietone parts), wiring, and detail work.

Department 6798:

A similar splitting between sections occurs here also, the percentage being approximately 60% in building 24-2, and the remaining 40% in building 23-2. The number of employees has been diminished by fifty-seven there being 200 at the start of the year and 143 at the present time. The work is similar to that of 6797, telephone and telegraph assembly, and detail. There are twenty-eight employees per supervisor.

The Specialty Products Branch contained roughly 1200 employees in January 1930, of whom 35% were in departments 6797 and 6798. This branch was originally known as the Job Shop, and was at one time part of the Operating Branch. It was established to handle work, the nature of which made it unsuitable to place on a production basis, and to handle small jobs that were shipped from the outside. This latter function was an outgrowth of customers' complaints that there was an inordinate length of time between the



receipt of orders, and the shipment of goods. At the present time, when jobs in the Specialty Products Branch reach the point where a reasonably constant output is reached they are taken over by the Operating Branch. The interviewer has heard a number of comments from various sources which indicate that many men who were industrial failures have been transferred into the Specialty Products Branch. I have no definite information as to the veracity of these, but an analysis of the entire branch may serve to establish them as facts.

In interviewing employees in different departments, the interviewer sees a certain amount of similarity of comments of a certain type, but in many cases, departments will vary to a considerable extent in their attitudes. <sup>IN WELL DEFINED DIRECTIONS</sup> In my interviewing work in the Operating Branch, I have seen very little which would serve to single out any one department as unique. To be sure there are variations in comments from different departments regarding "working conditions" (those external conditions not involving a personal relationship, such as lighting and ventilation), which are obviously different in every department and locality.

As I mentioned earlier in this paper, one would expect that in general the Specialty Products Branch would closely resemble the Operating Branch, with the exception of minor variations in "working conditions." Strange to say, this is not the case; there are very marked differences. In order to get a more complete picture, I will sum up briefly the main comments of employees in

departments 6797 and 6798 that might be classified under "working conditions."

Likes

1. Cleanliness
2. Safety

Dislikes

1. Lack of tools and toolroom
2. Lighting
3. Division of sections
4. Piece rates

From comparison, it may be seen that the comments listed above are similar to those which are obtained from other branches. The volume of comments on these subjects seems to be normal, being neither exceptionally high nor abnormally low.

The Working Situation:

The Specialty Products Branch contains men of every type, ranging from those who have had five years of grammar school education to those who have completed four years of college work. It contains tradesmen and laymen, citizens and foreigners, young men making their start in the world and men who have grown old in industry. Some of our problems arise out of this diversity of types. We see decided friction existing between men of different nationalities, tradesmen and laymen, and young and old service employees. This has resulted in a number of "cliques" in the various departments, each man allying himself with the one which best suits his particular needs. This results in a splitting of the gang into smaller sub-divisions, each of which resents any favors granted to any other.

I have comment after comment which reads "The old service men here get all the good jobs" or "The younger men are getting all of the piece work, whereas the old timers are getting nothing for their long service." These two statements are contradictory, yet their importance does not lie in the veracity of either one, but in the idea that each individual employee-has-right or wrong though it may be.

As a general rule, the employees who have completed the apprenticeship work in a trade feel that they should be doing highly skilled work in it. Many men have stated that they are first grade toolmakers, and should be given a transfer to that type of work. They feel that they are being discriminated against when their attempts at a transfer fail and they become disgruntled. They resent to a considerable degree the fact that they are doing work alongside of novices, and when some short service employee is given a larger raise than they are, they are furious. They make futile attempts at understanding but it is beyond their ability; they give up. We have here one of the settings in the development of our "problem cases."

New men who have had little industrial experience usually seem to receive some of this feeling of superiority in a short time, and begin to think that they are doing work far below that for which they are suited. Upon questioning by the interviewer, the customary answer is "Well, I don't know exactly what I want to do, or where I want to transfer to, but I want to get into a better class of work." The impression conveyed to the inter-

viewer is "I'm too good for my job." I believe there are some men, to be sure, who are excellent tradesmen, as I have had comments from supervisors, and men in the piece rates organization which singled out several individuals as first class tool-makers, who were unable to get into the toolroom because of difficulty in speaking the English language. In the main, however, qualifications <sup>for</sup> ~~from~~ skilled work seem to be lacking.

I made mention of the fact that there are men in this organization who have had a certain amount of college training. The question naturally arises "Why are these men content to remain in <sup>a</sup> the class of work which doesn't seem to be satisfactory to men with far less education?" To understand, we must again base our conclusions on a study of the interviews of these particular individuals. The interviews are quite similar in certain respects, indicating a definite lack of drive and initiative on the part of the employee. They point out that these men are not completely satisfied with the work that they are doing, but they have never given the matter enough serious thought to decide what they prefer to be doing. They indicate semi-satisfaction. Their attitudes might be summed up as follows: "I don't know just what I want to do. This department isn't bad. The work I am doing is clean and the pay is good enough."

If the department is made up of "slices", we would expect to find very little social contact in these departments, and this is borne out. Interviewers in the Operating Branch last year found that after they had interviewed twenty to thirty

men in any one department, the remainder of the employees had heard about the program and had in mind the points that they were going to mention to the interviewer. This is by no means the case in departments 6797 and 6798. After interviewing for approximately one and a half months, I noticed that employees, when asked if they had heard why they were being talked to, would invariably deny all knowledge of the interviewing program. The first thought that came to me was that I had laid undue stress on the confidential nature of the interviewing program, and I intentionally told every employee that I talked to from that time on that I had no objection whatever to his explaining the purpose of the interview as carried on by department 6088, to fellow employees. The result was negative. Sensing a peculiar condition, I tried to understand why it was that no news of anything as novel as the interviewing program had circulated in these departments. An actual lack of social contact seems to be the primary factor. Secondary to this, the fact that the supervisors never mentioned the interviewing program to the employees at any time.

Many times during my work, I have been able to complete the interviewing of one employee early enough in the morning to warrant the taking of another interview before noon. Rather than return to the department, I would have the employee take his time ticket, on the back of which was the name of the employee that I wished to interview, to the department clerk who would send the latter to me. Prior to that time, I had men fairly well classified under the group chiefs to whom they reported.

I would ask the employee if he knew Mr. Brown, the man whom I wished to interview next. In nearly all cases the employee would say, "I don't think so. It might be Joe who works near me. What is the clock number? I might be able to tell you from that." In many cases the individual to be interviewed was a member of the same gang as that of the employee whose interview had just been completed. Other comments, minor in themselves, have been steps which have led me to this same conclusion regarding social contact.

In departments where there is very little social contact or cooperation, the morale is obviously not of the best, and we would expect employees working in a department of this sort to have many criticisms of existing conditions. I am not going to attempt, as I mentioned before, to judge whether these criticisms are well founded as there are two sides to every problem and it is extremely difficult to judge in many cases where the maximum truth lies. It has been my experience that criticisms under these conditions will fall upon personalities rather than inanimate objects upon which it is difficult to place the blame. It is human nature to designate a person rather than a thing, as the cause of our troubles. We have seen a certain amount of antagonism between individuals, but the greater part of it was directed against supervision.

The comments pertaining to supervision are many, and quite diversified. Some appear to be factual whereas others may result

from warped thinking by the employee. There are two comments, often mentioned, which seem to be true: (1) "My boss is a liar. I wanted to get a transfer to the piece rates organization, and he told me that there were only college men in that branch. I have checked that, and found it to be false." The above comment, and others of a like nature, appear to have some foundation. Rate setters have also mentioned that supervisors have lied to them about the machines and time necessary for certain jobs. (2) "What good are these bosses? They give you a blue print on the job, and you have to figure out how to do it; they don't help you any." No explanations of the above comment is necessary; it is self-explanatory. It might be interesting, however, to contrast it with the following: "He (the supervisor) gives me a blue print and tells me to go ahead. I like that way. The supervisor is never around to bother me." Obviously we could not make a snap judgment regarding the first comment that we received. If we did we would undoubtedly brand the supervisor as a "complete flop." Similarly we would be handicapped in any attempt to analyze supervisors; what is considered excellent by one individual might very possibly be extremely distasteful to another.

Other comments on supervision read, "The supervisors are ignorant, and don't know how to give orders." "The bosses in my department are all foreigners. I don't speak any perfect English, but I can speak so anyone can understand me." "I bet there isn't a supervisor in my department that has had more than

a grammar school education. I have had only two years of high school but I had to report to an ignorant."

As I mentioned before, a number of these comments are probably an outgrowth of the employees' desire to place the blame for his own dissatisfaction on anybody's shoulders but his own. Many of these comments do arise, however, from the diversified training of the individuals. Men who have had high school education resent working for men who have not had that training, and regardless of the supervisor's <sup>PRACTICAL</sup> practicable ability or personality, feel that he is inferior. Men who are Americanized are apt to have the same feeling for those who are cast of the European mold. In my estimation when comments of the above type run fairly high, the supervision is poor. Mind you, I am not stating that these men are poor supervisors as far as applied ability is concerned, but they have accepted the responsibility with a heavy obstacle to overcome. To use a slang phrase, they begin their supervisory duties with "two strikes" on them. Apparently, these men have been unable to elevate themselves above their initial handicap.

There is one other item of extreme interest which I wish to mention, and that is the matter of "problem cases." As I see it, the designation of an individual as a problem case places him in a category of one who has made fewer of the adjustments necessary to the working situation than the normal individual. Problem cases may be divided into two classes: (1) The



individual with a relatively stable personality, whose situation is not compatible with his interests; (2) the individual with an unstable personality who is discontented, and unable to adjust himself wherever placed.

There is some doubt in my mind as to whether the former is a definite problem case. A consideration of the employee's interests and training, and a subsequent transfer to a suitable type of work should eliminate the problem. I have mentioned the fact that the comments indicate that a number of employees seem to be dissatisfied with their present situation and are desirous of getting a transfer. It seems to me that the placement of an individual showing the symptoms mentioned above into another class of work is not necessarily a therapy. The point that I wish to bring out is that such an individual may actually be in the latter classification of problem cases and yet appear, after a cursory decision, to be merely another job placement case. It would be extremely difficult for a supervisor, being continually pressed for output, and having only an elementary knowledge of psychology, if any, to analyze an individual to the point of assessing his personality. We are handicapped ourselves in the single interview. We get indications of maladjustment frequently, and subsequent interviews, each based on the ones before, would undoubtedly allow for critical analysis of the individual, and would suggest means of remedy.

I have collaborated with Mr. O'Brien, who has also been interviewing in the Specialty Products Branch, in regard

to problem cases, and he agrees with me that the number of these is unusually large. We both have had interviews in which individuals have indicated maladjustment, but which we hesitated to place in the class of problem cases because of insufficient evidence. These are as a rule potential problem cases, and here again, subsequent interviewing is the road toward understanding and remedy.

We have had individuals who have mentioned very delicate and personal subjects to us. We have had men who were seemingly preoccupied with sexual perversions -- men whose wives were untrue to their marriage vows -- men who were rabid in their denunciation of existing conditions to which they were unable to adjust themselves, and men who could actually be classed as being on the border line between sanity and insanity. I am going to briefly summarize a problem case interviewed for purposes of explanation.

The employee is a rather crafty-looking chap, about thirty-eight years old, who was born in Russia. When he was a boy of fifteen he saw his mother, father, and brother murdered by the <sup>Russian Army</sup> Bolsheviks. A short time later, he came to this country and married. His wife was quite nervous and after the birth of their child was suffering from a heart ailment. Some years ago, a supply of stored dynamite in one of the stone quarries in Lyons exploded. The employee's home was not far away and the blast was such a shock to his wife that she died. The baby was sleeping in a hammock, and was thrown out on the floor

- Interview follows under 5.1

injuring both her eyes which are bad today. The employee says that the men in his department all call him "Bolshevik" or "Red", which he resents to a marked degree. He states that he is a radical on matters of government but mentions that he is against Bolshevism, and says that the American government is a radical government, as it began with an idea that was decidedly different from existing governmental types. His supervisor informed me that whenever this man was asked to help someone else on a rush job he refuses. He was taken to the foreman five or six times but it did no good. The supervisor was at a complete loss; he couldn't understand the employee's viewpoint. He "knows", however, that the employee is a "Red."

We can make a fairly accurate analysis from the interview. The first point that comes to our attention is the murder of the employee's relatives by the Bolsheviks. Taking the supervisor's work, we are immediately curious to know how he could be in sympathy with a movement which must have so profoundly upset his life. We are not surprised, therefore, when he states that he is not a Communist. We see some really intelligent thinking shown in his definition of a "radical government." We understand also that he resents in a marked degree any insinuations that he is a Communist. From these attitudes as expressed in the interview, we want to understand why he refuses to help out any other employee on a rush job. Remarks which he resents have been made so often to him that he has become unsocialized. He hates the men that are working with him, and refuses to lend

them any assistance "But", you say, "He is not helping out those men personally; he is working for the Western Electric Company which is paying him for his work." That is true. That is the kink in the employee's thinking. Because of the troubles he has had, he has a soured disposition, and relates his work directly to personalities. Our job would be to correct the employee's thinking along social lines. I am going to repeat myself again by saying that a series of analytical interviews is the only method which could ever lead to success.

Conclusion:

I am not trying to convey the impression that we do not have similar problems in other branches here at Hawthorne, but the percentage in the Specialty Products seems especially high. In this branch, we are handicapped by the number of foreigners employed, who have worked under miserable conditions in the old country. Comments are, for the most part, a matter of comparison, and in cases of this sort, we would expect very few criticisms of conditions here. In view of this fact, I believe that the ratio of the number of comments to the number of interviews taken is not so significant, but that the ratio of favorable to unfavorable comments gives us the best means of comparison.

I have compared percentages on the two topics upon which I have received the most comments, with those obtained from the Operating Branch last year. There were 10,500 interviews analyzed in the Operating Branch last year, of which 4662 employees mention-

ed the supervision. Of these 1868 or 40% commented favorably, and 2737 or 60% unfavorably. In the Specialty Products, there were 70 comments on supervision, 20 or 28% favorable, and 50 or 72% unfavorable out of 175 interviews analyzed. This shows an increase of 12% in the unfavorable classification. There is also a marked difference in comments on job placement. Of the 10,300 interviews in the Operating Branch, 8827 mentioned job placement, 7321 favorably and 1506 unfavorably. The percentages are 82% favorable to 18% unfavorable. On the contrary, the Specialty Products comments show 40% favorable to 60% unfavorable, a gain over the Operating Branch of 42%.

At the present time, the Company is introducing gang piece work into this branch. In view of what we have seen, we would expect any system depending as much on cooperation and harmony as does this one to fail. This is exactly what is happening. I have comment after comment from the men in the branch to this effect. I have been rather fortunate in being able to interview in the organization that is setting the rates on gang piece work in the Specialty Products Branch, and the consensus of opinion could be summed up in this comment, which I received from one of those men. "You can't set rates in that mad house; you might as well keep a snowball from melting in hell." No data was obtainable on problem cases, due to the fact that there was difficulty in <sup>labeling</sup> ~~locating~~ an individual as such without more insight into his reflective thinking. If

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in the future, we are able to introduce a plan of <sup>successive</sup> ~~successful~~ interviewing we will have a wealth of material upon which to base our conclusions.

L. S. SALVIN - 6068-1.

LSC-HL

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MILWAUKEE**

March 21, 1930.  
Specialty Products Branch.

26-11078-RFO-2B4-B.

4375-48(4-2)-21b.

The following conversation was held with an Employee who was designated by his Supervisor as a problem case. He told one of the Conference Leaders that he would like to have him interviewed. The Supervisor explained that the Employee was rather temperamental and that many times he would refuse to be taken off of the work he was doing to be placed on some other work. He had been passed along from one gang to another and if he doesn't make good where he is now the company will get rid of him. He didn't appear to be at all antagonistic during the course of the interview and spoke very freely as soon as the interview had gotten under way. His Supervisor said that it would be pretty hard to get much out of him as he wouldn't talk. He said that even if he did he would probably say that his bosses were perfect. The Interviewer made the remark that if he repeated that statement enough he might very possibly get to believe it.

I: "Good morning Mr. Dash. How are you today?"

E: "I'm all right."

I: "Let me take your hat and coat and we'll sit down here and have a little talk."

E: "All right."

I: "Do you smoke?"

E: "Yes I smoke a cigarette once in a while."

I: "How about a lucky strike?"

E: "That's just my brand."

I: "Well that's fine. I'm certainly glad that that is the kind of a cigarette that you like. Relax yourself and we will light up."

E: "All right, thank you very much. I have some of my own in my coat."

I: "Oh that's all right. These are given to you with the compliments of the Western Electric Company."

E: "Well as long as you don't have to pay for them I'll take one then....."

RM



I: "Well this is getting more like March today isn't it? It's quite a bit cooler than it was Sunday."

E: "Yes it is. Sunday was a fine day. I wish they were all like that. I don't like this damp weather at all."

I: "I certainly agree with you. I don't care much about it myself. It makes a fellow sort of forget about his vacation doesn't it when it gets as cool as this?"

E: "Yes a fellow doesn't think much about a vacation in this kind of weather."

I: "I suppose you have yours already planned."

E: "Well I don't expect to do much during my vacation. I never do. You see I am all alone at home, there is just myself and my little girl who is eleven years old. We just stay home during the vacation period and take walks or go to a show now or then. I haven't got enough money to travel around very much. We like it just as well anyway."

I: "Oh I see there are only yourself and your little girl at home."

E: "Yes I lost my wife a number of years ago. Do you remember that explosion that they had at Lyons when all of that dynamite exploded?"

I: "Yes I believe I do. That was about five years ago wasn't it?"

E: "Yes just about five years ago. I was living at Lyons at the time and I wasn't very far from the place where the explosion occurred. My house there seemed to be on a sort of vein of rocks and it carried the vibration of that explosion right through the house. My wife was all alone with the baby at the time that it happened and when I got home she was running around the house screaming. She was out of her head and I didn't know what to do. I thought she had gone crazy. The doctor said that she was temporarily insane at that time. She got an enlargement of the heart afterwards from the strain that her nerves suffered during the explosion and she was in the hospital for over a year but she never recovered from the effects of it. She finally died and left me all alone with the little girl."

I: "I see."

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E: "I don't live in Lyons anymore. I have moved to Riverside. I feel that it is better to spend money to get a good home and to get a good place to live better than to save it up and spend it foolishly. We only have one life to live anyway and we might just as well live as well as we are able to for the money we make."

I: "Yes I think that's very true. How do you like Riverside?"

E: "Well it's a pretty nice little town. I like it quite a bit better than I did in Lyons. Of course the house that I owned there was quite a bit cheaper than the one I have now and the surroundings weren't anywhere near as nice. I come from Poland myself and most of these places around Chicago here look like Heaven compared to some of the places I have lived in over there."

I: "How's that?"

E: "You've probably heard several things about the conditions over there in Poland at the time that it belonged to Russia. It was terrible. You know the Russian government at that time was a very strict form of anarchy. They had absolutely no mercy for anyone that incurred their enmity. Of course the Poles are very ~~ferocious~~ people and stick up for their race at all times and we always fought the best we could to try and win our freedom back. Whenever any fights or anything broke out over there in Poland, Russia would send their army down and they would wipe out entire towns sometimes."

"God how I hate the Russians! When I was a small boy, twelve years old I saw both my mother and father and two brothers killed by the Russian army. They were just slaughtered in cold blood. I never forgot that. I haven't got any use for any Russian since then."

I: "I'm certainly not surprised that you haven't."

E: "I guess their government over there now is a little better than it was since they got rid of the czar but I still think it has a long way to go as far as perfection is concerned. The trouble with it now is that it is run by a bunch of Jews that don't do anymore than shoot off a lot of hot air and tell everybody how things ought to be done but never do them. I hate the Jews just about as much as I do the Russians. That's one thing I like about the Western Electric Company. I don't think I've ever seen a Jew working here yet. I'll take my hat off to the company"

KML

for that. You know I suppose my ideas on government are rather funny at least they seem to be funny to most of the men in my department. I am in favor of a radical government. What I mean by that is a government that is run correctly by the people. This old Russian Iron Rule that they used to have over there is all wrong. I call the American Government more or less of a radical government and I think it is fairly good but it has a lot to learn yet. It is still run by people of the capitalist class.

"The politics that we find in our city and in the state and in the national government today are terrible, and they are made all the worse because of the stories that are written in the newspapers. I'm getting to the point now where I don't even read newspapers anymore. In fact I don't do very much of any kind of reading. My eyes have gotten pretty bad since I've been working here and the doctor told me to take it easy so I'm taking it easy and now I sort of got out of the habit of reading."

I: "You say your eyes went bad here at the plant?"

E: "Yes, we didn't get enough light on our work. You see these lights that we have in our department are on the ceiling as they are in most of the places here at the plant but there are no bench lights that we can use on our detail work. You know that sort of work has pretty close limits on it sometimes and it is quite a strain on the eyes. Oh as I started to say before, I never read the newspapers anymore. You pick up a paper nowadays and there's a big headline on the front page that says 'Al Capone is doing this or Al Capone is doing that' and the paper is just filled with a bunch of murders. There's no reason why all that sort of thing should be printed."

"I noticed in the paper the other day that a very famous physician had died down in New York. There was a little piece in the paper about him about an inch long but when Al Capone takes a drink of booze or anything like that there is a write-up about him all over the front page. That's a bad state of affairs. The combination of the newspapers and the present government that we have today makes conditions pretty bad I think."

I: "Do you find conditions pretty bad here at the plant?"

E: "No I don't. I think the conditions here at the Western Electric are pretty fair. Of course there are some things that don't go quite as they ought to."

I: "For example?"

E: "Well I think many of the benches here at the plant don't

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fit their positions."

I: "Do you find that trouble in your department?"

E: "No I can't say that I do. The bosses in our place on the whole are quite a bit above the general run although there are two or three gang bosses here that I worked under at one time that I never liked. The fellow that I have now I do like. He is a good natured sort of a fellow and makes an allowance for you when you make a mistake now or then. One of the chief troubles that I've noticed with the bosses here is that they don't seem to fit their positions as I say. A boss should be something like a teacher. He has all of these men under him and he should teach them how to do things and the easiest way for themselves and the way that will turn out the best output for the company. The only way that a person can be a teacher is by knowing more than the men that are working under him. I think that's very true isn't it?"

I: "Yes I think we can grant that a teacher has to know more about the subject that he is teaching than those he is trying to teach."

E: "I think so too. Another thing that I've noticed about some of these bosses is that they will lie occasionally about certain things. Sometimes you will be doing work on a certain part and your boss will take credit for the job. That isn't right to do that. A fellow ought to get credit for what he does and shouldn't have his boss take all the credit for suggestions and things like that."

I: "Have you put in any suggestions?"

E: "No I haven't myself but I know one fellow in this department who has put in oh, ten or twelve suggestions I think and his boss has taken credit for some of them I know."

I: "Oh I see."

E: "I certainly can't see why a boss will lie to his men or lie to his Supervisors. If there is one thing that I don't like it is a lie. That's one thing I can say about my daughter. She's been brought up to the point where she never tells a lie. She knows that I never lick her if she does something that she shouldn't do if she comes to me and owns up about it. I came home from work the other night and she met me at the door and she was crying her eyes out. I said: 'Well what's the matter, what's happened?' She told me that she had forgotten

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to practice on her piano that day and she felt awfully bad about it. I said: 'Well don't feel so bad about that. I'm awfully glad that you told me about it and all you have to do is practice a little bit after supper.' She brightened right up after that. She never lies to me about anything."

I: "Well that's mighty nice."

E: "Yes I always brought up my daughter in the right way. She knows a lot more than most girls of her age about a lot of things. I have made sure that nothing that she ever asks me goes unexplained. I always tell her the truth and I think that's the best thing to do. We used to have quite a bit of trouble with her eating between meals but I've cured her of that. I explained to her that it wasn't a very good thing to do and we went through the whole thing and she finally got to the point where she only eats during her meals."

"My daughter and I are pretty chummy together. Of course we would be likely to be as we are home alone all the time together. She has been through a couple bad sicknesses with me so we feel that we have been pale in misfortune. She had Pneumonia about a year back and for a while we thought she was going to die but we finally pulled her out of it. The doctor came to see her and said that she had double Pneumonia and that there wasn't very much chance of her living. He wanted to take her to the hospital but my daughter was so afraid of the hospital because she always thought that they killed her mother there and she refused to go."

"After explaining to the doctor why, he decided that the proper thing for us to do was to have her stay home and we got a nurse to take care of her. He said that the best thing that we could do for her was to get her some good whiskey. I knew a friend of mine that used to own a saloon there in Lyons and I got some from him. He never drinks himself and I never drink either but he said that he would give me a bottle owing to the circumstances. He told me that he wouldn't sell that bottle of whiskey to anybody else for \$50.00 and that it was old stuff."

"Well anyway I got it and gave it to the doctor and he gave it to my little girl and it cured her. You know I think Whiskey is the best medicine in the world. I have been sick a number of times myself and have always taken whiskey and I've always gotten well. I'm not a drinking man myself. I never drink liquor except when I'm sick."

BCH

I took cold down here at the plant this winter and I cured it with whiskey. You know the windows in our department are open for too long a stretch during the ventilation periods in the morning and in the afternoon. The draft blows right on us and when we're hot and sweating from our work we are very apt to catch a cold. I got a pretty bad one at that time and was out of work for three days. For the first two days I didn't do much for it except the usual things that everybody takes but one of the fellows said: 'What you want to do is get yourself a good quart bottle of whiskey and get yourself plenty drunk.' That's what I did and the next morning when I woke up I had a little headache from drinking so much whiskey but I didn't have a cold anymore. I went back to work and never had anymore trouble with a cold. I think that prohibition nonsense that they put through here was one of the most foolish things that they could do. The liquor that they sell today is damn bad and no one can drink it. If you really need some good stuff for sickness or something like that you actually can't get it. The doctor that took care of my little girl said that he couldn't get any liquor anyplace that wasn't just a bunch of poison and that's why I had to get it for him."

I: "I suppose you've noticed quite a few changes in industry today compared to what it was many years ago."

E: "Well yes. There have been some changes in the work of course. In the old days we used to do a lot more work by hand than we do now. One of the biggest changes though that I have noticed is the fact that the workmen all dress better today than they used to. You don't see very many fellows coming down to work now in an old blue shirt or overalls or anything like that. Almost all of us wear a white shirt and a collar and a tie. It wasn't very many years ago that everybody used to come down dressed in overalls. How many fellows working in the shops used to come to work in an auto? Not very many, believe me! Nowadays it seems like almost all of us come to work in cars."

I: "Have you got a car?"

E: "Yes I've got an old 1916 Ford. It still runs. I have always been awfully careful with it. I never drive the thing over twenty-five hours a mile. I feel that a Ford was never made to travel any faster than that and I have had it for a good many years now. I know a lot of fellows think I'm blocking the road and all that sort of thing but nevertheless I keep on taking my time. I'm never going anywhere anyway I just go out for the ride and enjoy the scenery. Another thing

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that I have noticed nowadays is the fact that industry is beginning to realize more than they did before that education is something that is mighty valuable. They don't hire very many men here anymore that haven't had at least a high school education. You know the brain is like a wire. When you first start to bend it it is rather hard to make it bend but after you have twisted it a couple of times it bends without any trouble. That's what education does to a fellow. He has made his brain flexible enough so that whenever he gets any problems that are sent to him, he gives an answer right away. That's what education does....."

I: "Do you ever expect to take a trip back to Poland to see how the country is now since the war?"

E: "No I don't. I have tried to forget what few relatives I had over there. They have written to me several times but I never answered them. They don't understand English and they don't know anything about the American customs. I feel that with my little girl here and everything that I'll never go back there again. I am very well satisfied over in this country."

I: "You are pretty well satisfied over in this country then. You don't seem to have any troubles."

E: "Well I have a little trouble occasionally of course with my work. You know sometimes when the weather is changeable and things like that, a man doesn't feel quite as much like working as he usually does and he might be a little crabby sometimes. I have noticed that with a number of men in our department. When the weather changes they always get crabby. I don't think they really ought to do that. I have seen some men there that didn't feel like working at all and would even ask to go home just because they were too lazy to work. I think that if a man doesn't feel like working there is really something wrong with him. I always feel like working myself. I wouldn't know what to do if I had to stay home. Speaking of trouble, I don't have very much. Once in a while I have a little trouble with the bosses, but I expect that because sometimes I am a little grouchy myself. As far as I know though none of them hold it against me and I know I don't hold it against them. It's just a little quarrel you know that lasts only a short time and we always forget it. The boss I have now is a mighty good sort of a scout. I think he forgets those things about as soon as they happen. That's the kind of a fellow I like to work for.....Of course, in a big company everything goes along pretty slowly. In a

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small factory the men that are in charge of it can find out what's wrong without a great deal of trouble but in a plant as big as this one it makes a pretty hard job for anyone to find out exactly what things there are here at the company that the fellows don't like. The only way they can do it is by taking the individual men and talking with them. I don't mean that you should give the employees something too soon for them. That is they shouldn't ask for something and get it before the time is exactly right.

"Then again I think that a fellow gets a certain benefit by just being able to talk. That is one thing that I have noticed in the Catholic Religion. I am not a Catholic myself, as a matter of fact I don't care for any religion. We go to all churches, and I've even been to a Jewish church at one time. It was so dirty inside there that I couldn't get myself to go again. You know the fellows sit on the floor there in church, perhaps they chew tobacco and everything else. Boy the place is filthier than a pig sty. You ought to go there sometime when you get the chance. It will be quite an experience for you.

"As I started to say, in the Catholic church the purpose of the confessions is just to give a person a chance to express themselves. In addition to that it let's them find out exactly what the people are thinking about."

I: "I see you must have heard something about this so called interviewing."

E: "Yes my gang boss told me a little something about it before I came down."

Note: The Interviewer had talked with the Gang Boss before the interview and told him to let the Employee know before he went down there that this had nothing to do with the argument that he had had with the boss sometime before and also with his Ferromen. The Boss evidently told him enough about it so that he wouldn't be afraid to come down and wouldn't think that it had anything to do with him being laid off or hauled out or anything of that sort.

E: "Of course the Catholic church is losing people now more than they ever did. Their policy has always been to keep their congregations more or less in ignorance of everything. Nowadays with the increase in education amongst the people you will notice that they are turning away more and more from the Catholic church."

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Note: The Interview continued along these lines for sometime, the Employee merely mentioning a few well known facts about various religions. At the close of the interview the Employee made a very important statement.

E: "You know all of the men in my department call me Bolshevik and kid me a lot. They don't treat me any too good and they're always teasing me about one thing or another and that makes me kind of sore."

I: "I see. You don't care a great deal for the men in your gang then."

E: "No I don't. They don't seem to care about giving me a break and I don't like to even work with them even more than I have to."

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MISSING

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November 24, 1930.

MR. H. A. WRIGHT - 6088-1:

In discussing this paper on egocentrism it was pointed out to me that it would be difficult for anyone to follow it through without first becoming familiar with Piagets' Works. This is a very good criticism, and my only defense would be -- we should have become familiar with Piagets' findings after some two years of similar research.

However, I could point out (as has been done elsewhere by Dr. Mayo in his paper, "The Work of Jean Piaget") that Piaget originally was a biologist. He first achieved distinction as an authority on Molluscs'. Naturally he carried this early influence with him in the investigation of the human infant. We might say he brought with him the scientists passion for more and more "adequate discrimination". The value of this viewpoint is not to be overlooked and its contribution to the field of psychology is not yet fully appreciated nor understood. It has not in general achieved a proper meaning.

Feeling that it would be a hopeless task to attempt to resume Piagets work because of its essential minuteness I have attempted, in the following paper, to make explicit the significance of this detailed research to our own growth and development. If I have failed in this respect we can only trust that this paper stimulates us to further thinking so that we can remedy the defects in this presentation.

THE EGOCENTRIC HYPOTHESIS

From the work of Jean Piaget comes a respect for and a faith in the methods he employs in connection with our own development. When the child, in the course of what Piaget terms the clinical interview, gains a new insight into the universe by the thought processes leading to a liberated conviction, the analogy to our own endeavors is striking. Looking at the therapeutic side of interviewing, the practical side if you like, we see at once that if, by a variant of the clinical interview, we can elicit these liberated convictions and help the employee to gain a new insight into his problems, we will have achieved our end. The means to this end even with adults apparently lies in that type of methodology which Piaget has employed to such an advantage.

By a liberated conviction Piaget means a conviction or a conclusion that an individual arrives at subsequent to a non-suggestive interrogation. When we say, "conviction that an individual arrives at we imply a mental activity which takes material already present and ultimately arrives at a liberated conviction. The individual is stimulated by the clinical method to re-define meanings he possesses in such a manner that this re-definition gives him a new insight into his specific interpretations of events and objects.

By dividing speech into egocentric and socialized, Piaget was able to determine that approximately 50% of the speech of children under seven years of age was egocentric in character. His research, needless to say, had all the controls possible which would assure

validity to his findings, but the significant factor for us is his departure from routine orthodoxy. As he points out, it seems impossible to use the questionnaire or the test method under alleged standard conditions because in the human being you have no standard conditions. In the type of research we are considering, the investigator must first rely on direct observation for hypotheses and ultimately for verification of these hypotheses.

In his application of this procedure, Piaget came to the conclusion that the questions must be framed from the material furnished by the children; that is, it seems apparent that the questions used by the experimenter must come from the conversations of the children themselves. As he points out, the validity of the findings depends on the balance between no hypotheses and hypotheses which influence the unearthing of the data. Put in simple terms it amounts to this: The experimenter must keep to a mid-course between the tendency to find nothing of outstanding and specific significance in the verbal behavior of his subject, or, on the other hand, of noting only those elements which coincide with the too-rigid hypotheses. If we wish to "objectify" the interview situation we are forced to conclude that we must not advocate the "open mind" but the "mind of flexible hypotheses." These flexible hypotheses must be controlled by and arise from the context of the material presented rather than preconceptions.

The problem now arises as to how far we can carry the egocentric concept in the investigation of adult situations. The psychoanalysts held to the belief that adolescent neurosis is occasioned in

part by the perpetuation of infantile demands. On the basis of Piaget's findings these infantile demands are due to the universality of the egocentric period of development. In this we have a common ontogenic epoch to the effects of which we may by minute study, trace personality deviations. It would seem that these infantile demands are the consequence of egocentrism. If, then, the basis of certain personality deviations and irrationalities can be traced back to egocentric tendencies, we have a working hypothesis on which, by observation, we can build our superstructure.

Reflection on why it would be advantageous to utilize the egocentric hypothesis in future investigation calls to mind three important factors. The first of these is that there are some indications that out of the chaos of psychological schools we can all find enough common elements in the egocentric theory to warrant our coming to agreement upon it. To the casual observer the internecine warfare of the psychologists is self-destructive. We are not concerned with the truth or falsity of this assumption, but it would seem that if the points advocated by the various schools are false there would be no serious controversy. Therefore, we propose to take from them their essential features and perhaps combine these essential features into a tenable system. This system, of course, would arise from the egocentrism hypothesis.

The second of these factors seems to be that this idea would give us a skeletal structure - a framework on which we could build up our investigations from the work that has and is being done. We refer here to the researches of the psychoanalysts, psychologists,

anthropologists and sociologists. To make this idea clearer perhaps we can draw the analogy of structural steel work in modern office building construction. We will assume that egocentrism, syncretistic formations, juxtaposition, irrelevant syntheses, preoccupation with thinking, passive-active mental behavior, etc., is the steel work in our construction. On this framework we can then fill in with the other necessary materials (the findings of the investigators in the fields we mentioned before.) Perhaps it will fall to our lot to complete in part the upper portions of this structure. Certainly, if we look at our problem in this light, we shall be able in due time to see the direction of our activities as well as fill an appropriate niche in the field of human relations research.

The last of these three factors is by no means the least important. It would seem that the utilization of Piaget's type of methodology (the egocentric concept) is the most favorable avenue by which to approach the investigation of the so-called normal individual. It is helpful and extremely logical to state that in the abnormal we have a caricature of tendencies and character traits found in the normal, but is it in the final analysis so essential to our work? We think not from the view-point of our industrial position. In this connection it might be well to point out, as Harold Lasswell does in his "Psychopathology and Politics", that the normal being presents even a greater mystery (his efficient functioning is a greater miracle) than the eccentricities of a psychoneurotic because the well being of the normal person involves a synchronization of an infi-



nite number of complexities. This is no doubt true and because of this it appears that by using Piaget's work as a basis for our investigation of the "normal obsessive" we have a proper vehicle for the minute study of this type. The basis for this last statement lies in the fact that almost every "normal" individual exhibits syncretistic mental behaviour. We shall explain just what we mean by syncretism in the paragraphs to follow.

When we use the term "normal obsessive", we mean those individuals of total integrate background or object to which they may refer experiences and derive meanings as opposed to individuals of disintegrate total object (hysterics and psychotics). In a broad sense we can perhaps say that any diminution of attention and hence effectiveness is an obsessive symptom.

Having attempted in brief form to give the reasons favoring the egocentric hypothesis as we see it, we shall now go on and explain what we mean by egocentrism and its related factors. In this way we hope to present its theoretical as well as its practical implications.

#### Egocentrism

By egocentrism we mean a confusion between the self and the external world. It is the inability to discriminate between the ego and the environmental objects. In the child it gives rise to the animation of inanimate objects. Egocentrism is also the explanation for the anthropomorphic tendency of children. Due to this confusion between self and external world, the individual makes false demands of his environment because he is unaware of this egocentricity.\*

\*This is clearly expressed in Mr. Roethlisberger's paper Methods of Interviewing. If, then, an individual makes false demands on his universe and is unaware of the falsity of these demands, his consequent discontent and preoccupation arises because he does not recognize this irrationality he has no insight. From egocentrism there arises an inability to abstract the self from the situation. There is an incapacity for dealing with the ego as an object among objects on an explicit logical basis. There is a tendency to interpret events with a logic built up with reference to the self. As, Mr. Roethlisberger puts it, "the self cannot be taken out of the picture." This inability to distinguish between self and not self renders the individual incapable of developing an objective logic with regard to the environment. As Piaget says, "Egocentrism is the denial of the objective attitude and consequently of logical analysis. It, therefore, gives rise to subjective synthesis. Objective synthesis, on the other hand, presupposes analysis." There is inevitably "an egocentric logic based on egocentric discriminations; for example, judgments, definitions, etc. are made with reference to the self. In the case of the more advanced thinker the tendency is to refer to the item he discriminates from the totality to a complex of logical entities which will allow him to see its relation to other things as well as to himself."\*

In studying the material we have on egocentrism in the form of Mr. Roethlisberger's papers and Piaget's texts, we found it necessary to introduce the hypothesis of "egocentric organization of the total personality." In this way we were able to bring to a semblance of order

the conglomeration of ideas and impressions which we seemed to have fallen heir to after reading the material presented by the above and a number of other authors. Another factor also prompted us to introduce this hypothesis. It was the difficulty we experienced as interviewers in reconciling our observations to the findings of these other investigators. In view of these things we submit for discussion our (probably naive) conception of the egocentric organization of the total personality and the value as well as the validity of the hypothesis.

Egocentric Organization of the Total Personality

As Mr. Roethlisberger states, "Individuals diagnosed as hysterics \*T. J. Roethlisberger's paper on "Egocentrism", or dementes lack an integrate total background or object to which they may refer meanings derived from experience. Obsessives, psychosomatics, compulsion neurotics and otherwise normal people are characterized by an integrate total object to which they may refer meanings derived from experience." In these later types we encounter individuals who display a tendency toward egocentric organization of their total personality or their total situation if we consider personality as dependent upon total situation and vice versa.

These people are distinguished by an irrelevance between the object of revery and the object of attention - (an irrelevance of directed and undirected thought or attention and revery.) The range between adjustment and abnormal is controlled primarily by the degree of relevance of undirected thinking to daily activity, and by the degree to which this undirected or dispersed thinking is under control.

Janet says, "There is, I think, a sense of reality which consists in the apprehension of reality by perception or action, and which very considerably modifies all other mental operations according to whether it is added to them or is not added to them."

Every "normal" individual exhibits two distinct phases of mental activity, an active phase and a passive phase. The active phase includes all acts of attention and adaption to the explicit world, and that portion of the implicit world in which the individual actively discriminates from himself. The passive phase implies the world of thought in which the individual passively assimilates this world to himself. If we consider that in the egocentric there exists an essential confusion of self and external world, we also may conclude that in the passive assimilation phase this assimilation will occur according to certain derogatory rules or schemas due to this confusion. From this arises the concept of "schemas of assimilation."\* Carrying this but a step further we see that arising from faulty "schemas of assimilation," must come an inadequacy of discrimination. This inadequacy of discrimination has as its correlary an inability to attend and adapt, which has a direct relevance to industrial investigation.

We have tried to present foregoing material as justification for this statement; syncretistic formations are fragments or particles dislodged, in the form of symptomatic mental processes, from a larger or more complete integrate egocentrically organized total personality. Basic syncretisms are merely conclusive evidences of this egocentric

(Egocentric model  
Symptom - Content)

\*F. J. Neethlisberger - "Method of Interviewing."

organization and are dependent on it. They denote in which areas the universe is egocentrically organized and are useful insofar as they do this. This paragraph leads us to consider and define Syncretism.

#### Syncretistic Formations

Syncretistic formations imply the failure to discriminate. The failure to discriminate involves two processes.\* (1) The building of a vague and indistinct general schema which constitutes a "syncretism." By syncretism we mean the bringing together of heterogeneous phenomena into relation. It is the tendency to connect everything with everything else. It is the vision of the whole which supplants the details.

(2) The failure to state precisely the exact relation between parts. In the thinking of the child Piaget calls this Juxtaposition. It is the predominance of the parts over the whole, whereas the former tendency is the predominance of the whole over the parts.

Adequate discrimination, then, should mean an equilibrium between the tendency of forming schemas and the analytical function of breaking them up into parts. Where these processes are made explicit, as in the case of science, the result is more and more adequate discrimination. On the other hand, where these processes remain implicit the result is an oversimplified discrimination, remaining at the same level and incapable of further development.\*

The word "syncretism" was taken from Reason for "that first wide and comprehensive, but obscure and inaccurate activity of the

spirit where no distinction is made and things are heaped one upon the other.\*

In connection with our present study, Mr. Roethlisberger gives us an excellent lead in the detection of syncretistic formations. He states, in effect, that it becomes a study of: (1) Irrelevant synthesis, (2) Preoccupational thinking, (3) Diminution of attention and hence discrimination, (4) Obsessive logical elaboration.

Working from this base we submit for discussion the following examples.

\*Syncretistic Formations by F. J. Roethlisberger.

Example of Syncretistic Formations Chosen at Random

An employee had been coming in late quite often. Because of this and because he presented such a depressed appearance his supervisor called him over to his desk to find out what the trouble was. The employee answered, "my wife always forgets to wind the alarm clock, so I don't get up early enough to get here on time."

The solution of this difficulty was simple. The supervisor said, "Why don't you wind it yourself?" This apparently had never occurred to the man and with this statement came new insight.

On the surface this incident is not of much significance. But we can assume that when he relied on his wife to wind the alarm clock and get him up on time he had carried over a pattern behavior reaction from childhood. As a boy some one used to "set the alarm" for him. This was probably his mother. Some years later we find his wife fulfilling this same function. When his wife forget to wind the clock

the fault was hers just as he could have blamed his mother in a similar situation. His mental confusion made it impossible for him to realize that the fault was his. There was a confusion between self and world - the earlier egocentric attitude being carried over to adult behavior. He never saw that the demand for service made upon his wife was merely an infantile attitude which he had never relinquished.

With the supervisor's statement came new insight and a new adjustment. The mechanism being similar in every respect to the insight gained when the father tells the son a "fact." This fact was taken at its face value, and without question. The interview being an "authority-subservient" situation, the suggestion arising from authority was therefore incorporated in the employee's schema.

Number Two\*

"I was hurt in an automobile accident. I thought if I got \$500 that would be pretty good. The insurance man said, 'I'll give you \$300.' Well, you know, I could have gotten a lot more than that but it was my daughter's fault. I said I'd take \$350 and he was tickled to death. That's why I know if my daughter had said, 'Pa, don't take less than \$500,' I would have gotten it. The insurance man probably figured, 'Well, the man wanted \$500 and I got off for \$350.'"

"The boss wanted me to join a lodge. I said, 'I can't speak German.' He said, 'Join it anyway.' I didn't and when hard times came along I was one of the first to be laid off."

In this first comment it is rather difficult to identify it as a syncretistic formation. Nevertheless, when we consider this in a critical manner, we can identify what could be considered as an egocentric element when we observe the dependence of this man on his daughter. If we assume that had this man taken a more analytical attitude and considered himself an object among other objects, it would have been impossible for him to see a relationship between his daughter's refusal to speak and the outcome of his litigation. Then we can also assume an irrational synthesis, which, in this case, identifies it as a syncretistic formation.

In the latter instance the individual clearly sees a relation between the two events (his failure to join the lodge and his subsequent lay-off) which exhibits the processes of irrelevant synthesis and inadequate discrimination. If this dismissal had precipitated a severe crisis there would also have occurred, in all probability, an obsessive over-elaboration and preoccupation thinking - the degree varying in proportion to severity of the crisis.

### Number Three

"Maybe my appearance had something to do with the fact that they didn't push me along with these other fellows. I have heard that but there certainly are a lot of others who are worse looking than I am around here."

"The job they offered me rates a few pennies more, but to have to run around with a lot of girls means more than a few pennies to me."

"These numbers designate the number of the interview in our special folder from which the example was taken."



These two comments come from the same interview. We note that in a temporal consideration of the events in the interview situation this man first suggests that the reason he did not advance was his bad appearance. Later on in the same interview he states that he refused a certain job because it involved running around with girls. We can assume that the same attitude underlies both statements. His inferior feeling with regard to his appearance must lie in the assumption that he falls short of his standard of what is ideal. His aversion to girls would seem to indicate that he cannot deal with them because he is unattractive. In competition with others for social expression he feels himself handicapped because he is bad looking. His inferiority in the social realm is brought with him to the factory situation and failure is attributed to the same unchanging factor - his appearance.

Number Ten

"While you are working here you get in touch with certain supervisors and they have you all pegged. No matter how hard you study or how much education you get, they still think of you as you first worked for them."

As in all these examples we undoubtedly have a grain of truth in the above comment. From ideas of this sort we get that very common maxim, "the first impression is a lasting one." We are not considering that phase in our study of syncretistic formations.

What we are concerned with is the irrelevant synthesis exhibited. The employee assumes that men are classified by first impressions. These

first impressions range from favorable to unfavorable (in the employee's thinking) in direct ratio to the amount of education. What he overlooks is that this is merely one, perhaps not so important factor, in a complexity of factors which make for desirable supervisory contact. Nevertheless, when an employee makes use of a defense mechanism of this sort he sets up a vicious circle - he thinks he is classified as inferior; he becomes preoccupied with this situation; he does not contribute to his full capabilities because of this preoccupation and in the end justifies the opinion of his supervisors.

"Sometimes I give a boss an argument even if it don't mean anything to me to come out on top because there are times when politeness and courtesy are taken for cowardice, and I don't want them to think that I am a coward.

"We used to write notes to the night operators explaining the best way to do new jobs. Do you know the supervisors objected to that, and in a sarcastic way told us that the machines were not in operation when we were writing notes? But I think it was just jealousy on their part when they found out that the men were capable of expressing their thoughts in writing."

These two comments came at different points in the interview but they both apparently point to the same underlying attitude. They arise from a feeling of insufficiency on the part of the employee in coping with adult situations. Perhaps the employee has retained elements of an infantile dependence on authority. The boy fights other boys to prove his masculinity and more closely identify himself with the father.

Here the employee must argue with authority to prove his own courage. If he had this courage he speaks of it would not be necessary.

Then again when his superiors find him writing notes he attributes their annoyance to jealousy on their part. He projects his own sense of necessary conflict with authority (in order to prove his power) onto his supervisor and, because of this projection, realizes in his own mind that his supervisor is jealous of his achievements. This seems a fair assumption because without introducing the element of competition, in his own thinking, the employee would not feel that his supervisors were jealous of what he could do.

Number Seventeen

"I started in the office about nine years ago. I was making fine progress. I had a Section Chief's job and all of a sudden I lost all my hair and I realized then that the office was no place for me. I asked for a transfer to the storeroom where I could wear my cap all the time. I've tried so many things - so many doctors - that I'm practically disgusted. It cost me about eighteen hundred dollars. I can't do the things or go the places that I would like to. I used to be quite a tennis player but I've given that up entirely. I wouldn't mind if I had just a little border of hair around the ears and the neck but not having any I feel foolish wearing this thing. It sure is a handicap in my life. I don't feel that I ever can progress or get married. I've had a couple of opportunities to get married but I don't feel it's the right thing to do.

"In the condition I am in I have a sort of a fear; I seem to be afraid of everybody. Evidently it's that self-conscious feeling I have."

Men lose most of their hair and still carry on. In all fairness it is very probable that the majority of successful men are "bald headed." When we consider the above comment in that light we do see an inability to take the self out of the situation.

It is significant that this man has had opportunities to get married, "but he never felt it was the right thing to do." Why does he take this attitude? Is it because he will bring shame and humility to his home? This does not seem a good explanation. The only clue we do get is that the loss of his hair serves as a "precipitating element for a more general and at the same time subtle personality deviation. He is afraid of everybody and attributes his fear to self-consciousness. This is surely an interesting rationalization. It is a pity we could not study this man further. He may be valuable time going to waste at industry's expense.

#### Number Eighteen

"About eight years ago I got another bad scare. I got a telegram that my dad had committed suicide and it didn't prove fatal - he cut his throat. That's what I attribute my goitre to. Of course, I guess nobody knows what they came from, but that is what I always thought mine came from that. Maybe I'm wrong but I feel that that's the cause of mine."

This is an interesting "relation between heterogeneous phenomena." The man receives a telegram that his father committed suicide (which did not prove fatal) and he gets a goitre from the shock. Without wishing to become humorous we wonder whether the shock of the alleged death or the fact that his father didn't die was the cause of the goitre. In fact this brings up a fundamental point in psychopathology which we will not attempt to discuss.

Aside from this speculation this comment serves as an example of irrelevant synthesis (combination of the shock and the goitre into a configuration which excludes a view of the details) and preoccupation-al thinking, for it was certainly after extended periods of submerged reflection that this very illogical assumption became a "fact." The rigidity of the assumption is apparent because of the long period over which the employee has held to this belief regardless of innumerable opportunities for explicit verification of his hypothesis.

Number Nineteen

"I had three hernia operations. When I was being sewed up after the third operation, the doctor used silver wire instead of thread, so I had a pretty good job done on me."

The application of the syncretistic formula in this instance is self-evident. When precious metals are used to sew up the abdominal tissue after an operation the operation is a good one. When "thread" is used one cannot rely so explicitly on the manipulations of the surgeon.

This comment also introduces Mr. Roethlisberger's mechanism of "false dichotomies." In our paper we neglected to mention this concept and it certainly has its place in the terminology we employ. But to explain the false dichotomy in this comment; operations with silver wire are good - operations with thread are not to be classed with "Silver wire operations."

Number Twenty

"I don't believe in babies sleeping with grown people. The odor from a grown person's body is not a good thing for a baby to inhale."

This very short syncretism is something of a gem an an example of irrelevant synthesis. It is full of implied and unexpressed meanings. The employee assumes in the first place that babies often sleep with grown people. This may be so at his level of society, although there is some reason to doubt even this.

Then he assumes that there is a significant odor from a grown person's body. (It would have been interesting to get his ideas on the odor from a baby's body.) We will make no attempt to explain a conception of this sort but we will point out that this man's experiences and his reflection on these experiences were somewhat peculiar to himself. He either assimilated his theory from some authoritative source or evolved it of his own accord. In either event it apparently has not been objectively tested.

Then the crowning irrationality is the statement that these adult bodily odors are not good for a baby to inhale. This is a fact to the employee and as such is incapable of elucidation or development. It is

not important in itself but it does perhaps indicate the need for investigation of more fundamental and more important syncretistic formations.

Number Twenty-One

"That's one of the big troubles around here. A man is judged by his ability to talk English. If the biggest engineers of Europe came over to this country and couldn't hold a conversation in English, some of our supervisors would think that they were nothing but a bunch of dumbbells."

It would be natural for our supervisors to consider a foreign engineer a "dumbbell" if he could not converse with them? That is an objective observation. If a man is placed in a situation and he is judged to a degree by his ability to talk English it would be a part of his job to learn to talk English if he wished to make a complete adaptation. A supervisor cannot give a man credit for intelligence if by his behavior the man cannot demonstrate it.

If, on the other hand, an aristocratic foreigner were placed in our shops and had to compete with socially inferior, but linguistically better equipped associates, the type of logic shown in the comment would almost inevitably be his defense mechanism - a syncretistic formation. Such is the case with this employee. He had held the rank of Colonel in the Imperial Russian Guards.

Number Twenty-Two

"I expected to stay at ninety-seven cents an hour but after the first two weeks of the raise period passed, I was reduced in salary

to ninety-six cents, and I don't think that's right. My God, it almost drove me crazy. They offered to transfer me but that's not a good policy when you've worked in one organization thirteen years. The Welfare Department knows the situation, but it just seems as though I'm one of those underfortunates that hasn't got any friends around here, and I'm beginning to believe that I haven't got any friends here; I haven't got a drag and they're certainly rubbing it into me."

The reduction from ninety-seven to ninety-six cents an hour would amount to fifty cents a week for a standard fifty-hour week. Yet, when they reduced this man one cent an hour he says of that action, "My God, it almost drove me crazy." We spoke of the self-standing as a barrier to the development of an objective logic to the environment. When a man speaks of going crazy because of a reduction in salary of fifty cents a week there must be an inadequacy of objective logic - a subjective synthesis.

Then again he explains his misfortune in terms of lack of friends. He apparently wishes to throw the responsibility for his reduction on this factor. In this manner he is able to displace his remorse at failure to somewhat remote and intangible elements in his environment. When the blame for a failure to progress can be attributed to other people the employee is absolved from a personal responsibility.

#### Summary

In some of these examples we observe a clean cut syncretism. In others we infer a syncretistic formation by rather subtle didaction.



If we have built up a workable theory we should be able to apply it to our interviews. This seems a logical conclusion from the material presented in our paper. If our theory is correct but it produces no satisfactory results the defect then must be in the method by which we accumulate our data.

For some months we have been discussing the urgency of inaugurating what Laswell calls the, "prolonged interview". The necessity for this seems to be further brought to light in this study. It is not so much that we have failed to accomplish what we intended to accomplish, as it is the inability to "objectify" our findings. We have often heard the remark; "we do get something in our interviews but what is it." We feel that we have in part settled this question. If we have done that we have made a step forward.

All our evidence and findings point to the fact that our next step must be the "prolonged interview". It seems that by this method, and only by this method, can we verify the hypothesis and concepts which we have presented in this paper. To put this more clearly; we cannot regard the data we have at hand as factual until we have verified our assumption by a minute study of the individuals we are considering. When by this method we have reduced the superficial verbalizations, so often current in the initial interview, to "psychological facts" we will find ourselves possessed of an understanding of human behavior. With this understanding will come ways and means of controlling our personnel to insure a maximum of effectiveness in all the work implied.

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END