HOW I WRITE A PAPER ON SOCIALIZATION
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BACKGROUND HABITS

The way in which I go about writing a paper seems valid as reflection, analysis, and synthesis. The result is usually received well enough, but the method is ideosyncratic. I get an idea, a theme, but why, and out of what experience does it occur to me? A description of certain habits seems relevant to this question.

I read more or less constantly in these areas: social theory, the family, sociology of knowledge, anthropology, psychology, biology, history, equality, politics, ideology, biography and fiction. I mainly read books with adequate scholarly credentials. I also read selectively in *Science, Scientific American, Hastings Center Reports, Daedalus, Chronicle of Higher Education, Harvard Education Review, Humanist, New Statesman, New York Times* and the *Boston Globe.* I pay considerable attention to the *New York Times Book Review, New York Review,* and the *Times Literary Supplement.* I read sociological periodicals infrequently, though I occasionally search them and dutifully subscribe to the *American Sociological Review.*

I was once a reader and occasional contributor to the radical press, including *Monthly Review, Partisan Review, Studies on the Left, Science & Society, Resistance,* and *Politics.* If I have become less attentive, it is not that I think it irrelevant, but because I think its passion for justice has buried the dilemmas of power and violence under an unquestioned assumption of the necessity of revolution. Its criticism of the existing order has become more sophisticated, but so has its ability to rationalize away the cruelty of revolution and the hollowness of the post-revolutionary state.

NOTATION

When I own a book, I annotate it on the inside front cover; if not, on a separate piece of paper. I do not keep card files. I did so for my doctoral thesis and for one other major project, but I prefer a more visible and panoramic file. When I wrote *German and Jew: The Life and Death of Sigmund Stein,* my basic file consisted of two sheets of paper, about 18 x 24 inches, filled with writing and webbed with lines and arrows of reference. Parts were barely legible, but it was eminently panoramic! Of course, I had other source material, including 500 pages of single-spaced, typed interview and reference notes, carefully indexed. For my work in progress, *The Dialectic of Equality,* my file consists of multiple folders of reprints, clippings, book exerpts, and the like, and heavily annotated working versions of the various chapters. I use a fairly comprehensive personal library.

OBSERVING AND REFLECTING

I observe also! Some years ago I was engaged in formal research which involved refinement and application of concepts, quantification of observations, and the assembling, organizing, and statistical analysis of data. I like this work and would enjoy doing it again some time. Thought and analysis must reflect the real world, and must show respect for the test of practice. But the ties of thought to the real world and the test of practice conceal subtleties for which formal methods are neither more nor less adequate than sensitive observation and thorough reflection.

When the inspiration takes the form of thesis or hypothesis, I spend time worrying the bone of it, jotting down thoughts and ideas. I accumulate pages of notes of variable detail and disorder. When circumstance and impulse coincide, I write up this material in essay form as a working draft.

READING AND CITATION

Having formed and developed an idea, I keep it in mind when reading. I reread and revise the working draft. I adjust my reading and observational awareness to it, but both continue to be largely general, varied, and serendipitous. I may consciously avoid some works which bear specifically on the topic.

Such a procedure does not systematically marshal observations. Many of my ideas are not original, and some doubtless involve unconscious recall of specific material from my readings. I do not know where they came from in any way that I can put my finger on. I deliberately belabor the obvious. As I work with the idea, I often recall relevant passages, and since I am now reading with the idea in mind, I pick up quite a few usable citations. I use citation to illustrate, and as rhetorical fleshing out or even

as rhetorical *straw men,* or to add interest, or to credit the source of an idea, when it is known. An essay is a product of thinking, and is itself a kind of thinking out loud. In the end, it must stand or fall as such. Annotation contributes little or nothing that is essential to it.

This is not a scholarly way of doing things. It is not research. But it is concern and intellectual action and engagement. In many respects, it is more rehash than production of knowledge. This troubles me a little. I do not take the position that everything worth saying has already been said. In sociology, the vital content of much that has been said is obscured and suppressed by a formalistic scholarly procedure, and by linguistic conventions which hinder communication to others who care to know. Total communication may not be possible, but if so, it is because of problems which are as real between sociologist and sociologist as they are between sociologist and lay reader.

APPLICATION TO THE DIALECTIC OF SOCIALIZATION

It may not be apparent that I have taught and used methods of social research, but I do respect empirical research and the test of practice. I teach the usual things about hypotheses and hypothesis testing. But, I add the notion of *explication,* by which I mean attending closely to what is actually being said in a hypothesis, examining the range of concepts, and the costs and benefits of reducing them to elements of an explicit, testable proposition. I stress making mental experiments by extrapolating asserted relations to extreme cases, and bringing to bear what we already know. In so doing, we may save ourselves from pursuit of will o' the wisps, dig out the decisive parts of the hypotheses, and uncover new trenchant hypotheses.

My thought on socialization was established long before I read Becker's *Structure of Evil, Escape from Evil,* and *Birth and Death of Meaning.* In the same way, the light pessimism of Heilbroner's *Human Prospect* seemed to conform my own mild pessimism. Henry's *Pathways to Madness* contains passages which echo my own thoughts on the matter, and sympathetic vibrations arise from every page of Carol Klein's little book, *How It Feels to be a Child,* and Nancy Friday's *My Mother-Myself.* Crista Wolfe's *Kindheitmuster* is fiction, but

with its wonderful manipulation of time, it captures something of what I want to say on primary socialization when I stress conflict between norms internalized at a very early age and the norms which confront us in late childhood and maturity.

Socialization derives from fundamental human-species characteristics. The antagonism to this view, or at least to the concept of *human nature,* is provocatively stated in Young's *Limits of Human Nature.* The works on feral children by Malson, Lane, Armen, and others were stimulating, while various investigations on teaching language to an ape were congenial warnings against glib distinctions between human and animal nature as was Thorpe's *Animal Nature and Human Nature,* and von Fritsch's *Animal Architecture.* I have not read Wilson's *Sociobiology,* but have read his more recent *Human Nature* with admiring irritation. I was dazzled by the erudition of Stephen Gould in *Ontogeny and Phylogeny.* While Milton Gordon's *Human Nature, Class, and Ethnicity* belongs in this context, I was more struck by the parallels between his concept of *eth-class* and mine of the logical hierarchy of groups.

Three reading experiences I had while writing on socialization are typical of what happens in such situations. They involve Berger and Luckman's *Social Construction of Reality,* Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind,* and Bottomore and Nisbet's *History of Sociological Analysis.*

THE BERGER & LUCKMAN EFFECT

I read the Berger and Luckman book shortly after it appeared in 1966, having retained an interest in epistemological sociology, which is close to the sociology of knowledge. The *Social Construction of Reality* certainly influenced my thought, repeatedly supplying the stimulation of essential agreement and disagreement. I found that they dealt with many issues more fully than I had.

I found that their treatment of primary and secondary socialization said much that is relevant to my own treatment of these topics, and much that had fed into what I said. Clearly, it seemed to me, they would recognize my *Dialectic of Socialization.* Yet despite a few passages that approach the matter, at no point do they confront the issue which for me is central, and that is the creative instability of socialization, particularly in primary socialization. For good

reasons of their own, they see primary socialization as massively and coherently imposing itself on the individual. They do not deal with the problems created by the very indistinct boundary between primary and secondary socialization.

I'm sure Berger and Luckman would accept the idea of the *Dialectic of Socialization.* Perhaps elsewhere they have developed similar ideas. But in Berger's later books, *Pyramids of Sacrifice* and *Sacred Canopy,* I find no such development, while his *Invitation to Sociology* conceives society as a sort of prison, from which Berger offers an escape which is less convincing to me than that afforded by my own analysis, which creates at best, a very flimsy prison.

BATESON'S EFFECT

The experience with Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* is no less typical. Until very recently, I had read none of Bateson's work. I was familiar with his name because of a subordinate interest connected with my course in family, with his *double-bind* hypothesis. After I had completed the second draft of my essay on secondary socialization, I chanced to see his book. I was drawn to it because of my minimal awareness of Bateson, and because in my course on population and ecology, I deal with the ecology of human intelligence, having borrowed this label, but not the concept itself, from the book of the same name edited by Liam Hudson. In the Bateson book, I discovered the thought of another soulmate which was more profound, though more opaque, than my own. My present labor, *Dialectic of Equality,* gives a simpler, more profound, and more basic expression of the double-bind hypothesis.

I was also interested to find that Bateson takes Korzybski's *Science and Sanity* seriously. I had read this massive essay more than thirty years ago, and was plainly influenced by it. I had the impression that Korzybski is seen as a kind of crackpot, and was happy to find Bateson's implicit rejection of this view. I was also amused to find that Bateson, with his *schismo-genesis,* perpetrates an even more jargonist term than my own *logical hierarchy of groups* to describe an important process of group life.

THE BOTTOMORE AND NISBET EFFECT

More substantive is my conviction that I must identify to a significant degree with all

of the sociological traditions presented in Bottomore and Nisbet's *History of Sociological Analysis.* My way of thinking about human society would have to be described as totally eclectic, if it could be shown that I had some familiarity with the traditions which they discuss. I agree with Durkheim and others that society cannot be reduced to a summation of individuals and individual characteristics. I embrace the notion of emergent properties. Nevertheless, social phenomena must be consistent with human-species characteristics in the sense that these can plausibly be shown to demand that social phenomena emerge from their manifestation in a multiplicity of individuals. My treatment in the *Dialectic of Socialization* follows much of their analytical thought.

I agree with Wrong's *Over-Socialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology* but only insofar as it refers to a view of socialization considerably narrower than the conception which I advance. I have pursued the term *socialization* through the *Handbook of Social Psychology* and the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* where I find much that is relevant. I am not advancing an analysis of socialization at odds with the empirical and theoretical work already done, and I am building something on it.

CITATIONS

You might question whether I could adduce appropriate citations which, when compared with my own ideas, would enable the reader to draw her/his own conclusions. I take another's thought seriously. My understanding and interpretation of it is always tentative and provisional. But it cannot be transformed into persuasive propositions by a few citations. Textual exegesis would be necessary, not merely for particular passages on a single point, but also what the author has said about it and about related points in other contexts. The question *why* does the writer make such an assertion, and what he/she means must be examined. In all but the exact sciences, and often there as well, this can only be done through extensive exploration. It is possible, and it is scholarship in the best sense. Yet the demands on time run squarely against the fact that in a situation of many and extraneous commitments, I have ideas which I want to develop–ideas which, however derivative they may be, are

original in their particular combination. I read for stimulus and contribution to my thought, both of which I gladly acknowledge. But my thought is a vector sum of all such stimuli and contributions, consciously remembered or unconsciously operating. Of course, I make no assumption that this is the last word on the subject.

It is not merely that any citation or example is out of its own immediate context, but rather that an entire book or monograph may need the wider context of its writer's thoughts and actions if it is to be meaningful. *The Archeology of Knowledge*, set forth in Foucault's book, is relevant here, as is a recent essay by Mischler, *Meaning in Context--Is There Any Other Kind?*

CONVENTIONS

Must I drag out Marx, Weber, and Sumner, read in depth several years ago, or Mannheim, Mead, Merton, Parsons, Schutz, Simmel, and Spencer, extensive portions of whose writings I have also read? All of these thinkers have influenced me profoundly, but is it arrogant to say that they told me nothing which in some significant sense I didn't know already? My earliest serious reading was in the revisionist literature on the First World War. Without my being aware of it, this reading taught me something about knowing, about conflict, about classes and social structure, and most of all, about the human condition. Such writers as Harry Barnes, Fabre-Luce, Sidney Fay, Liddell Hart, Mock and Larson, writing as historians and as social critics against received myth, must have passed on to me the spirit of an age in which the contrast and conflict with Marx was a pervasive element. In somewhat the same way, perhaps an early reading of Ruth Benedict and Abraham Kardiner supplied me with certain ideas about the relations between culture and personality, about the relativity of culture. For this, however, I could hardly have been better prepared than by the revisionists' turning topsy-turvy the myth of the Hun or their demonstration of how personalities on both sides were determined by the dominant themes imposed by culture.

Must I mention the texts--with their sometimes clear, and sometimes confused reflection of the basic literature--which after having read them myself, I have inflicted on my students? Must I refer to labels like symbolic interactionism, conflict theory, cognitive dissonance, functionalism, labeling theory, and the like, to pretend location in a tradition which by its claim to be a science, supposedly ignores tradition? Neither the existence of ideological "schools" nor the penchant for identifying ourselves and others with them is mysterious or worthless. But stress on "schools" belittles, while the enthusiastic embrace of discipleship stultifies thought.

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then the customers. So there was much less of a customer problem in the back for closing down, and the backroom person was usually the first finished. So at 9:00 p.m., closing time, all you really needed to do was to sweep up, scrub sinks, and make sure the animals had plenty of food and water. All of these jobs depended on doing your work earlier and without much bother from the customer at 9 p.m. It made closing up in the back the easiest in the store.

Signs of blockage arise from the absence of specific groups of employees. The administrative secretary astutely noted "...that at 3:30 p.m. the executive types would appear to be very involved in their work as we were preparing to leave, but on my many afternoons of overtime, it was obvious that they just waited for us to leave, and by 3:40 p.m. that office was completely emptied except for us few who were involved in our particular 'urgent' task."

Mobility

In the discussion of actual blockages, the concept of disappearing near the end of the day was stressed. If the maintenance man could not be found, he could not be asked to do more work. The progression of the shut down from one's immediate area to the entire organization is often mentioned. People put their office in order, clean their work area, or straighten up things on the desk. The spread of shut down is depicted by the administrative secretary. "By 3:25 p.m. one of the secretaries would be in my office announcing that there were only 5 minutes more to go--which would prompt desk-picking-up time." One secretary cues the others, and their departure cues the executives.

Volume & Division of Labor

The full shut down, like the others, may be prolonged by the volume of work. As the floral designer said, "A late customer or phone order could delay departure of individual employees by 30 minutes or more. Holidays destroyed all schedules, and we often left a littered, messy work area at 3:00 a.m. or later." High volume was universalistic in its extensions.

A successful shut down depends on the division of labor. Those who had completed their shut-down tasks could relieve others who had not. Thus, at the pet store, the backroom worker, who finished first, came out to help the others shut down, and

so avoided the charge of incompetence from fellow workers.

Finally, the nursing assistant put it best: "...We all were caught up in the habit like millions of other Americans: we finished our day's work a little bit earlier so we wouldn't have to work overtime." To finish early, they invoked special routines which were developed for that purpose.

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