



The extent and kind of attachment to teaching of metropolitan senior secondary teachers as compared to other life attachments
by Charles Clifford Hanna

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
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Abstract:

It was the purpose of this study to explore the degree and kind of secondary teacher attachment to teaching as compared to non-teaching attachments.

Questionnaires were sent to a 50 per cent random sample of secondary teachers in the Minnesota cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul: The questionnaires of 489 respondents, 78 per cent, were utilized to derive the findings of this investigation.

In interpreting the study results it was assumed that a lightly committed teacher will tend to play out the most obvious expectations placed on his job performance and view the school as a means to acquire the ends to participate in non-school interactions which have more social meaning to him than does teaching.

Some of the more important findings and conclusions were as follows: (1) Only about half of the secondary teachers studied were found to be Job Oriented in their total value commitment to teaching. (2) Eight out of ten secondary teachers preferred non-school related environments for their Informal human relations; it appears that their perceived primary social relationships which are not prescribed by organizational rules, procedures and job necessity do not take place in school or with school related activities. (3) In the Formal dimension of social behavior secondary teachers are Job Oriented in that nearly nine out of ten of the teachers studied were attached to the school as an organization and did prefer school related interactions for the application of their specialized knowledge and skill.

The broad generalization suggested by these findings is that the global and complete dedication of self to work assumed to be characteristic of professional occupations does not exist for many secondary teachers.

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OF METROPOLITAN SENIOR SECONDARY TEACHERS
AS COMPARED TO OTHER LIFE ATTACHMENTS

by

CHARLES CLIFFORD HANNA

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial
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Approved:

Robert J. Thibault
Head, Major Department

Earl N. Rings
Chairman, Examining Committee

J. Goering
Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

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ABSTRACT

It was the purpose of this study to explore the degree and kind of secondary teacher attachment to teaching as compared to non-teaching attachments.

Questionnaires were sent to a 50 per cent random sample of secondary teachers in the Minnesota cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The questionnaires of 489 respondents, 78 per cent, were utilized to derive the findings of this investigation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Systematic study of the relationship between man and his work is of relatively recent origin. This is not to imply that man, once he developed language capacity, has not always valued or devalued everything he has had to do. It is hoped that a brief historical review of some of the attempted analyses of man and work relationships will provide an introduction to and support for the importance of empirically testing the values man assigns work experiences as compared to the values he assigns non-work experiences.

It must be noted that an ex post facto attempt to ascribe man's view of work prior to systematic reporting of the relationship is at best highly speculative and therefore open to criticism. For example, Tilgher suggests that the early Greeks and Romans held work in low esteem; that those who worked were scorned while a life devoted to reading, thinking and discussing

was held in high esteem.¹ There is no way to verify or deny his observations as it is equally likely that this kind of value orientation was limited to a few "elites" as it is that it might have been typical of the general population. It would seem that the most appropriate statement which could be made about the early relationship between man and his work is that we do not have sufficient information to precisely describe the relationship.

Wilensky states that the early Hebrews thought of work as painful drudgery although they felt they must suffer it as a way to atone for original sin. "... in this sense work was accepted as an expiation, a way to regain lost spiritual dignity. In fact, Rabbinical literature held that no labor, however lowly, is as offensive as idleness."² Although the Hebrew's view of work is not well substantiated, the fact the concept is treated in their religious literature tends to lend support to

¹Tilgher, Adriano, "Work Through the Ages," in Man Work and Society, pp. 11-12.

²Wilensky, Harold, "Varieties of Work Experience," in Man in a World of Work, p. 126.

Wilensky's conclusions.

Wrenn feels that in the early centuries and into the medieval period, work was dignified for the religious orders but it was still valued less than prayer and contemplation. He suggests that work gradually became thought of as worthwhile and with the advancement of the guild system, it gained further acceptability; however, he notes that individual profit and money lending were socially condemned.³

Wilensky posits that the work-view of St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) is, "...not far from that of the Catholic Church today: work is a natural right and duty, the sole legitimate base of society, the foundation of property and profit, of guilds and corporations (according to divine plan), but it is always a means to a higher spiritual end."⁴ Wilensky feels that work was viewed as a means to an end--the real value, aim, and motive in living

³Wrenn, C. G., "Human Values and Work in American Life," in Man in a World of Work, p. 26.

⁴Wilensky, op. cit., p. 127.

was preparation for a life hereafter--and in itself did not possess dignity. If St. Thomas Aquinas and subsequent Catholic leaders were successful in dignifying work and if at the same time they succeeded in convincing Catholics that its purpose was preparation for a life hereafter, then the concept of a Protestant Work Ethic is more or less accurate. If in fact Catholic workers tended to value work in much the same way as did non-Catholic workers from the time of the Reformation to the present, then the concept is subject to question. The resolution of this dilemma is beyond the scope of this investigation; whatever the case, the Protestant Ethic point of view is presented herewith for the reader's consideration.

"Protestantism is the moving force and the profound spiritual revolution which established work in the modern mind as the base and key of life, and in this matter, the first voice of Protestantism is Luther."⁵ Wrenn identifies Luther as the agent of change for work. He notes that with the Reformation work became not only essential but

⁵Tilgher, op. cit., p. 17

also it was God's will that man should work. Luther was seen as a proponent of the position that it is equally honorable to work in and without religious occupations.⁶

Tilgher said of Luther:

For Luther, as for medieval Catholicism, work is natural, the remedium peccati of fallen man. It has both a penal and an educational character. So far nothing new. But from these familiar premises he draws a conclusion that all who can work should work; that idleness, beggary, lending at interest are unnatural; that charity should be bestowed only on those who cannot work; that (and this had farreaching effects) the monastic and contemplative life is the result of egotism and lack of human affection on the part of monks, who evade in the cloister their duty to their neighbors in the world....Everyone should earn his living and no more....But--and here is the immense originality of Luther--within the limits of his own profession, whatever that may be, as long as it is legitimate, Luther held that work is a form of serving God. There is just one best way to serve God--to do perfectly the work of one's profession....So long as work is done in a spirit of obedience to God and of love for one's neighbor, every variety of labor has equal spiritual dignity, each is the service of God on earth....From his hands work came forth endowed with religious dignity. The gate which gives upon modernity was from his time on, definitely open.⁷

⁶Wrenn, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

⁷Tilgher, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

Wrenn suggests that Calvin was the stimulator of the next developmental step in the work ethic. In his view, Calvin proposed that God requires man to work and profit-making is acceptable so long as the profits are re-invested to create more work. Social mobility through work is acceptable and idleness is a sin.⁸

There is little question that Luther, Calvin, and others associated with the Reformation and post-Reformation period did contribute toward making labor a virtue. It must be pointed out that there is not universal agreement that the emergent work ethic is solely a product of Protestantism. What is of concern to this study is well summarized by Wilensky (ignoring his emphasis on the Protestant Ethic) when he writes:

...the vast economic expansion of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries....This is the period in which the 'Protestant Ethic,' together with other strands of Christian doctrine, meshed with the 'Spirit of Capitalism' to form, ultimately, a secular religion of work....

On the issue of the importance of work, nineteenth-century socialism was at one with ascetic

⁸Wrenn, op. cit., p. 26.

Protestantism and free-wheeling capitalism. In the society of socialist dreamers, work is central, natural, and an end in itself....In fact, in the early writings of Marx and Engels, in their humanistic stage, work in the utopia of classless society would acquire the free, fluid character of leisure.⁹

Wilensky further noted that the utopiasts, typified by the philosophies of Sir Thomas More, Charles Fourier and Saint-Simon, all subscribed that all men shall work as it is a central and necessary aspect of successful living.¹⁰ He states about the present value assigned to work by man:

The dominant modern philosophies of work have in common a positive approval of labor....All modern states have developed ideologies which give work a positive central place. For modern fascists work is a social duty, carried out through the guided collaboration of various occupations and classes so that the nation may achieve its highest development. The Soviets call themselves the republic of workers, peasants, and soldiers, glorifying manual labor as the highest human dignity. Modern Protestant countries in the free West still draw on the liberal economics of yesterday in defense of the free market, private property, and (in America) minimum government as the formula for releasing the productive.

⁹ Wilensky, op. cit., pp. 127-129

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 129-130.

energies of the people. Catholic idealizations of labor continue to emphasize its roots in the spiritual ends and its utility in the attainment of higher spiritual ends. French humanists define labor as man's confirmation of himself against nature (whatever it does to make life easier and longer or useful and beautiful).¹¹

Wrenn points out that the American work ethic was brought to this country by immigrants. It has the social dimensions inherited from the class system and the religious justification value adopted from the religious systems of Western Europe. These values, coupled with the demands of pioneer life and the later pressures of an individualistic early civilization combined to form the American work ethic. As the United States industrialized and urbanized there was an increased demand for workers and they were imported to work the machines and to serve as slaves on southern plantations. Work and work products were of great importance to the development of this new nation. In America, a man has been thought capable of rising to any height if he works intelligently and hard enough.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 129-130.

Tilgher notes:

Since Calvin's day (work) has never lost its dignity, but work for work's sake is no longer preached (as it was during the Reformation) as a worthy but subordinate accompaniment to a good and pious life. On the contrary, with the passing years it has more and more lost its connection with religion, has been more and more granted an importance for its own sake, until it stands today the watchword of the nations, the creed of the one really vital, sincerely felt religion of the age.¹²

In way of introduction to his article, "Is the Work Ethic Realistic in an Age of Automation?" G. B. Childs said about the American work Ethic:

Work, being necessary, came to have a very central significance in our social and economic thinking. Work is necessary, work is desirable, work is good....It is through work that one receives economic rewards....It is through work that one achieves identity....Work provides the principal means of social interaction in our society and for large numbers of people offers the only means of establishing social contacts.. ..Work for some is pleasurable as a release from boredom; for others it provides an opportunity to do something constructive....

Work is so central to our lives that we take it for granted and our ideas about work are so deeply ingrained that we rarely examine them. Of course everyone should work and of course he

¹²Tilgher, op. cit., p. 20.

should be paid for working. Work is good. Non-work is bad. He who works is good. He is industrious, provident, a contributor to society, a wage earner....

This is the way we tend, as a society, to think. And we think this way because to do so is compatible with a system which, with temporary dislocations, has operated successfully throughout history.¹³

The purpose of his article was to challenge this concept of work and to point out the necessity for our society to teach a new work ethic in view of changing social and economic conditions.

A somewhat different view is taken by Sigmund Nosow who posits:

The problems of obtaining valid resource materials and adequate documentation characterize all social research.... Similar pitfalls are found in the contemporary study of work. Most of the research data currently available are the result of direct questions put to people asking what they like or dislike about their work.... Although work has become increasingly segregated from other realms of social life, today more people than ever before consciously expect to derive meaning from work. Whereas in earlier eras family, community, and religious activities were expected to give

¹³ Childs, G. B., "Is the Work Ethic Realistic in an Age of Automation?", Phi Delta Kappan xlvi: 371, April, 1965.

meaning to work, today we expect work to give meaning to other areas of life....

The separation of work from other realms of life has been erroneously interpreted by some as indicating that work is no longer a central life interest of man. The available evidence does not confirm this, for work continues to be the driving force giving direction and meaning to contemporary living. While it is true that work satisfaction tends to decrease with level of occupational skill, work still occupies a central role in the lives of most people.¹⁴

Nosow has indicated that much of the available research focuses almost exclusive attention on gathering data about peoples' reactions to the work environment. Wilensky agrees with Nosow that a new kind of research approach is needed but sharply disagrees with what he speculates the research will reveal. He writes,

Few studies focus directly on the place of the job in the total round of life. Few analyze job satisfaction in relation to satisfactions derived from other life areas....Dubin found that only one in four could be classified as mainly job-oriented....Arthur Kornhauser found, 'Mental health was best among those high in education and occupation, poorest among those low in both'....If we assume that job satisfaction and life satisfaction are inseparable, this study suggests that the portrait

¹⁴Nosow, Sigmund, and Form, W. H., Man Work and Society, pp. 10-11.

of the cheerful worker derived from more direct approaches to job satisfaction is grossly over-drawn....

Direct questions yield a misleading picture of cheerful majorities, although they also suggest the prominence of economic meanings of work among lower strata. More indirect approaches and some consideration of the balance between rewards and aspirations and their chronology over the work life uncover more discontent. They also suggest that job satisfaction is part of life satisfaction, that job discontent spreads to other discontents....

A more fruitful way to join debate about what work is doing to or for modern man is to compare men variously situated and ask how well their prized self-images fit their work roles.¹⁵

Dubin did conduct a study of 1,200 Middle-western industrial workers using the research approach suggested by Wilensky wherein an analysis of job attachments as compared to non-job attachments was the focus. He found, when viewed from a comparative point of view, work and the workplace were not central life interests for the subjects of his study.¹⁶

¹⁵Wilensky, op. cit., pp. 137-149.

¹⁶Dubin, Robert, "Industrial Workers' Worlds: A Study of the 'Central Life Interests' of Industrial Workers," Social Problems, 3: 131-142, January, 1956.

In recognition that Dubin has offered a somewhat unique perspective from which to view man in relationship to his work; being aware that the societal work values have undergone transitions in the course of history; and believing that an exploration of the extent and kind of attachment to teaching of active members will be of value to those people training and working with these teachers, a study utilizing symbolic interaction theory and taking the theoretical orientation suggested by Wilensky and Dubin, was designed. A more complete description of the design of this study follows.

Statement of the Problem

The major hypothesis of this investigation required the exploration of the degree and direction of teacher attachment to job oriented interactions and experiences as compared to those which are non-job oriented. Four component hypotheses were delineated to test the different attachments to the Formal and Informal behavioral systems (see definitions pages 15-18) with a comparison within

each system between job oriented and non-job oriented interactions and experiences. Finally, selected sub-categories of teacher characteristics were stated in the form of null hypotheses (termed subordinate) to measure the differences, if any, among teachers in their attachment to job oriented as compared to non-job oriented interactions and experiences.

Procedures

To explore the areas of concern mentioned under the statement of the problem, the following procedures were used:

1. The literature was reviewed to develop propositions which in turn yielded the hypotheses tested and to formulate a conceptual model of the behavioral systems within the school. The phenomenal world for teachers was divided into two broad categories: Job Oriented Social Worlds and Non-Job Oriented Social Worlds. The Social Acts which occur in these Social Worlds were categorized under two behavioral systems: the Formal and the Informal.

2. Social acts and experiences which can reasonably occur in both Job Oriented and Non-Job Oriented Social Worlds were identified. Questionnaire items to measure these properties were constructed and administered to a random sample of Minnesota secondary school teachers. By comparing the teacher's degree of preference for participating in a Social Act in one of the two divisions of the teacher's Social Worlds, it was possible to test the hypotheses derived.

Definition of Terms

A number of terms have been used in this study which require interpretations; they are defined in this section to clarify their meanings.

1. Social Act. It is, "A unit for observation and analysis of interaction....The social act may be said to have three distinct parts: a beginning, a middle, and an end." In the beginning phase the actor is defining the situation in terms of his past experiences, present observations, and future anticipations. The middle of the act

is devoted to some kind of action; the universal and by far most prevalent kind of action in the social act is talk. In this phase of the act, action is continuously being constructed. The end of the act signals the end of the interaction; it may or may not terminate in the fulfillment of participant objectives.¹⁷

2. Social World. It is a setting, locale, or situation for carrying out a Social Act.¹⁸

3. Informal System. It refers to interactions where the relationship is face-to-face and may be shared over a wide range of subjects. Dubin has characterized such interactions as, "Relations between people that are not directly a product of an official relationship in an organization or related positions in a division of labor."¹⁹ Such behaviors as small talk, leisure-time

¹⁷Kuhn, M. H., "The Interview and the Professional Relationship," in Human Behavior and Social Processes, pp. 194-196.

¹⁸Goffman, Erving, Encounters, 19-34, and Mead, G. H., Mind Self and Society, pp. 98-100.

¹⁹Dubin, Robert, op. cit., pp. 135.

activity, friendship interactions, casual conversations, and affectional attachments are the components.

4. Formal System. Carzo and Yanouzas see this system as including behaviors and experiences directly related to achieving the objectives of the organization.²⁰ The Formal System includes organizational prescriptions of rules, procedures, controls, rewards, and ordering as well as the carrying out of prescribed tasks. In this study the Formal System has been dichotomized into Organizational Experiences and Technical Experiences.

a. Organizational Experiences. These are interactions and prescriptions relating to hiring, joining, firing, disciplining, rewarding, directing, and ordering. This subcategory includes such things as: becoming a more important member in...; the importance of rules, regulations, and procedures; attachment to the goals and purposes of the organization; duties and responsibilities; and the carrying out of job functions.²¹

²⁰Carzo, Rocco, Jr., and Yanouzas, J. N., Formal Organizations, p. 117.

²¹Ibid., pp. 117-123; Dubin, op. cit., p. 137.

b. Technical Experiences. These are the relationships between an individual and his actual work operations. The job tasks and things directly related to the job tasks are included. For the teacher, such things as the following are included in this subcategory: concern with techniques; specialized knowledge; accuracy of job performance; evaluation; transmission of knowledge and skills; committee work; changing behavior of others; the quality and maintenance of materials; and the implementing of the programs, goals and procedures specified by the school.²²

5. Secondary School Teacher. One who teaches in a grade(s) between nine and twelve, inclusive.

Limitations of the Study

Riley has noted that in any research, it is never possible to attend to all properties of the case.²³

²²Dubin, op. cit., p. 138; Wittlin, A. S., "The Teacher," Daedalus 92: 745-763, Fall, 1963.

²³Riley, M. W., Sociological Research, p. 282.

Homans has pointed out that when you deal with social theory it is always easy to say, "You have left such and such out. They are quite right: we always leave something out. We must if we are to make theories at all."²⁴ This would seem to be the very nature of theories as attempts at generalizations in the way of explanation. The crucial question is: what has been taken into account.

The conceptual model which formed the basis for this study requires recognition of the fact that it can only be assumed the behavioral properties observed are representative of the universal nature of the case. It is also recognized that the self-concept is only partially accounted for in the conceptual framework used in defining the phenomenal world of the teacher. However, it would seem that the model does sample a significant amount of the interactional experiences which occur between the teacher and others.

²⁴ Homans, G. C., The Human Group, p. 14.

The Formal and Informal systems are considered to be of equal importance in determining the degree of teacher attachment to work. A review of the literature (cited elsewhere) reveals that this assumption must be kept in mind in the formulation of conclusions but that does not compromise the basic design of the study.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Dubin utilized a conceptual model of the world of work which was based on symbolic interaction theory in his study of the "Central Life Interests" of industrial workers.¹ Orzack made a direct application of Dubin's instrumentation to measure the "Central Life Interests" of nurses² and Nelson likewise directly applied Dubin's conceptualizations to Michigan Industrial Arts teachers.³

This study relies on Dubin's design, yet, the derivation of hypotheses is based on a somewhat different application of symbolic interaction theory; thus, the orientation is from a somewhat different perspective than that of the other studies mentioned and required the

¹Dubin, Robert, "Industrial Workers' Worlds: A Study of the 'Central Life Interests' of Industrial Workers," Social Problems, 3: 131-142, January, 1956.

²Orzack, L. H., "Work as a 'Central Life Interest' of Professionals," Social Problems, 7: 125-132, Fall, 1959.

³Nelson, H. E., Occupational Self-Images of Teachers: A Study of the Occupational Involvements and Work-Role, Doctor's Thesis, Michigan State University, University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, 1-158, 1962.

development of new instrumentation for data collection.

It is perhaps commonplace to mention that a measure of attachment to social groups (using the term in its broadest denotation) must originate in the study of the value systems of the group members. The seeming simplicity of this logical observation is misleading and the complexity and elusiveness of the source of individual values becomes evident on considering the process of symbolic interaction. To ascertain the value orientations of individuals, it is necessary to analyze that portion of symbolic interaction theory which in this study has been defined as Social Acts and Social Worlds.

This chapter will be devoted to an explanation of the nature of Social Acts and Social Worlds and related symbolic interaction processes. With this framework established, it will then be possible to measure an individual's attachment to different Social Worlds by applying these concepts to the different types of interactions which occur. Specifically, by comparing an actor's preference for Social Acts in job related Social Worlds with

Social Acts which occur in non-job related Social Worlds, it is possible to determine the extent and kind of teacher attachment to teaching.

The Social Act

Kuhn offers a very useful division of the social act for analysis when he suggests it has three distinct parts: anticipation (beginnings), action (middle), and consensual termination (end).⁴

Beginning of the Social Act. A Social Act does not begin with overt, observable behavior as would be the impression of a casual observer; rather, action is preceded by a series of complex anticipations or to use W. I. Thomas' term, definitions of the situation, and a series of participant adjustments. To what extent the anticipations are conscious or unconscious is not a matter of concern to this study as it is only relevant that such anticipations and adjustments do precede action.

⁴Kuhn, M. H., "The Interview and the Professional Relationship," in Human Behavior and Social Processes, pp. 193-206.

Mead in discussing the social act notes that the observed, external act is only a part of a process which has started within the organism. He recognized (as do most all interactionists) that something is occurring within the central nervous system of the organism during this anticipatory stage but also points out that the exact nature of the nervous system adjustment is yet beyond the grasp of man. It cannot be explained by a set of stimulus-response connections nor can a precise conscious-unconscious continuum be established. The purpose of anticipatory behavior is clear to Mead and others. Its purpose is for the organism to pick out of the whole group of stimuli which confront the actor, those to which he intends to respond. The organism picks out and organizes the set of stimuli which sets the stage for action. From the multitudinous number of possible stimuli and combinations thereof, the organism, by anticipating the situation in which it finds itself, makes its selections--it schedules the agenda. The selections made are tentative and will be constantly modified during the enactment of the Social Act. In this

part of the act, the organism is defining the situation (selecting stimuli) and preparing for action.⁵

Shibutani extends the concept of definition of the situation by drawing a distinction between the perspectives imputed to an audience and those of the people who make up the audience. He notes that action which will follow depends to a large extent upon how an actor defines the situation.⁶ He observes that the definition of the situation depends on the actor's perspective which he defines in the following manner:

...an organized view of one's world, what is taken for granted about the attributes of objects, of events, and of human nature. The environment in which men live is an order of things remembered and expected as well as things actually perceived.⁷

The complexity of the social act begins to emerge when it is seen that people view the same situation from different perspectives, which means that actors within the

⁵ Mead, G. H., Mind Self and Society, pp. 42-82.

⁶ Shibutani, Tamotsu, "Reference Groups and Social Control," in Human Behavior and Social Processes, pp. 128-134.

⁷ Ibid., p. 130.

same situation will view the situation in somewhat different ways. The concept of selective perception (or put another way, selective inattention) becomes clear when it is recognized that what is perceived depends to a large extent on what is anticipated. (i.e. Shibutani points out to illustrate this point that, "A prostitute and social worker walking through a slum area notice different things."⁸) The vague and tentative boundaries of the Social Act are drawn during the beginning part of the act when the organism interprets to self present perceptions based on: remembrances, what is perceived in the present situation, and anticipations of future events. In this manner, certain tentative responses are readied for action. Since different actors in the same situation view the situation from unique perspectives, the stage is now set not only for responding but also for changing definitions of the situation. e.g. testing one's own views against others by first checking or validating one's own assessments of others attitudes.

⁸ Ibid., p. 131.

Middle of the Social Act. It is in this part of the act, the action phase, that the dynamic and fluid nature of social interaction becomes most obvious. Action begins with a conversation of gestures (which in themselves require participants to begin the process of redefinition of the situation and modification of the boundaries of the Social Act), and in most cases extends into symbolic interaction (interactions mediated by language, other significant gestures, and natural signs) which can best be analyzed by attending to the concepts role, role taking, role making, and reference groups. Each of these concepts require further explanation in order to carry forward the conceptual design of this research.

Mead's Conversation of Gestures. Mead points out that the gesture is that part of the Social Act which serves as a stimulus to other forms involved in the act. He illustrates a gesture by his classical "dog story."

The act of each dog becomes the stimulus to the other dog for his response. There is then a relationship between these two; and as the act is responded to by the other dog, it, in turn, undergoes change. The very fact that the dog is ready to attack another becomes a stimulus to the other dog to change his own position

or his own attitude. He has no sooner done this than the change of attitude in the second dog in turn causes the first dog to change his attitude. We have here a conversation of gestures.⁹

Several distinctions should be made at this point although more will be said of these matters later. First, the changes in the definition of the situation by each dog are not the result of gestures which can be considered "significant." That is, the dogs are not capable of defining to themselves the meaning of the attitude of other, but respond directly to the situation in re-defining the situation. (The process of response to significant language symbols which characterizes the interactions of man is far more complex than this direct S-R relationship.) Second, the limitations of conversations by natural signs (non-verbal signals) begin to be obvious.

Mead further clarifies the gesture when he says,

...certain parts (gestures) of the act become a stimulus to the other form to adjust itself to those responses; and that adjustment in turn becomes a stimulus to the first form to change his own act and start a new one. There are a series

⁹ Mead, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

of attitudes, movements, on the part of these forms which belong to the beginning of acts that are the stimuli for the responses that take place. The beginning of a response becomes the stimulus to the first form to change his attitude, to adopt a different act.¹⁰

Thus, the gesture as a beginning point for action, calls out a response of the other which in turn becomes a stimuli for the original sender to readjust so that the action part of the Social Act can proceed. The initial definitions of the situation and the communication by natural sign gestures proceed almost simultaneously; the adjustments in many instances occur with almost "lightning-like" speed; and the process gives the appearance of being "automatic."

Mead notes that when verbal symbols (language) reach the stage that the gesture "...means this idea behind it and it arouses that idea in the other individual, then we have a significant symbol."¹¹ Simply, when a language symbol, which has a particular meaning in the

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 43.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 45.

experience of the first individual, calls out that meaning in the second individual, it is then a significant symbol. Interactions among human beings is best understood by analyzing the communication of significant symbols among them--more will be said of this matter later.

Role, Role Taking, and Role Making. The process illustrated by the conversation of gestures is extended in the process of communication by significant symbols. It is necessary to first take into account the nature of role prior to explaining the communication by significant symbols which is basic to the process of role taking and role making.

Ralph Turner has pointed out that the term "role" has many and varied referents, that many people repudiate it as rigid cultural and mechanical determinism, and that they think of "role" as being synonymous with social norm or culture.¹² The clarification he offers dissipates these criticisms. Turner significantly points out that a

¹²Turner, R. H., "Role-Taking: Process Versus Conformity," in Human Behavior and Social Processes, pp. 21-28.

distinction must be made "...between taking the existence of distinct and identifiable roles as the starting point in role theory, and postulating a tendency to create and modify concepts of self-and other roles as the orienting process in interactive behavior."¹³ This approach to role theory places emphasis on the construction or making of the role during the course of its enactment. People who occupy roles behave as if there were roles and the participants frame their behavior as if their roles actually had clear existence, yet, closer observation of the process reveals that roles have constantly shifting boundaries and exist in varying degrees of concreteness.

Turner begins to clarify the process of role making (this term is used to give emphasis to the concept of the role being constructed during the course of the interaction rather than the misleading idea of playing out or enacting a predetermined role much as one would follow a script of a play) when he notes that every role must have

¹³Ibid., p. 21-22.

one or more other roles toward which it is oriented. (For example, the role of father makes no sense without the role of child.) A role is always in relationship to at least one other role.¹⁴ Stryker points out three other propositions which are basic to an understanding of the process of role making.¹⁵

First, to participate in social interaction, a person must take the role of other(s) implicated with him in the role relationship. Mead¹⁶ notes that animals do not communicate in such a manner that one puts another in the proper "attitude" toward external conditions. He also points out the difference between this kind of communication of general attitudes toward a part of the environment and the self-conscious communication of man by observing.

In the human group, on the other hand, there is not only this kind of communication (that of

¹⁴Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁵Stryker, Sheldon, "Conditions of Accurate Role-Taking: A Test of Mead's Theory," in Human Behavior and Social Processes, p. 42.

¹⁶Mead, op. cit., pp. 253-254.

general attitude) but also that in which the person who uses this gesture and so communicates assumes the attitude of the other individual as well as calling it out in the other. He is himself in the role of the other person whom he is so exciting and influencing. It is through taking this role of the other that he is able to come back on himself and so direct his own process of communication....The immediate effect of such role-taking lies in the control which the individual¹ is able to exercise over his own response.¹⁷

Second, Stryker offers the following illustration of the process of role taking, "To play a role, Person A must incorporate into his 'self' the role of Person B. A must anticipate or predict the response of B, since that response is the basis for A's future activity."¹⁸ This is one illustration of the tentative nature of playing a role; during the course of interaction the participants are constantly changing their role performance as a result of the continuous testing which comes about by taking the role of the other(s) and interpreting their anticipated responses to self role. The process is more one of taking the role

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 254.

¹⁸ Stryker, op. cit., p. 42.

of the other than it is of playing a role prescribed for self by the other.

The third and most important proposition of Stryker is that the ability to take the role or attitude of other is "...predicated upon a common universe of discourse."¹⁹ Rose explains a part of the concept of a universe of discourse when he writes,

A symbol is defined as a stimulus that has a learned meaning and value for people, and man's response to a symbol is in terms of its meaning and value rather than in terms of its physical stimulation of his sense organs... language does not simply symbolize a situation or object which is already there in advance; it makes possible the existence or the appearance of that situation or object, for it is a part of the mechanism whereby that situation or object is created.

Practically all the symbols a man learns he learns through communication (interaction) with other people, and therefore most symbols can be thought of as common or shared meanings and values.

...taking the role of the other (also called empathy)--as well as more spontaneous expression that happens to evoke in the other a feeling tone and body response which are present in himself. The learned symbols which require

¹⁹Ibid., p. 42.

role-taking for their communication Mead called significant symbols.

...in communication by significant symbols... the communicator may influence the behavior of the attender, but he cannot control it...symbolic communication is a social process, in which the communicator and the attender both contribute to the content of the communication.

...It is not the noise of the words or the physical movement of the gesture itself which communicates, but the meaning for which the noise or physical movement stands as a symbol. Both the communicator and the observer have had to learn the meaning of the words or gestures in order to communicate symbolically.

...Role-taking is involved in all communication by means of significant symbols; it means that the individual communicator imagines--evokes within himself--how the recipient of his communication understands that communication.²⁰

The significant gesture or symbol always presupposes for its significance the social process of experience and behavior in which it arises; or, as the logicians say, a universe of discourse is always implied as the context in terms of which, or as the field within which, significant gestures or symbols do in fact have significance. This universe

²⁰ Rose, A. M., "A Systematic Summary of Symbolic Interaction Theory," in Human Behavior and Social Processes, pp. 5-8.

of discourse is constituted by a group of individuals carrying on and participating in a common social process of experience and behavior, within which these gestures or symbols have the same or common meanings for all members of that group, whether they make them or address them to other individuals, or whether they overtly respond to them as made or addressed to them by other individuals. A universe of discourse is simply a system of common or social meanings.²¹

Stone made a major contribution to the understanding of the dynamic, tentative and changeable nature of the role-making process when he noted that "same" meanings of symbols to different people actually never result in identical responses by different participants to the same symbol. Because symbolic meanings only more or less coincide, one places his self in the role of the other or the attitude of the other and in so doing can anticipate the response of the other from other's perspective and in this way guarantee that one's own response will more or less coincide with the response of other.²² It is the taking the

²¹ Mead, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

²² Stone, G. P., "Appearance and the Self," in Human Behavior and Social Processes, pp. 88-89.

role of the other that gives meaning and order to symbolic communication.

This study relies heavily on the assumption that language--symbolic communication--is the most significant dimension of the interaction process. The findings and design of the investigation are based on the assumption that what teachers say about symbolic interactions will reveal their attachment to different Social Worlds and that the most meaningful portion of social interaction is communication with significant symbols. Mead's theory does support this assumption and in addition, offers additional insights into the role making process. Mead writes,

...the conscious or significant conversation of gestures is a much more adequate and effective mechanism of mutual adjustment within the social act--involving, as it does, the taking, by each of the individuals carrying it on, of the attitudes of the others toward himself--that is the unconscious or non-significant conversation of gestures.

When, in any given social act or situation, one individual indicates by a gesture to another individual what this other individual is to do, the first individual is conscious of the meaning of his own gesture--or the meaning

of his gesture appears in his own experiences-- in so far as he takes the attitude of the second individual toward that gesture, and tends to respond to it implicitly in the same way that the second individual responds to it explicitly....the individual's consciousness of the content and flow of meaning involved depends on his thus taking the attitude of the other toward his own gestures....Only in terms of gestures as significant symbols is the existence of mind or intelligence possible; for only in terms of gestures which are significant symbols can thinking--which is simply an internalized or implicit conversation of the individual with himself by means of such gestures--take place.

...the taking of the attitude of other toward one's self, or toward one's own behavior--also necessarily involves the genesis and existence at the same time of significant symbols, or significant gestures.

...the vocal gesture is one which does give one this capacity for answering to one's own stimulus as another would answer.

We must be constantly responding to the gesture we make if we are to carry on successful vocal conversation. The meaning of what we are saying is the tendency to respond to it.

...but where one significantly says something with his own vocal process he is saying it to himself as well as to everybody else within reach of his voice. It is only the vocal gesture that is fitted for this sort of communication, because it is only the vocal gesture to which one responds or tends to respond as another person tends to respond to it.

The conversation of gestures is not significant below the human level, because it is not conscious, that is, not self-conscious (though it is conscious in the sense of involving feelings and sensations). An animal as opposed to a human form, in indicating something to, or bringing out a meaning for, another form, is not at the same time indicating or bringing out the same thing or meaning to or for himself; for he has no mind, no thought, and hence there is no meaning here in the significant or self-conscious sense. A gesture is not significant when the response of another organism to it does not indicate to the organism making it what the other organism is responding to.²³

Mead has clearly pointed out the importance of language to the communication process and the major differentiation between animals, who can communicate only on a natural sign level and the human who can communicate with significant gestures--language.

In summarizing the process of role making, it should be noted that the enactment of a role is dependent upon communication with significant symbols between the person occupying the role and others. A role is not a predetermined set of behaviors which are simply released

²³Mead, op. cit., pp. 46-48; 66-69.

or acted out in response to certain stimuli; rather, the role is constantly being made up during the process of the interaction. The tentative and dynamic nature of the role is the result of man's unique capacity to communicate with significant symbols--language symbols which have more or less the same meanings to self and other(s). When Person A enacts his role by sending a communication to Person B, he must anticipate how Person B will interpret his communication. In order to empathize with Person B, Person A takes the role or attitude of Person B and anticipates how B will respond to the communication. Person A then interprets his anticipations of Person B's potential responses to himself and constructs his communication on the basis of his anticipations. Since the significant symbols do not have identical referents in the experiences of Persons A and B, Person A is able to evoke within himself with only partial accuracy how Person B will respond to the communication. Therefore, in taking the role of Person B, Person A is able to tentatively anticipate the response of Person B, he then sends a communication to

