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SOCIAL INTERACTION IN THE CLASSROOM: A PARTICIPANT  
OBSERVATION STUDY OF PUPILS' CLASSROOM LIFE

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 1977

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- Page 192, line 9 - in/spite.
- Page 243, line 18 - counselling.

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### Abstract

The thesis studies the classroom life of 15 secondary school girls. Broadly phenomenological in intent, its major objective is an analysis of classroom life as these girls saw it. After a review of other classroom research, the thesis follows a developmental pattern - three theoretical approaches within social phenomenology are introduced and observational and interview data are analysed from each perspective.

Firstly the symbolic interactionist model is developed and distinguished from other 'group' models of behaviour. It is distinctive because it sees man as active, interpreting and endowing his world with meaning. How men define situations is seen as the key to understanding why they act as they do. Classroom observations are analysed from this perspective and the fluidity and change in behaviour relating to changing definitions is exposed. Pupils who define classroom situation in the same way and take each other into account when deciding how to act are called an interaction set; some of the most common (cultural) interaction sets are recorded.

The second half of the thesis is concerned with grounding this essentially external 'second order' concept of the interaction set in the pupils' own conceptions of classroom life. Two different theoretical perspectives are developed to this end, both of them utilizing the study of language as their major research strategy. In the first, Schutz' sociology of knowledge is explored and by analysing interview talk, pupils' typifications of teachers and teaching situations are documented and from this information their relevance structures are assembled. But it is also pointed out that these relevance structures cannot explain pupils' actions in classrooms unless the observer himself engages in considerable interpretive work.

The final approach, ethnomethodology, criticised phenomenology for its 'idealised' approach to language and directly tackles the problem of relating 'talk' and action. In this model, language is seen as indexical and as a 'frame' through which the subjective world is actively created by participants. Pupils are portrayed as creating meanings for themselves depending on how they assess the situation 'this time' (the notion of 'situation' includes such features as the teacher's 'power' and the influence of 'leaders'). From this final perspective, the interaction set involves those pupils who 'for the moment' agree to construe events in a similar way, putting aside their individual interpretations.

## Chapter I

### An Introduction to the School, the Pupils and the Method of Classroom Ethnography

#### 1. The Problem

Several years ago, this research began with what was thought to be a fairly simple objective - to study the process by which pupils influence each other in their classroom behaviour. Pupils' influence on each other is of interest to both parents and teachers; a concern often expressed in phrases such as "He's getting into bad company" or "She's a good influence on the class". Of course a great many other students have tackled the same problem. There is a long line of studies of what is called 'pupil culture' in this country and in America, stretching back to Hollingshed in 1949.<sup>1</sup> But none of them seem to have moved up close enough to what actually happens day to day in the classroom. They are all concerned with presenting an abstract, remote and organised picture of pupils' classroom life. Even the more recent sophisticated participant observation studies such as those of Hargreaves and Lacey, do not let their observations or pupils speak for themselves. What the pupils say or what they do in class was always tightly edited to present a neat package - a culture, either pro or anti school. Pupils are not portrayed as being in control of their own behaviour. They are always seen as 'cultural dopes' responding to the external demands of their group.

By contrast, I was interested in moving up close to an individual group of pupils and documenting what their classroom life meant to them.

Whether or not they acted in a way that could be interpreted as consistent, it was important to begin by recording their reality and illustrating what they took into account in deciding how to behave. If a group of pupils all interpreted classroom situations in the same way, then it ought to be possible to show how that consistency was achieved and maintained through the process of face to face interaction.

It was with these vague objectives in mind, that I first entered Randall School as a teacher and participant observer. In fact, during the first two years the role was more one of participation than observation - working three and a half and sometimes four days a week made it almost impossible to do anything but accept the 'natural attitude' of a teacher. It was not until the third year, when I reduced my teaching to two mornings a week, that it was possible to be distant enough from the teaching role to begin more serious observation. The nature of the teacher/observer role and the method of classroom ethnography is discussed in more detail below. First it is necessary to provide some background to the study, by describing the school and the 15 girls in the class of 4G who were observed.

## 2. Randall School<sup>2</sup>

### (i) The neighbourhood and the situation of the School

Randall was an old secondary modern school, awaiting amalgamation with a nearby grammar to become a comprehensive. It was situated in one of London's traditional working class and immigrant 'reception' areas. For years, regular influxes of Irish, Southern Europeans and most recently West Indians had made up the somewhat mobile population

of the school. The headmistress was able to boast of having taught a child from virtually every country in the world during her time at the school. In recent years though, the new immigration restrictions had introduced an increasing stability to the population (For example, 12 of the girls studied were West Indian, and only one of them was born in this country, yet amongst the younger children in the school there was an increasing number of 'first generation' West Indians) Appendix 1. shows the ethnic make up of the school population, at the time of the study,

The neighbourhood that Randall School served was somewhat depressed. Despite some redevelopment and slum clearance since the war, much of the housing provision was inadequate. Although a fair proportion of the established English and Irish families had been rehoused in the new council property that had replaced one of London's most infamous slum areas, nearly all of the more recent immigrants lived in Victorian 'multiple occupancy' houses.<sup>3</sup>

Randall School occupied two sites approximately half a mile apart. Because of the distance between the buildings, they tended to be organised almost independently. 'Lower School' took pupils from the first to the third years, and they moved to 'Upper School' for the fourth, fifth and sixth years. The pupils seldom, if ever, moved between the buildings and only about 25% of the staff taught in both. Both sites had their own hierarchy but it was the head of the Upper School who had overall responsibility.

Because the pupils in this study were in their fourth year, the field work was carried out entirely in Upper School although the pupils do occasionally refer to events in the past that happened 'down Lower School'. By the time I commenced observing them in

January 1973 they had been in Upper School for one term. They had adjusted to its routines and organisation and knew the names of a considerable proportion of its staff. Randall Upper School was situated at the end of a narrow street leading off a busy main road. Beyond the school was a large empty space awaiting redevelopment by the Council. Opposite was a short row of Victorian four storey houses of the sort that had once made up the whole neighbourhood. Despite their dilapidated condition they had somehow escaped the fate of demolition that had overtaken their neighbours.

The school itself was a typical 1870 'Board school' of the sort which abound in London. It was solidly built with three stories, endless winding staircases, long dark corridors, opening out into large high well-lit classrooms.

The front of the building opened immediately onto the street, while at the rear there was a small yard, surrounded by a high wall and fence. Beyond the yard was the canal.

The general feeling of the building was depressing, but no more or less than any other building of the same age. It was well built even if somewhat out of date and was considered by many staff infinitely superior to the new buildings that were provided for the comprehensive which opened later in 1973 (there was even a campaign to move back there!)

(ii) The pupils

Although each group of pupils were assigned to a classroom, few children seemed to identify very closely with them. Books were supposed to be kept in lockers provided in the corridors, not in the classroom desks, and as a consequence, informal school life more often than not took place in the corridors, in one of the two halls

or in the yard. At almost any time of day, and especially between lessons, small groups of pupils were to be seen sitting on the stage, lounging on the hall window sills or playing football in the yard.

This lack of identity with any particular classroom in the school was heightend by the inadequate security. The pupils usually had to carry books with them for the whole day. Those lockers which did afford the luxury of a door seldom actually locked and only a fool would leave his books there. Consequently, teachers invariably collected textbooks at the end of each lesson and locked them securely away. Some of them even found it more convenient to collect the exercise books too.

This lack of security applied to coats as well. In the winter the students had to carry their coats and hats with them all day, as there was nowhere safe to leave them; they usually wore them all the time.

All of these factors contributed to a general aimlessness and disorganisation that characterised the lives of the lower ability children in particular. Five or even ten minutes out of each 35 minute period were taken up with movement, with pupils carrying books, coats and bags, moving along corridors and around interminable twisting staircases.

Because Randall was divided by the two sites, there were only about 450 pupils in each unit. It was therefore possible for the pupils and staff to get to know each other fairly well.

Within Upper School, the pupils were banded. The cohort of 120 fourth years was divided into three large bands according to academic ability. Each band was further divided into a number of 'tutorial groups' with a tutor and a separate classroom for registration.

Individual teaching groups were made up of pupils from throughout the band and were not necessarily the same as the tutorial groups.

At the top was 4A, divided into both arts and science groups. They followed a generally academic curriculum leading to C.S.E. in the fifth year. Below them was the largest band, 4ATC; the boys took a curriculum with a technical bias, while the girls of the group studied mainly commercial subjects. They too were working for C.S.E. in the fifth year.

The lowest band, 4G, was the smallest and was itself divided into three tutorial groups; 4G (Technical) for boys, 4G (Commerce) for girls and 4GSE, the separate remedial (Newsom) group. All of these pupils would be staying on until 16 as they were part of the first ROSLA<sup>4</sup> group, though they would not all be taking C.S.E.

Teaching groups for all 4G pupils were usually small (the average size was 16)<sup>5</sup> and were often made up of pupils from the three different tutorial groups. The 15 girls studied came from 4G and were selected because they spent a great deal of their classroom time together. Of the 15, 13 came from 4G (Commerce) and 3 were from 4GSE the remedial class.

The chart in Appendix 11 shows which subjects the girls took, and how often they were together.

The girls' backgrounds were not studied in any organised way. The focus of the research was on classroom behaviour and therefore we do not know the relationship between what is reported here, and traditional 'sociological' information such as father's occupation or number of brothers and sisters. These factors have therefore been deliberately left out.

For the West Indian girls, it is sufficient to say that like

most West Indians in London, their families were generally poor and they lived in overcrowded and inadequate housing. In addition, from a British point of view, their family backgrounds would probably seem somewhat confused. Several girls mentioned that they did not live with their fathers, at least one girl was living away from her family altogether, with an 'aunt', and yet another shared a house with an older sister. None of these factors was particularly startling for pupils in this school, and they were not researched in any detail. Rightly or wrongly this study has chosen to ignore family background and therefore it would seem misleading to include such factors on a post hoc basis.

Given the nature of the project, the fact that nearly all the girls studied had been in the same class before is of more interest. Of the total of 15 girls, Carol, Valerie, Diane, Jill, Linda, Monica, Dorothy and Francis were all in the same class for the two previous years, and out of that long established group Carol, Jill and Monica had been together since their primary school days. Out of the rest of the class, Anne, Angela and Mona had been together the previous year and in the first year had worked with some of the others too. Finally, Debbie, Julie, Jackie and Terrie had also been in a class together several times before.

Consequently, all these girls shared a long history together and had gained many common experiences. Those experiences were certainly relevant to the behaviour reported here, and they frequently refer to incidents that happened 'down Lower School'.

Further introduction of these girls is unnecessary at this point. Their behaviour in class and their discussions about school tell us more than can be summarised here. They speak for themselves

throughout the thesis.

(iii) The staff

Finally, the staff. Randall was to be amalgamated with the nearby grammar school in the summer of 1973. As the new school was not to be as large as the sum of its constituent members, Randall had been 'run down' over the previous few years. Slightly fewer children had been taken on each summer, and members of staff who were recruited from Summer 1971 onwards were not given any guarantee that they would be appointed to the new school. The headmaster left in Easter 1972 and was not replaced. The deputy head took over, and after a term's deliberation was granted the title 'Temporary Headmistress' by the governors. During the final year before amalgamation (when the research was carried out) permanent staff who left were not replaced at all, and 'Supply teachers' were sent in by the I.L.E.A. to fill in the gaps. Appendix 111 shows the breakdown of staff by qualification, experience and length of service. It shows an unusually high proportion of new teachers and non-permanent members of staff.

The consequence of the running down process was an increasing feeling of disorganisation, especially during the last two terms. Teachers were 'holding the fort' and 'going through the motions' but found it increasingly difficult to carry on normal teaching. The pupils inevitably suffered. As one I.L.E.A. official unfortunately put it in a talk to the staff, "I always feel that we have to sacrifice a whole generation of pupils for an amalgamation of this kind".

Many of the staff were as apprehensive of the amalgamation as the Grammar school teachers had shown themselves to be. Although

Randall did not have a record of high academic success, and did not enjoy the highest reputation in the neighbourhood, the staff generally considered that it fulfilled an important function in the area. They knew their pupils and cared for them. There was an easy-going, relaxed atmosphere throughout the school; pupils were often to be seen chatting casually to staff around the corridors and out of school hours in the neighbourhood. Because of its small classes and generally low academic standard, teachers had time and energy to devote to the less able. In a comprehensive struggling to make its way in an academic world, all of this might be lost. The average and below average pupils who made up the majority at Randall might be sacrificed to the demands of establishing an academic reputation. In the event, this did not prove to be the case, but it serves to illustrate the general style of the school and the role many teachers saw themselves fulfilling.

### 3. On Methodology

One of the outcomes of the upsurge of interest in phenomenological sociology has been an increased awareness of the interrelationship between theory and what has traditionally been called 'methodology'. In conventional sociology, the process by which the sociologist constructs an abstract view of the world, i.e. his theory, is seen as independent of the way he goes about testing his ideas. Constructing theories has been the province of theoreticians (Glaser and Strauss (1967) call them 'theoretical capitalists') and the term methodology has been confined to a description of the supposedly bias-free research techniques that an individual researcher uses to test these theories.<sup>6</sup>

Phenomenological sociologists wish to extend the term methodology to include all the processes which are used to present an abstract view of a situation. The picture of social reality presented is influenced by the process of observation, selection in interpretation. Yet theory does not just dictate how data is interpreted, it also influences what is observed and what is selected. In other words, theory has implications for what data is, and it therefore becomes just as much a research method as the questionnaire. It plays a crucial role in the development of the sociologists abstract account of the situation.

As Phillipson has said:

"Methodology therefore includes all the processes by which a theory is constructed. Unless we can reconstruct the process through which the observer moves from his observations of the social world to his conceptual description of it, we are in no position to evaluate that description". (Phillipson 1972:79).

The interrelationship between theory and data has thus become one of the main 'sub-plots' of this thesis. It is a theme that runs throughout and has been important in the form that the report has taken. There are three distinct theoretical chapters, and each is followed by an empirical chapter. These different theories can rightly be considered as separate methodologies, for each of them has different implications as to what data is, as well as how it might be interpreted.

The methodological discussion therefore runs throughout the thesis in the form of the debate about theory. Nevertheless in this introduction it is still necessary to describe the way in

which the data was generated. We need to look a little closer at the nature of the participant observation used and the process of classroom ethnography.

#### 4. Classroom Ethnography

##### (i) The guiding perspective

Even the most 'objective' and 'scientific' techniques for generating sociological data, such as a sentence completion tests, or sociogram questionnaires, impose a pattern on reality. Their apparent objectivity hides the theories of the social world on which they are based. Yet despite this they do remain objective in the sense that their bias is static, even though it is unacknowledged by most researchers. On the other hand, direct observation is less objective in the sense that its bias can change with each observer.<sup>7</sup> It is for this reason that participant observers have usually been more aware of their theoretical assumptions than other people. Constant criticism that they are unscientific and imprecise has thrown them back on to themselves to examine their own assumptions in a way that might be beneficial to more traditional researchers.

The underlying assumptions followed in this research were broadly phenomenological. This does not mean that at the outset, specific phenomenological questions were set to be answered; specific questions did not emerge until later in the analysis. One of the main objectives was to generate what Glaser and Strauss (1967) call 'grounded theory' - it was hoped to develop new understandings from the data itself. (For a fuller description of the development of grounded theory, see below).

Yet developing grounded theory involves an irresolvable conflict. Although it is inevitable that the researcher will have a guiding perspective and some awareness of foreshadowed problems which will allow him to pay attention to some events and ignore others, his objective is to have as open a mind as possible during observation. If a researcher is not aware of his own perspectives and interests, then he is probably deceiving himself about the 'objectivity' of his observations. If, on the other hand, he develops these interests into specific questions, then he will simply be accused of observing to prove his theories.

Smith and Goeffrey (1968) in their excellent book, quote Malinowski on this problem:

"Good training in theory and acquaintance with its latest results is not identical with being burdened with 'preconceived ideas' . . . Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and those problems are first revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies" (Malinowski, 1922: 8-9).

Unfortunately, in practice, the distinction between foreshadowed problems and preconceived ideas is not always that clear.

To return to the point, phenomenology and an interest in how pupils influenced each other, provided the guiding perspective during observation. They influenced what was seen and what was ignored, though hopefully in not too specific a way.

Phenomenology is the attempt to describe the phenomena of consciousness and to show how they are built up or constituted.

The major imperative for a phenomenologically informed sociology is therefore to get back to the things of consciousness themselves; it must treat as data those things of which the actors are aware. The student must begin by trying to describe the actors' realities, for the lived in 'common sense' world is the starting point for any social scientific explanation. He then has to go on and ask how that reality is constructed.

This concern for describing the world as it was experienced and lived by the pupils themselves, formed a major part of the guiding perspective that was used during observation. It was a dissatisfaction with other explanations of how pupil's classroom behaviour was accomplished that led to this concern for their own experience of school.

With this apparently simple objective in mind, classrooms were observed and pupils interviewed in groups and by themselves. There was a naive assumption that if pupils were observed carefully, without too many preconceived ideas, it would be possible to find out 'what it all meant' to them. Asking pupils themselves in interviews to describe what happened to them was a way of cross-checking those observations.

Fortunately, it is perhaps a lot easier to be a bad sociologist than a bad observer. Data are more sensitive to uncritical theoretical interpretation when one is not aware of what has been selected or why, than to actual bad observation. It was perhaps naive to approach the school with the assumption that just by looking it would be possible to describe the classroom reality of pupils. But it had the advantage of providing a wide variety of different sorts of information which could be analysed more carefully later. At the end

of the period of observation, several different types of information had been generated. There were transcripts of tape recorded interviews with groups and individual girls, written transcripts of classroom conversations, observation and interpretation of teacher and pupil behaviour as well as records of 'non-verbal' behaviour such as seating arrangements and movement around the classroom.

This open (and perhaps uncritical) approach to observation proved vitally useful later on. The main process of analysis involved sharpening the 'guiding perspective' by looking in more detail at specific schools of thought within phenomenology, each having different implications for what constituted data. The symbolic interactionist approach demanded that one document the process of interpretation and negotiation amongst the pupils about how to behave. The use of a Schutzian perspective involved asking questions about how the reality that pupils seemed to work with was socially constructed. Finally, the last section led to the searching for information about the power of pupils and teachers to influence each other's ideas of reality. There was a continual interplay between the theory and the data, each theory suggesting different questions to be pursued, but each leaving problems unresolved. It was because the body of information accumulated during observation was not too specific that these very different questions could be pursued without recourse to further observation. (A more detailed account of how grounded theory was developed in this thesis is provided in Appendix V).

(ii) The teacher as observer

Most school participant observers have made some effort to describe the role that they adopted in carrying out their observations,

yet nearly all of them have remained essentially 'external' observers. There are exceptions of course, for example Hargreaves (1967) and Hamilton, D. (1973) both of whom taught for some time in the schools they studied. Yet even with these two, teaching was always subsidiary to their observation role - it was a way for them to establish their credibility amongst the staff.

Although I took up teaching with the sole objective of gaining access to a school for the purpose of observation, it became a major preoccupation in itself for two years. I not only became a teacher in the eyes of the staff and pupils but in my own eyes too, and it was not until I was able to reduce the teaching to two mornings a week that it was possible for the observational role to re-emerge. Yet even when my main preoccupation was observing, I was still seen as a teacher by most of the staff and pupils.

Observing as a teacher had both advantages and disadvantages in developing relationships with staff and pupils. As far as the staff were concerned I was already an established colleague and in many cases a friend. It was therefore fairly easy to gain access to a great many classrooms. As a teacher, my colleagues took it for granted that I already shared much of their knowledge about 'these types of kids' (i.e. they were difficult). After a little uneasiness most of them did not mind me witnessing scenes of disorder and disruption - they were probably aware that I had just as much difficulty as they did with these children, it was a mutual problem that we all faced together. Because it was such a difficult school, an observer who did not have experience of teaching at Randall might have found it far more of a problem to gain entry to classrooms and would have had to devote a great deal of time and energy to establishing and

maintaining relationships with the staff. As a teacher I could devote most of my energy to developing rapport with the pupils.<sup>8</sup>

The main disadvantage of being a participant over a long period of time is that to behave normally one has to 'take sides'. As a young teacher (especially a teacher of social studies) mixing with other young teachers I inevitably became alienated from particular members of the staff. Certain teachers' classrooms were not open to me, neither were they willing to discuss pupils' behaviour or to fill in questionnaires. This factor had some influence on the group I chose to work closely with - 4G. They had teachers who were all cooperative.

In gaining access to classrooms, being a teacher was generally an advantage, but in developing rapport with the pupils it was obvious that it might be a hindrance. It therefore became necessary to drop or at least change that role as far as the pupils were concerned.

In discussing his role in the eyes of the pupils, Hamilton, D. (1973) made an interesting point. He noted that in three of the classes that he had been observing, the children made no comment when he began teaching them. As far as they were concerned, he was essentially similar to a teacher, even though he did sit at the back of the class and write down what they did. However, in the fourth class he found considerable difficulty in establishing his authority when he came to start teaching. During his period of observation with them, their teacher had often left the room. They soon became aware that Hamilton would not discipline them or report them if they misbehaved. They had discovered that he was different from a teacher because he implicitly sanctioned non-classroom-like behaviour.

My relationship with 4G developed on much the same lines as Hamilton's unusual group. Although I was a teacher in the school, I had never taught any of these girls. Because they misbehaved so often, they quickly became aware that I was not an ordinary teacher - I did not report them, get them into trouble, or make any apparent criticism of what they did. Of course to start with they continually monitored my every move<sup>9</sup>, but after a very short while it became apparent that I could be trusted. In their eyes I might have been a teacher, but I was certainly an unusual one. Almost fortuitously, by being so disruptive, they had become aware of the nature of my role as an observer as distinct from a teacher. A more docile group might have taken far longer to come to this realisation.<sup>10</sup>

(iii) The field notes

Basically two kinds of records were obtained during the research; firstly, observation notes made during the lessons themselves and written up more fully at the end of the day; secondly, transcripts of tape recorded interviews carried out immediately after the observation work was complete.

The observations were carried out during the spring and summer terms of 1973. I stayed with the girls for a morning or an afternoon at a time, moving from room to room as they changed lessons. In this way they were observed with each of their different teachers in about 100 lessons in all.<sup>11</sup> It was also possible to talk to them and note what they said and did between classes and before the teacher arrived. As was implied in the discussion of the 'guiding perspective', the main objective was to record their perception of the classroom and how they influenced each other in what they said

and did. Special attention was therefore paid to informal communication amongst themselves, both verbal and nonverbal, their seating arrangements, and their movement around the class. The pupils' communication with the teacher, their involvement with the task at hand and incidents of indiscipline or hard work were also noted as an indication of their apparent attitude to particular events. All of these rather external and interpretive observations were then cross checked during several half hour interviews with each of the girls. They were all interviewed at least once in small groups of 2 or 3 (several girls enjoyed talking so much that they demanded another interview later) and then 10 of them were interviewed individually as well. The interviews were designed to follow up the observations already made. For example, they were asked about teachers, subjects, discipline, misbehaviour, etc. The objective was always to get them to describe specific events in some detail to illustrate their point of view. Not only did they find this much easier than talking in more abstract terms but it also provided a much 'richer' source of data than simple summarised statements.

(iv) Analysing the field notes

In analysing the field notes the objectives and methods suggested by Glaser and Strauss's (1967) book have been closely followed. Their objective is to discover theory from the data itself - what they call 'grounded theory'. They call their technique for achieving this the 'constant comparative method'.

On page one of their book "The Discovery of Grounded Theory", they state:

"We believe that the discovery of theory from data . . . is a major task confronting sociologists today, for as we shall try to show, such a theory fits empirical situations and is understandable to sociologists and laymen alike. Most important it works - provides us with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications".

They argue that previous books on the methods of social research have focused mainly on how to verify theories and consequently much sociology has become concerned only with verification rather than with theory development. The concepts and hypotheses to be tested and how these are developed is usually left largely to the individual researcher. He may 'logically deduce' his hypotheses from 'grand theories' or he may intuitively guess at what he considers relevant from what he 'knows' about the situation he is researching. But apart from a brief excursion for his pilot study, this all important preliminary process is carried out away from the 'real world' of his research field. Data is collected to prove or disprove theories which have been established in isolation, and there is no attempt to make those theories responsive to the real world they are supposed to represent.<sup>12</sup>

Glaser and Strauss' 'constant comparative' method is an attempt to provide guide lines whereby researchers may move their theory building closer to the data they are trying to study. The researcher's first task is to generate conceptual categories from the observational data itself. Glaser and Strauss give the example of nurses judging patients in terms of 'social loss' when they are dying.

"the category social loss can be generated from either the observation that V.I.Ps receive special care in intensive

care units, or that lower class Negroes often are neglected on city hospital emergency wards" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:24)

In order to elaborate this concept of 'social loss' the researcher would 'constantly compare' these examples with others from his data. For example, he might be interested in the importance of age on how nurses assess social loss. He would then compare examples of such instances until he had 'saturated' the category with enough examples to satisfactorily explore its full nature.

In this way, the theoretical concept 'social loss' has grown from the data itself. As Glaser and Strauss say, it is relevant to both the sociologist and the practitioner.

The weak point about Glaser and Strauss' approach is that they are naive about the relationship between theory and data. They suggest that the researcher should enter the field with as few preconceptions as possible and continually learn and revise his ideas as he goes along:

"To be sure, one goes and studies an area with a particular sociological perspective and with a focus, a general question in mind. But one can (and we believe should) also study an area without any preconceived theory that dictates prior to the research 'relevancies' in concepts and hypotheses. Indeed, it is presumptuous to assume that one begins to know the relevant categories until the 'first days in the field' at least are over" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:33-34).

In this quotation, one can see that there is a naive assumption that the data will 'speak for themselves' if one looks hard enough,

and categories such as 'social loss' will emerge on their own.

In a somewhat similar vein, Becker (1958) suggests that the first task when approaching observational data is the selection and definition of "problems, concepts and indices". Yet like Glaser and Strauss, he sees this selection process as unproblematic. Neither of them seem sufficiently aware of the impact of theory on what emerge as problems, concepts or indices.

Whereas during the period of observation it was sufficient to operate with only a vague notion of a 'guiding perspective', when analysing the data it is essential to become much more precise in the theory that we use. That theory dictates which categories emerge in the analysis and what questions are to be asked. A very thorough consideration of our own position therefore becomes an integral part of the process of analysis. That theory will suggest what sorts of problems, concepts and indices we are interested in. Specific examples of them in the field notes can then be sought and 'constantly compared' until a grounded theory emerges.

Because a single piece of observational data can be interpreted in a great many different ways depending on one's perspective, it seems that it is highly unsuitable for theory testing. In these circumstances, Glaser and Strauss' attempt to use such data for theory building seems more appropriate. But observational data need careful handling even when theory building. Unless the perspective we use to interpret the data is made available for criticism and discussion, it will not be possible to see how the researcher moved from his observations of the world to his conceptual description of it. Without a clear theoretical framework we will be in no position to evaluate the usefulness of

that description.

This then, was the procedure that was followed in this research, and it has formed the framework of this report. Different theoretical perspectives were developed, each of which had implications for what sort of concepts were relevant in analysing classroom events; the approaches are reported in Chapters III, V and VII. Each theory suggested different questions to be pursued and by a process of constant comparison allowed for the development of different grounded theories. These different 'treatments' of the data are reported in Chapters IV, VI and VIII.

The impetus for movement between one theory and another came from comparing what was 'discovered' by applying each approach with what had been observed as a natural participant. The observation notes thus took on a dual function. They not only provided a major resource for analysis, but they also provided a base line with which to continually compare the grounded theory that was emerging. Theories are naturally selective, and by referring to the notes it became obvious where questions were left unanswered. This sort of comparison provided the impetus to carry out further theoretical work and develop another set of questions. In this way there was an ongoing dialogue between the theory and the data; each different approach building on the insights and inadequacies of the other. This accounts for the developmental nature of the thesis.

Finally, a brief word about the different theoretical approaches used. It has already been mentioned that the overriding guiding perspective has been broadly phenomenological, and, in looking to theory, that approach has become sharpened specifically

into symbolic interactionism and Schutz's sociology of knowledge. The nature of these two quite different approaches is explored and compared in Chapters III and V respectively. As they are developed in this analysis, both direct themselves to the phenomena of consciousness, though in quite different ways and with different implications for substantive research.<sup>13</sup>

The final approach grew out of a dissatisfaction with the explanatory value of the first two (they did not explain all that could be seen as an observer using the 'natural attitude' of common sense). It was apparent that however much the pupils might agree about the meaning of events when describing classroom situations, they frequently construed those events in quite different ways when they were in those classrooms.

This was seen as a problem inherent in Schutz's conception of language but a solution to this problem came with the development of an ethnomethodological approach. From this perspective the language actors use to describe their world is seen as 'open' and 'flexible' - it can take on new meanings depending on how it is interpreted 'this time' and in 'this situation'. An important constituent of the 'situation' is the 'power' of the teachers and the influence of 'leaders' both of which can influence the reality that the pupils create for themselves.

Notes for Chapter I

1. As well as Hollingshed (1949) and Coleman's (1961) American studies, see Sugarman (1966, 1967 and 1968), Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) for work in British schools.
2. The name Randall school is of course a pseudonym as are the names of all of the pupils and staff mentioned in this thesis.
3. Hood et al. (1970) in a study of the particular area that Randall served, showed that the density of the population rose to 100 per acre. They quote the 1961 census to show not only that the area had one of the highest multiple occupancy rates in London, but that in one third of such households, there were six or more members.
4. ROSLA is the common abbreviation for the raising of the school leaving age which came into effect in 1972. This group of girls were in the first year that had to remain at school until they were 16.
5. The ILEA had a policy of providing a better staff/pupil ratio in schools with a high immigrant population. Randall chose to allocate these extra teachers to the lower ability groups and this explains the unusually small class sizes.
6. Of course, no technique is bias free. For example, sociometric questionnaires have been used by many students of 'school culture' yet they certainly are not bias free. They were developed by Moreno in response to a theoretical assumption that they were such 'things' as groups which existed in some externally real way. Using sociometric questionnaires thus imposes a structure on reality and makes such groups emerge in the mind of the researcher if nowhere else.

7. Chapter II which is a review of classroom observational research illustrates some of these possible biases.

8. There was only one time when I found it necessary to go out of my way to maintain my relationship with a teacher and it was unusual enough for me to write it down in my field notes. The occasion was when a teacher hit a child in a fit of temper. In the field notes I put:

"I feel worried about my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ she was obviously embarrassed about having lost her temper so much and hitting Julie. Valerie noticed her embarrassment too. She said, 'Look she's gone all red'. I talked to the teacher for a little while at the end of the lesson about how difficult the class was and how they seemed in a difficult mood . . she seemed reassured".

9. The most amusing example occurred in an art lesson during my second week of observation

"At the end of the lesson, Carol and Jean (a girl from a different class) became aware that I am writing down what they are doing. Every time they do something they come and see if I have written it down. The teacher is out of the room for a moment and they both begin fighting and rolling on the floor. They continually look up at me watching them. When the teacher comes back Carol gets up and says to Diane 'Did he write that down?' Diane says 'Yes'. They both laugh".

10. The following year I continued to teach part-time at Randall and had the misfortune to be assigned to this group for one lesson a week. Unlike Hamilton, I never did manage to regain my authority!

11. At first sight, recording 100 lessons may not seem very much, yet even this number yielded a plethora of data. As an example of the sort of 'richness' that observational data can give, Walker (1971) notes that B.O. Smith and his colleagues have used tape recordings of just 85 lessons as the basis of three research reports and several Ph.D. theses, the same material being continually subject to reanalysis.

12. Blumer (1953) makes an essentially similar point when he says "In terms of both origin and use, social theory seems in general not to be geared to its empirical world" (4). Blumer's criticisms of theory will be dealt with more fully in Chapter III.

13. The term symbolic interactionism in fact covers a multitude of different approaches; this thesis has concentrated only on those which are broadly phenomenological in intent. For a comparison of different approaches within symbolic interactionism, see Meltzer and Petras (1967).

## Chapter II

### Classroom Research - A Review of the Field

#### 1. Introduction

For many years there has been a growing uneasiness within education about the continued usefulness of the traditional approaches to research. Attempts to understand classrooms through learning theory, personality and attitude tests, or clinical psychology have failed to give much insight into the process of teaching and learning. Yet interestingly enough, apart from anthropologists, very few researchers have actually looked at classrooms directly until recently. Traditional researchers may have failed to grasp the reality of classroom events, precisely because of their unwillingness to move up close to them and study them as they are.

More recently though, an increasing number of people have been penetrating the private domain of the classroom. Stimulated by such popular writers as John Holt, there has been a move to take a new look at teaching and learning. Increasingly people are following Phillip Jackson's advice given in 1968:

"A newlook at teaching, if there is to be one requires us to move up close to the phenomena of the teacher's world" (159)<sup>1</sup>

Within this recently established field of classroom observation, there are two distinct camps. Firstly, there are those who are concerned with 'systematic observation'; an approach with its roots in the traditions of American social psychology. Researchers use

an observational category system to code classroom behaviour into small scale units suitable for tabulation and computation (e.g. teacher asks question, pupil replies). As with most quantitative research the objective of analysing classrooms in this way is to produce knowledge at high levels of abstraction and predictive reliability. Workers such as Flanders, the most famous in the field of systematic observation, claim that they are searching for the 'laws' of teaching.

Systematic observation is the most widely used form of classroom research today, it therefore deserves some attention in this review. Yet the abstract and generalised knowledge that this type of research produces can often be as irrelevant to the practising teacher as traditional research based on learning theory. For as Walker (1974) has pointed out, if the teacher wants to make use of these 'laws' of teaching he has to generalise from that abstract knowledge back to his own specific case.<sup>2</sup>

In the classroom, he may consider the type of findings provided by such research as largely irrelevant to his specific questions. (For example, a teacher interested in asking why he ends up doing all the talking when he is teaching 4A, will find little insight in Flanders' 'rule' that says that teachers talk two thirds of the time in most classrooms). As Walker says, the teacher is "presented with trends and patterns, but never judgements in particular cases" (Walker, 1974: 2). Consequently the practising teacher ignores such findings and turns to conventional 'wisdom' and 'lore' that comes from past experience (e.g. 4A are just lazy).

Walker himself sees that the solution to this paradox is provided in an alternative methodology which he calls 'case study', and it is

this which forms the other main approach to classroom research. The objective is to reach understandings through detailed study of particular instances. By exploring one situation in detail, it is possible for the researcher to provide other people with 'vicarious' experience, and thus build up and systematise practitioner's conventional wisdom. The knowledge that will come out of such case studies will therefore be directly relevant to the teacher and the pupil, for it will be grounded in specific situations.

Hamilton and Delamont (1974) explain the advantages quite well:

"Despite their diversity, individual classrooms share many characteristics. Through the detailed study of one particular context, it is still possible to clarify relationships, pinpoint critical processes and identify common phenomena" (Hamilton and Delamont, 1974:8)

They go on to say that out of such studies it is possible to produce abstract summaries and general concepts which may be found to be illuminating in other settings. "Case studies, therefore, are not necessarily limited in scope. Indeed, unlike interaction analysis they can acknowledge both the particulars and universals of classroom life" (Hamilton and Delamont, 1974: 8)

Producing case studies of this detail obviously involves quite different research strategies from those applied in the systematic school. Substituting a depth analysis in one case for the large numbers covered in traditional methodology, usually involves the researcher in carrying out some sort of participant observation. He may only visit the school for a day, or alternatively he might work there for a year or more.

In order to build up an adequate description of the particular

setting, the participant observer can use a number of alternative strategies. He may compile field notes of what he observes, he may tape record or film classes, he may use both formal and informal interviews; he may administer questionnaires; he may research official documents. Whatever his particular research strategy, his objective is to maintain a holistic approach, describing events in some detail, rather than reducing them to some preordained category system. Theoretically at least, it is only slowly that he reduces his perspective to come to focus on one particular feature of the setting.

This alternative approach to the classroom, (for which the terms 'ethnography' and 'direct observation' will be used interchangeably) contain many different approaches. Educationalists using this method have tackled a vast variety of problems from many different theoretical perspectives. The range stretches from anthropologists, who have looked at the role of education in maintaining and transmitting national culture, to ethnomethodologists examining how a class goes about interpreting a teacher's joke.

Despite their diversity, there is an important central theme around which these different enquiries can be compared. This is the relationship between the researcher's theory and the data gathered. As was pointed out in the introduction, all research, but direct observation in particular, demands that decisions should be made about what data should be collected and even what data is. How this problem is treated becomes a central theme in distinguishing between ethnographies.

Some researchers seem unaware of the impact of theory on what they have chosen to observe, whilst others select data to back up

or prove an established theory. However, interesting their results may be, neither approach is very satisfactory. Researchers who do not articulate a theoretical position, and who present their observations as having a self-evident validity, are more often than not naively unaware of their own selectivity. On the other hand, choosing data to 'prove' an established theory often does no more than show how observations can be interpreted in as many ways as one wishes.

The first two groups of ethnographies looked at in this review will therefore be (a) those where no theoretical position is articulated and (b) those where the observational work appears to have been simply selected to substantiate one particular theory.

If studies are to be criticised for having both too much or too little theory one might reasonably ask what the alternative is. It is of course, to use the observational data to develop 'grounded theory'. Almost by definition those who take up direct observational work hope to learn and modify theory through participating in the situation, but this does not mean that they develop grounded theory in the way that Glaser and Strauss advocate. That demands a particularly 'reflexive', self aware approach with the particular 'mix' of common sense, observation and theory involved in the analysis clearly laid out. The majority of ethnographic work therefore falls into a central category between the extremes of too much or too little theory - the researchers do indeed learn from observation but they have not made the process of theory development explicit. Because of this omission it is often not possible to see how much the researcher has 'learned' from his work in the field and how much is simply apt illustration of hypothetically deduced theories.

In order to distinguish amongst this large group of ethnographies they will be examined in terms of the 'guiding perspectives' used to select and interpret the data. As was pointed out in the last chapter, even a wholehearted commitment to developing grounded theory does not provide an escape from the problems of theory. However hard the researcher tries it is impossible for him to enter the field without any preconceived ideas or foreshadowed problems. Every researcher, whether he knows it or not will have some 'guiding perspective' which will encourage him to observe some things and ignore others. As Walker (1971) has said:

"... the activities to be observed in classrooms are as complex as we let them seem. Just how complex we need to let such activities appear requires rather delicate judgement" (120)

Even if the researcher does not have an explicit theory to test, it is still he who decides how 'complex' his observations will be; it is he who decides what to observe. If this is the case, then obviously the 'guiding perspective' used becomes a critical consideration.

Once again, different researchers have used different guiding perspectives in the generation of their grounded theories. It is not possible, in a few lines, to point out which is the 'right' perspective - that is a question that is pursued throughout this thesis. It is possible though, to point in a general direction. It is held as axiomatic that the researcher should grapple with the problem of meaning; he should take as his starting point the normative order of society. The idea of the normative order involves taking into account the point of view of the actor himself and includes his categories for classifying the social and physical world; his values towards such categories; and finally the rules and norms relating to actions in situations thus categorised. Such an approach stands in opposition to a study of the 'factual' order of a society where an external 'scientific' observer constructs accounts of

order and organisation without reference to the actor's point of view.

Throughout this report interaction is presented as a sensitive, interpretative and changing process. It is therefore not always possible for the external observer to 'know' the meaning of events or actions from the actor's point of view. What may appear as obvious to him may have an entirely different meaning to the people he is studying. His guiding perspective should therefore lead him to search for data which will throw light on the interpretative processes of his subjects. His theory should encourage him as far as possible to take the role of the actor, for as Blumer has said:

"To try to catch the interpretative process by remaining aloof as a so-called 'objective' observer, refusing to take the role of the acting unit, is to risk the worst form of subjectivism - the objective observer is likely to fill in the process of interpretation with his own surmises in place of catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting units which uses it"

(Blumer 1962: 188)

This 'filling in' of the process of interpretation can be seen at the end of many research reports where the researcher uses his own common sense to 'explain' the findings that he has come up with - it is never considered whether or not these bear any relationship to the actors' common sense interpretations.

The objective in looking at these studies is therefore to develop an argument for a certain approach to sociological research; to build up a picture of an 'ideal' which this thesis will necessarily fulfil only in part. That ideal involves developing grounded theory within a clear framework where the impact of theory on what is recorded and how it is interpreted is made clear. Precisely what that theoretical framework

should be one of the main themes of this thesis.

## 2. Systematic Observation

### (i) The method

As a method of classroom observation, the systematic approach is almost by definition the farthest from the criteria of good research established in the introduction to this chapter. There is no attempt to generate theory from the observations themselves, the pupils and teachers perceptions of the classroom are not considered, and the objective is to establish knowledge at high levels of abstraction with predictive reliability. Yet as systematic observation is the most active field of classroom research in this country and in America, it demands some attention.

In an introduction to a review of some 50 observational systems, Rosenshine (1971) describes this type of research as usually including four steps:

- a) developing an observational instrument
- b) using the instrument to record classroom behaviour
- c) ranking classrooms according to any measure of student achievement
- d) comparing teaching strategies to the different achievement scores.

As a way of presenting the method of systematic observation, it will be useful to look at these four steps in more detail.

#### a) Observational instruments

It would be virtually impossible to review all the instruments that are available for analysing classrooms. Rosenshine looked at 50 in 1971, and Simon and Boyer reviewed 79 such systems in 1967

and 1970.<sup>3</sup> But these reviews only examined the best known instruments at the time and are now very obviously out of date. It appears that today there are many hundreds of systems that a researcher might choose from, each examining different aspects of the classroom environment (though the usual practise is for each researcher to devise a new category system of his own).<sup>4</sup>

In the field of systematic observation, the most dominant influence has been that of Ned Flanders and his own term, (interaction analysis) is often used as an alternative name for the approach. Flanders' own research instrument FIAC has been widely used for informative and critical purposes and it is reproduced here in Figure I.

Figure II shows another observational instrument which has both similarities and differences from FIAC. Spaulding's Coping Analysis Schedule for Educational Settings (CASES) is reviewed in Simon and Boyer's anthology and is one of the two instruments Spaulding has used for analysing classrooms. It is reproduced here, firstly because it is one of the few category systems in Simon and Boyer's review that concentrates on pupil behaviour (virtually all the others concentrate on the teacher) and is therefore more directly related to the theme of this thesis than Flanders' scheme. The second reason for presenting it is that it will later be used to illustrate difficulties with Flanders' work and with systematic observation in general.<sup>5</sup>

Figure I

Categories for Flanders' System of Interaction Analysis

Teacher Talk	Indirect Influence	1. Accepts feeling 2. Praises or encourages 3. Accepts or uses ideas of student 4. Asks questions
	Direct Influence	5. Lecturing 6. Giving directions 7. Criticising or justifying authority
Student Talk		8. Student talk - response 9. Student talk - initiation 10. Silence and confusion

(Adapted from Simon and Boyer (1967) Summary Volume p.5-3)

Figure II

Categories for Spaulding's Coping Analysis Schedule  
for Educational Settings

1. Aggressive Behaviour
2. Negative (Inappropriate) Attention-Getting Behaviour
3. Manipulating and Directing Others
4. Resisting Authority
5. Self-Directed Activity
6. Paying Rapt Attention
7. Sharing and Helping
8. Social Interaction
9. Seeking Support, Assistance and Information
10. Following Directions Passively and Submissively
11. Observing Passively
12. Responding to Internal Stimuli
13. Physical Withdrawal or Avoidance

(Adapted from Simon and Boyer (1967) Summary Volume p. 21-3)

b) Using the instrument

With all systematic observations, the observer sits in the classroom and at preordained intervals (with FIAC it is every three seconds) assigns the behaviour he sees to a specific category. The Flanders' system concentrates on the teacher's talk, and the observer watches him interact with individuals or with the class as a whole. With Spaulding's CASES, the observer records the non-verbal activity of individual pupils one after another. In this way, if the observer noted that a pupil was refusing to do what he was told, he would assign this action to category 4 "Resists Authority"; if the pupil was watching the teacher, and listening intently to what was being said, it would be assigned to category 6 "Paying Rapt Attention".

Similarly, if the researcher was using the Flanders' system and the teacher was lecturing, it would be classified to category 5, and if there was silence in the room, it would be coded as category 10.

In other words a trained observer breaks down a 'live' situation into preordained categories and that data is then reassembled in such a way so as to allow particular conclusions to be drawn from it. Flanders was concerned with a teacher's 'flexibility' or his 'directness' or 'indirectness'. Other researchers have had different objectives, but the procedure remains the same: live events are coded to a limited number of categories chosen by the researcher.

It is argued by systematic researchers that the use of a category system makes the observer's work more 'objective' and therefore more 'scientific'.<sup>6</sup> For example, Flanders says:

"Too often an observer's preconceptions of what he thinks should happen creates a screen through which the perception of some behaviours can pass, and are noticed and other behaviours can not pass and are ignored. Interaction analysis is an observational procedure designed to minimize these difficulties, permit a systematic record of spontaneous acts and scrutinize the process of instruction by taking into account each small bit of interaction" (Flanders, 1965:1)

It is hoped that by determining how the observer should classify the stream of events that he sees, the problem of 'subjectivity' can be overcome. This is the objective, but as we will see below, life is not that simple!

Once a number of classrooms have been analysed in this 'objective' way the usual procedure is to compare them on certain chosen dimensions.

#### c) Ranking classrooms

All the 50 observational systems reviewed by Rosenshine (1971) compared teacher behaviour with one or more measures of student achievement; the most usual procedure is to give a simple test of what has been taught in the lesson. By this technique, it is supposed to be possible to evaluate different teaching strategies that the observational schedule has identified. Flanders' FIAC in common with most systematic researches uses this simple learning test method of evaluation, but this is by no means the only way of ranking classrooms.

As previously noted, Spauldings' CASES is one of two schedules used in studying a particular classroom. CASES is used with STARS

(the Spaulding Teacher Activity Rating System) which, as its name implies, looks at teaching strategies in much the same way as Flanders' work does. CASES therefore is used to record pupils' reactions to different teaching strategies. In this way, it takes the place of the pre- and post-test procedures used by other researchers, and gives feedback on which teacher strategies are 'best' for controlling the class.

d) Comparing teaching strategies

As Rosenshine points out, the objective of this systematic procedure is to assess which teacher behaviours are related to what outcomes. Flanders considers that he is searching for the 'laws' of teaching.

"systematic analysis may help to discover laws that explain varieties that exist within the chain of classroom events, giving special attention to the actions of the teacher. Such laws would express relationships between the teachers' behaviour and the nature of classroom interaction. In the long run, such knowledge should help to explain differences in educational outcomes that are associated with teaching" (Flanders, 1970: 1)

Yet as Simon and Boyer have acknowledged, classroom interaction is a complex process, and no one category system measures all the important aspects of teacher pupil interaction. "Each system represents those dimensions which are important to the person who created the system" (Simon and Boyer, 1967: VI, 1). Flanders has therefore examined only one area of the 'laws of teaching'. He has been concerned with the relative importance of 'direct' and

'indirect' teaching strategies, Spaulding's work has revolved around essentially similar dimensions but he has called these 'integrative' and 'dominative' techniques of classroom management.

Flanders defines 'direct' teacher influence as being represented by statements where the teacher is restricting freedom of action by focusing attention on a problem, interjecting teacher authority, or both. Indirect techniques are where the teacher tries to expand a student's freedom of action by encouraging his verbal participation and initiative. Examples of direct teaching would include lecturing, giving directions and criticising etc., whilst examples of the indirect approach would be asking questions and praising or encouraging pupil responses.

In other words, it is by recording these events in the classroom, that Flanders has compared different teaching techniques and related these findings to differences in pupil achievement as measured on tests.

According to Flanders the most 'effective' teachers are those who are 'flexible' that is they are able to change between being 'direct' and 'indirect' to meet specific teaching needs. 'Flexible' teachers are able to be 'indirect' when the goals of the lesson are unclear or when new material is introduced, and are 'direct' once those goals have been established.

Flanders conclusions that 'flexible' teachers are the most effective in producing learning illustrates the kind of results that this type of research produces. He has observed teachers using a schedule designed to highlight direct and indirect teaching strategies and compared his results with a test of pupil performance. Thus the end result of his work is a number of prescriptive statements

about what constitutes 'good' and 'bad' teaching. As he says in his introduction to his latest book 'This book is about effective teaching' (Flanders, 1970:3).

Most systematic observers have a similar objective - they want to "make good teachers" - and this objective is reflected in the popularity of this research amongst those concerned with teacher training.

#### Difficulties with systematic observation

Delamont (1973) has rightly pointed out that most criticism of systematic observation has concentrated on the work of Flanders: so much so that she says he has become a 'stalking horse' for the opponents of this form of research (see for example Walker 1971 and 1972, Delamont 1973 and Hamilton and Delamont 1974).

One of the consequences of this concentration on Flanders' work is that in reading though these reviews it is often impossible to distinguish between criticisms directed at Flanders in particular and difficulties with systematic observation in general. There are a great many observational systems now in use - many it is true to follow the Flanders' tradition, using broadly similar categories and stemming from the same theoretical heritage - but other authors, equally systematic, have developed quite different approaches. For example, in his historical introduction to systematic observational schedules, Walker (1971) says that Medley and Mitzel's work was directed mainly at a general exploration of classroom interaction. This sets it significantly apart from Flanders' own research which does not explore, but classifies<sup>7</sup> classrooms along preselected dimensions (direct and indirect).

Certain problems in Flanders' work can, and have been recognised

by other researchers in the field, and new schedules have been devised to overcome them. Yet there are other, more fundamental problems with systematic observations as a whole - problems implicit in the very notion of a category system, which cannot be remedied so easily.

It is obviously very important to distinguish these two sorts of difficulties and the objective in looking at the work of Flanders, as well as that of Spaulding and others, is to do exactly this.

(ii) Problems with FIAC

Perhaps the most serious criticism of Flanders' work is that by reducing teacher and pupil discourse to single categories such as teacher 'lectures' or teacher 'gives directions' (Flanders' categories 5 and 6) he is implying an extremely simplistic model of teaching.

For example, Flanders would categorise both of the following statements in the same way. He would consider a teacher saying

"Class, get out your text books please"

as the same type of statement as:

"Get out of the room John, and wait outside the headmaster's office".

Both are teacher statements, giving pupils directions and both would therefore be coded to category 6.

Flanders is implying a very simplistic model of teaching here for two reasons. Firstly the pupils are seen as responding to a particular type of teacher statement rather than to its substantive content. For Flanders, what is important is that the teacher lectures or asks a question, not what his lecturing is about, or what the question is. There is no way of coding the content of classroom talk, yet obviously to lump all teachers' instruction or pupils'

questions together into single categories is to conceal important educational differences in the nature of the experience. FIAC by definition ignores the meaning of language.

The implicit model of teaching is also inadequate for a second reason. Classroom discourse is seen as the most important factor in creating different learning climates, yet it is analysed in the most simplistic terms. The model of talk implied is that the teacher talks, the pupil replies, teacher talks again and pupil replies. It is a behaviourist 'stimulus/response' model of learning. To give an example, the teacher might ask a question (an event that would be coded to category 4) and the student might respond (category 8). The observer might then see the teacher as giving directions (category 6) but note that there followed a period of 'silence and confusion' (category 10). The model of linguistic interaction built into the very nature of this category system is therefore Teacher-Pupil Teacher-Pupil. Hamilton and Delamont (1974) have called it pedagogical and linguistic ping pong!

This model implies the most traditional conception of what teaching and learning is all about and therefore such a schedule will only be appropriate in the most formal classroom where the teacher is the fountain of all knowledge and the pupils are all involved in the same activity at the same time.

Flanders' system is therefore not immediately relevant to any of the more 'child centred' techniques of teaching implicit in much curriculum reform. Perhaps it is this fact that has given he impetus to the search for alternative research approaches in examining curriculum innovation.<sup>8</sup>

Yet neither of these problems so far identified (the simplistic

model of discourse and the lack of concern with its content, ) are necessary components of systematic observation as such. For example Taba et al (1964) who were interested in improving children's ability to handle abstract conceptual thinking, constructed an interaction analysis system which distinguished different kinds of thinking. Taba was therefore actually analysing the substantive content of each statement made. There have also been recent attempts to adapt schedules to less formal teaching situations.<sup>9</sup> By identifying individual pupils and concentrating on their interactions with other pupils for longer periods of time than is usual with this procedure, data can be developed on the pupils' response to almost any 'informal' classroom setting.

Other problems with Flanders' work have also been overcome by some researchers. For example, he has been criticised for his concentration on talk as a medium through which classroom climate is expressed. FIAC takes no note of non-verbal communication, and one is left wondering what he would make of the sort of Cherokee Indian classroom described by Dumont and Wax (1969) where all of the significant pupil-pupil communication was on a non-verbal level. By way of contrast though, Spaulding concentrates solely on non-verbal behaviour when looking at pupil action, so obviously this type of classification is not necessarily excluded from the systematic approach.

Flanders has also been criticised for his use of school tests as a way of evaluating different teaching strategies. Such a procedure would be unexceptionable if he were only concerned with comparing different teaching strategies as ways of producing more achievement on tests. It seems obvious, however, that when one is concerned

with pointing out that some teaching strategies are 'better' than others, then very much implicit in that choice are all sorts of assumptions about the importance of what the pupils learn over and above the curriculum. Jules Henry has stressed the importance of 'multiphasic learning'; he has pointed out that children learn a great deal in school from the way they are treated, and expected to behave, and this is as important as what they are 'taught' in their lessons. In his terms, they learn the 'noise' of the classroom along with the 'message' of the curriculum. Flanders' predilection for 'flexible' teaching strategies, seems very much involved with changing the 'noise' of classrooms, and if this is so, it seems inadequate to compare the effectiveness of such strategies by looking at the results of learning tests alone.

Of course this is not the only type of evaluation that can or has been attempted by systematic classroom researchers. Spaulding recorded pupils' nonverbal responses to different teaching strategies, and researchers could use interview and questionnaire techniques to gain a great deal more feedback about how pupils respond to particular classroom climates.

### (iii) Theoretical problems with systematic observation

#### a) Explanation or classification

In addition to these commonly noted criticisms of Flanders' work, there are more fundamental difficulties implicit in systematic observation as such.

A fundamental problem with most of the research in this tradition is that it is frequently simply a classification of classrooms in some prespecified way, yet it is often presented as more than this: the results of the research are often elevated to the level of

explanation of classroom interaction. There is nothing wrong with classification as such as long as the inherent selection involved is clearly specified; this is not the case with Flanders' work. His schedule is sold as a technique for collecting 'bias free' data. Secondly, the validity of such an approach as an explanation is obviously only as good as the implicit theory behind the categories which guide the observer (for the observer sees no more than the categories allow him to see). The explanatory value of a category system is not increased simply by observing more and more classrooms. In order to evaluate their explanatory value we must look at the theory behind them.

Simon and Boyer recognise this problem:

"Many of the systems have been constructed along a theoretical dimension which includes behaviours which are presumed to be helpful in promoting pupil growth if used in the classroom, but which are not ordinarily found in the classrooms of America today". (Simon and Boyer,

1967: VI,19)

As both Walker (1971) and Delamont (1973) have already adequately pointed out, Flanders' research has grown from the background of Bales' and Anderson's work with groups carried out after the last war. They were interested in 'democratic' and 'authoritarian' styles of group management; in Flanders' work the terminology has changed (he is interested in 'direct' and 'indirect' styles of teaching) but the underlying concepts remain the same. As previously stated, Flanders' major finding is that the most effective teachers are able to be 'direct' sometimes and 'indirect' at other times, depending on the learning needs of the

class; in other words they are 'flexible'. Such a finding is acceptable if we agree with the original premise upon which the category system was established. That theory implies that what a teacher does is the most important thing in the classroom, and the way he uses 'direct' and 'indirect' influence on the group has a significant effect on what and how pupils learn.

If we do not accept this premise, or at least do not accept it as the whole truth about teaching and learning, then interaction analysis can not be seen as a procedure for developing theories about classroom life. Rather than an explanation of teaching, FIAC simply becomes a way of classifying classrooms on the 'direct' to 'indirect' dimension.

The fact that Spaulding's work has grown from the same historical background as that of Flanders (i.e. Bales and Anderson) further illustrates the importance of the theory behind the categories. As Spaulding rightly notes "In any science, the choice of variables defines the content of the discipline" (Simon and Boyer, 1967 Vol. V p. Spaulding 1).

His choice of variables (categories) look remarkably similar to those of Flanders. He says:

"Various psychological dimensions have been used in the development of this schedule. Basic have been the concepts of 'integration' and 'dominative' social behaviour as delineated in the work of H.H. Anderson" (Simon and Boyer, 1967, V.5 p. Spaulding 5).

In understanding the selective bias in Spaulding's system, it is necessary to look again at how his two schedules are used. The first, STARS is used for coding teaching behaviour in much the

same way as the Flanders system. CASES, the schedule for studying pupil behaviour is a method of classifying pupil responses to teaching strategies. In other words, the 'explanatory' value of the system again lies with the way in which teachers are rated. The pupils are seen as simply responding automatically to the 'climate' created by the teacher.

In drawing up the categories for observing teacher behaviour (STARS) Spaulding says that he used a factor analytic study of 113 categories of teacher/pupil interactions in a sample of 21 Elementary school classrooms he concludes that:

"The major findings were that three types of teacher variables were specifically linked with subsequent pupil performance and self concept;

- 1) supportive, approving and receptive teacher behaviours, which operated as rewards.
- 2) Aversive or Dominative teacher behaviours which had generally a punishing effect
- 3) Limit and goal setting teaching behaviours which tended to clarify, regularize, organize or further structure the environment for the benefit of pupil performance"

(Simon & Boyer, 1967 V.5 pp. Spaulding 5 & 6)

Spaulding constructed his categories for STARS on the basis of these findings. The assumption appears to be that because these dimensions of teacher behaviour emerged from the supposedly unbiased technique of factor analysis, they are what teaching is 'really all about'. The similarity of these dimensions to those of Flanders is striking to say the least. After reading their work, one is left with a feeling that either Flanders and Spaulding have a monopoly

of 'real' understanding about teaching or that they appear to be engaged in the popular process of researching self-fulfilling prophecies.

Spaulding's work therefore can be seen as a way of classifying teachers' behaviour along similar lines to that of Flanders. Whereas Flanders compares these strategies with measurement of pupil 'learning', Spaulding relates each to pupil non-verbal behaviour. As with Flanders' work, the insights that can come from this type of analysis are limited by the adequacy of the underlying theory of teaching, and are not significantly heightened by the fact that Spaulding has carried out over 1000 case studies of pupil behaviour using this schedule.

The fact that Flanders' (and Spaulding's) works have grown from a long line of research on group management has proved both a strength and a weakness. Flanders has acknowledged this research heritage, but he does not appear to appreciate the extent to which it has coloured his 'findings'. Nevertheless, his concern with 'direct', 'indirect' and 'flexible' teaching strategies has (fortuitiously?) reflected the opinions of many educationalists about what constitutes 'good' teaching. This explains why Flanders' schedules have become so popular for use in teacher training. In providing teachers with feedback about how 'authoritarian' or 'child centred' they are being, Flanders is reflecting popular concerns about teaching. Whether training with his schedule does lead to 'good' teaching is not a matter for dispute here. What is in dispute is whether he is explaining teaching. Other teaching techniques can be effective and are now popularly advocated but presumably FIAC would not reflect their value.<sup>10</sup>

From Flanders' point of view, the disadvantage of his dependence on Anderson and Bales is that it is obviously easier to criticise FIAC for its narrowness of perspective. Yet other, perhaps less experienced researchers, who do not base their category systems on such a well articulated theoretical position are still being selective in their observations. If there is no explicit theory, then it frequently means that yet another researcher has classified classrooms in an unspecified way. This is exactly the same point that was made in the introduction to this chapter when discussing direct classroom observation; unless the theory behind the category system or direct observations can be made plain and exposed for discussion, the findings will be of little or no value.

b) The problem of meaning

The second important problem with all systematic observational schedules is that they do not treat the meaning of action as problematic. They make no recognition of the 'normative order' of classrooms. This becomes obvious in Flanders' description of how an observer works when using his system.

"An observer sits in the classroom and keeps a record of the flow of events on an observational form . . . He is trained to use a set of categories. He decides which category best represents each event and then writes down the code symbol of that category (Flanders, 1970: 5, emphasis added)

In other words, Flanders sees the meaning of actions as unproblematic - the observer is presumed to 'know' what a particular action means and consequently finds no difficulty in assigning it to its right category.

Unfortunately, social action does not have a single and definite meaning for all participants. For example, the teacher statement "Leave the room!" will take on different meanings, depending on how the class as a whole

see the teacher; whether he has a reputation for being strict or soft. The statement will also mean different things to different individual pupils. Some pupils know they can 'get away with more' than others, and will consequently see attempts to discipline them in a different light.

The phrase "Leave the room" does not have a single meaning, and assigning it to category 6 on FIAC (giving directions) tells us little about how it was interpreted by the different actors or the circumstances in which it was used. The implicit model of classroom interaction of Teacher-Pupil-Teacher-Pupil, precludes any consideration of the complex interpretative process that goes on as a group of actors construct a common or joint action. There is no way of introducing the responsiveness of teachers and pupils to each other as they interpret the meaning of each other's statements and actions.

As Smith and Geoffrey (1968) found out, the classroom is a social system where the individuals have particular social identities and what the teachers and pupils do can only be interpreted in the light of that particular social context. A system where the researcher spends only a very short time in each classroom, and records events at 3 second intervals, necessarily precludes an understanding of the contextual meaning of statements and events. It is only by staying in the classroom over a long period of time, and by trying to see events with the various participants' eyes that those contextual meanings will start to emerge.<sup>11</sup> Even where observational schedules are used in one setting over a period of time (as has been attempted by Delamont (1973), they seem unlikely to be able to throw very much light on the problem of meaning. The researcher is more

likely to become aware that the complex nuances of social interaction cannot be captured in 10 or even 1000 categories, and for any analysis of this sort of problem it is more fruitful to turn to other research techniques, as Delamont herself has done.

### 3. Ethnographies of the Classroom

It was pointed out in the introduction to this chapter that it was to some extent possible to distinguish between classroom ethnographies depending on the way in which the authors had tackled the relationship between theory and data. What was considered important was a reflexive, self aware approach to research where grounded theories were developed within a phenomenological framework. Not all ethnographies live up to these demands and in establishing a platform for this current research it will be useful to divide existing observational research into three loose groups. (It is of course recognised that any such classification system will be to some extent arbitrary for there will be many overlapping cases; nevertheless the categories do serve as an heuristic in establishing a need for a certain approach to observational work that is taken up in this thesis).

The first group of studies to be considered will be those where there is no explicit consideration of the theory; where the researchers do not make it clear why they have selected the events they have or why they have interpreted them as they do. By contrast the other two groups of studies do make their framework clear, but use different ones. As this research is phenomenological in intent studies within this paradigm are considered together in section (iii) while observation work with a more positivistic intent is looked at in section (ii). Within these two categories research can be further differentiated depending on the extent to which grounded theories have been produced.

(i) Observational studies with no explicit theory

The first group of studies to be examined are those where there is no explicit consideration of how the data was gathered or organised in the analysis. These are studies where the observational data is presented as fact, where it has already been organised and edited to present a specific argument, but where we are given no information about how this editing process was carried out.

A number of anthropological studies fall into this category, some are truly cross cultural and others, like the work of Jules Henry, deal only with America. They may all be considered truly anthropological in that their concern is to relate what happens inside the classroom to the wider culture of the society at large. In an introduction to a series called "Case Studies in Education and Culture" George and Louise Spindler say that they are presenting the results of direct observation and participation in educational processes in a variety of cultural settings. Those "cultural settings" are a German village (Warren, 1967) a Canadian Indian school (King, 1967) a Japanese school (Singleton, 1967) and a tribal school in central Liberia (Gay and Cole, 1967).

All but the study of the Canadian Indian school directly tackle the problem of the interrelationship between the wider culture of the community and what goes on inside the school. For example, Singleton in his study of a Japanese school says that he has developed a model where ". . . the school has been viewed interacting with several communities each of which influences the school and in turn is influenced by the school" (Singleton 1967, 119)

This theme is pursued by Warren in his study of a German village school. He is particularly interested in the curriculum studied which he sees occupying a central point in transmitting and influencing the culture of the wider community.

"The role the school develops is Rabhausen in transmitting the traditional culture and mediating cultural change is affected

not only by the enduring life of the village, and by impelling forces for change such as the factory, but also by individuals groups and institutions whose established authority impinge on the life of the school" (95)

These external and internal forces in the community and the school influence what is taught in the classroom and the particular cultural lessons that are passed on to the children.<sup>12</sup>

The impact of the wider culture on the classroom is pursued in Gay and Cole's (1967) study in a slightly different way. They examine the difficulties experienced by members of the Kpelle tribe of Liberia in learning modern maths. They show that if one examines the culture of the tribe, not only is the content of the mathematics syllabus alien, but much more important, so is the way of teaching.<sup>13</sup> The Kpelle traditionally learn by rote learning which is not considered appropriate for modern mathematics. In addition, the children find it difficult to master new techniques for learning, as their culture as a whole devalues innovation ". . . the pragmatic is always subordinate to the traditional"(18).

In these circumstances, Gay and Cole note that it is surprising that the children learn anything at all. Their study stands as an example of the argument that one cannot fully understand the child's experience of the school without examining the cultural knowledge he brings with him.

The final study in this series, by King (1967), is slightly different. He looks in some detail at the student subculture in a residential school for Indians in the Yukon in N W. Canada. Because the pupils find the school largely irrelevant, they develop a subculture which subverts the educational aims of the teachers. Like the Cherokee Indians in the school described by Dumont and Wax (1969) the pupils at this school appear quite docile - school is irrelevant to them and there is virtually nothing the teacher can do to rouse them to interest:

". . . the operation of the school bears a striking resemblance to a well run stock ranch, or dairy farm, in which valued animals are carefully nurtured . . . The children are moved, fed, cared for and rested by a rotating crew of overseers who condition the herd to respond to set signals". (King, 1967:55)

King says that the pupils may appear docile, but a closer analysis shows that they are participating in an extremely active subculture which includes sets of evasive strategies for dealing with the demands of the teachers. These patterns of behaviour are so thoroughly internalised, that they are almost conditioned responses.

All of these four studies, with their concern for dimensions of culture both inside and outside the school, reflect themes taken up in the work of Jules Henry. For Henry too is an anthropologist, but rather than look at a school in Japan or Germany, he studies American culture, and how it is transmitted and maintained. The school classroom is only one of the arenas of cultural transmission that Henry has investigated, but unlike many researchers who will be considered below, he does not see the school existing in isolation. He is interested in the dialectic that goes on between the outside world (in particular the home) and the school. Both influence each other, for it is in the home that the child acquires a great many attitudes and values which influences how he experiences his school life and what he learns there. On the other hand, Henry pinpoints the fact that children learn a great many cultural lessons at school, over and above what they are formally taught in the curriculum. They learn how to behave, what is valuable and worthwhile and what is irrelevant. In short, he is interested in what he has called the 'polyphasic learning' that goes on in schools, that is ". . . the inordinate capacity of the human being to learn more than one thing at the same time" (Henry 1966: 289).

There is, therefore, an internal and external dimension to Henry's work - the home and the school - and both contribute to what the pupils actually learn in the classroom.

For example, in a study such as "Education and the Negro Child" (Henry 1971) he examines the field work reported by one of his students who had observed the lives of two negro children both at home and at school. One girl Rachel, came from a well run stable family, where she was encouraged by her mother to read, to 'play school' and to play constructively with other children. David, on the other hand, came from an entirely different family situation. He lived with his grandmother and numerous other children of various parentage. The home was disorganised both physically and in the pattern of life led there. Henry argues that the child's personal biography has a profound impact on the way he experiences the school and what he learns there. Presumably David, because his life is one of chaos and disorganization, will find it more difficult to respond to the demands of the classroom than Rachel. In fact this will not be the whole story, for Henry sees the child's classroom behaviour as the product of several types of experience: the home, the school and the peer group. It is the interrelationship between these different experiences that is significant.

"The outcome of a child's experience with the formal educational system is the sum of several types of experience - home, school and peer group. Any one factor taken alone can not explain why some fail and others succeed" (Henry, 1971: 69)

~ Thus the culture of the school becomes an important area of study in itself for Henry and he suggests a number of avenues that

might be followed as a means of investigating it. These suggestions for studying school culture lead to the other main theme of his research - polyphasic learning. This research is designed to illustrate how the implicit values of the school culture (and of course wider society) are transmitted in the classroom. For example in "Golden Rule Days" Henry says.

"A child writing the word 'August' on the board for example is not only learning the word 'August', but also how to hold the chalk without making it squeak, how to write clearly, how to keep going even though the class is tittering at his slowness, how to appriase the glances of the children in order to know whether he is doing it right or wrong, etc. etc." (Henry, 1966: 289).

Henry suggests that children do not just learn the subject matter of the curriculum - they do not just learn domestic science of biology, but a great many other values and ways of behaviour as well. He distinguishes between the official 'message' of the curriculum, and the 'noise' of classrooms. Along with the official 'message' there is a great deal of 'noise' that communicates to the children how they should behave and what they should value and find worth while - for example, achievement, competition fear of failure. In many classrooms the 'noise' is so strong that it becomes the predominant message.

Through this process of 'polyphasic learning', Henry suggests that a great deal of American culture is transmitted, for American classrooms, like other educational institutions anywhere, express "Values, preoccupations and fears found in the culture as a whole" (Henry 1966:286).

The great value of Henry's work, and that of Warren, Singleton, and Gay and Cole, is that in concentrating on culture in such a broad way, they are able to relate what goes on inside the classroom to the world outside. The four "Case Studies in Education and Culture" all pursue ideas identified by Henry as relevant. They look at the impact of pressure groups in the community on what is actually taught in the classroom (Warren 1967) and what broader cultural messages are transmitted (Singleton 1967). They also cover the relationship between a child's home and school experience (Gay and Cole 1967), as well as an examination of the influence of the peer group culture on what is learnt at school (King 1967).

All of these researchers are interested in building up a picture of culture and examining how it is transmitted, but apart from Warren's study of the German school, the pictures are ahistorical; their perspectives can not explain cultural change. Jules Henry in particular sees the social system as extremely stable - indeed he says the main objective of the school is to crush true creativity and preserve stability. Pupils are portrayed as being simply socialised into existing cultural patterns and change is only seen as occurring when some of the lessons taught by the school are not properly learned.<sup>14</sup>

This is indeed a problem, and is perhaps inherent in the concept of culture as they use it. Another criticism, is that like the systematic researchers, these studies do not see the 'meaning' of events as problematic. They all present 'culture' as some external reality to be maintained and transmitted but we do not know what this culture means to the individual; how the values projected in 'polyphasic' learning are interpreted, changed or rejected by the

pupils. Nor do we know how the teachers experience the influence of a particular pressure group and interpret its dictates. Statements are always taken at their face value, and interpreted in terms of what they mean to the researcher.

The greatest weakness in these studies is their relationship to theory in the generation of data. Henry for example does not make his interpretations of his data explicit. Most of his essays are drawn from two types of data reported by his observers. Firstly there are direct observational notes made by the field worker, but there is no attempt to separate observation from comment - the field worker's feelings and judgements about the situations are treated in the same way as their (subjective) descriptions of events.<sup>15</sup> The second source of data are reports of actual conversations, though it is not clear if these are tape recorded or written up later from memory.

Henry uses these observations to illustrate a series of propositions but he provides us little or no clue about how these were arrived at - we are simply presented with a series of tightly edited field notes which support his interpretation of events.<sup>16</sup>

Glaser and Strauss (1967) call this the middle zone between grounded and logio-seductive theorizing in which the sociologist chooses examples systematically and then allows them to feed back to give theoretical control over his formulations. But as they say, it is hard to figure out when this is happening, even when we are clearly told.

The same criticism can be levelled at the other studies mentioned; observation is mixed up with comment; extracts from pupils essays and teachers' meetings are presented, but with no

evidence of the organising perspective pursued by the researcher in their selection. As Robinson (1974) has recently said of Singleton's work, we have to take their analysis on trust - we are left on our own to decide whether their analysis 'seems plausible' and to accept or reject it on that basis alone.

(ii) Observational studies within a positivistic framework.

This second group of studies within the ethnographic tradition are again linked by their theoretical framework, if in a rather loose way. They are those where the observation and interpretation has been carried out with a broadly positivistic framework rather than with reference to the actors' point of view. Of course this is not to say that some of the researchers are not 'interested' in the actors' perspectives (e.g. Lacey (1970), Delamont (1973), Smith and Geoffrey (1968)) but not specifically in a phenomenological way. Within this category though there is considerable variation amongst the researchers in how far they have developed their ideas from their data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) criticise some sociologists for simply 'exemplifying' existing theories, that is entering the observational field already knowing in detail what to look for.

They explain this procedure as follows

"Another opportunistic use of theory...is that of exemplifying.

A researcher can easily find examples for dreamed up, speculatively or logically deduced theory, after the idea has occurred. But since the idea has not been derived from the example, seldom can the example correct or change it (even if the author is willing) since the example was selectively chosen for its confirming power.

Therefore one receives the image of a proof when there is none and the theory obtains a richness of detail which it did not earn." (Glaser and Strauss 1967:5).

As has already been pointed out Glaser and Strauss argue for a different approach where the observer builds up his theory from his observational work.

In practice when existing research is considered it is not easy to distinguish between work that is merely 'exemplifying' and grounded theory. Some researchers, particularly Smith and Geoffrey (1968) and more recently Lacy (1976) have made their process of theory development clear - others have not and we can only guess at how much they already 'knew' when they began observing. The studies reviewed in this section are placed in a rough 'developmental' order in terms of how far they have been explicitly concerned with developing grounded theory but as a number of them do not make this clear it can at best be only a tentative analysis.

Two studies that seem most clearly to illustrate Glaser and Strauss' charge of exemplifying and those of Burnett (1969) and Young and Beardsley (1968), both of which are within a structural functionalist framework.

Burnett (1969) makes an analysis of the importance of ceremonies and rites amongst students in an American high school, in maintaining the equilibrium of the social system. For example, she describes the 'pep rally' that occurred before a football game as a ritual. The principal and the team coach talked to the whole school on the importance of winning.

Yet for Burnett, the 'real function' of these talks is nothing to do with winning the football game; rather it is a technique of equilibrium maintenance during a period of dramatically changing social interaction.

"pep rallies (designed to promote 'school spirit') then are a ritual means of quickly carrying the students through a transition from work activity and the everyday relationships of school life, to the characteristically different relationships of extramural athletic events when the students relate to large numbers of the community and relate to one another in somewhat different ways." (Burnett, 1969:4)

Another study with a similarly strong structural/functionalist approach is that of Young and Beardsley (1968). They are interested in how classroom learning teaches pupils to operate in a complex social system. School experience is portrayed as no more than a socialisation process for adequate functioning in the world outside.

"Much of the behavioural events in a classroom are more understandable when viewed in the light of their relevance to social system imperatives than when viewed as germane to enlightenment, erudition and self-fulfilment" (186)

Thus they consider the content of most maths lessons entirely irrelevant to pupils:

"But what is learned that is of value is not the mathematics but rather the norms which maintain a math class qua a social system" (176)

Whether one accepts these studies, depends on how one looks at structural functionalist theory. The 'real functions' of maths lessons and pep rallies are obviously considered to be beyond the comprehension of any of the participants. They are simply models to be controlled and manipulated by some reified social system. What is very important though is that neither of these studies can be considered as a proof of the theory. Both Burnett and Young and Beardsley appear to have done no more than fit observational data to a theory. That process proves nothing more than the infinite malleability of observational data. It would be impossible for them not to support their theories, for their explanations lie beyond the data itself, with the 'grand theories' they support.<sup>17</sup> In these circumstances it is perhaps best to consider the observations as no more than mere illustrations of the theory, rather than any kind of proof of it.

Another study, that of Delamont (1973) can be subject to the same sort of criticism. She has sought to combine three diverse research techniques in order to investigate one substantive area: independence and dependence in pupils' study habits. She has tried to consider the results from a symbolic interactionist perspective (As I argue below Delamont can be considered a positivist, because despite the symbolic interactionist framework she has ignored all of the more phenomenological implications of that approach).

In the tradition of Hudson and Parlett, Delamont chose to investigate the syllabus-bound and syllabus-free child in two independent Scottish girls schools. As a medium for the research

she chose to examine what she has called the rich and virgin field of pupils' classroom talk.

Delamont attempted to examine pupils' study habits by a combination of direct ethnographic observation along-side systematic observation; she also makes use of more traditional 'paper and pencil' tests and questionnaires.<sup>18</sup> She became a participant in the schools she observed for a long period of time, mixing with both the staff and the pupils. But because most of the classes were organised on a fairly formal basis, she found she could not talk to the students during class time. In order to make the most of these periods of classroom observation, Delamont therefore devised her own systematic observation schedule to highlight the dependent and independent nature of pupils' public statements. For example, two of her categories for recording pupils' speech are:

"VR A correct, or a least, acceptable response,  
produced by a volunteer.

QUIB A quibble with the teachers' explanations etc."

(Delamont 1973:21)

In this way, Delamont was able to build up portraits of individual pupils as well as comparative pictures of the climates developed by different teachers to encourage or stultify independent or individual contributions to classroom talk. This information was supplemented by pupils' responses to an inventory designed to distinguish syllabus-bound from syllabus-free children and extensive field notes made in the classrooms, staffroom and playgrounds.

In the final chapter, Delamont tries to synthesise her diverse data by developing a single symbolic interactionist model. Actors

are presented as 'negotiating' over how to define classroom situations; they negotiate about how dependent or independent they will be in their approach to the syllabus. She sees the outcome of these negotiations as dependent on such factors as

- a) the educational, institutional or physical 'setting' in which the negotiation takes place
- b) the 'resources' that the actors bring to the settings e.g. their 'power' or their 'reputation'.
- c) the 'perspectives' the actors bring from their different reference groups e.g. professional and home.

All these factors are relevant in the emergence of different 'strategies of negotiation' that typically occur amongst teachers and pupils.

Delamont draws together her three types of data in order to build up a picture of these negotiation strategies that go on in any one classroom. She is attempting to explain the influences on a particular child that result in dependent or independent speech in a particular social setting.

Her systematic findings are therefore 'interpreted' from a symbolic interactionist point of view, and direct observations are 'selected' to fit it. For example, the finding from the systematic data that not all pupils contributed an equal amount to classroom discussion, was interpreted as follows: "The number of contributions a girl makes in a lesson is directly related to the power of her resources and her perceptions of appropriate classroom behaviour" (405).

In order to illustrate an individual's 'perceptions' and 'resources' she turns to her other data. For example, she gives a detailed analysis of a girl called Jackie, who according to her

questionnaire was very conscientious and 'syllabus bound'. Using her systematic observation data to break down Jackie's speech patterns, Delamont notes that the girl did not contribute the same amount in each lesson:

"Jackie clearly contributed content-oriented moves more often in Maths and Chemistry than in for instance Physics"(316).

Delamont attempts to explain this finding by using her direct observations. She points out that the Chemistry mistress was also the warden of the hostel that Jackie lived in. This relationship was an extra 'resource' that Jackie brought to the Chemistry class, and it therefore had an impact on the nature of her classroom contributions.

Delamont gives three examples of the sorts of strategies of negotiation that take place in the classroom. She illustrates how family background can be a classroom resource: how pupils' behaviour can be related to their perspectives on the limits of knowledge, and finally, how 'rules' are negotiated in the classroom.

The final strategy is illustrated by the case of Karen, arguing with a teacher about the 'right' answer to a question in a Geography test. Delamont 'explains why' in the following way:

"Karen's bargaining is an ingenious attempt to obtain a mark by negotiation for an answer she knows to be 'right' (in a sense that Mrs Hill did not expect it), but one she feels she can argue a case for. Various aspects of her personal background and attitudes may be relevant to her decision to bargain for. Karen's family lived abroad, her father having been posted 'all

over the world' in his jobs. This gave Karen a perspective on Geography . . . (419/20).

These few examples illustrate the way in which Delamont attempts to integrate the three types of data. Systematic observations and questionnaire data are 'interpreted', and direct observations are 'selected' in order to fit the symbolic interactionist model. Whether or not her analysis is an adequate one would seem to rest on the validity of the symbolic interactionist theory on which it is based. The merits of the symbolic interactionist perspective will be considered in some detail in Chapter III, but at this point it is sufficient to say that selecting of observational data to illustrate a well articulated theory is an extremely dubious process. Delamont's direct observational data do not speak for themselves; in fact, they have a fairly subsidiary place in the development of the argument, the main force of which is taken by the systematic and questionnaire data. Direct observations are simply used to 'fill in the gaps' in that argument.

A central theme of Delamont's thesis is that both systematic and direct observational techniques can be usefully used together to research a substantive area. She is obviously well aware of the limitations of systematic techniques<sup>19</sup> yet she argues that within these limitations, they can provide useful information. Unfortunately it seems that she has not understood one of the basic difficulties of the systematic approach - the problem of meaning. Delamont does not see meaning of participants' actions as problematic, and in her anecdotes, one is left to 'see the logic' for oneself or accept her interpretations of what things meant to teachers and pupils.<sup>20</sup>

By not exploring what actions meant to the participants, she has overlooked one of the most potentially fruitful areas of direct observation. It seems that in her development of symbolic interactionist theory, Delamont has ignored the more phenomenological writings (She does not even reference Blumer!) Yet if she had considered the meaning of actions as problematic it should have become obvious that it is impossible to integrate systematic and ethnographic observations; as we have already seen, systematic schedules cannot, by definition, take the actor's perspective into account.

Delamont has been eclectic in her research design (not a crime in itself!) but she has fallen down on the difficult task of integrating radically different approaches to data. Her 'interpretations' of her systematic findings raise numerous useful questions about pupils study habits, but these can not be adequately answered by post hoc selection from field notes. All that such a process does is to illustrate the underlying theory: it does not tell us anything new (except perhaps that direct observations can be interpreted in as many ways as we wish). We are simply left asking, is the symbolic interactionist model an adequate explanation of what goes on in the classroom?

We turn next to the work of Hargreaves (1967). Even today with the current vigorous interest in educational sociology, this study of a school remains among the most useful we have. It's widespread influence in sociology and education at large perhaps stems from the fact that until recently it was one of the few easily available attempts in this country to study the culture of the school from the pupil's perspective. Hargreaves work stands in the long American

tradition of studies of youth culture, stretching back to the 1940's and 1950's with the work of Hollinshed (1949) and Coleman (1961). Other British researchers such as Sugarman (1966, 1967 and 1968) have attempted more traditional sociometric and questionnaire studies of large numbers of schools, but Hargreaves' participant observation work in a single school in the mid-sixties represented a radical new departure from educational research in this country.

'Social Relations in a Secondary School' is a detailed study of one fourth year group in one school. Hargreaves became a participant observer over a long period during which time he taught and observed nearly all of the 120 pupils in the year. His work stands strongly in the social psychological tradition with its emphasis on the importance of small groups, and by a mixture of sociometric analysis and observations he builds up a picture of the distinctive character of each of the four streams in the fourth year. He suggests that in each class there is a dominant clique which has 'social power' over the other pupils thus, influencing the culture that develops. Through this process of social power different norms emerge giving rise to two distinct cultures - the academic, centred on the A stream, and the delinquent centred on the D stream.

The influence of functionalism on Hargreaves theorising is considered in more detail in the next chapter, but it is useful to look at his notion of interaction at this point. Hargreaves portrays classroom interaction in terms of informal groups - they are seen as the arena in which interaction takes place and the notion that groups 'exist' in some objective way is one of his most basic assumptions. Hargreaves sees the whole student population as being split

up into informal groups which in some way are related to the 'formal' structure of the school (i.e. who has been allocated to which class). He also suggests that the pupils will know who is 'in' and who is 'out' of the informal groups and he sees it as his first task to specify who is in which group amongst the pupils. For this purpose he turned to sociometrics, asking the boys to write down 'who they went around with' at school. Those boys who mentioned each other were defined as a friendship group.

The objective of studying these groups was to highlight the process of interaction for Hargreaves assumed that choice in a sociogram would provide some evidence of social influence. What he actually meant by 'interaction' is never fully explained, though he seems to suggest that it involves the process of meeting people regularly and is the basis for developing norms. Once Hargreaves has established these groups he then provides observational evidence and other more 'objective' data (such as questionnaire results and information from sentence completion tests) to build up a picture of the norms of the different groups. If we know the norms of the dominant group in each class, so the argument runs, this should explain why the pupils act as they do.

One problem with Hargreaves's work is this attempt to study the process of social influence through the group membership. His conception of actors as being controlled by the 'norms' of a group is quite different from that of say Blumer, who sees people interpreting each other's gestures and acting on the basis of the meaning yielded by these interpretations.

Within the school those involved in this type of face to face interaction will not only be those who are part of friendship groups.

Friendship groups are not necessarily the same thing as 'interaction' groups or sets. Those involved in the process of interpreting each other's behaviour and fitting lines of action together will continually change depending on a great many factors. Interaction is not just confined to 'friends' who are in the same 'group'.

If Hargreaves had approached the question of who interacts with who by observation rather than by the necessarily limiting technique of sociometrics he might have arrived at a quite different picture of social interaction. Sociograms tend to give a static one dimensional picture of friendship choices and as this thesis will show it is wrong to assume that these choices are synonymous with reciprocal influence in the choice of action. A great deal more interaction takes place in a classroom than just between named friends but the group model of social interaction is not able to take this into account.

A second difficulty in the work, like some of those discussed above is that it is impossible to tell from Hargreaves report how much of his analysis is simply 'examplifying' social psychological theory and what new insights come from his observational work itself. Was he drawn to a 'group' approach to social interaction by his experience as an observer or did he enter the field 'knowing' its importance. Is he presenting us with anything 'new' in the way of a substantive theory of social interaction in schools or is he merely illustrating how small group theory might illuminate that situation. Unfortunately from the way the report is written it is impossible to tell and we are left to take his analysis on trust.

~ A study that is specifically directed to developing new insights by directly observing the process of schooling is that of Lacey (1970)

He too acted as a teacher and observer of staff and pupils in one school over three years. Unlike Hargreaves though Lacey is a sociologist by background and has therefore been drawn to place his study of a single school in a wider framework than Hargreaves.

Lacey begins by accepting the existing concerns of sociology in education that is the relationship between social class and educational achievement but suggests that studies prior to his had not looked inside the school to see how that relationship was achieved. Traditional sociologists operated with a simple 'black box' model of the school and only addressed themselves to the external features such as indices of class background and achievement. Lacey wanted to open up that black box.

He begins his study by placing the school in a social and historical context, tracing its development through three phases, the 'finishing school' period, the 'transitional' period and the modern 'professionalising' school. From documentation he also argues that in line with other sociological findings the relative position of working class boys in the school had actually deteriorated since the 1944 Education Act. (At least during the 1930s the few who entered the school on scholarships did well). In this introduction to his study Lacey also gives a portrait of Hightown itself and the various primary schools the boys were recruited from. He suggests that as the primary schools were so accurate at predicting who amongst their pupils would gain grammar school places there was a strong possibility that even before all the boys were 'socialised' into an expectation of academic success. This expectation of success and the fact that the pupils were used to fulfilling the 'best pupil' role in the primary schools had a significant impact on how they reacted to the highly competitive life of the grammar school where by definition some must 'fail'.

The central part of the book (and the portion most relevant to this thesis) concerns the process of stratification and subsequent subcultural development associated with the fact that some did indeed fail. The new boys spent their first year in unstreamed classes and as they came from many different primary schools many of them were isolated from their previous social relationships. This, together with the fact that they were used to being 'best' at school encouraged high commitment to the school as well as fierce competition amongst themselves. But the pupils did not remain undifferentiated for long, by March, when Lacey began observing them there was already a social structure in existence in the four first year classes: the pupils and the teachers knew who was good at reading and who was bad, who misbehaved and who was a 'character'. Lacey uses examples of two boys with the same I.Q. and similar initial class positions to show the impact of this structure on success. One boy, from a middle class home was the butt of the class. He associated with the deviants but they only used him and laughed at him when he got into trouble. The other boy, from a working class background sat with the high achievers of the class and was recognised by the pupils and the staff as a success even though his initial academic performance was not much better than the other boy. By introducing this unusual case in terms of class and achievement Lacey says he is not trying to challenge the established relationship "but to highlight the fact that there are detailed social mechanisms and processes responsible for bringing it about, mechanisms which are not completely determined by external factors" (57).

By using detailed observation and other more 'objective' measures Lacey has developed a model of 'differentiation' and 'polarisation' to

explain the mechanisms involved in this process. By differentiation he refers to the way the students are academically ranked by the staff in numerous ways. This is seen as giving rise to a process of polarisation within the student body that is a process of subculture formation developing in opposition to the dominant norms of the school. The exact nature of this anti culture is seen as dependent on the particular school and its social setting.

Drawing on his experience as a teacher at the school, Lacey suggests that teachers differentiate pupils on two scales, the behavioural and the academic scale, though these are to some extent interrelated. Polarisation is linked to these; those who do well tend to support the system while those who have lost their accustomed 'best pupil' role by doing badly in the competitive system, begin to embrace alternative values. Although in the first year Lacey reports that academic failure was associated with individual distress (bedwetting etc.), by the second year the pupils had evolved a social solution to their structural situation and the anti group subculture had become established.

Lacey backs up this model derived from observation, by sociometric data. For example he shows that in the first year when the pupils were not streamed the academically unsuccessful had less friendship choices than average, where as by the end of the second year, (after streaming) the bottom stream had above average friendship choices amongst themselves and a considerable number of hostility choices from higher streams. These differences between the groups were illustrated in other ways too, by for example differential projected school leaving ages and time spent on homework. Through a detailed study of one cohort of pupils throughout two school years Lacey shows how differentiation leads to a situation where the opposite ends of the differentiated group are faced with different problems: the problem of success and the

problem of failure 'It is the resolution of these problems that gives rise to polarisation' (95).

In his final chapter on this process Lacey turns his attention to one particular form, the 'express' stream to observe the same features at work on a smaller scale and over a longer period. From his sociomatrix he identifies different cliques and 'friendship areas' amongst the pupils and gives observational evidence to illustrate their different approaches to school life. By the third year he shows that the sociomatrix indicates an increasing polarity in the class. There were three friendship areas each with different average class positions and comparatively few reciprocating friendship choices between them. The 'top' group were predominantly middle class and the 'bottom' group were mainly working class. So by the third year there were a large number of interlocking friendships developing amongst the large middle class, well behaved pro-school group and the anti-group had become more distinct too. Once again Lacey 'explains' these changes by drawing from his observational material relating to family background or increased or decreased success in exams. Thus for example when discussing a change in group membership by one pupil called Enoch, Lacey says "We saw that in 2E Enoch's behaviour and academic performance improved throughout the second year, while Walter's declined. This trend continued in the third year until the strain it imposed on their friendship caused it to break up." (114).

Lacey's work is important for a number of reasons. In the first place this theory of polarisation and differentiation is a grounded one. As he has recently explained, it grew from an "interplay between observation and an analysis of sociometric data" (Lacey, 1976:60) and has consequently proved relevant to both sociologists and teachers alike.

It is particularly useful because it represents an attempt to inter-relate internal and external features of the school. Unlike much other research (including this study) it does not see the school in isolation but specifically addresses itself to exploring features of society at large as they influence school life. Finally it is important because the model of differentiation and polarisation is a developmental one. Unlike Hargreaves' group analysis these concepts help us understand the process of subculture formation in schools, how there is change and realignment over time in response to the structural features of school organisation.

Nevertheless from the criteria established in this review, the work can be criticised on two accounts. In a recent paper on the methodology of Hightown Grammar Lacey has made the point that all methods of research involve different limitations " certain insights or levels of understanding are associated with certain methods of data collection.... I feel very strongly that the world under investigation seen through one method of collecting data becomes enormously distorted by the limitations of that data and the available methods of analysis" (1976:61). It is for this reason that he advocates using a variety of techniques and in Hightown Grammar that involved participant observation as a teacher, direct observation of classrooms, document analysis along with more conventional techniques such as questionnaires and sociograms. This concern leads us to a possible criticism of his work for he seems to imply that observation is a technique in itself in a way that is comparable with other more 'objective' methodologies. In the introduction to this chapter it was acknowledged that traditional research techniques imposed a pattern on the reality they studied but they were 'objective' in the sense that their bias was always static. By comparison it was pointed out that the bias of observation varied with each observer, each selecting from

his field different facts depending on his guiding perspective. From this perspective observation becomes a different 'technique' each time it is used for it reveals different 'facts' depending on one's theoretical and common sense position.

To some extent Lacey has made his position clear in relation to this point. He has stated his intention of working within the framework of the established relationship between social class and academic achievement and the concepts of differentiation and polarisation arise as a grounded theory within that framework. Nevertheless the impact of that perspective on the observational part of the study are not always recognised. He appears to be arguing that what is important is to view the situation from a number of commonsense perspectives (teacher, observer etc.) but he does not see that commonsense as problematic. Thus for example, the observations about the boy Enoch quoted above, what is seen as 'causing' the break up of his friendship with Walters was his increased academic success. This is presented as a fact, yet it would have seemed to have emerged for Lacey as an explanation in the light of his interest in social class and academic success. There are many other similar examples; Lacey draws on his observational material to develop and explain his model in an unreflexive way (For a more self aware approach see the work of Smith and Geoffrey quoted below). What he appears to have observed as teacher/sociologist is evidence of academic performance, deviance, I.Q. scores, form positions, fathers' occupations etc. and not for example how friendships and classroom interactions appear to the participants themselves. This is not to suggest that the picture Lacey presents of the school is wrong, merely that his observations as teacher/sociologist present one truth amongst many yet the 'relativity' of his findings are not always recognised.

The point about the actors' perspectives leads to a second criticism. Lacey describes himself as being in sympathy with the pupils and being privy to many of their discussions on school but the main thrust of his research is not directed at that experience. What he is looking for is evidence of subcultural processes that will explain the observed relationship between social class and academic success - a sociologists interest, naturally outside the experience of the members themselves. Because of this interest, increased success can become an 'explanation' of changed friendship patterns whether or not that was significant to the participants themselves. Lacey is concerned with patterns and norms, not with face to face interaction itself. His characterisation of classroom life is still at one stage removed from how it appears to the participants themselves and he could perhaps himself be charged with producing a further, if more sophisticated 'black box'. We still want to know why these changes in friendship patterns and culture emerged and how they are made manifest through face to face interaction in school. These points will be considered in more detail in Chapter III.

Jacob Kounin's work on the problems of classroom control is also very much a grounded theory. His research has covered two decades and has been reported in various publications. In 1970, Kounin assembled all his previously published research into one book, showing the development of his ideas over a period of time.

Kounin describes how he began his work after he had disciplined a student in a lecture for reading a newspaper. He noticed that other students in the lecture were affected by the discipline. Kounin's disciplinary or 'desist' statement had had a 'ripple effect' on the rest of the class. Thus the early work began with an investigation of the impact of a variety of different sorts of 'desist' statements used by teachers and their effect on the remainder of the class.

He investigated the 'clarity', 'firmness' and the 'roughness' of teachers' different desist statements, and by observing nursery children for two minutes at a time, tried to establish how the desists were related to task oriented or deviant behaviour.

He generally found that there was very little relationship between the child's reaction and the specific quality of the teachers desist, but that what was important was the general quality of the teacher's management.

Kounin's growing awareness of the importance of the general context of the disciplinary act was heightened by the studies he carried out in a children's camp, where he noted that there was no ripple effect when children were disciplined:

"There are then, consistent differences in children's conceptions of misconduct depending on whether they are talking about homes, schools or camps. Of special significance for this research are the differences in children's perceptions of the role of the central person in these situations" (Kounin 1970:20).

This understanding of the importance of the nature of the teacher's role was heightened by his study of disturbed children (i.e. those under psychiatric treatment) in normal classrooms. One of his most significant findings was that these children reacted differently to different teachers, and so did the rest of the class. Teachers who were capable of managing the class as a whole were also capable of managing specific disturbed children, and 'containing' them so that they did not disrupt the other children.

During this research, Kounin was gradually moving away from a consideration of the impact of specific disciplinary techniques to a study of what was involved in general classroom management and control. By this he did not mean that all techniques were equally effective.

Work in experimental situations had shown him that, other things being equal, certain techniques of discipline had more impact than others, but these experimental findings were not substantiated in the field work. He suggests that the 'ecological realities of the particular classroom are so important as to outweigh the effect of any particular technique. Kounin says:

"This latter learning involved unlearning on my part in the sense of having to replace the original questions by other questions. Questions about disciplinary techniques were eliminated and replaced by questions about classroom management" (1970: 143)

As a result, his research strategy changed: he began videotaping whole days of life in a classroom so that he could better examine the context of the disciplinary technique. He also became interested in trying to delineate concrete aspects of teachers' behaviour that led to managerial success in the classrooms.

For example, he identified two important dimensions in relation to the management of desists. Firstly 'Overlappingness' which was the degree to which the teacher stopped what she was doing to give the desist, and secondly 'with-it-ness' which was the teacher's ability to aim the desist at the right person at the right time.

Later, in 1968, Kounin went on to identify other dimensions in relation to general control. For example, he has identified 'Smoothness' and 'Momentum' which relates to how the teacher manages movement during recitation and transition periods. He also considers 'Seat work variety and challenge' which relates to how the teacher programmes the learning activities, and how intellectually challenging these are. All of these facets of teachers' style are related to 'successful' management of children during learning situations.

Walker (1971) says that Kounin's work is one of the best bodies of research in the field. He uses various different techniques -

videotaping, systematic and direct observation as well as as experimentation. He also uses large carefully selected samples in a variety of different settings. In addition, particularly in his latter work, Kounin provides a useful descriptive language with which to tackle the difficult problem of 'how to teach'. It is a language which is meaningful for the teacher as well as the researcher. What is most interesting is the way in which Kounin continually modifies his theory to fit his observations; he has slowly moved away from traditional techniques to the development of a grounded theory of discipline.

Although Kounin's work has very obviously developed to be closer to his data, his earlier interests do have a significant impact on his latest work. He began by being interested in extremely specific behavioural events, and has retained this interest in his consideration of the type of behaviour relevant to observe. Out of the complexity of the classroom, he has chosen to concentrate on surface behavioural factors. For example, in his definition of 'with-it-ness' he is concerned with whether the teacher aims the desist at the right person at the right time. This is the obvious selectivity of the research, and perhaps should have been made more explicit. Why has he chosen to regard these factors as data and ignore others? He might easily have examined what the pupils said or felt about the discipline, or what the teachers felt about their different strategies.

Kounin's grounded theory is directly related to his organising perspective for it is that which has determined what he considered relevant data to record. Yet he has not brought out the significance of this selective bias in discussing what he has found; his results are presented as having an independent validity of their own.

The impact of theory on what is observed is brought out most clearly by Louis Smith and William Geoffrey (1968) in their highly acclaimed study of an American 'down town' school. At the beginning of their book they explain that the personality theory of McClelland, the social theory of Homans and the learning theory of Skinner were important to them, and realise that these interests would inevitably have an impact on the way they looked at classroom events.<sup>21</sup>

Smith and Geoffrey's investigation of a single classroom has been praised because of its sophisticated research strategy. They were interested in studying how a middle class teacher coped with a group of working class children.

"The research had a strong orientation towards understanding the sequence of events centering on the teacher's coping with the children and the planning and strategy that lay behind that coping". (47)

To this end, Smith sat and observed Geoffrey teaching his own class of pupils for a term. Geoffrey himself took an active part in the research, recording his own intentions and reactions to classroom events which were later compared with Smith's observations. In this way they developed an 'inside' and 'outside' perspective on the teacher's work.

They began by recording in some detail the first few days in September when Mr Geoffrey met his class for the first time. Their objective was to discover how he established the 'ideal pupil' role - how he preached, instructed and admonished pupils until a conception of how they 'ought to behave' was estab-

lished. They call this process of teacher/pupil interaction 'grooving them in'.

The influence of both Skinner and Homans' is apparent in the interpretation when Smith and Geoffrey suggest that this is a 'shaping' process whereby a system of normative behaviour will be established amongst the class as a group.

They also describe the informal structure of the class, the sub-groups or cliques of pupils. Although they see the origin of these friendships as outside the classroom, they see them as having an impact inside in that they can be used by the teacher as part of his teaching strategy. For example they suggest that a teacher could keep a group of friends struggling with a difficult problem more easily than an individual, because they are all doing it together: "the teacher could keep the group in the problem, emitting responses until the correct one appeared and was reinforced" (75). (The influence from learning theory is even more apparent here).

In both their study of the development of the 'ideal pupil role' and their description of pupil cliques, Smith and Geoffrey's organising perspectives has, of course, led them to ignore features a phenomenologist would feel relevant. Only the teacher's perspective is considered. The children are shown as receiving rewards and punishments until they know how they ought to behave. Smith and Geoffrey do not investigate whether the children have the same model of the 'ideal pupil role' as the teacher has, or whether they accept it or not. Again with the study of cliques, it is from the teacher's point of view - it is not considered that clique membership may have some impact on how the pupils see the classroom or how they behave.

The teacher is somewhat naively portrayed as being in complete

control of what happens in the classroom; the children are the 'black box'. Learning theory has led them away from considering the thoughts and ideas of the pupils as relevant data to investigate.

Their perspective also influenced how the teacher himself saw things. One objective of their study was to try and record how Geoffrey went about coping with this class and for this purpose they established a research strategy whereby he discussed all his ideas with Smith. Inevitably Smith's theoretical perspective influenced Geoffrey in how he saw his work. This becomes most apparent when they describe how they both discovered that decision making theory was at the back of what the teacher was really doing.

"To us a major result of this investigation is the hypothesis that the teacher can be viewed from the model of decision maker...We became enthused with this discovery of teaching as decision-making. A number of sub-problems began to fall into place" (88)

For them, decision-making is the meta theory of teaching. They suggest that teachers have aims and goals, and different actions can be evaluated in terms of their ability to achieve these. Under the heading 'Operationalising the decision making model' (92), they suggest that aims and goals should be specified for each educational unit as this would aid the decision making process.

"For instance, in a literature lesson, what goals do I have?

What are the specific ways I can present this material?

What probabilities exist for changed attitudes, for increased information, for improved reading skills? A research supported theory of teaching will indicate the probabilities of these relationships?" (93)

This advice to teachers is remarkably similar to that given to people involved in writing programmed learning scripts, yet this is what Geoffrey saw himself as doing.

This study shows just how much theory influences what is seen in the classroom and underlines the importance of making that perspective clear at the beginning. Although I would disagree with the framework that Smith and Geoffrey have chosen, their book stands out as one of the most sophisticated in terms of its research strategy; they make their theoretical perspective clear and within that develop new grounded theories. Their work rightly stands out as a major landmark in classroom observation.

(iii) Classroom observation within a phenomenological framework

The blueprint for the phenomenological study of the school was laid by Cicourel and Kitsuse's (1963) book, the "Educational Decision Makers". Their research is directed at examining the careers of high school students and how they come to be looked upon and classified by the school as 'successes', 'failures', 'under-achievers', 'over-achievers' etc. etc. The field work was carried out in an upper middle class school, and therefore, theoretically at least, they suggest that the majority of the students ought to be motivated towards entering college. Obviously, not all pupils succeed in doing so and Cicourel and Kitsuse are interested in examining the organisational contingencies which go to establish a pupil's career as one that will lead to college or one that will lead to early leaving. They suggest that pupils who want to go to college are not automatically assigned to courses that will provide them with the relevant entrance qualifications. All pupils are continually assessed and evaluated by their ability; their actions are interpreted and reviewed; they are counselled on their problems; they are assigned to 'appropriate' courses. The successful student is a product not just of personal motivation derived from family and class background but also of a vast number of organisational decisions. To understand the impact of class ascribed motivation, Cicourel and Kitsuse rightly suggest that we need to examine the organisational processes which influences how

effectively these aspirations are carried out.

The authors draw on the work of Schutz to suggest that it is necessary to study how significant school personnel (teachers and school councillors) define and treat pupils. They want to know what classifications such as 'intelligent' and 'disturbed' mean to the teachers, and how they go about assigning pupils to such categories.

Following Schutz, they suggest that actors develop 'interpretative procedures' to make sense of their own world; these interpretations are seen as being accomplishments. If a term like 'disturbed' is to be used meaningfully amongst a group of teachers, it involves a certain amount of 'work'. The speakers imply something more than is implied in the normal dictionary definition of the term - it has a specific indexicality. In addition its meaning is seen to be linked to commonly accepted surface rules which would allow a teacher to 'know' when a child was 'disturbed'. For example, he might consistently interpret a child refusing to cooperate with his wishes as evidence of being 'disturbed'.

Cicourel and Kitsuse, then, are interested in how pupils come to be classified in the school statistics as having been 'disturbed', 'successes' 'failures' etc, etc. In their own words they say:

"Our problem was to investigate the day to day activities of school personnel, and the conceptions, definitions and criteria they employed to identify, classify and record 'cases' in the categories of the school statistics" (10)

As a means of gaining some leverage on these interpretative procedures used by school personnel, Cicourel and Kitsuse have applied a strategy frequently used in phenomenologically informed research; they have made a detailed study of the vocabulary and

syntax of the participants.

The assumption is that if teachers can talk meaningfully to each other, using terms like 'college-going' and 'noncollege-going', the terms must represent some mutually understood common sense knowledge about pupils. Even though such terms are often vague and only half formulated, they carry meaning for the participant, and provide valuable insights into how they define situations and people.

As Robinson (1974) has rightly pointed out, sociologists are increasingly beginning to see language not just as a background to social interaction, but as a central part of it. The individual takes part in a dialectic whereby he is able to impose his structure on the world by his use of language, but at the same time, participation in that common language structures and limits the world for him. The use of language in the classroom has therefore become a central research area in itself<sup>22</sup> as well as a technique for investigating other substantive issues.

Several more recent students have also been influenced by the work of Schutz and have devoted themselves to providing case histories of the ways in which teachers interpret, typify and label pupils. A well-known example is Nell Keddie's (1971) study of the teachers in the humanities department of a comprehensive school. Keddie suggests that the teachers operate with the concept of a 'normal pupil' which they use as a comparative base by which to make judgements about individual children. Teachers are described as 'knowing' certain things about different groups of pupils, and consequent on this classroom knowledge are different expectations about what it is appropriate to teach. Teachers

transmit different curriculum knowledge to different classes, depending on how they assess the type of pupils in them.

Unfortunately, Keddie provides all too little detail about how she has selected her data. Although from her writing it is apparent that she stands in the Schutzian tradition, her research strategy is open to the same criticism as that of Jules Henry and the other anthropologists; she supplies only the most minimal observational evidence to back up her propositions. We do not know if her understandings come from her observational data, or some predefined theory. In other words, we do not know if her work is thoroughly 'grounded'.

Another study is by Jenks (1971). Like Keddie, he too develops the notion of the 'ideal pupil' as a way of illustrating how teachers make judgements about what and how to teach.

The primary school that Jenks studied had changed considerably in the previous few years. Jenks says that the 'stable group' of older teachers who had been in the school for some time had a consensus view of the situation there. They were aware that with the changing neighbourhood, and the influx of immigrant families, their 'ideal client' was seldom met. For this group of teachers, the 'ideal pupil' was, among other things,

" . . . more 'white', from a 'better home', more 'polite', more 'cooperative', more 'interested', better 'behaved', 'nice' and even more 'intelligent'. (26/7)

The classes were now made up of mainly 'difficult' children.

Because this group of teachers characterised most of the pupils as being 'difficult', the predominant categorisation system used by them to differentiate children, was the extent to which

they could be 'controlled'.

"Thus the strategy of coping with the present situation involves a central notion of control, usually exercised as silence: this is what is sought after, and against this success in the classroom is measured . . ." (28)

Jenks says that control consequently became an important part of the curriculum; it was necessary for 'this type of child'. In stead of a curriculum of writing, spelling and maths, it became writing and control; spelling and control; maths and control.

The older teachers considered the modern 'child centred' methods of teaching inappropriate for the sort of children they had to deal with. Jenks describes how new, younger teachers were socialised into these standard ways of looking at the children and considering how best to teach them. New teachers had to 'learn the ropes' of teaching in that particular school, and naturally turned to the older teachers for advice. In addition, a system of 'team teaching' operated whereby different teachers took it in turns to work together; classrooms were not the private domain of any one teacher, but semi-public to the staff at large. Consequently new teachers found it difficult to maintain the more 'progressive' attitudes and pedagogy they had been taught in college. If they did not quickly embrace the established way of defining the situation, they usually left the school.

To a lesser extent, Jenks' study can be criticised in the same way as Keddie's. Although he does provide more observational data not all his propositions are as well supported. There is a lack

of detail in some of the concepts he develops, and as with Keddie's work this heightens the feeling of consensus that he reports in the way the teachers define situations. In addition he does not provide a very adequate account of exactly how the new teachers are 'socialised' into the established definitions - although 'logical', his understandings are not properly grounded in his data.

Another study, that of Beck (1972) examines how teachers and pupils look at the problem of transference from primary to secondary school. He investigates how different members of staff look at 'ability' and how committed they are to progressive techniques of 'pastoral care'. He then uses these understandings to see how teachers make sense of the problems children encounter in moving school. These teachers' perspectives are then compared with the way children look at this period of transference.

Beck demonstrates that parents pupils and teachers all have a similar 'psychometric' model of intelligence and ability; there is a high degree of intersubjectivity between these groups on this subject. Intelligence is seen as God given: either you have it, or you don't.

This basic ability is seen by the teachers as being distributed by social class, either genetically, or by the 'home background'. A child's intellectual potential may not be fully realised if he has a poor family background, but that potential still has an upper limit - the school is impotent to do very much about it. Ability was also seen by the teachers as being correlated with 'rational behaviour', 'maturity' and most important from Beck's point of view, with being able to cope with the new environment of the senior school. Pupils with a high I.Q. were generally considered to have less problems

during this period of adjustment. The low ability children were seen as suffering most by the change from the 'secure', 'stable' environment of the primary school to the complex and changing senior school. These children were seen as suffering from 'disorganisation'. Teachers saw these lower ability children's problems of adjustment in emotional rather than cognitive terms - it was not that the children did not understand the new subjects they were being taught, they just found the new environment upsetting and confusing.

This conception of the problem of adjustment explains why these teachers saw its solution as more contact with the pupils. More continuous, deeper relationships with the lower ability children, counselling them on their problems would help them overcome this difficult period.

Beck goes on to examine how these children themselves viewed this period of transference. He describes their attitudes to being 'banded' by ability (although most of the classes were 'mixed ability' the English and Maths classes were banded by ability - a fact which carried considerable stigma for those in the lowest group) and in much the same way as John Holt does, he describes their strategies of 'camouflage' in their new mixed ability classes. For example, these pupils would avoid teachers' questions, they would 'forget' their homework, and they would 'not bother' to take notes. Beck suggests that this way of avoiding showing themselves up made them lose contact with the teachers' system of relevancies in particular lessons. There was an ever present danger that those lessons would become literally quite meaningless to them.

Unfortunately, Beck says that the teachers saw these pupil

strategies as further evidence of 'disorganisation'. They considered that the children had emotional rather than cognitive difficulties, and the solution was to give them still more counselling!

Beck draws on the work of Barnes (1969) to suggest that these pupils were not suffering from emotional difficulties, but simply did not understand. He says that when entering a new academic subject, which has its own specialist language, the pupils have to make a 'cognitive leap' into that language, or the subject will remain nonsensical to them. In the lessons Beck observed, he suggests that the teachers had not brought the pupils to the point where the new specialist concepts had any meaning for them.<sup>23</sup>

Beck concludes by distinguishing three ways in which pupils adjust to the new, more specialist, subjects of senior school. There are the 'strangers', the 'estranged' and the 'alien'. All new pupils are 'strangers' to the new ways of learning, but some pupils will adjust easily, especially the upper band. The 'estranged' notice the discontinuity between primary and secondary school subjects, and want to succeed, but do not have the 'cultural capital' which enables the 'strangers' to adapt.

"The aliens, who comprise a significant proportion of the secondary school population, are those who, despite being in effect excluded from access to the specialised domain of knowledge institutionalised within the secondary school, are, at least at the outset of their secondary school careers, not aware of any exclusion nor any cognitive problems specifically related to transition. Indeed it is ironic, that

many of these pupils are among the more enthusiastic in welcoming the 'expert' teaching of the secondary school. Progressively during their school careers, the responses of these pupils, as compared with those of the 'strangers', come to appear less and less appropriate - the pupils thus supply evidence of their apparent ineducability" (Beck 1972: 7.22)

Robinson (1974) has criticised Beck's study for not taking into account the external pressures on pupils which produce anxiety on transference to a secondary school. 'The school is seen in isolation. What are the effects of parental pressures, expectations; community pressures; anticipatory socialisation within the primary school.' (262). Although this is obviously correct it seems an unfair criticism to level at only Beck's work; nearly all ethnographies of schools fall down on this point. Only Jules Henry and the other anthropologists and perhaps Lacey (1970) have successfully gone beyond the school, into the community at large.

A far more important criticism of Beck is that he is not consistent in his theoretical position in relation to his data. He begins his work in the Schutzian tradition, researching the teachers' organising perspectives in looking at pupils' problems of adjustment. Yet his explanations of what really happens (i.e. that pupils simply do not understand the new subjects) comes from outside this tradition. In looking at the problem of moving into the technical language of new subjects, he is simply providing observational evidence to back up Barnes' (1969) theory.

Although a plausible explanation of what happens, the data is not presented in a way that illustrates its relevance to pupils

in specific learning situations. As was argued above, supporting an existing theory with observational data can not be considered 'proof'; it is no more than illustration.

Like most other studies of schools, those in the phenomenological tradition have mainly concentrated on the teachers' perspectives, although there are a few notable exceptions. Woods (1974) for example has looked at how teachers 'show up' pupils as a technique of control. It is a specific form of 'desist' investigated by Kounin. By recording pupils' statements, Woods reports the nature of different sorts of 'showings up' that pupils recognise, and how they react to them.<sup>24</sup>

Slightly outside the sphere of the classroom, Atkinson's (1974) study of trainee doctors being taught how to diagnose patients represents an attempt to grapple with the difficult problem of how students themselves look at different learning situations. Atkinson explores two terms from the medical student's argot 'hot' and 'cold' medicine. 'Hot medicine' is where the students see the patient when they are being admitted to the hospital for the first time; where they actually have an opportunity to diagnose the patient at the same time as the surgeon. But the majority of teaching situations are what the students call 'cold'. The patient has already been diagnosed and treatment is under way. It is essentially a 'mock up' situation where the students have to diagnose the patient. This situation frequently poses problems for the instructor for he has to 'manage' the patients so that they do not 'give the game away' too soon if they knew what was wrong with them. (In a recent paper Atkinson and Deloment (1975) have shown the similarity between this 'mock up' situation and how a teacher

has to manage the mock 'discovery' in Nuffield Science).

One of the best known studies of the pupil's perspective of school is Carl Werthman's description of a delinquent gang in Berkeley California, reported in two articles (1970 and 1963).

He begins by suggesting that the traditional model of the juvenile delinquent faring badly in school because he is up against a 'monolithic' middle class institution, is simplistic and misleading. Firstly he notes that a great deal of 'trouble' occurs outside the classroom, secondly, that among the gang members he studied, there was no relationship between academic performance and trouble, and finally, trouble occurred consistently in some classes and not in others.

"It is only in particular classes with particular teachers that incidents leading to suspension flare up. We thus need to see how the same gang member may become a 'trouble maker' in one classroom and an 'ordinary student' in another" (Werthman, 1970:26/7)

25

In his two published papers, Werthman explores some of the ways pupils go about classifying and reacting to teachers. He begins by noting that teaching and learning are not the only activities that go on in the classroom as far as the pupils are concerned. If they are tired they sleep, if they are bored, they read comics; if they feel energetic, they may 'have fun'. How the teacher handles these situations is critical. If he is authoritarian, and disciplines the gang members in such a way as to undermine their sense of autonomy, then a character contest can begin. If on the other hand the teacher recognises the irrelevancy of the classroom to these students, and respects their sense of autonomy,

but still insists on the rules being followed, then he is considered 'straight', and conflict is usually avoided.

Werthman suggests that most delinquent behaviour is used to claim an identity which the school cannot touch. In the classroom, the boy often uses the teacher as a way of defining his autonomy

" . . . like behaviour on the streets, he often creates or provokes a situation in which he can defend his honour" (Werthman, 1970:34).

The gang members do not consider it legitimate for the teacher to make comments on their dress, or behaviour outside the classroom, but a 'straight' teacher's authority will be respected as long as he confines himself to teaching and learning situations.

Teachers are not only assessed in terms of how they handle their authority. In his 1963 paper, Werthman describes how the gang members assess teachers on how they distribute grades for work. By the time they had reached the high school most gang members were interested in what marks they got for school work, and it became crucial for them to find out how those marks were being distributed. Werthman describes the pupils acting as good social scientists, testing different hypotheses. They want to know if the teachers are bribing them with good marks, whether he is penalising them for misbehaviour, whether he is assigning marks randomly, or again whether he is being 'straight'. The gang members have a fairly good idea of how well they should do depending on their assessment of their intelligence and how hard they have worked. Grades that are obviously inconsistent with these notions have to be explained by the teachers, and if they are not being 'straight' then it is quite legitimate for the gang members to misbehave in class.

All of the studies examined so far have taken up the same research

strategy. They have all investigated the actors' use of argot in order to understand how they structure their subjective worlds. Whether the terms are 'intelligent', 'disturbed' or 'straight teacher', the assumption is that an elaboration of their meaning will give some insight into what 'real life' situations mean to them. It is assumed that the individual actor will define situations in accordance with the classification implicit in his use of the language of the group.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately this assumption is too simple. Analysing speech in one situation will not always predict action in another. For example Green (1972) has shown that participation in the 'progressive' language of the staff room, need not mean that the teacher is progressive in her attitudes towards the children. In his study of a teacher fluent in that language he shows her to be far from progressive in her treatment of children in the private domain of her classroom.<sup>27</sup>

It is not enough to elaborate the meaning of commonly used terms - they need exploring in concrete situations, where it may be found that they take on a totally new meaning.

This problem is to some extent foreshadowed by Beck. He is concerned about recording language in one situation, and assuming that it will be meaningful in another. For example, he mentions a teacher who implies two quite different understandings of 'intelligence' when talking on two different occasions. Beck says that when the teacher described the children in general he used a static psychometric notion of intelligence, but on another occasion, when discussing a particular child, he implied a possible development of cognitive ability. Beck seems slightly surprised by this observation, yet surely it is simplistic to assume that

individuals will always interpret situations in the same static way. People have a great many subjective perceptions of the world - how they interpret it at any one time will depend on the specific contingencies of the setting.

This is not to suggest that we can use language as a way of understanding actors' subjective worlds - we can, but we need far more sensitive analysis of the specific indexicality of that language. The same words will take on different meanings in different concrete situations.

An important step towards this sort of understanding has been taken by Walker and Adelman (1972). Their work stems from a different interest from the studies described above. They were not interested in providing case studies of particular schools or groups of teachers and pupils so much as developing a technique, for exploring a particular pedagogy: the 'open' classroom.

They suggest that the traditional methods of observing in classrooms (i.e. systematic and participant observation) are inappropriate where there is both weak 'classification' and 'framing',<sup>28</sup> and they have consequently developed a technique of 'participant recording' where they use a stop frame film technique alongside their field notes, to observe classrooms over long periods of time.

Systematic observation was obviously inappropriate for the depth of analysis they were interested in, but their approach had distinct advantages over traditional field notes as well. Film was not only a more reliable record of events in the classroom, but they could also go back over particular events that later on became significant in the developing history of the class. They could also show their

recordings to other people, who could give their interpretations of what was happening. By using this technique, they set out to produce what they have called sociographies of the classroom.

One of the main themes of their research report is the indexicality of speech in open classrooms. Early experiments with tape recordings in these informal contexts had demonstrated that it was not possible to understand the speech without seeing what was happening at the time. They found they had to use film if they were going to understand what was being said. Only by seeing on film who was talking and what they were doing was it possible to make any sense of what was being said.

Interestingly enough, this development of the 'stop frame' technique, suggested a new theoretical perspective to Walker and Adelman; in having to make decisions about how fast or how slow to set the camera speed, they began to raise questions about how much information you need in order to 'understand' what is going on.

"We are not therefore simply describing a technique which may be used as an alternative to video taped closed circuit television in some situations. We are raising general questions about the kinds of information certain social situations both generate and require to exist and about the minimum perceptions and transmissions of that information required to constitute and sustain identities within them". (18)

They go on to say:

"We are working towards asking, what do you need to perceive, recollect and express in order to participate within certain settings? What constraints does the

setting operate within in order to contain these actions. In other words, within this one culture what perceptions and actions are necessary to sustain and repeat the culture" (19)

Of course, these questions could equally well be asked in relation to 'closed', 'formal' classrooms, but because Walker and Adelman have looked at a less structured situation, it highlights the fact that participants have to maintain common definitions for interaction to continue. They illustrate that 'open' classrooms demand more interpretative 'work' than in closed ones. It seems that almost by accident, Walker and Adelman have stumbled into sociolinguistics.

Posing these questions has led the authors into a number of interesting areas. For example in one paper<sup>29</sup> they suggest that speech in the informal classroom promotes a different relationship between the teacher and the pupil. When teachers, both formal and informal, talk to the whole class they have to use strong framing, but when an informal teacher interacts with a small group or an individual, the nature of the speech must change. This prevents stereotyped roles developing for either the pupil or the teacher.

"The term 'role' does not help much to elucidate the relationships. Everyone is encouraged to have an identity, thus each gives an individual performance and is encouraged to interpret experiences for themselves". (30)

To use Schutz' terms, there is a movement from a 'contemporary' to a 'consocial' relationship; there is a higher and more elaborate

degree of intersubjectivity between the teacher and the pupil.

In "Strawberries" (Walker and Adelman 1972: 52-81) they further elucidate the indexicality of speech, by exploring classroom jokes. To understand the jokes they give, the researcher has to know the shared culture of the class and particularly the shared knowledge they have of each other's personal identity. One of the jokes they example had a history of several years. They are illustrating the point that although a particular argot develops among different groups of people, it often has a quite general meaning, so that it can be understood outside its particular situation. What they are looking at is something more context-bound than argot: classroom jokes can only be understood specifically in that classroom.

Unfortunately, it seems that Walker and Adelman do not go far enough; the case of the classroom joke is a very good example of the indexicality of speech; its meaning is only apparent to that group of pupils who share a common history. Yet the same could be said for many of the terms referred to above as argot. Teachers' argot has a generalised meaning over and above specific situations. This enables them to take part in meaningful conversations. Yet participation in this common language is not the same as action in specific situations. The other phenomenological studies fall down because they only look at that generalised argot: it is a fairly gross analysis. They do not look at what teachers and pupils actually do in concrete situations. Typical action transforms a fairly generalised term into something more specific. One can investigate what a term like 'intelligence' means in staffroom talk, but this might be quite different from what it means to a teacher in the classroom. In that private domain, the term will take on a

new indexicality for the teacher which may or may not be the same as that implied in the staff room talk. Meanings are transformed by specific situations and this is a point that is taken up in the final section of this thesis. Walker and Adelman have only touched on the surface of the problem in their study of informal classrooms.

Another study, that of Green (1972) (more recently incorporated in the work of Sharp and Green (1975) ) has attempted a critique of phenomenology by recognising this disjunction between general meanings and action in specific contexts. Green suggests that in the classroom there is a material and political structure which has a vital impact on the way actors go about defining their reality. Individuals are aware to a greater or lesser extent of the constraints upon how they they see the world (and hence how they talk about it) but those constraints exist and can be demonstrated empirically. For Green the main question is not how but why reality is defined as it is by teachers and pupils. He sees the choice as dependent on the structural contingencies of the setting.

"We wish to make that choice (of how to define a situation) problematic suggesting that the elective affinity in the praxis of the actor's reconciliation of his felt interests and the situation, may involve more or less freedom depending on the structure of the situation" (18)

In studying one particular infant's teacher Green begins, like the phenomenologists by studying her language: she says she does. She describes herself as being 'child-centred', responsive to the individual pupil's needs and development. She therefore has no formal programme of work, devising different tasks for her pupils as they are 'ready'. Green formulates this child-centred approach as the official 'ideology' of the school - it is the approach avowed by the headmaster

and by most of the staff to a greater or lesser degree. Green then goes on to describe what the teacher actually does in the classroom and finds that central to the teachers work is 'busyness'. From the point of view of the school's ideology if a child is 'busy' (be that at what is usually called 'work' or 'play'), he is responding to his inner psychological needs and the school is fulfilling its function in providing for individual development. Green suggests that in practice, the notion of the children being self-directed and 'busy' was essential to as teacher trying to cope with 30 pupils doing 30 different things. It also made her free to devote more time to those who 'chose' to be busy on 'academic work' and she could legitimately leave to themselves those who chose to work out their psychological problems in the sand pit. Thus despite the official ideology of equal opportunity a hierarchial differentiation of children emerged via the praxis of 'busyness'.

There is thus a reported disjunction between what the teacher says she does (her avowed ideology) and what she actually does (as recognised by Green). This gap is bridged by the 'structure' of the situation. Green suggests that the teacher's classroom behaviour does not simply come about as a result of intersubjective conversations with other members of staff (as he says Schutz would have us believe), but emerges because of various pressures (material and political) that impinge on her. The expectations of powerful people, such as the headmaster and the parents and the material problem of coping with thirty pupils, all have an impact on how she sees the classrooms and the pupils in it. Her child centred ideology, developed through conversations with other teachers is transformed into a 'substantive consciousness' as a result of the complex dialectical relationship between (a) her theoretical practices (as evidenced in her talk with other teachers), (b) her substantive practices and (c) the political and material situation that

she faces.

To the extent that a teacher only recognises what she is doing in terms of the child-centred ideology, she can be said to be 'falsely conscious' she is ignoring the political and material context which are 'really' influencing her. Green also suggests that the child-centred ideology can be placed in a political framework too, in that the teacher who avowed it most strongly in the staffroom was identified by the Headmaster as the 'best' teacher and was consequently given considerable freedom. On the other hand, the teacher who was least happy with the approach had the lowest status.

At first sight Greens' analysis appears to be a very thorough and tightly argued condemnation of phenomenology. If what is 'really' influencing teachers is their political and material context, whether or not they are conscious of it, then that imposed severe limitations on the efficacy of studying actors perspectives. It suggests that structure will influence what people do and think even if they are unaware of it - if this is the case why bother to study the actors' perspective at all. As actors cannot be relied upon to know what is influencing them it is obviously more efficient to simply study the external structure. Although Green draws on many of the concepts and methodologies of phenomenology and participant observation his study is in fact intended to be a direct challenge to this approach to sociology.

In fact though a closer analysis of the work shows that Green has misunderstood and misused some of the phenomenological concepts he is attacking - in particular the nature of 'accounts'. Although it is not stated, it seems that Green recorded his data and then constructed his analysis later. Although not ideal this is a common procedure, yet it does have quite a dramatic effect on the lines that Green's work takes.

He began by observing lessons and recording the teacher's accounts of what she was doing. Later he constructed these accounts into an 'ideology' which he suggests was endorsed by the other staff and the headmaster too. From his classroom observations he suggests that what was really affecting the teachers practice were the political and material constraints of the situation which played no part in how she accounted for what she did. Because Green constructed this formulation in retrospect he gave the teacher no opportunity to comment on it; he simply suggests that as political awareness is not part of the child-centred system of accounts, she is falsely conscious. In fact though if he had taken his analysis back to his teacher, it seems highly likely that she would have agreed with his political interpretations. Teachers are aware of the impact of the expectations of powerful people such as headmaster the inspectorate and parents. They are also supremely aware of the 'material' context of large numbers of pupils and restricted time. If he had asked her it seems quite likely that this teacher could have provided a quite different account of what she did in classrooms in these terms. Green had misunderstood the nature of accounts. As Weider (1974) has shown, accounts are an 'invitation' to construe events in a particular way. We provide different accounts to different audiences and there is a certain amount of politics in that process too. As an external observer from the local technical college Green would have been likely to only be provided with the 'official' account of work going on in the school. In the more private talk of the staffroom, teachers often give quite different accounts, some of which will be 'structural' in nature.

Green's analysis is largely correct; it shows the importance of studying language and action in understanding situational meanings.

Therefore it is probably quite true that the school's official ideology apparent in teachers' public accounts of what they do is changed and transformed into classroom practice by the political and material context that the teacher faces, yet these constraints are not nor can be outside the teacher's own consciousness. If we are to look at the relationship between talk and action (and the last section of this thesis makes some attempt to do this as far as pupils are concerned), then it must be done in terms of how structural situations are recognised and dealt with by the actors themselves; it can not be 'short-cut' by the notion of false consciousness.

These are the concerns taken up at the end of the thesis. Before that, two other perspectives are developed, symbolic interactionism and Schutz' phenomenology. In much the same way that Smith and Geoffrey (1968) worked it is hoped to develop a grounded theory of pupils classroom interaction using these two theories as guiding perspectives to select and analyse the data. The theoretical problem of situated meaning arises at the end of the thesis because as Green found out these perspectives can not explain all that has been observed. But rather than rejecting the phenomenological framework as Green appears to be suggesting, it is proposed that ethnomethodology can provide an answer to these problems.

Notes for Chapter II

1. Jackson's (1968) book "Life in Classrooms" has been important in the move towards classroom research. In it, he discusses traditional research in the light of his own observations of classrooms.

"He uses direct observation to check research evidence, to give it meaning, and to move it from the simple to the complex. The advantage of doing this is that it allows him to retain an image of classroom activity as one of complexity, ambiguity and transience" (Walker 1971:116)

2. Elsewhere Walker (1971) has said

"It is easy enough to produce theories that are objective in that they exist apart from the reality from which they are drawn, but when it comes to using theories for explanation within that reality, the researcher is often presented with a problem from which many withdraw entirely" (Walker 1971: 114)

3. Simon and Boyer's (1975) latest edition has a 1000 item bibliography!

4. The journal "Interaction Newsletter" tries to maintain an up to date record of systems in use, but even this does not cover them all.

5. The importance of Flanders in this field is reflected in the contents of two recent books by the N.F.E.R. (Channon (ed.) 1973 and Channon and Delamont (eds.) 1975). Many of the articles look at the work of Flanders.

6. Most of the early work in the field was carried out by American social psychologists who have established the need to be 'scientific'

above all, For a good review of the development of Interaction Analysis, see Walker (1971).

7. For an elaboration of this distinction see below.
8. See for example Walker (1974) and the work of the SAFARI project, Parlett and Hamilton (1972) and the Project PHI reports (1974).
9. See for example Deanne Boydell (1974) and Delamont (1973).
10. Silberman (1973) has argued that the change from 'direct' to 'indirect' teaching is in fact only a modest improvement. After reviewing a vast selection of current educational research he advocates a far more radical change than is implied in Flanders' work. He wants to see the teacher become responsive to the interests of the pupils:

"To be sure, many of those using interaction analysis for teacher training believe strongly that the less direct a teacher i.e. the less he lectures and the more he solicits student responses the better his teaching, and there is some evidence that teachers trained in this way do teach in a less directive way. But while it is what the writer at least would call the right direction, the change nonetheless is modest. The teacher after all remains the focal figure, standing in front of a room filled with rows of desks, teaching twenty five or thirty youngsters as though they were all interested in the same thing at the same time. If the teacher is less directive it is because he lectures less and asks more questions and not because he tries to evoke learning from the student's interests; the teacher still dominates the classroom, deciding what learning

should be done, when it should start and

when it should end" (Silberman, 1973:456/7)

11. In a similar way Kounin (1970) found that he could only discover the significance of a disciplinary action taken by a teacher by looking at it in the ongoing context of the classroom. It was only by staying in classrooms over long periods of time that he realised that it was not specific disciplinary events that were important, but the teacher's general management technique.

12. For example, in looking at the history essays that children wrote Warren says:

"Common to most of the essays was an emphasis on the contrast between the rights enjoyed under the present government and the conditions of servitude which previous generations had experienced under serfdom, monarchies and dictatorships" (Warren 1967:82)

13. A similar point is made by Dumont and Wax (1969) in their study of Cherokee Indians in school.

14. Hence the title of the book 'Culture Against Man'.

15. Henry could hardly defend himself by saying that these interpretations were valid because the observers were active participants in the situation - they were not. To use Bruyn's (1966) typology Henry's field workers were 'complete' observers as opposed to participants. Their judgements were therefore external to the situation.

16. An example from Henry's study of Rome High School is the proposition "Sex and the convention of legitimate misrepresentation" where he shows a girl steering a narrow line between remaining

sexually attractive (by using a padded bra etc.) and being afraid of being too attractive and not being able to control her admirers.

17. Glaser and Strauss (1967) talk about the 'great men' who have developed 'grand theories' and the influence they have had over other researchers.

"As a result, many potentially creative students have limited themselves to puzzling out small problems bequeathed to them by 'big theories' . . . These 'grand theorists' have played 'theoretical capitalism' to the mass of 'proletariate' testers by training young sociologists to test their teachers' work but not to imitate it" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 10/11)

18. After some consideration Delamont (1973) abandoned other more traditional 'paper and pencil' tests of pupils

"Little emphasis has been placed on other standardised measures of pupil attitude or personality. This lack of emphasis was deliberate. Just as many studies of personality and attitudes among teachers have little relevance to classroom events, so too the vast educational literature on personality correlates of pupils performance is disappointing - especially at the individual level. Many studies show correlates at the level of the large sample, but few predict individual behaviour" (401)

19. See for example Hamilton and Delamont (1974)

20. For example she 'explains' a girl's unusual choice of war books to read by stating that her father was in the army. We are left to see the logic of this explanation for ourselves.

21. For example take their concept of 'Provisional Try' a strategy they saw teachers continually using:

"Using our conception of teaching as a decision making process seems to demand such an approach. In essence, much of the teacher's behaviour needs to be analysed as a tentative gambit, a trial that becomes a permanent part of the structure only if it meets certain criteria such as 'being interesting', 'promoting learning' and so forth. A number of illustrations occurred in Geoffrey's classroom; for instance seating arrangements were put in the context of 'we'll try it for a while and see how it goes.'"

This concept of the 'Provisional Try' is directly related to Skinner's notion of 'shaping', yet this is what Smith and Geoffrey 'saw' happening in the classroom.

22. See in particular the work of Stubbs (1976) and Walker and Adelman (1972).

23. He gives the example of a science lesson where the pupils were considering the 'elastic' properties of different things;

"It may be that one reason for the withdrawal of interest was that the design of the lesson . . . had not brought them to a point where the specialised concept of 'elasticity', around which for the teacher the lesson was organised, held for the pupils any theoretical interest" (Beck 1972:7.9)

24. Woods might be criticised for trying to develop the notion of 'Showing them up' as context free. One of the important

findings that came out of Kounin's (1970) work was that techniques of discipline are extremely context bound.

25. A very similar theme is pursued in this thesis.

26. Delamont (1973) points out that Becker made a similar assumption

"Becker and his collaborators, though proficient at establishing the common perspective for the majority of students, did not manage to show differences between sub-groups or individuals - these are simply defined as subsidiary to the common perspectives" (Delamont 1973:183/4)

27. See below for a fuller discussion of Green's work.

28. They use Bernstein's (1971) term 'classification' to describe the degree of insulation between the contents of the curriculum, and the term 'frame' to refer to the degree of control the teachers and pupils have over the organising, pacing and selection of knowledge. In the 'open' classroom, what counts as knowledge is open to negotiation and both teachers and pupils take part in the organisation and selection of that knowledge.

29. "Talk and transcribing from informal settings, with special reference to small groups" (Walker and Adelman 1972: 26/31)

### Chapter III

#### Symbolic Interactionism: the first guiding perspective

##### 1. Introduction

A central concern of this thesis is a study of what Blumer (1965) called joint action; the way in which lines of behaviour of individuals (or pupils) are fitted together to form a common or social act. Blumer gives as examples of joint action a trading transaction, a family at dinner, a marriage ceremony, etc., and to that list we might easily add such examples as a class listening to a teacher, a group of pupils telling a joke, or two children working together on a scientific experiment. Joint actions range in complexity from two people simply working together to the complex interrelationship of individuals involved in a large organisation. For Blumer, as for many others, joint action rather than individual behaviour is the fundamental unit of society

"Everywhere we look in human society, we see people engaging in forms of joint action. Indeed the totality of such instances - in all their multitudinous variety, their variable connections, and complex networks - constitutes the life of society (Blumer 1965:19)

It is the assumption that human behaviour cannot be conceived of in an individualistic way that separates the social psychologists and sociologists from psychologists. Elsewhere Blumer (1953) says that

"The premise of social psychology is that group life is the setting inside of which individual

experience takes place, and that such group life exerts a decisive influence on such experience" (186)

In other words, all 'psychological' factors such as 'personality' or 'attitudes' or 'drives' do not have any independent existence, but only have relevance within the context of human association.

So far, few people would quarrel with these generalised statements, yet what is very much at issue is how best to conceive of that process of joint action. Theories about the way in which individuals take account of each other and fit their actions together are frequently in conflict. Each may illuminate only a different aspect of the process, though they often claim much wider validity.

As was mentioned in Chapter I, this thesis will be organised in a 'developmental' way. There are three distinct 'theoretical' sections, all having different implications as to what constitutes 'data'. These three sections can be looked on as examples of different ways of conceptualising joint action, each attempting to build on the inadequacies and insights of the others.

The first section will be concerned with symbolic interactionist theory, particularly that of Blumer, and his interpretation of Mead. It will be useful to begin by looking at the criticisms that symbolic interactionists level at more traditional explanations of joint action.

In 1953 Herbert Blumer said:

"Unfortunately, in my opinion, present day social psychology is relying to a formidable extent on schemes of human association which do not reflect faithfully the nature of human association" (202)

He suggested that instead of carefully observing the process of human association, most researchers either work at a very gross level,

utilizing purely second order constructs such as 'roles', 'statuses' and 'norms' etc. or they import various schemes as explanations or models of interaction. For example, he said that one common approach is to utilize a psychological model, whereby individual psychological features such as 'drives' and 'attitudes' are seen as the cause of human association. Another common approach is to use an analogy from another discipline so that joint action may be seen in terms of organic systems or operating in line with statistical probabilities,<sup>1</sup>

Twenty years after Blumer made these observations, they are still largely correct. Until recently, it was still true to say that the most widely accepted studies in education did not base themselves on a detailed observation of pupil interaction.

A frequently accepted characterisation of joint action has been in terms of small groups; in the hands of different theorists, groups have been conceptualised in terms of psychological needs, organic systems and mathematical models. If we take three of the most widely quoted British studies of pupil's classroom behaviour (i.e. Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) and Sugarman (1968)), then we find that two of these studies (Hargreaves and Sugarman) derive their hypotheses and organise their data in terms of functionalist model of group behaviour. Lacey's study on the other hand, conceives of groups in individualistic terms.<sup>2</sup>

As a way of illustrating Blumer's criticism that a good deal of research is not directed at the individuals' experience, it is worthwhile looking a little more closely at the models of joint action implicit in these three important studies.

## 2. Hargreaves' and Sugarman's use of the Functionalist Model of Groups

Both Hargreaves and Sugarman draw on a functionalist model of group behaviour. Sugarman summarises that model most clearly as follows:

"The group-as-causal-factor theory involves a set of assumptions . . . The most crucial assumption is that among members of each group (defined by regularity of interaction) there develop certain norms or values in the sense of preferences for and against various kinds of behaviour (including the expression of beliefs, sentiments and attitudes). Whether or not the norms, values or preferences reach conscious articulation, the theory assumes that they tend to pattern members' behaviour in ways that it would not otherwise take. The basic mechanism through which this works is that some members come to feel that they should all act or think in a certain way. They start (quite spontaneously) to react to the behaviour of others in terms of whether those others are conforming or not to those norms. When they encounter conformity, they react more warmly, more favourably to the individual and when they find deviance, the opposite. Thus behaviour in line with emerging norms tends to be rewarded, reinforced and so repeated, while other behaviour does not" (Sugarman 1968: 47)

Hargreaves presents a similar picture of joint action - the individual child tailors his action to fit in with the emerging 'norms' of his group, that is how he thinks others expect him to behave. Joint action is not considered as two individuals inter

acting directly with each other so much as one person acting vis a vis 'the group' as a whole, each conforming to the expectations of the other members and gaining his rewards in his social exchange with them as a group. It is this interrelationship between the customary ways of doing things, i.e. the norms, and the 'control' of mutual expectations, "that forms the steel of society" (Homans 1951:178).

A great many social psychologists, not just Hargreaves and Sugarman, have been influenced by this conception of the human group. It has been customary in most textbooks to discuss a group's norms, values, goals and membership, and even problems of relating to the 'environment' and maintaining 'equilibrium'.<sup>3</sup> Yet it seems that the majority of these theorists have divorced such concepts from the essentially functionalist analysis developed by for example Homans, of which they form an integral part.<sup>4</sup>

Sugarman and Hargreaves do not mention the organic analogy used by Homans, yet their whole conception of what groups are and how they influence their members is dependent on such an approach.

The most central notion taken from a functionalist theory is that groups exist in a concrete way. This is a theoretical assumption, yet it is from this that the notion of group norms, and status hierarchies develop, both of which are central to Hargreaves' and Sugarman's research.

Hargreaves and Sugarman used very different techniques to collect their data (Hargreaves used participant observation and questionnaires in one school just looking at four classes, while Sugarman used questionnaires to survey four schools and 540 pupils). Despite this, they were both concerned with identifying similar features within

the informal life of the pupils. By using sociometric questionnaires, they both attempted to identify which group each pupil belonged to. Asking each pupil who they went around with was expected to reveal those pupils who spent a lot of time together; the rationale being that those who spent most time together would be those who would develop customary ways of doing things. i.e. they would develop norms.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, the first assumption taken from functionalism is that groups exist in some given way - that they have boundaries and that it is possible to tell who is 'in' and who is 'out' of each group.<sup>6</sup> "The definition of the group implies and is meant to imply that the group has a boundary and that outside that boundary is the group's environment" (Homans 1951:86)

If we take the example of Homans as an important figure in functionalism and look at how he developed his idea that groups exist in some real and objective way, then Blumer's criticism of this type of theorizing becomes relevant. It is obvious that Homans' conception of a group as a concrete entity is more dependent on his imported organic model than on actual observation.

Homans develops his theory of groups by 're-writing' famous empirical studies. He begins by looking at the Bank wiring room in the Hawthorne experiments. He suggests that the 'group' is the 16 men who work in the same room - he considers them as all sharing norms and values, and all agreeing on a common idea of status. In theory Homans defines his groups by the amount of interaction; those who interact most frequently will be more likely to develop customary ways of behaving and expect conformity to those norms by others. Yet within the Bank wiring room (as within any other collection of people) there was an unequal distribution of interaction; there were

a number of sub groups who interacted more frequently amongst themselves. Presumably then, each clique would have developed its own norms and expectations of behaviour, yet Homans continually emphasises that the group must be considered as a whole. He utilises his notion of a social system to draw together the various interactions into a single 'group' and criticises the original Hawthorne experimenters for not emphasising this cohesiveness.

Drawing the boundaries of the group seems to be a very arbitrary decision for Homans, Hargreaves and Sugarman, but it becomes crucial in the development of their respective theses, for the individual is seen as orienting his behaviour towards how he imagines the 'group' as a whole expects him to act. Who this group is therefore becomes vitally important - is it the clique, as Sugarman implies, is it all the pupils in the class as Hargreaves' analysis suggests or is it the school as a whole as an earlier study by Coleman (1961) implied?<sup>7</sup> There is very little observational evidence within Homans' work or that of any of his followers to tell us which it is. Using systems theory demands that a group boundary be established in order to differentiate the internal system from the environment. The decision as to where to put that boundary has to be arbitrary.

It is because Hargreaves and Sugarman uncritically take this notion of groups existing in some concrete way with specifiable boundaries that they begin by administering sociometric questionnaires. A questionnaire that asks the pupils to specify the 5 friends they 'go around with' most of the time at school, can not help but make groups emerge in the researcher's mind, whether or not they exist in any real sense for the participants.

Once the group has been conceived in this objectively 'real' sense, over and above individual interaction then the concepts of norms and status hierarchies follow easily.

Homans says "The more frequently men interact with one another, the more nearly alike they become in the norms they hold . . ." (Homans 1951:126). Norms for Homans are ideas that group members have about their customary ways of doing things. Those people who interact regularly establish routines and each comes to expect the others to act in line with these established patterns. Yet norms are more than this, they are also 'sanction patterns'; those who do not conform to the established norms are punished by the group.<sup>8</sup> It is because Homans' systems model suggests that people interact in groups (rather than in cliques or as individuals or whatever) that he is able to suggest that these norms become established for that group as a whole. Norms are therefore abstract and not related to any particular individual or situation. For example, the sort of norms Hargreaves reports are that the pupils of his 4A wore ties, while those of 4D did not; pupils in 4A valued homework whereas those in 4D did not. Such norms are seen as belonging to the group as a whole and not to any individual participant.<sup>9</sup> Yet as we have seen, the idea that people act as a group rather than in any other way is not based on actual observational evidence, but is simply an assumption taken from theory. Such a criticism seriously challenges the efficacy of studies such as Sugarman's which uses simple questionnaires, assuming that groups of pupils will unilaterally be 'pro' or 'anti' school.<sup>10</sup>

The implications of the assumption that groups exist objectively becomes compounded even further when Homans moves on to talk about

status hierarchies. As he assumes (unfoundedly) that everyone in the 'group' conforms to the same norms, he suggests that those who identify most closely with them will have most status. Both Sugarman and Hargreaves draw on the idea of commonly accepted norms being linked to hierarchies. They each administer questionnaires (and Hargreaves also observes directly) in order to gain some leverage on the norms of the groups they study. In order to determine which norms reported are the norms of the group, they each turn to the notion of a status hierarchy. Taking the idea that those who conform most to the norms of the group will be highest in status, Sugarman and Hargreaves have tried to identify who are the most popular boys in the groups they have identified and assumed that the normative behaviour of these boys will symbolize what is held as valuable by every one else.

Blumer's criticism is certainly true for these two famous studies. We have a progressive cycle of assumptions taking us further and further away from direct observation and experience of joint action. Homans' imported organic systems model led him to suggest that groups have some objective existence and that they have boundaries. This led to a further assumption that norms of behaviour were held by all members in common. These norms are seen as abstract and the individual member has to tailor his action into line with what the group as a whole expects. This leads us to another assumption that those who conform most closely to these mythical commonly held norms, will be of higher status and will thus be in a better position to influence what goes on in the group.

### 3. Lacey's 'Individualistic' Model of Joint Action

The other important study of pupils at school is Lacey's (1970) Hightown Grammar and this uses what I will characterise as a more 'individualistic' conception of motivation in groups.

Lacey is concerned with the relationship between social class and academic achievement and in criticising earlier 'macro' studies of this topic, he says that there is nothing to suggest that the features that those researchers considered relevant are necessarily the salient ones as far as the actor's are concerned. This is one of the reasons Lacey began a detailed participant observation study of one school. Nevertheless it can be argued that although his work is a great improvement on the macro studies of the 1950's and 1960's, and although he obviously has a 'sympathy' with the pupils themselves, he still does not deal with their conceptions of interaction directly; we do not know to what extent the model of differentiation and polarisation that he proposes relates to what the pupils themselves see happening in school.

Lacey argues that within the context of the school as a whole and within each individual form it soon becomes evident that some pupils are more successful than others. In an educational system very much concerned with achievement, by definition some must end up at the bottom of the pile. His model suggests that those pupils who are not successful in the eyes of the school, those who are 'status deprived' will tend to come together and find a common solution to their problem by forming an anti-culture.<sup>11</sup> The way pupils are differentiated by the school forms a significant 'social pressure' from them

"The individuals response to this social pressure is conditioned but not determined by a number of his own social characteristics. As the response is being worked out it causes an alignment (and

as it proceeds a re-alignment) of individuals within the year group. Those with a similar response to the dominant social pressures tend to coalesce, that is choose each other as friends (Lacey 1970:95).

In other words the social situation of high competition produces individual problems for the pupils (in the first year at school this is evidenced by individual stress, crying etc). but they find a social solution for these problems by evolving an anti-group. Although Lacey suggests that as a group becomes established it produces an impetus of its own and carries the pupils further into deviant acts, it is the individual's problems with dealing with the school which provides the motivation for behaviour. For Lacey the idea that groups exist with rigidly prescribed boundaries, have distinctive hierarchies, or distribute rewards and punishment to ensure normative behaviour is not as important as in the functionalist model. There is no need to explain conformity purely as a social phenomenon for motivation remains firmly with the individual - he has a psychological problem created by the school, for which he finds a social solution.

Obviously with its concentration on the individual this approach to joint action is far more in line with the symbolic interactionist model developed below. Yet however convincing the model of differentiation and polarisation is Blumer might well criticise Lacey for not dealing directly with face to face interaction. Instead, Lacey looks for evidence of friendship groups by drawing on questionnaire and observational material. Facts like different average projected school leaving age, and different average homework time are taken to indicate that different subcultures exist. Such features are backed up by generalised observations about a particular cliques 'approach' to school. For example on page 102 Lacey says

"All the boys in the clique had a middle-class background and all lived in the new suburban part of Hightown. They were not particularly academically oriented, their major interest and out-of-school activity being rugby football.

They were all middle class in their career orientation however."

Thus Lacey does not concentrate on how the cultures he presents appeared to the pupils themselves or how they came about through face to face interaction. The evidence of subculture formation is still at one stage removed from classroom interaction itself - it is only 'evidence'.

This approach to interaction tends to simplify Lacey's model somewhat. For example in Chapter 5 he recognises that not all behaviour can be subsumed within one culture (Short was badly behaved but still co-operated sometimes and Sherman was good in class but misbehaved when the teacher was away (p.87)). In addition he notes that pupils behaved in quite different ways on different occasions (e.g. on the cricket field) and responded in a different way to some teachers. All of these features could be seen as presenting a considerable challenge to his model of a subculture for they can not be readily integrated into it. - they either have to be exceptions or be explained in a different way. In this sense Lacey is being quite selective about what in classroom behaviour he is trying to explain. But as will become apparent in this thesis, if pupils behaviour is looked at directly, rather than by means of 'evidential' procedures like sociograms and generalised observations there is always considerable flexibility and even contradiction to be seen in what the children do. These features must be integrated into any explanation of classroom interaction that we put forward.

#### 4. The Symbolic Interactionist Conception of Joint Action

The symbolic interactionist conception of society is a particular interpretation of the work of G.H. Mead. It is somewhat different from the models described above for it attempts to place the individual as

an active agent at the centre of the social world. Rather than seeing him as stimulated to response by such external forces as roles or norms, or such internal psychological factors as needs or drives, symbolic interactionism points up the need to see the actor himself interpreting such things, and on the basis of his interpretations, constructing his own line of action.

(i) The self and its interpretation of the world

If we accept the fundamental assumption that there is a vital process of interpretation between an external 'stimulus' (be that another person or an object) and an individual's 'response', then it is essential to postulate the existence of some internal mechanism such as the 'self'.

In the hands of different authors this 'self' has been seen as both a structure, whereby the individual brings into play certain set perspectives to interpret the situations that confront him, and as a process - a continual changing dialogue. Meltzer and Petras (1967) say of the latter approach that the self is seen as

"A process of internal conversation in the course of which the actor can come to view himself in a new way, thereby bringing about changes in himself. Moreover, in his transaction with others there occurs a flowing sequence of interpretation of the conduct of others, during which the actor may subject his attributes to highly variable use - or disuse" (53)

It is this idea of the self as a process (especially as expounded by Blumer) that has been utilized in this part of the thesis.<sup>12</sup>

Blumer himself says of the Median idea of the self "In declaring that the human being has a self, Mead had in mind chiefly that the human being can be the object of his own action" (Blumer 1962: 181). Blumer calls this process 'self indication'. The individual does not respond to his surroundings in a behaviouristic (stimulus and response) way,

but interprets his world; it has particular meanings for him. In contrast to the behaviouristic model the external world (both physical and social) is not seen as having any set meaning for the actor. It is up to him to interpret that world, and construct his response to it in line with the meaning it has for him. Rose puts this in a slightly different way:

"Man lives in a symbolic environment as well as a physical environment, and can be 'stimulated' to act by symbols as well as physical stimuli. 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 this sense organs" (Rose 1962:5)

By pointing out that the world is made up of learned symbols rather than objects, Rose is highlighting the interpretative work that has to be carried out by the actor in realising the meaning of that world. Objects are seen as quite different from stimuli. Instead of having a particular independent 'objective' character of their own which acts upon the individual, they only have that meaning which is conferred on them by the actor himself;

"In any of his countless acts . . . the individual is designating different objects to himself, giving them meaning, judging their suitability to his action and making decisions on the basis of that judgement. This is what is meant by interpretation or acting on the basis of symbols" (Blumer 1962:182)

This continuing dialogue with the external world is carried out by the self and it is on the basis of this dialogue that a person constructs his action. The symbolic interactionists are at pains to

point out that action is to be seen as a construction rather than as a release - the individual pieces together and guides his action, by continually taking account of different things and interpreting their significance for what he intends to do. From Blumer's point of view at least, self indication is a 'moving communication' process' - the actor continually noting things, assessing them, giving them meaning and then deciding how to act. For example, a pupil might note that another pupil is making a social demand on him or that a teacher is telling him what to do; he might observe that he is tired, or that he resents being told what to do. As Blumer says:

"His behaviour accordingly is not a result of such things as environmental pressures, stimuli, motives, attitudes and ideas, but arises instead from how he interprets and handles these things in the action which he is constructing" (1962: 183).

In summary we can say that symbolic interactionists firstly see human society as being made up of people who have 'selves'. They can point things out to themselves and actively endow the world with meaning. Secondly, because individuals are active in this way, their behaviour is seen as a construction rather than a release. The individual continually interprets the world that he finds himself in, and constructs his action on the basis of that interpretation. We can now move on to a third important part in symbolic interactionist theory, describing joint actions. This is the way individuals fit their emerging lines of behaviour together.

(ii) Joint action

The most important process that the self carries out is interpreting the meaning of the behaviour of other people; pointing out

that it has this or that meaning. Action through self indication is always seen as taking place in a social context. Although each individual engages in a separate act, this is only constructed in the light of his interpretation of the social world that he finds himself in. The behaviour he chooses thus becomes joint action: he is always taking other people into account in deciding how to behave.

A joint action involves people fitting their lines of behaviour together. This is accomplished by each of them trying to understand the meaning of what others are doing or intend to do. This process is called taking the role of the other; each takes the other into account before deciding what to do.

"Taking another person into account means being aware of him, identifying him in some way, making some judgement of appraisal of him, identifying the meaning of his action, trying to find out what he has on his mind and trying to figure out what he intends to do" (Blumer 1953: 194)

All behaviour is seen as 'social' in this way, for even when we are alone we are able to point things out to ourselves, or apply the perspectives of the groups that we belong to, that is our reference groups.<sup>13</sup> Thus joint action is seen as the fundamental and irreducible unit of society, and that society is made up of individuals or groups of individuals all fitting their lines of action together. (There may be other ways of describing society, but to the extent that they are not congruent with the idea of individuals interpreting each other's behaviour and constructing their action together, then they are considered inadequate).

The process of 'taking the role of the other' (whether the 'other'

is a group or an individual) is seen as the basis of how we construct joint actions, yet it is not a 'once off' process that takes place at the beginning of interaction - it is a continuing process. As Blumer goes on to say:

"One has to keep abreast of the action of the other, noting what he says at this point and at that point, or interpreting his movements as they appear one after the other. Perceiving, defining and judging the other person and his actions and organising oneself in terms of such definitions and judgements constitutes a continuing or running process" (1953: 194).

In this way, people are seen to continually respond to each other subject to subject rather than object to object: they are looked on as responsive to each other in a way that is overlooked in other theories of society.

In order that actors can have some basis on which to orient their interpretation of those around them, they are seen as firstly identifying the situation that they find themselves in. Defining a situation in a particular way gives actors a key to interpreting what others are doing and helps them to organise their own action. For example, a pupil's definition that a group of people in a room constitutes a lesson in a classroom helps him to make sense of what other pupils and the teacher are doing. Similarly, taking part in a definition that a teacher is 'soft' as opposed to 'strict' helps him make sense of the disruptive behaviour of other pupils in the classroom and is a guide to him in constructing his own response.

Because we inhabit a common social world, and consequently learn the meaning of many symbols together, key definitions of situations

often tend to be fixed and repetitive; situations become structured because previous interaction has established common understandings of them. We can therefore fairly safely predict how others will interpret the phenomenal world most of the time, and it is this that gives rise to the recurrent nature of much of group life. As Denzin (1971) says "Once meanings of objects have been agreed upon, conduct can flow on lines of custom, tradition and ritual" (26)

It is because people take part in common definitions of situations, that they appear to act in a way which is frequently interpreted as 'cultural'. The commonly accepted definition supplies each participant with a decisive guidance in directing his own act so as to fit into the acts of others.

Turner describes these customary ways of acting as 'roles' but he utilises the term in a somewhat different way from usual. He suggests that taking part in a common definition allows the actor to behave as if there were a prescribed role, ready for him to act out. In reality, roles exist in varying degrees of concreteness and consistency, but the individual "confidently frames his behaviour as if it had an unequivocal existence and clarity" (Turner 1961: 22) It is because he has accepted a common definition that he finds it necessary to act in a way that can be construed by others as maintaining that definition. In other words, rather than enacting a prescribed role as the traditional Lintonian model might suggest, the individual devises a performance; he actually creates a role that will be symbolic of the commonly held definition of the situation. "It is this tendency to shape the phenomenal world into roles, which is the key to role taking as a core process in interaction" (Turner 1961:22)<sup>14</sup>

The course of interaction is therefore often outlined in advance: individuals make a common identification of the situation and this makes for regularity, stability and repetitiveness in the roles they create for themselves.

However, this is not always the case. As Denzin says "Humans possess the ability to self-consciously direct their own activities - to break out of old routines and construct new lines of action" (Denzin 1971:261).

Denzin consequently suggests that interaction must be classified into those behaviours that are routinely organised and those that are "actively constructed in a self conscious and interpretative fashion" (261).

Blumer's analysis is perhaps more subtle. He suggests that even though behaviour appears to be repetitive, this should not mislead us into thinking that no process of interpretation is going on. Even though ready-made definitions exist, the actors have still to monitor and interpret each other's actions and act in a way to maintain that definition. There will of course be other situations which are not defined in a single way. In these circumstances interpretations will have to be developed and the participants will have to work out ways of accommodating to each other. Unlike Denzin, Blumer does not see this as a qualitatively different situation from one where customary definitions are used: defining situations and interpreting the actions of others is an ongoing and continuous process.

Relating this brief exposition of the symbolic interactionist perspective to the more traditional approaches to joint action outlined earlier, it becomes apparent that they are inadequate in a number of different ways. Firstly, the 'psychogenic' model,

where an individual's needs and drives and attitudes are seen to influence his interactions. From the symbolic interactionist perspective, psychological elements will be recognised by the actor and brought into play, suppressed or changed within the developing interaction, as he sees fit. Blumer gives the example of 'attitudes' which are often considered a means of explaining action. He says

"Thus as one takes account of the developing acts of others attitudes may come to be mobilised or they may be scrupulously suppressed or held in abeyance or they may be given a new twist or they may be sapped in their vigour as one's own act becomes incorporated into new stable forms of association that are built up" (Blumer 1953: 198).

In this sense there are no such 'things' as attitudes as guides to action. Actors may account for what they do in terms of attitudes, yet they do not determine their behaviour in a concrete situation. A similar criticism may be levelled at other so-called psychological factors such as drives and needs - they will be recognised and dealt with as the actor sees fit in the emerging interaction that he is taking part in.<sup>15</sup>

The same sort of criticism may also be made of explanations of human association that utilise models from other disciplines. Accounting for behaviour in terms of statistical probabilities or as self regulating systems, denies the individual his autonomy. His action is not determined by group norms or by 'culture' or by the tendency for social systems as a whole to strive towards commonly held goals. To the extent that the actor is aware of customary ways of behaving or commonly accepted objectives, he may take these into account in

deciding how to behave, whether he chooses to ignore them or allow them their full significance is up to him. He has to choose how to actualise them.

##### 5. Symbolic Interactionism and Data

Employing a symbolic interactionist understanding of joint action implies a quite different conception about what constitutes data, (and how one may go about generating it), from traditional approaches to the 'group' model. Homans' conceptions of groups naturally led to fairly quantitative methodologies. For Homans, the primary objective was to define the group. It was essential to know who was in and who was out of each group, so that it could be distinguished from its environment. Lacey was also interested in who was a group member, who out of the population as a whole was using the group as a solution to his psychological problems. The most convenient technique for generating data on group membership is Moreno's sociometric questionnaire. This technique easily facilitates the perception of groups existing as concrete entities. Sociometric questionnaire also have the advantage of allowing the identification of the most popular group members, the so-called 'leaders' who are assumed to exemplify the norms of the group.

Researchers using the Homans model are also interested in generating information about norms - norms that transcend specific situations and which seem to guide and direct the individuals behaviour. Questionnaires serve this purpose well. Asking people to respond to questions about hypothetical situations encourages simplistic 'one dimensional' answers. What they would actually take into

account, let alone do in specific situations may be quite different. The 'individualistic' approach also leads to questionnaires, and other documented evidence, the results of which are interpreted in terms of psychological needs created by the social situation

In contrast to all this, the implications of the symbolic interactionist approach are quite different. Observing that individuals are taking part in a continuing dialogue with their environment and with the people around them, and that the world is not seen as having a permanent and fixed meaning for them, suggests the "fundamental empirical question becomes the identification of the shifting modes of interpretation that characterise the interaction process" (Denzin, 1971:261).

If people do not all define situations in the same way, if they do not always interpret each others actions identically, then the student must try and catch that process of definition and interpretation that the actors use. Taking a more phenomenological stance necessarily precludes the quantitative method used by other researchers, at least in the first instance. Individuals are seen to construct their actions by interpreting the situations that face them, in all their complexity. It therefore becomes inadequate to use the necessarily static techniques of questionnaires and paper and pencil tests, which remove the actor from his real social world. Action is seen to be negotiated between people who face each other at the time, and is not directed at some abstract reified group.

If the researcher is to do justice to this more subtle conception of interaction, then some form of participant observation seems essential - the student must to some extent take the role of the people he is studying: he must observe them directly and as far as possible

see their world with their eyes.

The nature of the participant observation used in this research has already been outlined in Chapter I but its appropriateness to the theoretical position adopted only becomes apparent at this point. Participant observation allows the researcher to move beyond simply recording the frequency and distribution of events, to try and link interaction patterns with symbols and meanings believed to underlie them.

There are numerous types of data that might be considered evidence of how actors define situations and interpret each other's behaviour. For example, individuals coming together to act in concert at a particular time can be observed and described by the researcher, the variety and types of regularly occurring joint actions can be recorded, each implying a different definition of the situation. This sort of evidence can be used to explore the full range of definitions that a group of people take part in, in all their variety, complexity and, often, apparent contradiction.

Observing how participants move in and out of interaction with those around them also provides evidence of how they are interpreting the behaviour of those others. Acting in a supportive way implies an acceptance of the common definition of the situation; establishing an alternative pattern of interaction can imply a divergent definition. Depth interviews and learning the language of the participants can also provide clues as to how they define situations, for example, names that pupils give to different teachers such as 'strict', 'soft', 'fair' and 'unfair' can be seen to be linked to particular definitions. Pupils move in and out of interaction with each other depending on whether or not they agree with these definitions.

It is only by directly participating in the field to be studied that this amount of variety and complexity can be captured. It is only by spending a long time observing events over and over again, that their full nature becomes evident and the 'responsiveness' of interaction that symbolic interactionism suggests exists can be recorded.

Notes for Chapter III

1. Of the organic model, Blumer says:

"Here the human group is conceived in the pattern of an organism, functioning as an entity and guiding the behaviour of its subgroups and ultimately of individual members. Interaction between members becomes merely instrumental to the unified action of the group" (Blumer 1953:189)

2. Blumer's criticism is of course essentially the same as the point that Glaser and Strauss (1967) are making. Their search for a means of developing grounded theory stems from a similar dissatisfaction with traditional theoretical models.

3. The importance of the organic model in determining Homans' interests is apparent when he says he is concerned with ". . . a group's ability to maintain a steady state in the face of changes in the environment"(Homans 1951: 87). It is this model which leads to the specific questions he asks, e.g. "Given the group is surviving in the environment, what are the limits that this condition places on the interactions, sentiments and activities of the group" (Homans 1951:88).

4. Gouldner (1971) considers that there is a significant difference between Homans' social exchange theory and traditional Parsonian functionalism. Admittedly, Homans' model does place more emphasis on the individual's personal satisfactions from social interaction than does Parsons'. Nevertheless, the implicit and unfounded assumption that society is an organised system moving towards some metaphysical holism is common to both approaches. Both fall short of Blumer's demand to move the analysis back to the experience of

human association).

5. In fact Sugarman's evidence suggests that questionnaires are very unreliable in finding out which pupils spent most time together.

Three months after administering his questionnaire, he interviewed a sample of the pupils and asked them who they went around with at school. The correlation of names mentioned to those cited in the questionnaires was only .65 and only .23 gave exactly the same list of friends.

6. See Hargreaves (1967) page 8.

7. Sugarman looked at cliques of three or more pupils and compared attitudes to school between different cliques. Hargreaves on the other hand looked at different groups that emerged in sociograms but suggested that attitudes would be influenced by the dominant boys in each class - they would become the leading crowd and influence actual behaviour. Coleman simply recorded the values of leading crowds in different schools assuming that the whole school would be influenced.

8. For Homans, people are actually conscious of norms; he defines them as follows:

"A norm is an idea in the mind of the members of a group, an idea that can be put in the form of a statement specifying what the members or other men should do, ought to do, are expected to do, under given circumstances. A statement of the kind described is a norm only if any departure of real behaviour from the norm is followed by some punishment" (Homans 1951: 123).

9. Sprott (1958) in his introductory text on groups also sees norms

as being outside the individual and therefore determining his behaviour:

"What happens is that without the participant noticing it, a set of customs become established which are regarded as 'right' within the context in which the group operates and they are felt by each member as being in some sense outside himself . . . he thinks, if he thinks about it at all; 'I must do so and so because it is our way of behaving': or 'because if I don't, I shall get black looks'. The group, if it has been in being for some time assumes a kind of independent existence in the minds of its members . . ." (13)

10. As a criticism of this position Lang (1975) says

"the structural polarisation approach has tended to make us see school experience as an allocation on a kind of for-to-against-school commitment dimension. The more biographic and the less nomothetic the data, the more we will find, I suspect, that the contradictions model fits rather than the cruder person-into-category model" (15/6).

11. For example it might be going to a folk group for members of a public school or gang membership for a working class secondary school.

12. For an example of the analysis of pupil behaviour from a more 'structured' approach to the self, see Delamont (1973).

13. This is possible through the process of self-indication. The

individual can continually monitor his own developing line of conduct.

"In making indications to himself, the human being may apply to his conduct the norms of the perspectives of the group and thus guide himself in interaction with others by considerations which are not immediately present in the interaction" (Blumer 1953:197)

14. The difference between the symbolic interactionist and Lintonian model of roles is that for Mead and his followers, acting out a role involved taking the perspective of the other person, whereas Linton saw it as acting out something prescribed by society.

15. For Blumer the problem with such psychological explanations is that the actor is not seen as having a self. This is a problem that is not overcome by introducing psychological factors such as drives, motives and attitudes. "Such psychological factors have the same status as the social factors mentioned; they are regarded as factors which play on the individual to produce action. They do not constitute the process of self indication" (Blumer 1962:185)

## Chapter IV

### Classroom Behaviour from a Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

#### 1. The Interaction Set

The objective of this part of the study is to use the insights gained from symbolic interactionism to develop a more sensitive analysis of the way pupils influence each other both in their understanding of their school experience and the types of behaviour they consider appropriate. The assumption utilized in previous studies that this somehow 'happens' in groups is inadequate and it is necessary to move up close to the classroom and study the process of interaction as it takes place and as the pupils themselves see it.

A central concern of this chapter is a study of the pupils' joint actions. In other words we are interested in occasions when more than one pupil defines a situation in the same way and where they make common judgements about how to act. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, the way individuals define situations is the key to the process of interaction, for it provides them with a matrix for interpreting other peoples' behaviour. Individuals can only construct joint actions by 'taking the role of the other' - attempting to see the world with other people's eyes. Establishing a common definition of the situation is the first step in this process.

People involved in joint actions therefore 'see' what is happening around them in the same way, and agree on what are appropriate ways to behave in the circumstances prevailing at the time.

This does not mean that those interacting will behave in the same way, simply that they will behave in a way that can be interpreted

by others as showing similar 'definitions of the situation'; nor do pupils have to 'tell' each other how they see things, for their actions will symbolically tell this to the whole class.

In this way running out of a class or shouting an answer to a teacher can be examples of joint action, when the individual pupil takes into account that she is being given support by smiles or laughter from others present.<sup>1</sup> That pupil knows by the support of others that they 'see' the classroom situation in the same way; they share her definition of it, and she takes that fact into account in deciding to misbehave in the first place. Here it is not enough to look at the individual on her own, for she is aware that her behaviour is a 'joint action', that others are taking part, that she is interacting.

The following example of joint action comes from observation notes. The incident occurred at the end of a science lesson during which Jackie and Terrie had done virtually no work at all - they had simply been reading comics. At the very end of the lesson the teacher insists that everyone has to write down two or three lines of notes from the board before they can leave:

Jackie: "I've done it Miss, I'm going"

Mrs. Newman: "No you haven't"

Jackie: "Yes Miss, honest. I'm off now."

Mrs. Newman becomes involved with some other pupils and looks away for a moment. Jackie and Terrie start to move towards the door by going round the far side of the work benches so that they don't have to pass Mrs. Newman.

Jackie (to Terrie): "I'm going what ever she says".

Mrs. Newman catches Jackie's eye and she starts to move back towards her place.

Terrie (out loud): "But you've done your work haven't you?"

Jackie: (loud): "Of course I have but she don't believe me."

Mrs. Newman (moving towards them again): "Then show it to me please."

At last Jackie sits down, gets out her books and begins work.

While trying to get out of doing the work Jackie was making continual verbal and non-verbal contact with her friend Terrie. They spoke to each other in loud voices making exaggerated protestations of their innocence and hence we can suggest that they both 'saw' the situation in the same way. They seemed to define the lesson as one where misbehaviour was appropriate and where it was possible to get away with doing virtually nothing; they continually take each other into account in deciding how to act.

These two girls who were choosing their behaviour together formed a group or a set. To distinguish those taking part in this sort of grouping from any other, I am going to call it an 'interaction set'; that is to say, the interaction set at any one time will be those pupils who perceive what is happening in a similar way, communicate this to each other, and define appropriate action together.

Now consider this example where a larger group of girls interact; they are aware of each other and direct what to say to the group as a whole. They were all part of an interaction set.

Eight of the girls are sitting round the same table in the room. Carol and Diane run in thirty minutes late and sit down with them all.

Carol: (to the whole table) "I went home to get some tangerines."

Mrs. Newman: "Where have you been?"

Diane: (aggressively) "Dentist...."

Mrs. Newman: "Where have you been?"

Carol: (aggressively) "None of your business"

Mrs. Newman ignores or does not hear this remark.

The interaction set in this second example was much larger than in the first: nine girls were involved, as opposed to three.

The descriptions above show that the girls were aware of each other in choosing their behaviour. This awareness of others was implied in the way they described classroom situations. For example, in an interview, Carol used the term 'we' rather than 'I':

"We sneak out of the class, or ask to go for a drink of water . . . and we don't come back, we don't come back in again at all".

This was a generalised classroom description, and Carol thought in terms of herself and her friends; she did the same when describing specific situations:

"We had R.E. . . . We had that stupid teacher, and he just sits there and gives us these stupid books to read, so I just sit there reading them . . . so Anne says 'Let's go out', so me, Jill, Linda and Diane just follow her out".

A lot of the girls' classroom behaviour took place in the context of an interaction set. They took others into account in deciding how to behave, and were aware that they shared a common definition of the situation.

(i) Who is in the interaction set?

Consider the following descriptions of classroom situations which show different interaction sets in operation. In the first the set comprises Francis, Angela and Anne in a music lesson.

Francis is sitting next to Anne and Angela but is leaning on the desk and is about to put her head down to sleep. Miss Harker has explained that Mendelsohn lived in Queen Victoria's time.

Miss Harker: "Francis are you listening?"

Francis: "Yes Miss"

Miss Harker: "Who's reign did Mendelsohn live in?"

Francis leans further forward over the desk and looks slightly awkward. Her two friends laugh at her for being caught out. After a minute Angela whispers the answer and Francis repeats it

Francis: "Victoria Miss"

Miss Harker: "That's right, very good"

Francis sits up, looks at Angela and Anne they all giggle.

In this second example, the interaction set included six girls.

Carol, Valerie, Diane, Anne, Angela and Monica sit round one of the benches in the Science Lab. There is continual talking throughout the lesson from these girls even though they carry on copying down the notes that Mrs. Newman has written down on the board. At times the noise from these girls is so great that Mrs. Newman can't be heard. The rest of the class sitting round the other bench are comparatively quiet

It is obvious from these two examples that quite different interaction sets are in operation. In the first situation Francis, Angela and Anne form a distinct unit - they defined the classroom situation in the same way and were responsive to each other in their choice of behaviour. In the second example a much larger interaction set was in operation, again Anne and Angela took part but this time Carol, Valerie, Diane and Monica joined in as well. Francis sat physically separated from this group, working at another bench.

There were other situations which illustrated different patterns of classroom interaction. In the following example, which describes a test, the pattern of interaction continually changed.

When the test begins, they slowly move to different seats without being told to . . . Linda does not know the answer to the first question and does not write anything. Diane whispers across the room to Carol, "You doing it?". Carol holds up a blank piece of paper and giggles, she hasn't been able to do the first two questions either. Miss Lane asks the next question: "Name a common cooking cheese" . . . Linda smiles, looks round the class and does not write anything. Next question: "Name one use the body puts calcium to". Linda behaves differently. She writes, then looks up to the ceiling for a moment, and then writes again. "Name a common egg drink". Linda and Jill's eyes meet; they both seem to know the answer and quickly look away, covering their papers from each other with their arms.

Here the girls were moving in and out of interaction depending on whether or not they knew the answers. When they knew the answer they acted alone, when they did not, they constructed a joint action.

The changing pattern of interaction was reflected in the way the girls described each other. For example, in an interview, Carol

Valerie and Diane discussed who they were 'friends with' in the class:

Carol: "Yes we're all friends together, really . . .

not Monica though, she's not really with us."

Valerie: "No, she works too hard, she's too good."

Diane: "Well, she used to be last year."

Carol: "Well I suppose she is most of the time."

They were uncertain about whether Monica was or was not a 'friend': observations showed that Monica only interacted with these three girls at certain times, but at others she had nothing to do with them, often sitting on the other side of the room. She obviously defined classroom situations in a different way - events and acts had a different meaning for her.

Patterns of interaction varied a great deal. Sometimes, these girls acted quite alone, with no obvious communication between them, apparently defining situations for themselves. At different times, interaction sets formed, involving varying numbers of girls and occasionally the whole class. Each interaction set related to a specific definition; all of the girls interacting were interpreting the behaviour of their friends and that of the teacher in the same way.

(ii) Norms and values

A great many researchers have tried to study the 'culture' of different adolescent groups, by trying to identify both the norms of behaviour and the underlying values to which members subscribe.

It has already been argued that action cannot be understood in terms of peer groups, for these are not the same as interaction sets where membership can vary from minute to minute.<sup>2</sup> Consistent

groups do not exist in reality, and observation has also shown that there is no consistent culture for a group of pupils.<sup>3</sup> Norms and values relate to specific definitions of the situations and to typical interaction sets, rather than to a particular group of friends. We have already seen that there was a great variety of behaviour in the class - a variety too great to be described in terms of a consistent 'culture' as the word has traditionally been used. This diversity is even more strongly brought out by the following description of some girls going to two different lessons on the same afternoon.

The girls are standing in the corridor talking to me before the beginning of a Commerce lesson.

Monica: "Quick - Mrs Alan!"

She runs violently into the class, smiling. The other girls all enter quickly and find their places and sit talking.

Mrs Alan: (through the noise) "Good afternoon 4G"

Girls in unison: "Good afternoon"

There is silence as they wait for the register to be taken, each girl answering her name as it is called. They then wait quietly for the lesson to begin.

Contrast this with the beginning of the Science lesson that followed immediately afterwards:

. . . the girls all enter the lab. Carol, Valerie, Diane, Debbie, Monica, Anne and Angela are talking, shouting and laughing. They find their places, and continue talking, all completely ignoring the teacher,

Mrs Newman. She takes the register, but is not able to call out the names as there is too much noise, and she spends a considerable time looking to see who is there.

The way the girls behaved in these two situations was quite different: different norms had emerged and different interaction sets were in operation. In the first example the whole class shared a common definition of the lesson, whereas in the second example, seven girls formed one specific interaction set.

The following examples relate to History, but with two different teachers. They bring out just how varied behaviour could be:

Carol, Valerie, Diane and Monica are sitting close together, though there is no visible contact between them, verbal or non-verbal . . . Mr Marks moves to the back of the class and talks to me in whispers for the last ten minutes of the lesson. None of the girls shows any signs of hearing us, they all seem too involved in their work to notice us.

As Monica said in an interview:

"We all love it, it's our favourite subject . . . we all like History."

During the period of observation, the History teacher, Mr Marks, left. Carol described an incident with the new teacher who replaced him.

"I just started to laugh and he hold my collar until I get out of the chair so I hit him . . then I push him and he fall down."

Extreme behaviour like this was very rare, but the girls were quite frequently rude and hostile to their teachers, or sometimes

did not bother to turn up to the lessons at all.

The idea that different norms and values were appropriate at different times was born out by the comments that teachers made about this class. The following statements were made by two teachers after I had asked to observe their lessons for the first time.<sup>4</sup>

Mrs Alan "Oh yes well as far as I'm concerned you can come in any time you like. They're a lovely little bunch of girls and they don't mind working. They're getting on far better than 4A who think they know it all and don't know their two times table."

Mrs Newman: "Well yes of course, but they're a horrible lot. You will find it a bit disorganised because Mr James is away and he's supposed to be working on the syllabus with me but you can come in. I warn you though, they're a load of terrors."

Obviously these teachers saw very different 'sides' of the girls in 4G and for this reason their behaviour could not be described as a culture in the normal sense of the word. The range was too great, and at first glance their actions often looked contradictory.<sup>5</sup>

### (iii) The individual and the set

A large proportion of the classroom behaviour of the girls observed took place in the context of interaction sets; there was a great deal of joint rather than individual action. In these circumstances it is important to examine the relationship between the individual and the other interaction set members. Are pupils 'forced' to act in a certain way simply by being members of an interaction set (as was implied in the group model); do they have psychological needs which

explains their motivation, or do they choose their action for themselves?

There are two ways of examining the relationship between the individual and the set. The first is to look at the behaviour of pupils when they acted alone, when they defined situations in a different way from those around them. The second method is to look at the variety of action that took place in any one interaction set. As an example, we will look at Carol.

(a) Individual action.

Most of Carol's classroom behaviour was interactive, but sometimes she acted alone. On these 'individual' occasions she showed the same types of behaviour as when part of a set. What was different was not the behavioural content, but the times when Carol considered that behaviour appropriate. Carol could be seen as having the same 'repertoire'<sup>6</sup> of classroom behaviour in individual or interactive situations. For example she could be just as hostile to a teacher when acting alone as when part of an interaction set. When she 'greeted' her new History teacher, by pushing him over, she was acting alone. Other girls describing the same incident seemed slightly shocked by the extremity of Carol's action; they were not participating or supporting.

A quite different example of very individual action came in a cooking lesson:

Carol . . . works alone, all lesson; she talks to no-one, not even to Dorothy who is working at the same table.

In an interview, she explained how she sometimes acts alone: " Valerie . . . and them lot sometimes start to muck about you know, and I says to them all 'Why can't

you lot behave? - you know, start to tell them off.

Sometimes I just sit down in the corner, you know - just sit down by myself."

Carol could therefore be extremely hostile and disruptive in some lessons, but at other times was very work-oriented. In the examples above she was acting alone, defining situations for herself. Yet, as is well documented below, she frequently showed exactly the same type of behaviour in interactive situations.

Particular 'pieces' of behaviour could be displayed in both social and individual settings. Action should therefore be considered not so much a product of a social situation, in some way 'manufactured' by it, but much more 'facilitated' by that situation. The choice of action remained with the individual, and belonged to her. Only the general situation was interactively defined.

(b) Variety of action

Girls who assessed situations in a similar way and defined appropriate actions together did not necessarily act in the same way. When Carol and Diane ran in late to a Science lesson, it was Carol who made most of the comments to the teacher, saying "None of your business" when asked where they had been. Diane, on the other hand, was much quieter, and began getting out books and finding out what they had missed. Despite the fact that they were in full communication with each other, each legitimating the action of the other, they negotiated different 'social identities', Carol being outspoken, and Diane being supportive. Similar examples occurred in less hostile situations. For example, Carol often shouted out answers to questions, or wandered round the room while Diane and Valerie supported her by watching and laughing. They seldom,

if ever took over this sort of action themselves.

Thus joint action does not always imply the same action. It simply demands choosing behaviour that can symbolically communicate to another person a particular definition of the situation; it must show that the interactants are interpreting the world in the same way. Thus the range of any one individual's joint action can, theoretically at least, be quite varied, as long as it symbolically implies a common definition. It is the willingness to take others into account and share interpretations and definitions of situations that is important. Carol chose her own action, but was dependent for support on others. She did not act in the same way as she would if she were alone, but decided how to behave in the light of commonly negotiated definitions of the situation.

This picture of joint action is quite different from those implied in earlier studies of pupils. By moving up close to the process of interaction, its fluidity and change has been exposed. Pupils moved in and out of interaction depending on how they defined situations. Girls who agreed with a definition that had been established constructed joint actions, taking each other into account in the development of the emerging act; those who subscribed to a different definition establish alternative patterns of behaviour.<sup>7</sup>

Interaction does not just 'happen' in peer groups, but is 'constructed' by individuals. When classes are observed, it becomes apparent that who interacts with whom can change from minute to minute depending on a great many circumstances. Pupil interaction in a classroom does not necessarily include all friends at the same time, and will often involve pupils who are not friends at all.

The concept of the interaction set not only recognises this

fluidity of membership but also accounts for what any casual observer of classrooms could see; that there is no consistent culture for a group of pupils. Even the most delinquent pupils will be well behaved in certain circumstances.<sup>8</sup> Teachers do not always invite the same amount of conformity or hostility and some lessons allow for greater feelings of personal achievement than others. Classroom situations change in the meaning they have for pupils and as they change, so will the pupils' assessments of how to behave. It follows that norms and values are not static or external, but are significant only in so far as they are interpreted in situations by the participants during the interaction process.

Pupils interpret school life differently. An interaction set presents a static picture of a group of pupils making the same interpretations of classroom events. It 'means' the same thing to them, and their behaviour is chosen in the light of what it means. The fact that different pupils take part in different interaction sets at various times simply illustrates the point that they do not always agree about what things mean.

## 2. Documenting Recurrent Interaction Sets

By pointing out that we inhabit a common social world where we learn the meaning of many things together, the symbolic interactionists suggest that many key definitions in our world become fixed and repetitive; a group of people who interact regularly will have established amongst themselves the meaning of objects and personalities. There will be a regular group of definitions of the situation to which they all subscribe and their behaviour will take on the appearance of being repetitive and cultural.

If we follow Denzin's suggestion that the fundamental question for the symbolic interactionist is the identification of the "shifting modes of interpretation that characterise the interaction process" (Denzin 1971:261), then we should be able to document a number of the key definitions of the situation that the pupils in 4G used again and again.

Theoretically, regular interaction sets should emerge, reflecting the fixed definitions of the situations that pupils subscribed to. We should expect regular alignments of pupils in recurrent situations. Particular teachers and their styles of teaching are likely to be viewed in established ways, and girls subscribing to a particular definition are likely to be aware of each other, negotiating their behaviour together.

This is in fact the case, and this section will be devoted to documenting the most recurrent 'cultural' interaction sets and the situations in which they occurred. Of course, they are only intended to be ideal/typical illustrations of the general style of behaviour and general patterns of interaction; any one situation would be different in some details, encouraging slightly different behaviour. Nevertheless, observations very quickly showed that certain patterns occurred again and again in situations that appeared to be similar.

In looking at patterns of interaction and behaviour we will begin by examining situations where the whole class agreed on how to define the classroom - settings where they formed one interaction set, each acting to support that common definition. Having looked at the broad range of possible interpretations of classroom events, we can then move on to the more complex times when girls disagreed about the meaning of classroom events and where a number of different interaction sets

where established.

(i) The whole class as interaction set

We will begin by examining 'successful' lessons, that is where all the pupils were involved in their classwork; reading, writing, answering their teachers' questions and obeying their instructions. In other words, lessons where the pupils behaved in a way that school teachers operating a traditional pedagogy would expect 'ideal' pupils to behave.<sup>9</sup>

Afterwards, we will examine lessons where the girls 'misbehaved'; where they did not conform to the expectations of how the teachers thought they 'ought' to act; where they did not carry out the work set by the teachers but talked, laughed and made jokes.

(a) Successful lessons

Certain teachers appeared to enjoy a reputation around the school of being 'strict'. Comments like "He's really strict you know" and "You can't get away with anything in her lesson" were constantly directed at particular members of staff. Teachers who were apparently defined as strict were far better at controlling the class than their colleagues and their lessons were far more frequently 'successful'. Successful lessons with strict teachers allowed for comparatively little interaction amongst the pupils. Even though friends sat near to each other they rarely made any contact, either verbal or non-verbal. The following notes were taken in the first lesson observed with the history teacher Mr Marks (in this subject, the girls of 4G worked together with some boys)

There is absolute silence as I enter the room.

Bertram is sharpening a pencil at the front of the class, and then moves back to his desk

and begins work. Everyone is working by copying, reading or drawing from their textbooks . . . Diane is leaning forward over her book, copying out a diagram of a ship . . . She pulls out a ruler from her bag, and then looks round at Angela and then continues her work . . . Mr Marks moves round the room looking at their books . . . He goes to Diane and asks to see where she has got to. She murmurs her reply and holds up her exercise book to show him. The exercise book is covered in brown paper and full of neatly written notes and small pencil diagrams

Another example of this sort of behaviour came in a commerce lesson with Mrs Alan

Mrs Alan writes on the board and the whole class copies in absolute silence. Occasionally the girls ask each other for something, e.g. Diane asks Valerie for a pencil. Someone else says "What's next miss?" . . . After showing a few examples on the board she moves round the room looking at their work.

Mrs Alan: "Who's book shall I look at next?"

"Mine Miss" They all chorus . . . No one seemed to notice the bell and the class went five minutes over time.

Although there was very little direct communication on such occasions, the whole class could be described as an interaction set. They all appeared to subscribe to the idea that in such lessons they had to 'work' and not 'muck about'. Even individuals who were disruptive in other classes would carry on working quietly with these

two teachers. Conversations were mostly work oriented and more often than not directed at the teacher.<sup>10</sup>

Occasionally it was necessary for these two teachers to discipline pupils, but unlike other lessons, misbehaviour was a very individual affair. One pupil at a time was disciplined and the rest of the class would ignore any appeals of support, even if they felt that the teacher was in the wrong. In the following example, Debbie was being disciplined by Mrs Alan. After the lesson was over the rest of the class said that they thought Mrs Alan was wrong, but at the time they gave no indication of support.<sup>11</sup>

Debbie is eating an ice lolly. Mrs Alan tells her to put it in the bin, but Debbie refuses and turns round in her seat to face the rest of the class.

Mrs Alan grabs the hat Debbie is wearing and says "Right, you are in school to do as you are told. When you have put your sweet in the bin as I asked you to, you can have your hat back"

Debbie: "You give me that hat back. I paid for it. Give it back to me!"

As she says this she looks towards Diane and Carol, but they continue with their work. Debbie sulks for the rest of the lesson making no attempt to do any work whatsoever. She is totally ignored by the rest of the class who carry on working enthusiastically.

Teachers who were not seen as strict appeared to be less consistently successful with this class; at times, all the girls worked together but at other times some of them misbehaved. Nevertheless, successful lessons with such teachers followed a fairly

similar pattern to that outline above except that there was much more talk about the particular topic being studied. The girls would help each other and discuss problems together and sometimes show off how much they had done during the lesson. Again, the interaction set was very large, the whole class taking part in the same activity with conversations and non-verbal communication taking place across the room.

The following two examples were both taken with Miss Keene during a typing lesson. She was not seen as a strict teacher, but she was quite often successful in managing to get the whole class interested and involved

During the last five minutes of the lesson, Carol moves over to sit next to Mona, and turns round to talk to Valerie and Diane. Miss Keene does not seem to notice. Carol and Francis have obviously finished all the set work for the lesson.

Francis: "Shall I go on to the next exercise Miss?"

Miss Keene "No I don't want you to go on to anything new today"

Carol (to Valerie and Diane), "I'll get my book and tell you if you get them right". She laughs a little, goes to get her book, comes and sits down and tells them what answers she's got, then she goes through her whole book looking at her work.

Monica turns round for the first time in the lesson: "I'm on number 5".

Diane: "I'm on number 5 too".

Monica: "What number are you on Angela?"

Angela holds up four fingers. Monica turns round again.

Another example is from a typing lesson where the teacher was explaining how to file alphabetically.

Miss Keene has explained that B.E.A. goes under British and not B.E.

Miss Keene: "Carol, how do you file I.L.E.A.?"

Carol: "I.L."

Valerie: "No! Inner".

Suddenly Carol understands and gets the next example correct. . . Miss Keene says they must write down the examples for the last two minutes of the lesson. She goes out to get some paper. Carol now explains to Angela how to do it - she is demonstrating her new-found knowledge. Miss Keene re-enters.

Miss Keene: "Oh there is not much time left. Would you like to do it for homework?"

They all shout "Yes" enthusiastically

In lessons where the teacher was seen as soft but effective everyone seemed to feel free to join in open discussion. Pupils talked to each other and compared their work even if they were on opposite sides of the room. Jokes were made by the teacher and by the pupils, and the whole class participated and laughed. Such teachers established a climate which meant the same thing to everyone; work was the order of the day but that was to be pursued in a friendly, relaxed manner.

As we will see below, lessons like this were fairly rare. Teachers who fell into this category were not strict enough to force the pupils to work if they did not want to and small groups of pupils were capable of disrupting the whole class.

(b) Misbehaviour

Just as there were lessons where everyone worked, there were also occasions when all 15 girls would misbehave - they would 'muck about' and 'have a laugh' together. 'Mucking about' included such things as talking laughing 'cheeking' the teacher, arriving late for the lesson, or not bothering to turn up at all - in their terms they would 'bunk it'. For example most of the girls found one particular lesson a 'waste of time' and the following example was typical of their behaviour there.

Carol, Valerie, Diane, Monica, Jill Dorothy, Ann and Angela are all sitting close together. Debbie is playing with Carol's shoe, Valerie and Diane are reading comics. Carol is combing her hair and occasionally making jokes to those around her. By and large no-one in the class seems very interested in the content of the lesson, though occasionally the teacher does break through their lack of attention by pinning down one girl and asking her a direct question or by calling her name and asking her to pay attention . . . Eventually the teacher 'notices' that Diane and Valerie are reading comics, and demands to have them. Diane gives up hers and Valerie looks up appealingly with big wide eyes and says "Oh no Sir, please don't take it" The teacher insists and takes it away until lunch time. Carol immediately gets out another magazine from her bag, turns round to Valerie and Diane, and they all start looking at it.

Although this was a fairly quiet lesson and not much was said, they were all aware that they were defining it in a similar way. For example Carol very deliberately combed her hair and made her jokes



Carol, Valerie, Diane and Jill are all missing at the beginning of the lesson. After about five minutes, Valerie and Jill run in and sit down.

Mrs Newman: "Where have you been?"

Valerie: "Out".

Mrs Newman: "Where?"

Valerie: "None of your business where I've been!"

The two girls sit down on opposite sides of the bench and proceed to have a shouting match about a pen that was borrowed. The argument is very loud and provides entertainment for all their friends sitting on the same bench. They all laugh. The girls on the other bench don't pay much attention - they simply get on with their work.

Lessons with Mrs Newman were consistently characterised by the same pattern. One large interaction set bent on 'mucking about' and 'having fun' dominated the class while the remainder of the girls sat separately, quietly working. Each group had established substantially different definitions of Mrs Newman's lessons.<sup>13</sup>

A similar pattern often emerged in one of the English groups. On these occasions it was the usually disruptive girls who were quiet.

Valerie, Mona, Carol, Monica and Debbie all took English together with a group of boys. The girls usually sat near each other at the front of the class and consistently tried to work despite continuous disruptions from the boys. In the following lesson one boy, John, had been particularly noisy and had disrupted the class several times already.

When they eventually settle down to read the book,

John puts up his hand and then bangs on the desk, impatient to be noticed. Eventually the teacher, Mrs Lawrence, looks up

Mrs Lawrence: "What is it John?"

John: "We've already read this miss".

Chorus from the girls: "No we haven't".

Mrs Lawrence: "Well you'll know it very well when we've finished"

Carol: "Yes, you'll be able to answer all the questions!"

The girls actually side with the teacher in order to stop any disruption of their work. They apparently defined their English lessons as valuable even though they often seemed to become frustrated at the teacher's inability to control some of the boys.

Although there was more than one interaction set in operation in the lessons just described there was still a fair amount of consistency in the pupils' behaviour. A consistent group misbehaved with Mrs. Newman and the same girls worked in Mrs. Lawrence's English group. These teachers were defined in regular and repetitive ways and the pupils' behaviour was comparatively predictable from day to day.

With some teachers though there was even more fluidity and certain girls would act in apparently contradictory ways on different occasions. This was most noticeable with teachers who weren't seen as strict but who were sometimes capable of running very successful lessons. We have already seen how Miss Keene occasionally ran successful typing lessons, the whole class participating, discussing and learning together. The domestic science teacher had much the same ability. She could actively involve the whole class for up to

two lessons at a time - they would all participate together as one group. Yet neither she, nor the typing teacher appeared to be able to make the girls work if they did not want to. Although these teachers were effective at controlling most of the class, there were several girls (Carol, Valerie, Diane, Jill and Linda) who could not be contained. On some days, this little group of pupils would work consistently and well and on other days they would disrupt the whole class.

The following example is from a typing lesson (in typing the pupils all had set places).

Diane, Monica, Julie, Mona, Valerie, Carol and Anne all sit together at the front of the class. They are all basically working but Diane, Monica, Valerie and Carol manage to muck about as well. They have been putting filing indexes in alphabetical order and Monica tells Valerie in a very loud voice what number she has got to. They are both very excited and more interested in telling each other than listening. Then Valerie and Carol 'tell' each other how far they have got by shouting over Julie's head who sits between them - Julie is excluded from this performance. By contrast Mona, Anne and Julie who sit amongst this group are comparatively quiet; they too talk about the work but in a quiet, business like manner. For example Julie asks Mona how to spell 'Post Office': Mona quietly spells it for her, and Julie writes it down.

Once again we have two different interaction sets, one group sharing the teacher's definition, and working, while the others are misbehaving together.

Both domestic Science and Typing meant different things to Carol and her friends on different days. Sometimes they seemed to consider these subjects worthwhile and rewarding and they would work while on other days it was a 'waste of time' and they would misbehave. Different patterns of interaction were established as definitions changed.

### 3. Key Definitions

To some extent this documentation of different interaction sets observed begs the question for we have not specified what it is that these girls look for in defining classroom situations. This point will be explored fully in the next section when a more phenomenological stance is adopted. But even from the position of an external observer certain patterns begin to emerge.

The 4G girls moved in and out of interaction depending on how they defined situations and of paramount importance in that definitions seemed to be their perception of the teacher's ability to discipline them.<sup>14</sup> When an individual girl saw a teacher as strict she had comparatively little choice in how she behaved in the class - she simply had to work. We might suggest that she had to accept the teacher's definition of the situation and conform to how he expected her to act. As we have already seen, when pupils saw teachers in this way, they worked quietly and alone - protest, if there was to be any, was usually an individual affair.

It was only when a group of girls did not see the teacher as strict, when they did not appear to take his discipline seriously, that they had some choice in their behaviour. Any group of girls who

consistently saw a particular teacher as soft could act in apparently contradictory ways. At times they could work and at other times they might misbehave. They seemed to be making judgements about the work that they were set. Some teachers were being judged as more effective than others, but these judgements only emerged as significant within the context of a teacher's discipline. A group of girls could only act on their like or dislike of a teacher's methods when he was seen as soft..

We therefore have a complex picture of girls moving in and out of interaction depending firstly on how strict or soft they saw the teacher and secondly on how effective they saw him. For example, Monica never misbehaved in domestic science, indicating that she took the teacher's discipline seriously. When a group of girls were mucking about in this lesson, Monica was never among them; she neither spoke to them nor laughed at their jokes. Even when they were rude to her she tried to ignore them, as the following example shows.

Most of the talk in the class comes from Carol, Valerie, Diane, Jill and Linda who sit at the back of the room.

Monica is sitting at the front of the class, not talking.

Carol: "Where's Monica?"

Linda: "Oh she's at the front".

Carol (sarcastically): "Oh look at that lot. She's too brainy for me!"

They all laugh . . . The rest of the class, including Miss Lane probably hear these remarks, but no one else laughs or makes any comment.

In science though, Monica appeared to define the teacher in quite a different way. She would nearly always join in with the large

group of girls who were mucking about: she apparently did not take this teacher's attempts to discipline her very seriously.

Monica of course is only an example. Other girls behaved in the same way, moving in and out of interaction with their friends depending on whether they agreed with their definitions about the teachers ability to discipline them. As was noted above, there were even occasions when they all agreed, and the whole class became a single interaction set, everyone misbehaving or working together.

The teacher's 'control' was therefore of paramount importance and it was only with teachers who were apparently seen as soft that decisions about how effective they were at teaching had any impact on the way the girls behaved. It was only with really soft teachers that they could choose whether to work or muck about.

Valerie saw Mrs Alan as soft but most of the time she worked in her lessons because as she explained in an interview, she learned a lot from her. The same was true for a large number of other girls with Miss Keene in typing; they could have got away with mucking about if they had wanted to, but most of the time they worked, (even if they did make a lot of noise about it!)

In the following example, which is taken from a science lesson, Valerie and Diane did not muck about as they usually did. Six or seven of their friends sat together shouting, joking and laughing as usual but Valerie and Diane sat quietly together in a corner thoroughly involved in their work.

Valerie and Diane sit at the top of the bench farthest from the board. They are correcting or finishing a diagram of a skeleton for the first five minutes of the lesson and take no notice at all of what the teacher is saying. They seem very involved

in what they are doing. Eventually they finish and put the diagrams away in their folders, get out a new piece of paper and begin taking down the notes written on the board. They work quietly and neatly with little communication with anyone else in the class.

On this occasion, Valerie and Diane formed their own interaction set. This particular lesson meant something different to them from other science lessons. They were interested and involved, and they chose to work.

Using the symbolic interactionist perspective, we have been encouraged to move up close to the phenomena of classroom behaviour and picture the changing process of interpretations that characterise interaction. We have seen that teachers and classroom events 'mean' different things to different pupils and the concept of the interaction set reflects the changing pattern of joint actions that emerge from these different meanings. Yet obviously this analysis of classroom interaction does not take us far enough. The picture we have so far is of static situations; a series of descriptions of behaviour related to specific definitions of the situations. What those definitions are as far as the pupils are concerned we can only intuitively guess at. For example, using the rationale that we are 'normal members of society' we can guess that the pupil's behaviour implies that some teachers are seen as more strict than others and some teachers are more successful than others.

Yet within the symbolic interactionist perspective, we are not encouraged to go on to ask how these pupils went about classifying teachers as strict or effective or whatever. We are not able to go on to ask what knowledge they were applying in the construction of

these typifications of teachers that led to the behaviour we have discussed. Such questions are of a different order from those implied within the present theoretical framework, for they appear to be more truly phenomenological. The next chapter will be devoted to exploring the theories of Schutz and his followers which should lead us on to asking these types of questions and suggest ways of generating data that will answer them.

Notes for Chapter IV

1. Non-verbal behaviour is particularly important for pupil-pupil contact in traditionally organised classrooms. Dumont and Wax's (1969) study is of course one of the most important in this context. In their extreme case, all pupil-pupil contact was on a non-verbal level and it was therefore 'invisible' to the teacher. They say of their Cherokee pupils, "A gesture, an inflection in voice, a movement of the eye is as meaningful as a large volume of words would be for their white peers" (Quoted from Cosin et al. (Eds.) 1971:81).
2. See the critique in Chapter II of Hargreaves', Lacey's and Sugarman's work.
3. Other researchers have pointed to this fact as well. For example Kounin (1970) reports his study of teachers disciplining emotionally disturbed children. His most important finding was that the behaviour of these children changed as they moved from class to class. Similarly, Withall (1952) using his systematic observational system managed to show how the 'climate' of a group of children changed as they moved round the school from teacher to teacher.
4. Keddie (1971) notes how teachers found it necessary to 'socialise' her in to their perceptions of classes before they allowed her to observe.
5. Werthman's (1963) study of a California gang obviously corroborates this position. The gang members went to school to learn something, even though they appreciated misbehaving as well. This contrasts strongly with the cultural model of group behaviour: for example Hargreaves' study leads to the conclusion that all those who muck about do not value school. It is quite possible to hold two opinions which in the teacher's eye might look contradictory but make sense to the pupils. Chapter VI will show that pupils make decisions about when it is the right time to learn and the right time to muck about.

6. The notion of a 'repertoire' of behaviour is taken from Goffman (1959).
7. That pupils experienced the classroom in different ways was recognised as long ago as 1945. Anderson used a systematic technique to study classrooms and noted that children had vastly different amounts and styles of contact with teachers. He suggested that pupils must therefore live in quite different 'psychological environments' within the same class - it would mean different things to them.
8. A closer examination of some of the comments made by the pupils that Lacey and Hargreaves studied suggests that they were much more ambivalent in their approach to school than the authors gave them credit for. See, for example, Lacey's discussion of a pupil called Short (p. 86) and some of the comments made to Hargreaves by class 4D (pp 40-47).
9. Both Jenks (1971) and Keddie (1971) suggest that teachers use the concept of an 'ideal pupil' as a comparative base with which to make judgements about behaviour.
10. As both teachers taught in the traditional 'chalk and talk' method, Flanders' finding that teachers dominate the classroom talk for two thirds of the time was probably correct. However, it was certainly not the case in other classes.
11. This was obviously an example of Kounin's (1970) 'ripple effect' of discipline.
12. Walker (1971) has pointed out that children's seating position, is an element of the 'material context' of the classroom and can have an impact on the 'social context' of the classroom. For example in one class Walker observed, he noticed that the teacher used Christian or nick-names of the pupils near him, but surnames of those who were

distant. This effect changed as the teacher moved round the room. For other work on the impact of the material context of the classroom see Richardson (1967).

13. Waller's (1965) comments on seating arrangements perhaps become appropriate here. In 1932 he noted the importance of what he called 'classroom ecology', i.e. variations in the classroom seating arrangements.

"In the front row is a plentiful sprinkling of overdependent types, mixed perhaps with a number of extremely zealous students. In the back row are persons in rebellion, commonly persons in rebellion against authority . . . The effect of this distribution on classroom interaction depends on the instructor's rapport with his student and the manner in which he distributes his attention over the group, but it is always a significant effect." (Waller 1965: 161-162).

14. Waller (1965) noted the importance of the teacher in the developing culture of a particular class.

"An important determinant of the personality of the class is in the teacher's mind, for differential attitudinal sets are called forth in the teacher by the classes which shape themselves in different configurations and the teacher shows a different side of himself to different classes. The differences in the teacher's attitudes are often so slight that they defy the keenest observer to isolate and describe them, but the effects of these differences are neither slight nor difficult to observe" (Waller 1965:162).

## Chapter V

Schutz and the Sociology of Knowledge:- the second guiding perspective.

### 1. A Critique of Symbolic Interactionism

In Chapter III it was pointed out that in Blumer's terms at least, sociology had lost its own subject, it had moved away from the actual fact of human association and a concern for everyday life as experienced by members of society. Sociology had become dominated by explanations that dehumanised society; explanations in terms of social systems and psychological drives etc. To remedy this, the symbolic interactionists' concern has been to investigate and record the normative order of society; in Blumer's own words

"Since action is forged by the actor out of what he perceives, interprets and judges, one would have to see the operating situation as the actor sees it, perceive objects as the actor perceives them, ascertain their meaning in terms of the meaning that they have for the actor and follow the actor's line of conduct as the actor organises it - in short one would have to take the role of the actor and see his world from his stand point"

(Blumer 1966)

The symbolic interactionists attempt to study the world as it appears to us in broadly phenomenological and because of this Berger (1966) suggests that it represents one of the most important theoretical contributions to American social science.

Yet how far can symbolic interactionism be called truly phenomenological - how far does it succeed in moving sociological analysis back to our experience of the world. Phillipson (1972), drawing on the work of Husserl, suggests that phenomenology is an

attempt at a 'presuppositionless' and therefore 'first' philosophy, the object of which is to describe rather than explain the objects of consciousness.<sup>1</sup> It is in this sense different from science, for science is an activity purely of the 'second order' drawing on the world we all know as a resource.<sup>2</sup> This is not to suggest that phenomenology rejects the idea of producing 'second order' accounts, simply that they will be of a different sort. Rather than drawing on the actor's perspective to construct some new account of the world the phenomenologist tries to 'reflect' the actors point of view. Theory, for the phenomenological sociologist is a refining and ordering of everyday reality.

This concern with the relationship between first and second order constructs provides a vantage point for evaluating symbolic interactionism and the analysis developed so far. From this point of view it is apparent that the concept of the interaction set is an 'external', 'second order' construct and as such it has a problematic and unknown relationship to how the pupils themselves see classroom events. Even though the concept is 'grounded' in the data, it has been built up by interpreting pupil's deeds and talk from the 'outside' rather than from their own point of view.

This can best be illustrated by looking back at page 143 where the notion of the interaction set was first introduced. There, after giving an example of Terrie interacting with Jackie it says

"They spoke to each other in loud voices making exaggerated protestations of their innocence, and hence we can suggest that they both 'saw' the situation in the same way. They seemed to define the lesson as one where misbehaviour was appropriate and where it was possible to get away with doing virtually nothing; they continually take each other into account in deciding how to act"

In fact of course we have no real evidence of what Jackie 'intended' to communicate to Terrie, nor how she 'saw' what was happening. Whatever Blumer has said symbolic interactionism does not consider it necessary to directly explore what situations mean to the actors for it is assumed that the observer will 'know'. In this way pupils' behaviour and talk has been interpreted as 'organised', 'repetitive' and 'supporting the same definition of the situation'. That is how it appeared to me as observer and as reported it supports the notion of the interaction set. Yet all this is done without any consideration to whether the pupils would have seen events like this. Symbolic interactionism involves an inherent confusion of actors' and analysts conceptions of events and the concept of the interaction set likewise has a confused and unknown background. (Pollner (1974) makes the same point about Becker's work).

This opens up Glaser and Strauss' approach to the development of theory to yet another criticism. It is not enough to develop grounded theories, for even they can do violence to the actors' perspectives; presumably it would be possible to interpret events to support almost any theory that 'emerged' from the data. What we have with the interaction set is just one more plausible account of how things 'really are'; if it is to be any more than this it must be grounded in how the pupils themselves see events.

This then provides a programme for the remainder of the thesis, that is to show the links between the second order construct of the interaction set and the pupils first order conceptions of classroom reality. We begin by turning to the work of Schutz and his followers, who, with their particular approach to language and the process of typification throw some light onto how pupils conceptions of classroom life might be documented more fully.

## 2. Schutz's Sociology of Knowledge

Schutz's sociology of knowledge, which underlies much recent work in educational research, stands apart from other sociologies of knowledge. Rather than concerning itself with the development of intellectual traditions, it treats as problematic the whole field of everyday common sense knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

In our world, Schutz and his followers suggest we are aware of 'multiple realities' (for example, dreaming, remembering or thinking) but among those realities, there is one that presents itself as supreme - this is the reality of everyday life, and it is to this that Schutz has addressed himself in his study of common sense knowledge. It is the reality that the normal wide awake adult takes for granted, where everything is self evidently real. It is the 'natural attitude',

"In the natural attitude, I always find myself in a world which is for me taken for granted and self-evidently 'real'. I was born into it and I assume that it existed before me. It is the unexamined ground of everything in my experience, as it were, the taken for granted frame in which all the problems which I must overcome are placed"

(Schutz and Luckman 1973:4)

So this life world that Schutz addresses himself to is the whole sphere of everyday experience in which people pursue their interests and affairs by manipulating objects, dealing with people constructing plans and carrying them out. The knowledge we have of that world is taken for granted; it is common sense and 'obvious' to everybody.

This world that we inhabit is from the outset intersubjective - the knowledge we have of it is shared with those around us, and teachers and pupils share much in the way of common sense about school life. It is this shared nature that distinguishes this reality from other realities and renders it available to sociological analysis.

One of the things that we take for granted is that other men exist in this world with similar consciousness. We assume that in the main, the outer world which was already experienced, mastered and named by our predecessors is fundamentally the same for our fellow men as it is for us. To the pupil it is common sense that others such as teachers may have different perspectives on that world (their projects may differ and even sometimes conflict) but they accept that for most of the time the world they all perceive is basically the same.

"The natural attitude is the attitude of common sense consciousness precisely because it is a world that is common to many men. Common sense knowledge is the knowledge I share with others in the normal self-evident routine of everyday life" (Berger and Luckman 1967:37)

The work of Schutz and his followers is directed to the study of this intersubjective common sense knowledge, reporting what it is and how it is constructed.

Knowledge has traditionally been conceived as a set of abstract structures with an independent 'objective' reality of their own. It has been assumed that objects have meaning other than in the minds of the individuals. This objectivist approach to knowledge is as much a part of the natural attitude of common sense as it is of traditional epistemology. Yet this is directly challenged by Schutz and his followers who insist that man is a product of his dialectic relationship with society.

For example Berger sees society as a

"dialectic phenomena in that it is a human product and nothing but a human product that yet continuously acts back on its producers" (Berger 1969:3)

In this way, what a man 'knows' about his world is intimately related to his position in that social world. Berger and Luckman have elaborated a triadic process in explaining man's dialectic with society. They suggest that men 'externalise' themselves through mental and physical activity as they continually act upon the world. This process of externalisation produces a world which is seen to be 'objective'; it becomes a facticity which faces its producer as real and external. Finally this external reality is subjectively experienced, it is 'internalised' and becomes part of the subjective world.

In their model of society individual meanings are objectivated and therefore become available to everyone who shares the same world. This world is then seen as 'objective reality', a reality that is seen to exist irrespective of the individual's own preferences in the matter. These socially available definitions of the world are taken to be 'knowledge' about it and this knowledge is continually verified for the individual in social situations where it is taken for granted.

"It is through externalisation that society is a human product. It is through objectivation that society becomes reality sui generis. It is through internalisation that man is a product of society" (Berger 1969:4)

What we all know of the world is a product of the joint processes of subjectivity and institutionalisation.

If we take this approach to society then it becomes apparent that men construct knowledge rather than discover it. Although our common sense knowledge of the world may appear to be objective and independent, it is in fact continually subject to the interpretations of individuals as these are mediated through social processes.

Man is an active agent, interpreting and creating his world, but that interpretation does not occur in isolation, but through socially approved categories which are differently legitimated in different social settings. As Esland points out, the naturally objective attitude to knowledge which is essential for the day to day functioning of society conceals the extremely complex problems of and infinite variations in its realisation.

Some implications of this approach to the school have already been explored by several authors, most notably in Young's (1971) important book 'Knowledge and Control'. The sociology of knowledge makes it possible to see the relationship between pupils and teachers as essentially a 'reality sharing' and 'world building' enterprise. Not only can the curriculum be seen as socially constructed 'zones of knowledge' to which pupils are introduced, but other more common understandings can be treated in the same way. Using this approach, we may ask what teachers and pupils know of each other; what a 'bright pupil' is; what the term 'below average' means, and ask how such knowledge is socially distributed and negotiated. We may also ask what implication such knowledge has for what the teacher considers it appropriate to teach (Keddie, 1971); how pupils come to be considered successes or failures (Cicourel and Kitsuse, 1963); or

from the pupils' point of view, how they assess whether a teacher is being 'straight' or not (Werthman, 1963, 1970). A closer look at some of Schutz's work will draw out the implications for the classroom more fully.

(i) Relevance systems and typifications.

In his later work, Schutz utilised W.I. Thomas' concept of the definition of the situation in much the same way as the symbolic interactionists; if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequence.<sup>6</sup> Yet as we have seen, Schutz is not only interested in exploring these definitions of the situation, he is also concerned with illustrating the means by which they are subjectively constructed within an ongoing social context.

In every day life, the normal wide awake adult has a body of knowledge which is automatically at hand. His store of experience is built up through education, the influence of parents, habit, and from his own reflection.

Some of these experiences are clear, some unclear, some of them are prejudices and some of them conflicting. Our objective in building up this body of knowledge is to be able to predict the behaviour of others and the course of events in our world. Of course we are not interested in predicting in a mathematical sense, but only in a typical sense. Our knowledge of the world is thus organised by a series of typifications. With these typifications

we structure our understandings of settings by inferring the unknown part of other peoples' motives. These typifications constitute ready made definitions of situations, and allow us to put into practice ready made 'recipes' for dealing with those situations.

In the construction of typifications we continually ignore what makes an object unique and place that object in the same class with others that share some trait or quality. New events can be taken for granted to the extent that we see them as having a 'kernel' which is essentially similar to other events that we have come across before; that is to the extent that they fit in with our existing typifications. Thus for example, teachers typify pupils as intelligent or dull, pupils typify knowledge as geography or history, useful or a waste of time. Schutz suggests that such typifications are always formed in relation to some purpose at hand and it is this immediate interest that determines what traits will be equalised, and what individuality will be ignored.

In his understanding of how men define situations, Schutz says that the world is always perceived as an immediate experience, yet this experience is continually being interpreted by the individual in terms of his relevance structures. What is considered relevant is defined by the inter-relationship between 'because of' and 'in order to' motives. By this Schutz means that the actor has a history; he has a unique collection of socially derived knowledge. It is biographically constituted

and thus his relevance system will have an historical dimension. In addition though, the actor also shares a 'purpose at hand' with those around him which influences what, in the environment, he pays attention to and what he ignores. In this way what we apprehend in the immediate present, contains both the past and the future.

In his own words, Schutz says that the individual has to pull into his present the

"open possibilities of his typical expectations of the typical events and occurrences which, though hidden in the open horizon, will, so he believes, materialise in conformity with his anticipation. And this belief is in turn founded on his preknowledge of typical occurrences and events in the past which have proved to be relevant in a similar way in similar situations"

(Schutz 1964:284)

So what is relevant to an individual in coming to a definition of the situation is the practical task that faces him, but in his construction of that task he will employ both historical (because of) and future-oriented (in order to) understandings. Within the context of the classroom we can assume that a pupil's definition of a particular teacher at any one time includes both knowledge of how this and other teachers have acted in the past, and expectations that he will continue to act in a predictable way in the future.

(ii) Intersubjectivity and socially derived knowledge

Our knowledge of the world is thus made up of a series of typifications, selectively constructed in accordance with our relevance structures. Such knowledge constitutes what Schutz calls our *Lebenswelt*, or life world. Yet this life world is not held in isolation but is a social product held in conjunction with other people who occupy our world.

"The world of my daily life is by no means my private world, but is from the outset an intersubjective one shared with my fellow men, experienced and interpreted by others; in brief it is a world common to all of us." (Schutz 1967:312).

However, not everyone is equally important to us in the construction of our reality. Schutz distinguishes between contemporaries and consociates, predecessors and successors. The greatest confirmation of our point of view comes from our consociates; those who inhabit a similar physical and social world, and with whom we consequently develop an intersubjective relationship.

This life world that we construct is thus intersubjective. Consciousness is inherently social, and we experience our world as a world held in common with others. It is this notion of the intersubjectivity of consciousness explored by Schutz that makes phenomenology relevant to sociology.

Looking again at the school we can see that by inhabiting the same physical and temporal world for at least part of the day, pupils and teachers take part in intersubjective relationships with each other; they participate in a process of 'world building' and 'reality constructing'. This is most particularly obvious when the curriculum is looked at from this point of view. Children are

introduced to theoretical, 'mapped out' zones of knowledge called subjects and they are only considered successful students if they adequately take over the perception of the world subscribed to by their teachers (See Esland (1971) and Keddie (1971)). Perhaps even more significant in its impact on school life is the intersubjective world constructed amongst groups of teachers or pupils, rather than between teachers and pupils. As Jenks has shown, teachers typify pupils in certain set ways, and during a process of 'learning the ropes' of a school, new teachers have to take over this social stock of knowledge if they are to find life in the staffroom tolerable. The same process can be identified amongst groups of pupils, particularly those in the same class, who meet regularly, (Werthman 1963, 1970 and Woods, 1974 point out some of the implications of this process amongst pupils).

It is because we inhabit an intersubjectively constructed world, that the knowledge we have of it comes not only from our individual experience but can be handed down: it can be socially derived. As Jenks identified from looking at teacher socialisation, we learn from our consociates. Schutz suggests that this is made possible because we assume that we have a 'reciprocity of perspectives' with them. This reciprocity involves two principles: (a) the idealisation of interchangeability of standpoints "I take it for granted, and I assume that my fellow man does the same that I and my fellow man would have typically the same experiences of the common world if we changed places" (Schutz 1967: 316) and (b) the idealisation of a congruency of a system of relevancies "I take it for granted until counter evidence is offered - and assume my fellow man does the same, that the differences originating in our private system of relevancies, can be disregarded for the purpose at hand" (Schutz 1967:316)<sup>7</sup>

Jenks' study again serves to illustrate this process. New teachers entered the school he studied with a different stock of knowledge from that utilized by the practising older teachers. As products of contemporary colleges of education the new teachers had embraced the 'child centred' approach in both philosophy and practise. Despite this, in learning how to operate in this particular school and in discussing specific educational issues, it became necessary for them to abandon this 'progressive' perspective. Using the rationalisation that 'these modern techniques are not relevant here', they took over the older teachers' way of looking at the school. Despite very different biographies, the new teachers assumed they had the same system of relevancies as the older teachers and were able to take over their social stock of knowledge about pupils and school.

Because knowledge can be socially derived in this way, we often do not have to 'map out' our social world - it is already done for us:

"We find ourselves in an historically given world, which as a world of nature as well as a sociocultural world, had existed before my birth and will continue to exist after my death" (Schutz 1967:312).

### (iii) Language

Language plays a vitally important part in the process of being introduced to the 'mapped out', 'objectivated' world that we come to share with others. Language is symbolic and refers us to particular 'provinces of meaning' which are already constructed. In other words, participating in a symbolic language pre-empts the interpretative process - words and names symbolize 'mapped out' consciousness which we automatically take over when we participate

in a common language. Berger expresses this process most clearly:

"The fact of language . . . can readily be seen as the imposition of order on experience. Language nominalizes (i.e. creates conceptual order) by imposing definitions and structures upon the ongoing flux of experience. As an item of experience is named, it is ipso facto taken out of this flux and given stability as the entity so named . . . it is impossible to use language without participating in its order"

(Berger 1969:20)

Elsewhere Berger (Berger and Berger 1972) suggests that language is the fundamental institution of society, for all other institutions are built on the underlying regulatory pattern of language; they all depend on a world of meanings that are constructed by means of language and kept going by language.<sup>8</sup>

Schutz suggests that our language consists mainly of named objects and events: names are by definition typifications for by naming an object we are linking it with things and events we have experienced in the past and assuming it will be consistent with that experience in the future. Typifications by their very nature are constructed in terms of our systems of relevance. Language used by consociates can consequently indicate for the researcher what is considered by them to be worthy of attention, or relevant as a group. Schutz expresses this most concisely by saying:

"The typifying medium par excellence by which socially derived knowledge is transmitted is the vocabulary and syntax of everyday language generalisations referring to the relevance systems prevailing in the linguistic 'in-group' which found

the named thing significant enough to provide  
a separate name for it" (Schutz 1953:10)<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, participating in a common language indicates a consensus about what is 'relevant' in the immediate situation; the language focalises, patterns, and objectivates and individual's subjective world. Language is a system of ready-made typifications schemes which we take for granted.

As we mentioned in Chapter II a number of students have employed the technique of investigating the vocabulary of people in school as a means of studying what is relevant of them. For example Cicourel and Kitsuse (1963) investigated what terms such as 'college material', 'academic problem' and 'trouble maker' meant to teachers. From the pupils' point of view, Woods (1974) has looked at the disciplinary technique of 'showing us up' and Werthman (1963,1970) has investigated such pupil concepts as the 'straight teacher'.

Teachers and pupils utilising such linguistic concepts are taking part in intersubjectively constructed typifications. The explication of these typifications can indicate what is relevant to them in the classroom - it can lead to an understanding of how how they construct particular definitions of situations.<sup>10 10</sup>

Knowledge that is made available by participating in a linguistic 'in-group' is socially approved. It can be considered as a set of recipes helping members of the group to define their situations in typical ways. They find typical solutions for typical problems and develop typical precepts for typical behaviour. This recipe knowledge represents an integrated whole and is available to all participants in the intersubjectively constructed reality. Our social stock of knowledge constitutes a set of different recipes ordered according to the roles we as society members to have perform.

Teachers will have a different set of recipes for the staffroom and the classroom, while pupils will have recipes for the classroom, the playground, for home and for the youth club etc. In short, this social stock of knowledge "Provides complex and detailed information concerning those situations of everyday life with which I must frequently deal and provides much more general and imprecise information on remoter areas" (Berger and Luckman 1967:56).

### 3. Implications for the Present Research

In examining how the reality that the pupils of 4G recognised was constituted, Schutz's analysis provides us with a number of useful avenues to pursue. If, as he suggests, language is of vital importance in the maintenance and transmission of a particular reality, then obviously such a study must begin by looking at the language of this particular 'in-group'.

Language consists of a series of typifications; pupils will typify teachers and classroom situations, values and objectives, some of which will be unique to them as a group and others which will be learned from predecessors and contemporaries. Exploring the typifications that pupils use can provide valuable insights into what is 'relevant' to them as a group. Although each girl, by virtue of her individual biography will have a slightly different perspective on the classroom, it can be assumed that for much of the time (by the idealisation of the reciprocity of perspectives) she will share a system of relevances with those around her. It is this commonly accepted knowledge that gives rise to the typifications that become established.

What are the consequences for pupils' behaviour of this knowledge? Firstly situations become organised and predictable when pupils typify

them. They link one teacher's behaviour with the actions of other teachers they have experienced or learned about, and thereby render the situation understandable and unproblematic. Such stable definitions also allow the applications of different recipes or precepts for action. Pupils portray themselves as acting in consistent ways in situations which they define as essentially similar.

If we document how the pupils see themselves behaving in class (What recipes for action they utilize in the different classroom situations they recognise) we can expose not only the rationality of their behaviour, but also how their perception of events relates to the second order formulation of their actions in terms of inter-action sets.

Notes for Chapter V

1. Phillipson (1972) emphasises that the main task of phenomenology is that of description; 'emphasising the descriptive method of phenomenology helps to distinguish its projects from other analytic methods and forms of explanation which characterise other philosophies and sciences" (122).

2. The links between the phenomenological task and Glaser and Strauss' argument for grounded theory are brought out in this quote from Husserl,

"Self evident data are patient, they let theories chatter about them but remain what they are. It is the business of theory to conform to data and the business of theories of knowledge to discriminate fundamental types and to describe them in accordance with their distinctive nature (Husserl 1967:89)

3. In fact this distinction somewhat simplifies the differences between symbolic interactionism and the sociology of knowledge. For example Berger sees great similarities between the two (see e.g. Berger (1966) and Berger and Luckman (1967)) but he has concentrated on the problem of psychological identity (drawing on Mead's notion of the 'me' and the 'I') rather than on joint action, which is the main subject of this thesis.

4. Zimmerman and Pollner (1971) make the point that up to now sociology has only 'fed' on common sense rather than taking it seriously and studying it in its own right.

5. This is distinct from the ethnomethodological question which asks about the rules that men use to see order in the world. Ethnomethodologists assume that there are invariant practices available which render situations concrete and they therefore study

"the way in which members assemble particular scenes so as to provide for one another evidence of a social order as ordinarily conceived" (Zimmerman and Pollner 1971:83).

6. The term 'situation' here refers to a "particular physical and sociocultural environment in which the actor has a physical, social and moral position as determined in part by his biography" (Heeren 1971:47)

7. Schutz's own example is very explicit here; he says:

"We both see the 'same' flying bird inspite of the difference of our spatial position, sex, age and the fact that you want to shoot it and I just want to enjoy it" (Schutz 1967:316)

8. Berger gives as examples of institutions, the state, the economy and the educational system. He says:

" . . . whatever else they may be (they) depend upon a linguistic edifice of classification, concepts and imperatives for individual's actions - that is they depend upon a world of meanings that was constructed by means of language and can only be kept going by language" (Berger and Berger 1972: 67)

9. Heeren (1971) distinguishes between two different sorts of 'in-groups' (epistemic communities). Firstly there are 'existential groups' to which one is born, where there is a presiding system of relevancies and typifications; and secondly there are 'voluntary groups' that one chooses to join, where relevance structures are not yet fully formed and where members must work together towards arriving at a common definition of the situation. A group of school pupils would presumably be classified as somewhere towards the voluntary end of the continuum.

10. One of the best examples of the importance of language in

the maintenance of a particular conception of the world is  
of course Berger and Kellner's (1964) article on marriage.

## Chapter VI

### Pupils' Classroom Knowledge

#### 1. Introduction

An analysis of language is of fundamental importance in examining how the reality that pupils perceive is constructed. Schutz himself makes the following point:

"The pre-scientific vernacular can be interpreted as a treasure house of ready made pre-constituted types and characteristics all socially derived and carrying along an open horizon of unexplored content" (Schutz 1953:10).

As we saw in the last chapter, language has a dual function: we use language to control our world, to impose a structure on it, but language also controls us by limiting the ways that we can think and act.

Language imposes order because it involves the process of typification. For example this chapter will demonstrate that the girls of 4G consistently typified teachers as 'strict' or 'soft'. By so doing they rendered classroom situations unproblematic, they knew what to expect of teachers and how those teachers would discipline them. By participating in a common language of which the words 'strict' and 'soft' were a part, they had readymade definitions of the situation. School life became routine and predictable for them and they could act with reasonable certainty of what the outcome of their actions would be. In Schutz's terms they could apply different 'recipes' for action as though they had objective

knowledge about teachers. Of course, they occasionally made misjudgements (a teacher they called 'soft' might take them to the headmistress and get them into trouble) but such events were unusual. For the most part, using commonly accepted typifications of teachers and classroom situations allowed them to act and predict the consequences.

The other side of the language coin is that it imposes its own structure on members' reality. By taking part in a common language pupils were committed to a 'ready made' and 'napped out' construction of reality. Their language constituted a set of typifications of teachers and classroom situations, values, and objectives some of which were unique to them as a class and some of which were handed down from predecessors and contemporaries. Whatever their origin, the world represented by this language took on an immutable objectivity. A teacher's strictness or softness emerged as a fact to those who took part in a language describing him as such.

Because language is so important, investigating it in detail can show how pupils' reality is constructed and organised. We will begin by recording how 4G typified teachers and classroom situations, for if Schutz is correct then such typifications ought to grow from the girls' relevance structures and also ought to be related to what they actually did in class - their recipes of action. Relevance structures dictate what we notice and what we ignore in constructing typifications. By recording these typifications we therefore ought to be able to go on to investigate what was relevant to the class as a whole - what they looked for and valued in a teacher.

If this analysis is correct then we should be able to understand different interaction sets in terms of the 'classroom knowledge' on which they are based. Relating the two sorts of data developed in

this and the previous section (that is what the pupils are seen to do in classroom observation with what they say they do in their talk about classrooms) provides some form of 'test' for the analysis and indicates possible weaknesses.

To summarise, the three empirical objectives of this chapter are therefore;

- a) the record the pupils' typifications of teachers and classroom situations;
- b) to investigate the pupils' relevance structures that were important in the construction of these typifications;
- and c) to re-examine classroom observations in terms of this 'common sense' knowledge.

## 2. Typifications of Teachers and Learning Situations

### (i) Strict and soft teachers

Teachers were typified in various ways but the most important distinction related to their ability to discipline the girls and make 'trouble'. Teachers were seen as either 'strict', and their discipline was taken seriously, or 'soft' and their attempts to control the class were fruitless. Monica made the distinction between these two types of teacher quite clear in the following extract from an interview.

Question: "What sort of teachers do you like best?"

Monica: "The strict teachers -sometimes the soft teachers - you know the soft teachers right, the kids take advantage of her you know, like if she's so soft they think 'Oh I can get away with that'. The teachers should

be strict. You know some of them have a certain strictness and a certain softness, you know what I mean - should be in between. But if you're too soft, the kids don't learn nothing, but if you're strict they take a good lot in because they're afraid of you. They think 'Oh if I don't get this done you'll really get me into trouble' so they say 'All right, I'll learn this, I'll learn that.'."

This distinction between strictness and softness was of paramount importance in how pupils defined classroom situation, and it ran throughout all their discussions about school. Valerie gives another good example of how important it is:

Question: "If you were a teacher and you came in and everyone was mucking about, what would you do?"

Valerie: "Well it would depend on what kind of a teacher I was. If I was a strict teacher I'd go 'SIT DOWN', you know once you hit one of them the rest are frightened - everybody just do the same thing."eg.

Before answering the question, Valerie has to decide what what sort of teacher she is talking about. She quite obviously sees strict and soft teachers as behaving in quite different ways.<sup>1</sup>

Valerie's comments also bring out the point that a strict teacher was someone who could discipline the girls, make trouble for them and stop them misbehaving. We can compare this with a conversation about soft teachers who could not impose any discipline.ine.

Francis; in "Some teachers are really soft you could stand up and they don't teach you anything that way. You tell 'em anything and they go "Come on sit down" what's the use of that when you leave school?" (slightly annoyed tone in her voice).

Strict teachers and soft teachers were the two basic typifications utilized by the pupils, and these two terms occurred again and again throughout their discussion: they provided the framework within which other typifications operated. The other main distinction that was made between teachers related to their ability to teach effectively - these were 'good' teachers and 'bad' teachers. Good teachers could be either strict or soft, and so could bad teachers. As we will see below when we explore the pupils' relevance structures, these girls had very specific notions of what they wanted to learn and what they expected of a teacher, but such demands were always placed within the context of a teacher's discipline. 'Strict good' teachers were seen in a different way from 'soft good' teachers and different forms of behaviour became appropriate.

(ii) 'Good teachers', 'learning a lot'

The ideal teacher as far as 4G were concerned was Mr Marks who took them for History. He was seen as strict and effective at teaching them in a way that they wanted to be taught. They all worked very hard in his lessons and seldom, if ever, spoke. It was their 'best' subject.

Question: "What's your best subject?"

Mona: Um History

Question: "Why history, is it the way the teacher runs the class?"

Mona: "Oh he's strict."

Question: "And why is it the other teachers aren't so good."

Mona: "Mr. Marks you know he really make you do a lot of work you know because some of us we're already on our third book in history."

Valerie expanded on this point further;

Valerie: "... you can't talk in Mr. Mark's lesson, you just have to work"

Carol: "Yeah."

Valerie: "So after a while you work and you enjoy it because you're learning a lot."

Those taking history were quite unanimous that it was their 'best' subject, even if it was not their 'favourite' one.

Question: What do you think is your best subject?"

Anne: "Cooking, I like cooking."

Angela: "Me too - but it's not my best subject."

Debbie: "Typing, I like typing."

Angela: "History I suppose" ( she seems rather hesitant at first)

Question: "What makes it best?"

Angela: "Well we do lots of work."

Question: "What sort of things would you do in a good history lesson?"

Angela: "Well copying notes from the board, writing notes from the textbook and things like that."

Debbie: Geography's my best, she's good Miss Brown."

It was not that they liked strict teachers per. se, in fact they often resented their discipline, but they accepted it when the teacher was 'good' and was able to make them 'learn'. The appreciation of good strict teachers is brought out in this discussion between Jill and Linda about English. They are describing the teacher to Monica who was in a different English group.

Monica: "He's strict isn't he?"

Linda: "When you're in his lesson right, you getting on with your work. Say you don't know that word, right, and he's talking to someone else and you call his name, he shout at you and something like that. He always do that to me."

Monica: "I can't stand people shouting at me".

Jill: 'He's good, he does teach us good.'

Question: "What do you think of him when he shouts at you?"

Linda: "I don't like it"

Question: "But you still think he's a good teacher?"

Linda: "Yeah."

Strictness was not liked in itself but to the extent that it was part and parcel of a teacher being 'good' it was appreciated.<sup>2</sup>

The other sort of 'good teachers' who were recognised were those who were soft. They were able to teach effectively when the class was quiet but they often had difficulty in gaining control. Such teachers were usually described as 'nice' and 'kind'.

Linda: Mrs. Newman - she is nice, she is nice to me."

Question: "Why is she good. Is it for the same reason as Mr. Walker (a strict teacher) is good?"

Linda: "No no that's different. Say like we haven't got Maria and Karen in the class we doesn't get any forward - she can't control the class."

For these two girls, Mrs. Newman was a potentially good teacher. She knew how to teach them effectively and sometimes they learned a lot in her lessons. However, because she was seen as soft, she could not control the class; everyone mucked about most of the of time and no one learned very much. There were several other teachers who were typified in the same way - they were soft, but potentially effective. In these teachers' lessons, the girls would occasionally work well and get involved in the subject, but the teachers could not force them to begin work if they did not want to, and consequently a lot of time was spent mucking about.

(iii) 'Useless teacher', 'boring lessons'

Teachers who could not teach effectively were characterised as 'useless' and the lessons they gave were just 'boring'. Once again

a distinction was made between strict and soft teachers who were boring. One of the art teachers was characterised as strict, so the girls in his art group could not misbehave. But he was also seen as a 'boring teacher':

Angela: "Art is boring - he just talk all the time. He just talk about art and all that sort of thing. He just talks and talks."

Anne: "Yeah, some teachers talk too much. We sit there for a long time listening so I lie down, put my head on the table and go to sleep."<sup>3</sup>

The history teacher who replaced Mr. Marks when he left was also characterised in the same way. He was extremely strict and would allow no talking or 'mucking about', but for example Mona could not understand his lessons - he did not explain things properly - she consequently saw his lessons as 'boring'.

Mona: "I can't stand people talking when I'm not doing anything."

Question: "What do you do when people talk?"

Julie: "Go to sleep."<sup>4</sup>

Mona: "Like he (the new history teacher) does, he just talks and writes things on the board like diagrams, writes names and and you're supposed to keep it in your head and then after he talks like and it don't even make sense."

Julie: "I just go to sleep."

Question: "Does it stay in your head.?"

Mona: "No it goes straight out."

Question: "What about when you learned from Mr. Marks?"

Mona: "It was good, I could remember a lot then."<sup>5</sup>

Question: "Why's that?"

Mona: "When he give it he explained it after but when he (new teacher) gives something to do out of the book when we done it he just takes it and marks it and don't explain it or

nothing - don't even explain it afterwards."

The final group of teachers who were recognised in the pupils' talk about school were those who were typified as boring and unable to exert any discipline: the girls misbehaved most with teachers categorised in this way. They could not learn anything because the teacher was 'useless' at teaching them in a way that they wanted to be taught, and if they laughed, joked, arrived late, or 'bunked' the lesson they probably would not get into trouble. Carol explained why she mucked about so much in these words:

Question: "Do you ever start the mucking about."

Carol: "Me? - Many times. I always do. Anyway to me the teachers look for it."

Question: "Why?"

Carol: "I get so bored. Like this morning for instance."

Question: "What happened?"

Carol: "We had (name of subject), we had that stupid man and he just sit there and gives us these stupid books to read so I sit there and read them and then Valerie and them lot say 'Lets' run out now -let's go out', so me Jill, Linda and Diane just follow her out."

This teacher was both 'useless' and 'soft' and rather than get bored, Carol might just as well enjoy herself and have a bit of 'fun' by mucking about.

These, then, were the basic typifications of teachers and classroom situations that were used during the interviews. Order and structure was imposed on classroom experience by typifying them along these lines. By characterising a teacher as strict a girl

was linking his actions with things that had happened in the past and predicting that he would behave in a way consistent with that experience in the future. She might know from past experience that teachers who were strict took reprisals against her when she misbehaved and consequently got her into trouble. Typifying a teacher in this way allowed her to be aware of these possibilities and act accordingly. In this way she could create stability and organisation in her world: it became normal and understandable to her.

### 3. Relevance structures

If we follow Schutz' argument through then the typifications documented must have emerged because they were related to the girls' relevance structures. If a group of people provide a name for something (strict teacher, soft teacher, good teacher, bad teacher) it indicates what is relevant to them: it must be important for a name to be needed. Consequently if we examine 4G's typifications of teachers and classroom situations a little more closely we ought to be able to suggest what was relevant to them as a group. Through the idealisation of the 'reciprocity of perspectives' they must have shared some knowledge of classrooms which they were drawing upon in the construction of their typifications.

We have already seen that the most important typification of teachers was related to their ability to impose discipline; a teacher's strictness or softness had a fundamental impact on how the girls behaved in his class. These typifications were obviously constructed in relation to something that was extremely relevant - avoiding 'trouble'. Avoiding 'trouble' was of paramount importance in this class where

misbehaviour was the norm; being able to classify teachers as strict or soft and predict how they would react to misbehaviour was essential. Consequently, by exploring what the girls meant by 'trouble' and why they strove to avoid it, we can gain some useful insights into their private world.

If 'trouble' and its avoidance was the first dimension of 4G's relevance structures, then 'learning' was the second. Teachers were characterised as good and bad teachers and this implied a concern with 'learning' of some sort. What the girls actually meant by 'learning' will therefore also be explored in some detail.

Finally, despite this interest in learning it must already be apparent that these girls devoted a great deal of time to 'mucking about' and misbehaving in various ways. What 'mucking about' meant to them will therefore also be recorded.

#### (i) Trouble

Although the girls spent a great deal of time in the class misbehaving and 'having fun', in certain circumstances, such behaviour could be transformed, and looked at in quite a different light. Instead of being a 'laugh' their misbehaviour could become a source of 'trouble'. When specific teachers took disciplinary action against pupils, and those pupils felt themselves forced into a position where they had to admit that it was 'wrong' to 'muck about', then the incident became trouble.

A teacher's ability to create trouble was in fact one of the most important factors in how these pupils saw classroom situations. Not all teachers could create trouble, there were 'strict' teachers and 'soft' teachers, and only the 'strict' teachers could get them

into trouble. How strict or soft a teacher was, was of great importance for it affected how the girls approached his lesson, how much they would 'muck about', how much they would 'work', and generally how effective they considered him in making them 'learn'. Obviously the term trouble, from which the concepts of strict and soft derive, is of great importance. It is a 'base term' to which other definitions are anchored.

All the girls 'mucked about' for a lot of their classroom time. The teachers recognised this in that they characterised the class as 'difficult'. From the pupils' perspective, mild delinquency was as much a part of normal classroom life as teaching and learning. Anne's statement is typical:

Question: "How would you describe someone you liked. What would she do in class?"

Anne: "Well, she'd muck about sometimes, and work sometimes."

Yet despite this acceptance of misbehaviour as normal, for the most part the pupils seemed to define it as wrong; it was defined as mis-conduct not only by the teachers, but by the pupils as well. Consequently, if they got caught, they usually accepted their punishment without much protest; they saw it as the teacher's prerogative to discipline pupils. The following discussion of the rights and wrongs of teachers hitting pupils illustrates this point well.

Jill: "It's all right for them to hit you, but not in your face or your head."

Monica: "I'm not letting my mum hit me in the face - only once I got hit across the face."

Question: "What would you have to have done to get hit?"

Jill: "Misbehaving, swearing and so on like that."

Linda: (quietly) "I don't think so."

Jill: "Yes you should! I'll take it yes, but not on my face - on my hands and my legs - but not on my face."

Question to Monica: "Do you think teachers should hit kids?"

Monica: "Yes."

Question: "What for?"

Monica: "Same as Jill."

Question: "That would be all the time in your class."

Monica: "I don't mind."

Two of the girls openly welcome quite severe discipline; it is only Linda who does not agree with corporal punishment. Yet she too described incidents where she accepted teachers' reprisals. Other girls took the same approach as well; if they were caught doing something they considered wrong, then trouble was legitimate.

Question: "Can you tell me a time when you've been in trouble Dorothy?"

Dorothy: "I've been in trouble many times."

Question: "Tell me one."

Dorothy: "There was Irene and Jackie in the class but usually when ~~we~~ we had his lesson we used to bunk it and go up library."

Question: "Who's lesson was that?"

Dorothy: "Mr. Whitmore geography and he was our tutor teacher as well and when we came in late he was asking us what we were doing and so we tell him that we are helping the library teacher (smiles at Linda, Jill and Monica). Then he sends us out and he used to swear at us and everything."

There was no protest, Dorothy had been caught doing something which she implicitly admitted was wrong and she got into trouble for it. We might

call this 'fair' trouble - it was considered legitimate by the class members.

For an incident to be defined as 'fair' trouble, some disciplinary action had to be taken by a teacher. The incident above did not become trouble for Dorothy until the teacher appeared on the scene. It was his taking action that transformed 'bunking' the lesson from mucking about to trouble. Yet the teacher 'doing something about it' was not the only prerequisite for trouble; the girls also had to admit that they were in the wrong. It was implicit in the way that Dorothy accepted her punishment that she admitted that she was in the wrong, and this was the important factor. Having to admit that they were guilty was seen as far more important than the discipline taken by teachers. Dorothy was sent out, and yet that was 'nothing'. Other reprisals such as being kept in or even hit were not important in themselves. The significant factor was acknowledging that mucking about was wrong.<sup>5</sup>

Members of the class varied in the lengths they would go to avoid having to admit that they were wrong, and hence trying to avoid getting into trouble. Valerie illustrates this point:

Valerie: "If me Carol and Diane are running about the building and we get caught, I usually get them out of it by saying a lie, but if they was by themselves, they get caught you see. If we get into trouble with a teacher - let's say today, I got into trouble with Mrs. Jones (the headmistress), I get them out of it because I just talk myself out of it. Sometime Diane don't know how to talk herself out of it, so she gets into trouble. See if Diane is lying to Mrs. Jones, right, Mrs. Jones find out, but if I lie to her, she always believe me and then I say to her, you know, this and that and she say "All right Valerie, go".

Valerie had a particular skill, she could manipulate the headmistress, and 'talk herself out of it' - she could get round actually having to confess that she was wrong, and the particular incident did not become trouble, even though she had been sent to the headmistress.

The admission of guilt then, was crucial in transforming mucking about into fair trouble. It was this that the girls wished to avoid and it was a far more important deterrent than any other form of punishment.

This notion of 'guilt' as a form of social control is in many ways similar to the disciplinary technique identified by Woods (1974) which he calls 'Showing us up'. Yet here it seems that guilt is not just a specific technique but lies behind all forms of discipline. Of course, trouble was not always considered fair. There were situations where the girls did not admit that they were wrong, and where they rejected the teacher's discipline.

Question: "Can you think of a time when someone got into trouble and you thought it was really unfair?"

(silence)

Julie: "You Mona, you remember when you said 'Oh my God' and then she told you off."

Mona: "Oh yeah I remember that. I think she told me to show, was it to show Angela - because she didn't get what we was doing and suddenly I turn and say 'Jesus Christ' and she chuck me out (slightly aggressive tone)

Julie: "She said stop swearing."

Francis: "That wasn't swearing."

Mona: "And that wasn't swearing anyway"

If, for example, a teacher singled out one pupil for punishment, where a number had been involved in mucking about, that was considered 'unfair', and the individual girl would protest. The class also had ideas about how far the teacher could go in his discipline; if he were too aggressive it was considered unfair.<sup>6</sup> This is most clearly illustrated by the following story which Carol told.

Carol: "Can remember one day we all started to shout and run round the corridors. Then we came in and and all three of us went to sit down. We had Mr. Thomas who left last year. Then he came to give me and give me one push."

(Valerie and Diane explode with laughter).

Valerie: (seriously) "I saw that one."

Carol: "And he gave me one push and I wasn't doing all that running (all laugh again) and he gave me one push in my back and he told me to go and sit down so I went and hit him. I hit him he shouldn't push me I nearly fall that day. He pushed me and I pulled away and he said to me to go to Miss - um - Bracewell, then to Miss Bracewell he told I can't behave myself. He came downstairs and said he write a letter home. . . ."

Question: "Why was that unfair then?"

Carol: (annoyed) : "Because I wasn't the only one that was running so he just came at me 'cos I was the last one and just push me."

Valerie: "You had no choice."

Carol: "So I hit him back and I got into trouble then. That was unfair."

The teacher was too rough in his action and he had singled Carol out for discipline - it was therefore unfair. Werthman (1963 and 1970) makes a similar point in his study of a gang in a California school. He says that they rebelled if the teacher threatened their sense of autonomy; there

were only certain things teachers could legitimately discipline gang members for. For the girls in this class, their sense of 'autonomy' was threatened when the teacher became too aggressive, shouted too violently, used personal knowledge to show them up, or when he was too extreme in ridiculing them.

When a teacher behaved in this way, the girls saw it as quite legitimate to reassert themselves, and protest about their unfair treatment. They would shout, swear, and even hit teachers. Inevitably this process of self assertion usually involved them in acting in ways that they did admit were wrong; it was wrong to hit teachers whatever the circumstances and they usually had to admit this when they were brought up against some higher authority such as the headmistress. Protestation of innocence merely helped teachers to define their behaviour as more concretely 'deviant' (what is more concrete than being hit?), and involved the girls in action they eventually had to admit was wrong. The fact that they felt themselves innocent of the original offence became defined out of the situation by the school authorities,

(ii) Learning

The second relevance structure that can be identified in the pupils' talk related to 'learning'. How much the pupils could learn in class was extremely relevant to them. Only certain teachers were seen as capable of making them 'learn' (they were typified as 'good') and these teachers were usually responded to positively.

In fact the word learning was somewhat ambiguously used, for it not only referred to situations where the girls actually understood something new (i.e. they 'learned' something in the conventional sense of the word), but also where they simply worked,

where they carried out tasks set by the teachers. Both situations seemed to provide them with feelings of achievement, though learning as new understanding seemed a fairly rare experience.

(a) Learning as doing the work

The word 'learning', as it was most frequently used, referred to situations where the girls carried out some work in their lessons, and where they had some positive feedback about that accomplishment. In other words, they 'learned' when they cooked something, when they typed something correctly, filled up exercise books with notes, copied out diagrams neatly, succeeded in working out problems, or achieved good results in a test. All these situations provided them with some feedback. They knew they had learned something as they could see the results. If the teacher actually praised them and gave them encouragement as well, they had even greater feelings of learning; such praise was additional feedback about their accomplishment.

In this sense, learning something was no more than working at it; one could be made to learn by teachers in the same way as one could be made to work. For example:

Question: "If you had an ideal teacher, what would she make you do?"

Valerie: "Learn more, learn a lot more . . . if you had teachers like Mr Marks, you'd get a good job when you left school with 'O' levels and all that, because they make you work."

From this point of view, all you really needed to produce learning was someone who was strict - they would 'make' you learn.

The girls considered Mr Marks, the history teacher, ideal; they 'learned a lot' in his lessons, yet the following discussion

between Carol, Valerie and Diane, brings out just how 'mechanical' that achievement was. Diane and Valerie, are teasing Carol, because she works so hard in History lessons. Although they tease her, they implicitly agree with all that she says.

Diane: "At least I'm not a teacher's pet."

Carol: "Nor'm I. He just like my work, my work is so good. I'm doing 5th form work (even though she is only in the 4th year).

Valerie: "Oh sorry." (laughs)

Carol: "Listen right, if you was doing 5th form work and he keep praising you in class, you'd feel proud. Admit it, come on admit it!"

Valerie (Laughing): "In a sense yeah."

Carol: "Well then, I'm proud."

Diane: "How many 'excellents' have you got?"

Carol: "A whole heap, you know. My book is 'excellent' everywhere."

Carol knows she has learned a lot, and she is able to communicate this fact because she has so many 'excellents' in her book, because the teacher keeps praising her, and because she is doing 5th form work. Another girl, describing the same teacher, illustrated the point that she had learned a lot in History by boasting that she had filled up three exercise books that year already.<sup>7</sup>

These discussions amongst the pupils, relate directly to the way in which the History teacher organised his classes. The girls spent most of their time copying down notes from the board, or working individually from their textbooks, where they could proceed at their own pace. They always handed in their books at the end of each lesson so that they could be marked; there was consequently a continual feedback to them about how they were getting on. There

was thus an extremely structured approach to a well defined syllabus. It was possible for each girl to move through the syllabus at her own rate, and in this way, Carol could be on 5th form work in syllabus content if not in complexity of material.<sup>8</sup>

The teacher did not attempt other methods of teaching such as discussions or individual project work. Such 'open' methods (obviously less structured about what knowledge 'is', and what has to be mastered) were not popular with the pupils.

Question: "Why is History so good, what sort of things do you do?"

Angela: "Copying down notes from the board, writing notes from the textbook and doing diagrams and things."

Question: "Well some teachers run their classes by having discussions do you think that's as good a way of learning as writing from the board?"

Angela: "No. I mean in your spare time you can discuss, but not in the lesson."

The teacher himself was able to articulate how he coped with a group such as this which he considered to be of very low ability.

Mr Marks: "The secret is . . . you have to brainwash them into thinking they're good. I have to continually tell them they can do it, and eventually, they do. Now take Carol. She's streaks ahead of all the others, and I tell her so. In fact she's ahead of the whole year, comparatively that is . . . Of course the advantage of doing it this way is that there is always something they can have marked, it gives them some incentive. Of course the actual level of their work is pretty low, I shouldn't think

any of them will get CSE."<sup>9</sup>

(To see how far Mr Marks' predictions were correct see Appendix IV which is a transcript of an interview carried out two years after the observations).

There is quite a striking degree of similarity between what the teacher consciously saw himself doing (as a means of control) and what the pupils appreciated in the classroom.

History was not the only subject where the girls learned in this way. For example, practical cookery lessons (as opposed to when they were learning theory), where they could work at their own speed and produce tangible (and edible!) results gave them great feelings of achievement. They also managed to 'learn' in some commerce and typing lessons where they were presented with simply structured exercises to go through; they could work at their own speed, and knew exactly how much they had achieved.

(b) Learning as understanding something new

As was mentioned above, the word learning was also occasionally used to describe situations where more than mechanical work was involved, where the girls would actually understand something new for the first time.

Their appreciation of this new understanding was not very clear, and was simply reflected in such statements as:

"Mr Marks used to talk to us as well; not talk them big words you know, talked words that we understood."

or criticisms of teachers who did not 'explain things' properly.

There was an obvious advantage in having things 'explained', though this was somewhat secondary to filling up two or three

pages of notes written from the board. Doing the 'work' set by the teacher was always of prime importance in learning; new understanding, if it occurred was an added bonus.

Understanding something new was apparently a quite rare experience, partly at least, because of the girls' demand for such tightly structured learning situations. They apparently found it hard to maintain their interest if the ideas were not presented in extremely small steps so that they could continually monitor their progress. This difficulty in maintaining their interest so that they reach some 'understanding' is brought out in the monologue by Linda.

Linda: "I don't like doing Maths, I can't do it, it's too hard. I don't know how to add - I know how to add but I don't know how to do the other sums - they're too hard. Anyway I don't do nothing in his lesson. I always got a headache and sit down there like what I do to Miss Lane (laughs)....Oh I enjoy doing things I know say like if something's very easy I can sit down all morning doing that but when something's hard and I don't really know how to do it I don't want to do it, I get bored."

Question: "What if it's just a bit too difficult so that if you really tried you could do it...."

Linda: "No I don't want to I don't like to try. I just want to learn just straight away like that. I don't want to try."<sup>10</sup>

Linda appreciates that it is possible to learn and really 'understand' but if it is not made easy for her she does not even want to try.

Out of all the lessons observed with this group of girls, only a very few seemed to have been defined by them as giving them 'learning' in this sense of understanding something new. It was only occasionally that one could see them struggling to understand, and taking risks by asking questions; it was only rarely that they took part in what one might call truly creative learning.

We can summarise what this group of girls looked for in their ideal learning situations. Firstly, they wanted the syllabus to be rigidly defined and structured; they wanted to know what had to be mastered, and how they could demonstrate that mastery in tangible terms (typing properly, working through a text book). In this way, they could know when they had learned. They also wanted the material to be presented in very small steps so that it was not difficult to grasp, and finally they wanted to have continual feedback from the teacher about their progress. In addition, if they had a teacher who was able to 'explain' things well so that they really felt they 'understood', then this was an added advantage. In other words, they could only cope with learning situations with very strong classification and framing.

Obviously, not all teachers lived up to these demands. There were some who were 'good' - they could 'teach' and there were others who could not "They can't teach you nothing." From their point of view, (and one might add the point that it is dramatically different from an educationalist's point of view) there were some teachers who they considered effective, and others who they saw as ineffective.

(iii) "Mucking about"

By now it must be apparent that although the girls of 4G valued learning and tried to avoid getting into trouble, they did spend a great deal of time 'mucking about' and misbehaving in one way or another. For example Carol said:

Carol: "I muck about every day."

Question: "Give me an example. What sort of things do you do...?"

Carol: "Like sneak out of the class or ask to go for a drink of water, then we come back and say we feel sick and she says 'Go back again' and we go back and don't come in, we don't come in again at all."

All the girls enjoyed mucking about and expected their friends to join in. It was so important to them that it became a defining characteristic of what a school friend should be.

Question: "If you had to describe what sort of person you would choose as a school friend, what should she be, someone who makes jokes or someone who's good at working or someone who's a mixture or what?"

Anne: "A mixture, a mixture. Jokes and work."

Angela: "Yes both."

Anne: "The mixture is better than just good at work and no jokes, better than working day in day out, writing, writing."

To muck about was to have a 'joke' or a 'laugh' together with someone else in the class. Almost anything could be a 'laugh' - cheeking the teacher, running round the classroom, arriving late, teasing or playing jokes on each other - the only defining

characteristics were that more than one girl should take part and that it should be 'funny'. Whether or not something was funny depended on how the lesson was defined. If a teacher was seen as strict by a particular girl she would ignore invitations to misbehave. Similarly, if she was working, she would get frustrated by friends who tried to muck about. Francis expressed the problem well:

Question: "Do you ever get fed up with the way your class mucks about?"

Francis: "Sometimes, sometimes when Carol starts she never finish. (laughs)

Question: "What about the others?"

Francis: "And Anne."

Question: "Anne - what does she do?"

Francis: "When she starts quarelling with the teacher she never finish - she carry on until the bells gone, we can't do anything."

On a different occasion Francis might well find someone 'quarelling' with the teacher 'funny' - but obviously for something to be funny the timing must be right. As Carol said:

"... when I find it funny, I join in, and when it's not funny, I don't."

Mucking about was rationalised by the girls as being a response to boredom in the classroom. It was the teacher's fault, they 'looked for it' either because they were not strict enough, and could not control the class properly, or because they did not make them learn. Both situations led to 'boredom'.

Question: "Do you work as hard as you can, or are you middling or lazy?"

Valerie: "Lazy."

Carol: "Just like you. I get bored sometimes.

'The work people set you I get so bored."

Question: "Why, what's so boring about it?"

Valerie: "In English, everybody starts laughing. She can't control the class."

Carol: "I get so bored."

It was seen as the teacher's responsibility to control and interest the girls, and when that control or interest was missing, they got bored. Being bored was seen as quite sufficient justification for mucking about:

Question: "What do you think the teachers think of you as a group of friends?"

Jill: "Probably think we're all rude."

Question: "Well are you? Is that true?"

Jill: "Could be, I mean sometimes it's so boring, you have to muck about don't you?"

Question: "When would you muck about Anne?"

Anne: "What I was fed up."

There were quite a number of teachers who were neither able to provide the disciplinary structure that the girls felt they needed, nor were they able to make them 'learn'. Consequently the girls often got 'bored'; they seldom began work and therefore stood even less chance of gaining any sense of achievement. Instead of working the girls therefore mucked about by arriving late, leaving early, talking, shouting, laughing and even fighting. They would do almost anything to get a 'laugh' and reduce the almost unending boredom of an irrelevant school life.

These then are the relevance structures implicit in the way the pupils talked about classroom life. They were concerned with trouble and its avoidance, learning and having fun and mucking about. As Schutz predicts these ideas are not clearly formulated and frequently contradictory. For example it is not at all clear how the girls would balance their concern for both learning and misbehaving. Nevertheless we can suggest that they draw on these different themes in defining the classroom situations that they meet.

#### 4. The Interaction Set and Classroom Knowledge.

Participants in an interaction set construe events in the same way; the situation they face 'means' the same to them. In studying how these pupils talked about classrooms, the objective has been to try to throw some light on what situations did in fact mean to them. One way of seeing how successful this attempt at documenting their 'first order constructs' has been, is to try and relate these relevance structures and typifications to the patterns of classroom interaction recorded during observation. By doing this it will become clear that the analysis presented is only partially successful, and that it is necessary to search for yet another theoretical 'guiding perspective' in the next chapter.

The first quotation from observation notes comes from a music lesson

"Jackie and Terrie are sitting nearest the piano slightly out of the main group. They spend much of the lesson talking together though they do participate when at the end of the lesson Miss Harker asks them to shout the titles of hymns with choruses in them. Eventually Miss Harker 'notices' them talking and says "Why were you talking". The girls make no reply. Miss Harker: "Were you telling her what she just missed while she was out of the room?". Jackie: "Yes miss." Jackie leans slightly forward on her chair, looks round the room and smiles, it is obvious

that this is not correct. Later these two are talking again. Miss Harker: "Who's that talking again, you two?"

Jackie: (slightly cheeky) "We were talking about songs Miss."

Working from the typifications and relevance structures documented above it might be suggested that Jackie and Terrie saw Miss Harker as a soft teacher - they could carry on talking and 'get away with it' most of the time - When they were told off they did not have to admit that they were in the wrong. They would also not appear to value the lesson as a learning situation either. The main theme of the lesson was rhythms and songs most of which Jackie and Terrie completely ignored. It was only at the end of the lesson when they were asked to shout out the names of hymns with choruses in them that they took any interest.

So much for this fairly straight forward situation where the typifications and relevance structures seem to provide a plausible account of what the classroom situation meant to these two pupils; we can understand them working together as an interaction set in terms of how they saw classroom events.

This description can be compared with another more complex one, where more than one interaction set is at work and where the criteria being used to evaluate the teacher are not so obvious. Although the following is not at all difficult to understand, it highlights the interpretive work that has to be done to make sense of events in terms of the relevance structures and typifications documented. It therefore serves to illustrate the limitations of this sort of analysis in understanding pupil's reality. (This quotation is rather long, but it is quoted in its entirety so that it can be used as a reference point for further analysis in the following two chapters).

When the lesson begins, Valerie, Carol and Diane are missing. Mrs. Alan asks where they are. Angela says they were in the last lesson.

Angela: "Them lot are outside Miss"

Mrs. Alan goes out and sends in Carol and Diane who enter laughing loudly; other girls in the class start to giggle as well. They are followed in by Mrs. Alan who shouts "Stand at the front!"

They continue to laugh and look round the room, though less confidently than before. Other class members are no longer laughing with them and Carol and Diane's eyes rove round the room but come in to contact with no one in particular. Mrs. Alan quickly exits again and returns with Valerie, shouts at her and makes them all sit down. As they walk back Valerie says "Fucking hell, who does she think she is?" This is said quite loud enough for Mrs. Alan to hear, but she ignores it. A few minutes later Mrs. Alan asks Carol to stop talking.

Carol: "I ain't talking. What did you say?"

Mrs. Alan: "You understand English don't you? You should be able to hear what I say!"

Carol (Aggressively): "I speak gibberish, I speak gibberish, I speak gibberish."

This time Mrs. Alan does take notice and sends Carol out. She wanders out slowly, laughing and looking round at Valerie and Diane who laugh as well. She stands outside the door, looking through the window with her face pressed right up close to it; she is drinking a can of Coke. For the next few minutes she tries to catch the eyes of the people inside the room, and Diane looks up at her for a few moments. Carol dances around

outside for a little while and eventually wanders off out of view. The rest of the class sit in silence.

Valerie is sitting behind and to one side of me. She says to me "What is the date Sir?" It is a quiet, business-like tone quite different from her other communication. She settles down quietly with the rest of the class to do the work set on the board. After writing for two minutes Valerie says out loud to the whole class "What's that noise, is it a trumpet? (From the next door music room)" - Diane laughs out loud again and Anne turns round and says "I can't stand your noise Valerie!" While everyone else is carrying on working, Mrs. Alan goes out and fetches Carol. -----Later:

Mrs. Alan to the whole class: "What is 5% of £50?"

Carol: (shouting) "100p"

Valerie: "25p"

Carol: "50p"

Mrs. Alan says that each is wrong in turn and as she says Valerie's answer is wrong, Valerie shouts out "Ignorant pig!" Mrs. Alan ignores this and proceeds to show how to work out the answer.

As she finishes she says, "So the person who called me an ignorant pig can now take it back". Valerie appeared interested in how to get the answer but with this challenge she shouts "I shan't". I won't take it back."

Carol: "She's a shit bag!"

Valerie and Diane laugh loudly.

Valerie: "That's a new one."

The rest of the class continues to work in silence.

In this quotation from observation notes there is a much more serious

problem in understanding what the classroom situation means to the girls. Carol, Valerie and Diane who form an interaction set for most of the lesson appear to have a dramatically different conception of the meaning of this lesson from the other pupils. Drawing on the typifications we have recorded we might suggest that Mrs. Alan is soft for these three girls; they largely ignore, or at least do not grant legitimacy to her attempts at discipline. At other times Valerie in particular seemed to take the lesson seriously and actually tries to take part in it (though only for very brief periods). All this contrasts strongly with how the rest of the class act. They avert their eyes and withdraw support as soon as Mrs. Alan enters the room. For them it would seem that Mrs. Alan is strict and has an ability to make trouble. (This is corroborated by how some of them spoke about her).

It is apparent that this lesson 'means' something very different to these two groups of pupils and it possibly even means something different to Valerie at least during the brief periods when she worked.

At first sight this may not seem problematic. It is easy to understand that such a situation might mean different things to such a collection of girls. But this is to overlook the essentially static nature of the typifications constructed earlier. If an observer is to make sense of what these girls do in terms of these relevance structures and typifications then it is necessary to undertake some 'work'. In order to understand this example in terms of a teacher's apparent strictness or effectiveness it is necessary to develop an understanding of those concepts. In order to see an example in a particular way one must elaborate one's understanding of the pupil's typifications so that this particular example 'makes sense'. In order to understand what this commerce lesson meant to these pupils it is necessary for the observer (and the reader) to elaborate the typifications documented in two quite

directions. He has to see that for some the teacher appears authoritarian and strict while for others she appears soft and weak.

Although this elaboration by us is in no way a problem it does raise a major difficulty in this type of analysis, for it highlights the fact that in reality teachers are neither strict nor soft, good nor bad at teaching in a factual way. However concretely the pupils may talk about teachers the fact remains that they continually have to develop their sense of what the teacher is 'like' on each and every occasion that they meet. In other words we can not know what situations mean to pupils by simply applying the terms strict, soft, effective and ineffective etc. Those terms continually have to be developed by the actors themselves and we need to record that process. The language categories recorded above may be a common way for the pupils to account to each other and to me for what they do in class but they do not predict meaning in specific classroom situation - meanings will be actualised and transformed by the specific context that the pupil faces. In recording the typifications of teachers the fact that the group interview is a 'situation' in itself has been overlooked and as such there would be a tendency for pupils to develop more common meanings and suppress possible differences that become important in the classroom. In the interview situation the pupils tend to give the impression that they agree in their definitions of what strict and soft teachers are, yet when that talk is compared with classroom observations it is apparent that they subscribe to quite different ideas about teachers in that situation.

It is not that the typifications are wrong - concepts such as strict and soft were important in how these girls constructed classroom situations, but the approach followed has led to an attempt to construct

decontextualised or ideal meanings. Yet it is now clear that these typifications do not have meanings in an abstract sense but must be seen in application. Notions like strict and soft may be common ways for 'accounting' for behaviour (in the sense used by Scott and Lyman (1968)) but they can not predict what classroom situations will mean to pupils and we therefore can not use them in this form to understand the interpretations underlying the interaction sets recorded.

If we are to understand how generalised concepts like these are transformed to provide meaning in specific contexts then it is apparent that we must search for another theoretical perspective. That perspective must allow us to include how pupils take various contextual features into account in constructing meaning, how they recognise the power and authority of teachers and the influence of dominant pupils.

These features will influence their understanding of specific classroom situations and each will transform the meanings implicit in the abstract typifications documented so far. It is argued in the next chapter that ethnomethodology can provide such a framework.

Notes for Chapter VI

1. Kounin's research (1970) has shown that the quality of the teacher's specific disciplinary action does not relate to the child's reaction. What is important is the teacher's general technique of management. Valerie obviously recognises this.

2. Werthman (1963) in his study of a California gang in school makes a similar point. He says:

"When the gang members are convinced that the educational enterprise and its ground rules are being legitimately pursued, that a teacher is really interested in teaching them something, and that effort to learn will be rewarded, they constantly show up on time, leave when the class is dismissed, raise their hands before speaking and stay silent and awake". (Quoted from Cosin et al. (eds.) 1971:48).

A similar point is made by Geer (1968). She also points out that if a teacher's control over the academic is seen to be adequate, this legitimates his control over other things.

3. Jenks (1971) says that in the school he studied the 'older' teachers assessed pupils in terms of control, usually exercised as silence. "This is what is sought after and against this success in the classroom is measured" (28). From this point of view, art lessons might be judged as highly successful. The teacher achieved a quite unusual degree of silence!

4. Beck (1972) points out that pupils often 'withdraw' because they have not made the 'leap' into the technical language of the specialist teacher. The class becomes 'boring' and they withdraw and start to muck about. It is not because they do not want to learn, (some of the pupils studied by Beck were among the most keen when they

entered the secondary school at eleven), but because they could not cope with the language, they withdraw.

5. Both Bernstein (1966) and Riseman (1961) point out that forcing pupils to feel guilty is the basic mechanism of all control.

6. When investigating the 'ripple effect' of discipline, Kounin (1970) noticed that when a teacher was 'rough' the main effect on the rest of the class was 'behaviour disruption' or 'confusion'. A very similar response could be observed in this class when there was 'unfair trouble'.

7. As Henry (1966) has pointed out, the motivating force behind modern methods of teaching is not the acquisition of knowledge, but competition. School life had given these girls the need for success, but by and large had not provided them with the means of achieving it.

8. Kounin (1970) has demonstrated the importance of a feeling of progress in pupils maintaining their interest and not reaching what he calls 'satiation'. For this class 'satiation' was very quickly if it could not be demonstrated to them that they were progressing.

9. Green (1972) has developed the notion of 'busyness' in his study of how an infants school teacher manages her class. As long as the pupils were 'busy', they were not a problem to her. As Jackson (1968) has observed, teachers tend not to be primarily concerned with learning but are much more 'activity' oriented. Mr Marks seemed to operate on a similar basis; as long as the girls were 'busy' it was enough.

10. Jackson (1968) quotes from one of his 'outstanding' teachers who says she can usually tell when her pupils do not understand:

"If they don't understand what you're doing, they usually won't express it verbally. They will climb on the desk or under the chair or make some quiet attempt to escape. They obviously don't want anything to do with the whole idea" (Jackson 1968:122).

11. Geer (1968) notes the same sort of thing:

"Teachers who fail to understand the basic premise 'We will behave properly if you behave properly' find themselves continually engaged in disciplining pupils rather than imparting knowledge". (Quoted from Cosin et al. (eds.) 1971:5).

## Chapter VII

### Classroom Knowledge and Ethnomethodology - The Third Guiding Perspective.

#### 1. Problems in Phenomenology

In Chapter V it was suggested that Phillipson's (1972) conception of phenomenology as the study of the relationship between first and second order constructs provided an important criteria of validity in relation to the concept of the interaction set. That was to see how far that essentially second order construct was related to the pupils' own conceptions of classroom life. According to the phenomenological definition of the term, validity is to be established by ensuring "Continuity and compatability between the sociologists interpretations and members' common sense interpretations" (Phillipson, 1972: 151). If the notion of the interaction set could not somehow be grounded in the pupils' conception of classroom life, then however interesting it might be it could not be considered any more than just another aptly illustrated account.

Schutz' presentation of language as a key to penetrating inter-subjective reality has provided an important way forward to achieving this end. By applying his notion of typifications to pupils' talk it has been possible to document a number of features of pupils' subjective perceptions of classrooms. Yet it has also been pointed out that there is a limitation in the analysis that arises from the essentially static conception of language implicit in the theory. As the theory does not explain all that can be observed from a common

sense perspective it is necessary to return to the theoretical level and search for yet another guiding perspective.

Phillipson has also recognised the need for more than simply recording language, for he suggests that if phenomenology is to achieve its end of relating first and second order constructs, then it has two distinct tasks. Drawing on the work of Husserl, he points out that there is a distinction between the 'noema', that is the things of which one is conscious and the 'noesis', that is the process by which one is conscious. From this point of view, phenomenology (and he is using the term in its broad sense here) must begin by describing how we see the world (the 'noema') but must then go on to describe how the world that we all experience is built up or constituted (the 'noesis').

It can now be legitimately asked how far the analysis developed in the last two chapters goes in achieving these objectives. The answer must be that it is only a partial achievement. As has already become apparent, what has been provided by looking at language in the way suggested by Schutz and his followers (particularly Berger), is a series of idealisations. As was predicted in Chapter V, pupils' perceptions of classroom events, like any other subjective perceptions, are often only half formulated and frequently contradictory. Although it has been possible to suggest a number of important relevancies underlying their talk it is not known how the pupils would utilise these relevancies to define any particular situation. We do not know how they would draw on the classroom knowledge documented to characterise a specific teacher as strict or soft on any one situation.

In other words, the phenomenological approach has led to the documentation of different situations as actors recognise them and in

this sense it is an improvement on the confusions of the symbolic interactionism position. Nevertheless, because of the conception of language utilized that world is still portrayed as being made up of Durkheimian social facts. There are 'situations' there are 'strict teachers' and there is 'unfair trouble'. The pupils' world is presented as being structured simply by taking part in a common language. Although at a theoretical level phenomenology is aware that at root the objectivated world is a human product, it is assumed that actors rarely in fact create that world but simply 'take over' normative interpretation by taking part in a common language.

That language is seen as pre-empting the interpretative process by imposing an order on an otherwise chaotic world. Berger and Kellner (1964) recognise this in their choice of a middle class marriage as an example of reality construction. It is a good example because they see the marriage relationship as one of the few areas left to modern man where he is in a position to actively construct his own world, however small. For Berger and Kellner actively creating the world is unusual; they see actors usually taking over a ready made world when they learn language.

This static approach to language is summed up by McKinney (1970) when he says that actors represent the world to themselves as symbols (in other words chiefly through language).

"The symbols one uses belongs to others as it belongs to him; it is always a common symbol, possessing a meaning that is typical for a social situation". (239. emphasis added)

McKinney and other phenomenologists see this commonness as something to be taken rather than made; differences in perspectives can be

explained away by Schutz' concept of the reciprocity of perspectives. But as will be shown below, for actors to see symbols such as language as having a common meaning is in fact an accomplishment and at best it is only partly achieved. This contrasts with phenomenologists who see meanings as shared by groups of people, and use this to 'understand' why they act as they do. As Zimmerman and Weider point out this makes the approach essentially no different from that of the structural functionalists

"Whether 'problematic', 'negotiated' or 'processual', whether couched in the language of norms, as in the case of the structural functionalists, or shared emergent meanings, as in the case of the interactionists, the end result is the same; stable social action is the product of the actor's orientation or compliance with shared, stable (if only within a particular interaction) norms or meanings. Norms or meanings presumably govern, guide, direct and for the analyst account for action."  
(Zimmerman and Weider 1971; 288)

The ethnomethodological perspective, particularly as developed by Garfinkel and his followers point to the inadequacy of such explanations. To see shared emergent meanings, however temporary as governing and directing action is still to adopt an objectivist point of view and the analysis has not moved far beyond that of symbolic interactionism. Ethnomethodology on the other hand is concerned with how these meanings are constructed in short it is concerned with the 'noesis'. If we are to understand how the pupils used their vocabulary in the process of creating a social world, we must turn our attention to this process too.

## 2. Ethnomethodology

Like phenomenologists, ethnomethodologists draw on the work of Schutz. They too are interested in studying actors' common sense knowledge of everyday activities and this interest derives directly from Schutz' work. But whereas phenomenologists might be interested in documenting the world as a group of actors see it and exploring their sense of rationality and orderliness, the ethnomethodologist points out that for people to maintain their sense of the world is organised and rational involves a kind of 'work' or 'doing'. In Garfinkel's words it is a "contingent ongoing accomplishment". As Zimmerman and Weider (1971) put it;

"We (ethnomethodologists) notice that the apparent orderliness and coherence of scenes of daily life are matters that members are continually and unavoidably engaged in recognising and making recognisable to others." (290)

The ethnomethodologist may begin with the same data as the phenomenologist, that is he may begin by recording the way a group of people see the world (in all its complexities and contradictions) but he then goes on to look at the methods and practical reasoning people use to produce that appearance of order. So instead of just recording actors' concerns, attention is also directed to the method by which actors assemble, communicate and justify accounts to themselves and each other of what they are doing and why they are doing it. Of particular interest is the way in which the actors use their accounts to sustain their sense that their interaction

"is embedded in an objectively existing social world and that they share common definitions and a common language"

(Wilson 1970; 707).

The ethnomethodologist does not ask how situations are defined, how interactions rules emerge or how stable social interaction is possible, but instead how people go about seeing, describing and proposing a definition of the situation, and how they make a rule emergent and how they use it. For Garfinkel and his followers, it is these common sense ways of assembling knowledge and interpreting the world that constitute common culture. They are far more important than the actual rules themselves for they are essential for producing those rules.<sup>1</sup>

The notion of rules is fundamental to a phenomenological conception of society but ethnomethodological studies that have actually investigated the ways in which rules are used by people have shown that it is necessary to continually discover the scope and application of rules in each situation in which they are used.

We can throw more light on the ethnomethodological approach to the use of rules by looking again at Keddie's (1971) study which is in a phenomenological framework. In common with other research in the same paradigm, Keddie sees rules as have a stable meaning in situations that are defined as the same by the participants. For example, she suggests that the teachers she studied operated with rules about what different pupils were like; they had a notion of what sort of behaviour was 'typical' for a particular stream (i.e. they had a notion of 'A-ness' or 'B-ness') and teachers understood pupil behaviour by applying these norms of appropriate behaviour. In this way pupils were seen to be 'Bright for a B' or 'As good as the A's'. Teachers might disagree that a particular pupil was typical for a B but they did not disagree that 'B-ness' existed. By building up this sort of picture, Keddie is able to account for the way the teachers acted towards their pupils by

saying that they were following rules of classification and 'defining' their pupils in these ways.

This approach sees rules as idealisations, possessing stable operational meanings independent of the actual situations of use and 'Distinct from the practical interests, perspectives and interpretive practices of the rule user' (Zimmerman 1971; 223). Precisely the same criticism can be mounted against the analysis in Chapter VI. It is assumed that terms such as 'strictness' or 'trouble' explain pupil behaviour in the classroom. For the ethnomethodologist this approach is inadequate; for him norms do not exist independently of the rules which bring them into existence. Rather than seeing terms such as 'B-ness' or 'strictness' as having fixed stable meanings, the ethno methodologist sees them as indexical. That is, the meaning of such terms is seen as related to contextual matters such as who is talking, where they are talking and on what occasion they are talking. In short such terms do not have any self evident meaning, instead they only have a sense as part of a particular setting.

For the ethnomethodologist ~~the~~ analysis in Chapter VI does not go far enough. He would consider it inadequate to 'explain' pupil behaviour by reporting the typifications they use in their talk. Instead he would wish to concentrate on the way in which pupils' employ a notion of 'strictness' in a particular setting and the way they continually have to develop what it means when they have to treat actual cases or when they have to defend the rationality of their behaviour to other people.

### 3. Ethnomethodology and Language

It should be apparent that ethnomethodological analysis involves a very different approach to language from that implied earlier. From this perspective Berger is wrong when he looks at language as imposing a definition and structure on the 'ongoing flux of experience'. This implies a far more static approach to the relationship between language and subjective reality than the ethnomethodologist would go along with. For him the recognition of the world as stable and organised is a continuing and ongoing accomplishment - it does not just 'happen' by taking part in a common language.

It has been a recurrent finding of ethnomethodological studies that people constantly use language in a way in which the meaning of words are relative to the place in which they are spoken, to what the hearer knows about the speaker, the time at which they are spoken and a great many other contextual features. In short language has been demonstrated to be 'indexical'<sup>2</sup> and it is therefore seen as inappropriate to try and conceptualise meanings in terms of rules. A number of ethnomethodological studies have specifically been addressed to the way in which rules are actually employed and have found that even where rules are specified, people continually have to discover the scope and applicability of the rules every time they use them. For example Garfinkel (1974) and Zimmerman (1971 and 1974) have studied rule following in bureaucracies and have found the importance of workers using 'ad hoc' procedures in the creative process of applying an established rule to a specific situation.<sup>3</sup>

"This suggests that the claim that the use of a name accords with the rules of proper usage applicable in all situations does not mean that the name has a stable sense in all

occasions in which it is employed since these rules of correct usage vary in their sense depending on the particular rules used 'this time' " (Weider, 1971: 109)

Thus the adequacy of studying language use by trying to write down a set of rules of correct usage is directly challenged. It would therefore not be possible or productive to try and further specify what terms like 'strict teacher' or 'soft teacher' meant on each occasion of their use, precisely because there are indexical expressions. We could not write down a list of rules of correct usage of such terms because their meaning and appropriateness has to be developed on each and every occasion of their use.

Given the objective of discovering what classroom situations mean to pupils this throws into question the exact status of the language categories in the last chapter. That it is invalid for the external observer to use these accounts to explain classroom behaviour has already been pointed out but this does not mean that these typifications are irrelevant to our understanding. As significant categories in pupils descriptive language of classrooms, terms like 'unfair trouble' and 'interesting work' do reflect some part of the pupils' subjective reality but the question remains exactly how they are used in the creation of that reality. Ethnomethodology suggests that people utilize a small number of interpretive procedures in the creation of social reality and examination of these practices throws some light on the status of pupils talk about classrooms.

In analysing how the group of pupils talk about school what we wish to understand is how they assign meaning to classroom events, in particular how they interpret the words and deeds of their teachers

(how they 'fill in' the meaning of what a teacher says and does so that it makes sense to them on this particular occasion and in these particular circumstances). Ethnomethodology sees people typically assigning meaning to the world around them by drawing on their particular biographically constituted stock of common sense knowledge - they draw on their own stock of personalised knowledge to throw some light on the situation at hand. In addition though they interpret events in line with their future oriented motivations, their current purpose at hand dictating which out of their past experiences, they draw on in the construction of the situation they face. In this way an individual's interpretation of the current situation involves elements of both his past and his projected future. To a large extent such personalised interpretations are unavailable to the observer be he fellow participant or sociologist. Unless our motivations get into words in the process of accounting to ourselves and others they are unavailable to those around us.

Despite this highly individual interpretive process, ethnomethodologists suggest that during face to face interaction, people do agree for the time being to put aside their personal differences and assume that they are interpreting their immediate environment in the same way as those they interact with. As was mentioned in Chapter V this notion of the reciprocity of perspectives involves two 'idealizations' on the part of the interactants. In the first place the participant assume that they would probably have the same experience of the immediate scene if they were to change places. They also assume that until further notice they will both disregard any personal differences they have in assigning meaning to and deciding on the relevance of activities so that each knows the other is interpreting the world around them in the same way.

This is essentially the same point as is made by the phenomenologists, but rather than being used to 'explain away' possible differences in actor's perspectives, ethnomethodology places emphasis on the temporary and creative nature of such agreement. Meanings are essentially personalised but in face to face interaction people put them aside and attempt to produce common meanings for the time being. People only ever manage to 'understand' each other because 'for the while' they assume that each is interpreting the immediate environment and the matter at hand in the same way. It is this process of assuming a reciprocity of perspectives while engaged in face to face interaction that is at the heart of the interaction set. Those out of a class of pupils who take part in an interaction set put aside their personal interpretations and construe the meaning of the classroom situation in the same way. The notion of the reciprocity of perspectives has further implications too. Not only will pupils assume common meanings when they interact in the classroom but also in group interviews as well. A great deal of the interview transcripts used in the analysis in Chapter VI were from joint interviews; two, three or four pupils discussing classroom events together. In that situation there would therefore be a tendency for pupils to develop common typifications of teachers and to produce common accounts of what they do and suppress possible differences between themselves which in another context might be considered important. The 'meanings' of the descriptive language used by the pupils that were extracted from these interviews must therefore be seen as relative to that situation. Pupils agreed in their characterizations of teachers as strict or soft, and the meaning of terms like 'trouble',

whereas in the classroom it is unlikely that they would always interpret these terms in the same way. The relationship between the descriptive vocabulary pupils used in their accounts and the meaning of classroom events is therefore unknown.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that the descriptive vocabulary is itself irrelevant. On the contrary as has been mentioned, it is only through language that we gain any insight into motivations, and people usually only coin a specific vocabulary to characterise events which are particularly important to them and are an indication of what Cicourel (1973) terms 'normal form' definitions. But as indexical expressions we cannot see them as having unitary meanings which are imposed on situations. Rather pupils will engage in a creative process, using such conceptions in a Gestalt like manner to create a world of social facts. Garfinkel calls this process the 'documentary method'.

#### 4. The Documentary Method

Garfinkel (1967) points out that even though language is indexical, even though we cannot take over other people's meanings, facts are still compiled, causal relationships seen and decisions are made. He suggests that this is made possible by the use of the documentary method which he has adapted from the work of Mannheim

"The method consists of treating an actual appearance as the 'document of' as 'pointing to' as 'standing on behalf of' a presupposed underlying pattern. Not only is the underlying pattern derived from its individual documentary evidences, but the individual documentary evidences in their turn are interpreted on the basis of 'what is known' about the under-

lying pattern. Each is used to elaborate the other."

(Garfinkel 1967: 78).

We can turn to the picture of classroom knowledge presented in Chapter VI to illustrate this process. If we imagine a pupil invoking her notion of what strict teachers are typically like then that notion of strictness would not have a stable meaning across different classroom situations. Instead the pupil would have to match her notion of strictness to a particular case by elaborating the sense of strictness or selectively viewing the teacher's behaviour. Thus she might extend the rule so that it fits 'this particular case' or she might reconstruct some feature of what the teacher does, ignoring some parts and paying special attention to other aspects that seem critical. In every case that the pupil sees a teacher behaving in a 'typically strict' way it is up to that pupil to identify that behaviour as strict and to search out and discover the links between this behaviour and what she held to be typical.

In addition of course the pupil is in a position of having to depend on this example of strictness and others of no more definite a character to tell her what strictness is in the first place. Therefore, whenever a pupil says 'that a teacher is strict' she is redefining her notion of strictness at the same time as interpreting this particular teacher's behaviour in relation to a notion of strictness which is partially formulated through prior similar utterances and acts. Each new piece of teacher behaviour would be simultaneously rendered sensible in terms of the developing relevancies of strictness and at the same time would be more evidence that strictness existed.

Weider draws the analogy here with a Gestalt contexture where one element can not be extracted from the situation without changing its

meaning because it gains that meaning from its relationship with the other elements.

For the ethnomethodologist, the documentary method is seen as an essential part of everyday life. As language is indexical, as it does not have any precise meaning, it is impossible for anybody to say exactly what they 'mean'. This being so we need to use the documentary method in order to build up a picture of what other people are talking about; as a strategy it is central to the whole process of social interaction.

If the documentary method is necessary to interpret language then it is no less essential when constructing understandings of nonverbal behaviour and symbolic objects. For example, we have to learn what it means when a pupil wanders into a lesson half an hour late or when a teacher leaves a cane across his desk. These are symbolic events, they do not have any self evident meaning and actors have to use the documentary method to interpret what they mean 'this time' just as they do with language

Garfinkel himself (1967) gives an excellent example of way in which people work to create a conceptual order in an experiment where counselling advice was given to students. In this instance students were given a random 'yes' or 'no' answer to questions they asked about their personal problems. It was up to them to interpret the 'advice' and explain to another person what the adviser 'had in mind'. Because the answers were only 'yes' or 'no' Garfinkel was able to observe how the students went about documenting this advice, how they had to work to maintain their sense that the advisers answers were in fact sensible and motivated by their original question. If the answers seemed contradictory, then the students employed a number of devices to overcome this - they might wait

for another answer to clarify the sense of the first; they might start with the answer and reformulate the question so that it fitted in with their interpretation of what the yes or no answer 'meant', or they might use present answers to answer future unanswered questions. Garfinkel reports that the students were very concerned to see some pattern in the answers given them and they achieved this by assuming that they and the adviser shared some common sense approach to their problems. They then actively interpreted the replies as documents of this common sense. As Garfinkel says, in this way

"the perceivedly normal values of what was being advised were established, tested, reviewed, retained, restored, in a word managed" (1967:97)

This of course was an extreme case but it does illustrate the interpretive work that we all have to go through in the creation and maintainance of meaning in our subjective worlds. The students assumed a common understanding of problems between themselves and the experimenter and actively interpreted the replies as a document of this common sense. In the same way, we as social actors develop 'themes' or 'normal form' definitions around which we document the situations we face in everyday life. By the same process of selective viewing, and continually reinterpreting and re-analysing events we create the stable world that we think we inhabit.

To return to 4G. Ethnomethodology places these pupils typifications and accounts in a new light. In the next chapter it will be demonstrated that these concepts that they use to characterise classroom situations do represent significant features of their life, but they cannot be seen as having unitary or static meanings. Rather,

these terms can be seen as a 'frame' through which events are selectively viewed in the creation of a social world. Typifications of teachers and classroom situations are 'themes' around which classroom events are documented. In this way the 'social facts' that the pupils report are created. At the same time, of course, these themes are themselves subject to continual reinterpretation and development, they too have an open and flexible structure which allows pupils to 'see' the situations they face in different ways, even though they use the same words to describe it.

Notes for Chapter VII

1. Cicourel (1973) makes essentially the same point, but characterises the distinction as one between 'basic' and 'surface' rules.
2. In the educational context the selection of papers in Cicourel (1974a) are the most significant demonstrations of this point. For more recent work in the organisational context, see Silverman and Jones(1976).
3. See Leiter (1974) for a study of how rules are used and transformed in interviewing and testing young children in school.
4. Sharp and Green (1975) also note this difference between what is said in interviews and the staffroom, and what situations are taken to 'mean' in the classroom. For them though this disjunction is 'caused' by the intervention of 'structure'.

## Chapter VIII

### Creating Classroom Realities

#### 1. Introduction

It was illustrated in Chapter VI that the terms pupils used to describe their teachers and classrooms could not 'predict' the meaning of events, for they were used in different ways by different pupils on different occasions. In other words, like any other linguistic concepts the terms were indexical. One approach to the inadequacy of their predictive ability would be to try and define more closely what terms such as strict and soft teachers meant on each occasion that they were used, but this would involve endlessly more detailed formulations of situations and actions, and by the very nature of language at the end one would still not know what a new situation would mean to a pupil since developing meanings is a creative process.<sup>1</sup>

Ethnomethodology presents an alternative to this endlessly detailed work. From that perspective it is possible to treat a concept such as 'softness' not as an object in itself, but as a language category which provides for the object like qualities of a teacher. Rather than seeking clearer specifications of what 'softness' 'really' means or attempting to formulate operational definitions, the object of the investigation becomes the manner in which a concept like softness is called upon by pupils, usually as a tacit resource to display and acknowledge the 'sense' of what a teacher is like.

Pupils are not particularly concerned about developing scientific definitions of terms like softness, but they do accomplish comprehensible talk and action by taking the notion of softness for granted and interpreting teachers' actions in the light of such a concept. It is because they habitually address themselves to teachers' actions in this way that a teacher is seen to take on a particular character. In other words, the pupils will sometimes utilize the notion of softness as a 'theme' around which to document the meaning of what a teacher does. If they were operating with such a conception of what a particular teacher was like on a particular occasion, they might ignore his threats and make particular use of opportunities to misbehave. Through this sort of selective interpretation around the 'theme' of softness they would build up and maintain a picture that this teacher was indeed soft.

This is precisely what was happening in the commerce lesson quoted at the end of Chapter VI. Carol, Valerie and Diane interpret the teacher's attempts at discipline as a 'joke' and ineffectual. When for example Mrs. Alan tries to control Carol, she simply answers her back:

Mrs. Alan asks Carol to stop talking.

Carol: "I ain't talking!"

Mrs. Alan: "You speak English, you should be able to hear what you say.!"

Carol (aggressive/cheeky): "I speak gibberish, I speak gibberish, I speak gibberish."

Obviously Carol is not taking Mrs. Alan very seriously; her threats do not imply strictness. Valerie and Diane do much the same. For example

Mrs. Alan: "So the person who called me an ignorant pig can now take it back".

Valerie: "I shan't I won't take it back".

Carol: "Shit bag!"

Valerie and Diane laugh very loud.

Valerie: "That's a new one!"

We can suggest that these girls are taking what Mrs. Alan says as simply meaning that she is soft and ineffectual at teaching. They employ a notion of softness as a theme with which to document what she says and does, and consequently this is what her actions come to mean.

As was pointed out before, their interpretations stands in marked contrast to how the rest of the class seemed to document what Mrs. Alan says and does. They all sit quietly and make no contact with the three deviants, they look away when Carol and Diane turn to them for support. It seems that for the rest of the class what Mrs. Alan does is taken as pointing to a different theme; for them when she shouts at these three girls it is seen as evidence that she is strict. The same acts carried out by the teacher are interpreted in different ways by different groups of pupils and give rise to substantively different realities. We might expect them to give quite different accounts of what was 'happening' during this lesson.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, if a concept like 'softness' is to have any validity, it is not as a characteristic of teachers, that could be specified once and for all, but rather it is a 'frame' through which pupils view a teacher's behaviour. Teachers are not 'really' strict nor soft, neither is their teaching inherently 'interesting' or 'boring'. Such characterisations depend on the pupil's interpreting the teachers' acts as a document of these themes. For example, in continually recognising the

new History teacher's talk and actions as 'strict talk' the pupils produce for each other the factual character of his strictness. His more or less stable character as a strict teacher is only available to them because of the interpretive work they do to overcome the infinite possibilities of alternative interpretations, and they therefore come to see him as 'unavoidably and for all practical purposes' a strict teacher. The notion of strictness is an underlying theme which his acts are taken to be document of.

It is here that the essential nature of the descriptive vocabulary recorded in Chapter VI can be seen. The typifications of teachers and relevance structures do not represent factual realities but are instead an indication of the major interpretive themes used by the pupils in the creation of their social world. They employ concepts such as 'trouble', 'learning', 'strict teachers' and 'soft teachers' as 'normal form' definitions. These are the most common themes around which they actively construe classroom events, and by so doing they create the factual world that they recognise. It is because these linguistic concepts have to be developed on each occasion of their use, and it is because they have an open and flexible structure that the 'same' events can be interpreted as evidence of different themes by various groups of pupils and different realities can be made.

## 2. Creating Realities in a Non-Verbal World.

One of the difficulties of carrying out an ethnomethodological study of pupils classroom life is that a great deal of the time it is a non-verbal culture. It is non-verbal in two distinct senses. Firstly, in

the sense that pupils, if they are behaving 'properly' are not 'supposed' to talk in class - there is therefore more emphasis on non-verbal communication than in other forms of social life. Looks, gestures and symbolic acts like running in late to a lesson take on a greater importance in the creation and maintenance of different realities.

Classroom life is also non-verbal in the sense that pupils are rarely called upon to talk about it. As has already been mentioned, teachers do not explain what pupils do by addressing themselves to the pupils' perspectives. Their understanding of why pupils behave as they do is directed to a totally different order of accounts - to psychological motivation and sociological features such as home background. Consequently pupils in general are rarely called upon to articulate their opinions on school life and as such the vocabulary they develop to describe that life is rather unsophisticated. They are simply not used to it. In this group, the rough division of all teachers into either 'strict' or 'soft' in fact does no justice at all to the multiplicity of different realities created in the classroom, but as pupils were seldom called on to talk about these experiences it is not surprising that their vocabulary is rather limited. This point can be illustrated by a quote from another commerce lesson;

Mrs. Alan has distributed some new book-keeping books. She has shown them how to do some elementary exercises and towards the end of the lessons has asked the girls to work out some problems classifying items into different accounting categories such as 'carriage', 'postage' etc. The girls all begin work with great enthusiasm. Mrs. Alan moves round the room looking at their books.

Mrs. Alan: "Who's book shall I look at now?"

Several pupils: "Me Miss, me Miss!"

They all carry on working but at the end of the lesson several girls start to ask Mona silly questions.

Carol shouts out: "Mona, what's stamps go under?"

Diane quickly follows with: "Mona, what's string go under?"

Anne: "Mona what's carriage go under?"

The questions to Mona get easier and easier; it develops into a slight joke getting Mona to do their work for them...

The class goes five minutes over time, no one notices.

Here is a situation where the pupils are working and are interested but it is difficult to guess whether they see Mrs. Alan as strict or soft this lesson. Those concepts in no way reflect the type of reality they are creating here. Basically they are working but they create a little light relief by starting a joke. They make a slightly different situation 'for the moment'. The reason it is difficult to describe this situation is that the pupils did not recognise it as a distinct 'type' themselves; they did not have a term to identify it in their vocabulary, yet similar minor jokes were quite common when they were working hard.

This sort of observation leads to a further reappraisal of the vocabulary documented during the interviews. The terms that they did have to describe classrooms represent the most recurrent and perhaps most important dimensions of classroom life (this is why they are reflected in their language), but within this broad framework the pupils would also create other more varied worlds for themselves by documenting the situations they faced in other more subtle ways.

This leads to the second feature of this less verbal culture,

that is the question of how different realities are created. In his famous study of a 'half way house' for convicts, Weider (1974) describes how the inmates created different realities, how they persuaded those around them to look at events in a particular way by explicitly appealing to 'the code'. For example by saying to a warder "You know I won't snitch" when asked some information about another inmate, the warder would come to look on the inmates non-cooperation as logical and legitimate. Realities were created by quite explicit verbalisations. The situation with 4G was quite different however for the pupils seldom used the vocabulary in the classroom itself. For example in the book-keeping lesson just described no one actually said "Let's muck about". Carol simply asked Mona a rather obvious question, Diane asked a more obvious one and Anne joined in too; it thus became a joke without any of them appealing to a 'code'. We can see the pupils themselves engaging in a documentary type interpretation of each other's behaviour. Diane 'knew' that in that context, Carol's initial rather obvious question was a joke and she carried it on; Anne did the same. It is symbolic words and deeds rather than any explicit accounts that were important in creating realities in this situation<sup>3</sup>

We can trace this process of the creation and maintenance of a particular reality through the interpretation of each other's words and deeds by examining one particular Domestic Science lesson.

At the beginning of the lesson several girls are missing.

Miss Lane goes out into the corridor to look for them.

After a minute Carol rushes in and goes up to Monica and says "What have we got to do write notes today?"

Monica: "Yes"

Carol: "I can't stand doing that, I'm going out"

She runs out and none of the girls reappears for another 10 minutes. Monica and Julie chat a little but continue writing.

Question: "Where are the rest Monica?"

Monica: "They must be messing about somewhere."

Julie: "I don't care as long as I get my work done".

Dorothy: "I saw them go out".

Miss Lane returns and says "I'll go through this with you, Mr. Walker (deputy head) can deal with the others."

At the beginning of the lesson all of the participants assume that the missing girls are 'bunking it', but it means quite different things to them. Carol sees her friends are not there and rushes out to join them, she provides some sort of 'account' for what she is doing by implying that she does not like writing notes though on other occasions she has been quite happy to do so. Monica and Julie see the others as 'bunking it' too but want to work, and finally Miss Lane recognised this too but sees it as deviant. The same act, the absence of several pupils, is symbolic of different things to different participants.

Carol is perhaps the most interesting. She arrived at the classroom not knowing what the 'situation' was though she rapidly acquires two pieces of information that help her make up her mind. She learns (a) that some of her friends are absent or late, and (b) that they will be writing notes. She rapidly seems to construe this lesson as likely to be boring and the teacher as soft.

This interpretation is maintained when eventually all the girls do arrive; they laugh, are rude to the teacher and do virtually no work throughout the lesson. They thus maintain the irrelevance of the work and the ineffectiveness of the teacher. Once again no accounts of what the situation was were provided, or not in as many words. The fact that several girls were late arriving was enough for Carol to 'know' that the others too probably saw the lesson as likely to be boring and the teacher as soft. No further explanation was necessary.

### 3. The Interaction Set Reappraised.

Ethnomethodology thus presents a quite novel perspective on how these pupils generate meanings or define situations. They do not simply 'take over' other peoples' ways of looking at things, neither do they establish 'cultural' ways of seeing the world which can be taken for granted. Rather they always have to engage in some sort of 'work' using the documentary method to build up and maintain a picture of what is the situation. Even when things appear routine or cultural some interpretive work is involved; they must work to 'make' the scene routine, they must use the documentary method to build up a view that this event is the same as the previous one.

From this perspective classroom life involves pupils in a process of continually searching out and creating meanings for the situations that they face, they must build up interpretations of what teachers' words and deeds mean 'this time' and on 'this occasion' when spoken in 'this way'. But it can be argued that classroom situations are different in some crucial aspects from the ideal typical model of social interaction presented in other ethnomethodological studies. These differences relate to the notions of power, authority and leadership.

Both Cicourel and Garfinkel, the most important influences on ethnomethodological work, derive their ideas from the work of Schutz, suggesting that when we are alone we use our future plans as a means of deciding which part of our common sense knowledge is relevant to understanding the situation we face. Because common sense is unique and individual, unless someone puts his individual ideas into words we cannot tell what a situation 'means' to him, we do not know what insights from his past experiences he has brought forward in constituting the current situations. This is the case of the individual, but as sociologists Cicourel and Garfinkel are far more interested in situations where more than one person is involved, where people interact. In such situations the process of creating meanings involves substantively different processes. Here actors are portrayed as putting aside their own biographically constituted knowledge, ignoring their individual perspectives and agreeing to generate common meanings. They each take it for granted that the other sees the world in the same way; they assume it means the same for them. This ideal model that ethnomethodologists usually develop pictures equal participants each willing to put aside their personal meanings that they might have developed for the situation and constructing new meanings together. This is the reciprocity of perspectives which ethnomethodologists see at the heart of all face to face interaction. But of course, the classroom situation is not like this at all - it involves very unequal participants which considerably changes the operation of the reciprocity of perspectives. When teachers and pupils interact, they may end up looking at the situation they face in the same way, but this is not achieved by each party suspending their own personal views. Typically it involves the pupils suspending their meanings and searching out those of the teacher.

Teachers do not suspend their meanings of the situation when they interact with pupils, they know very well how pupils ought to behave, and in all but the most progressive schools they know the meaning of the material they are trying to present. Pupils have 'learned' when they can demonstrate to the teacher that they have taken over their meanings in relation to the curriculum. (See Hammersly 1977). In reaching that point it is up to the pupil to suspend her biographically constituted knowledge and try to build up meaning similar to those of the teacher.

This process was made clear in a number of lessons, but particularly in a typing lesson where the pupils were learning how to file names. (Part of this lesson has already been quoted earlier, but it is worth re-examining as an illustration of this point).

Miss Keene mentions again the procedure for filing in alphabetical order, how persons are filed under their surname, and companies under their first name. She also mentions the punctuation needed in each case. All of the pupils have a typed list of names in front of them.

Miss Keene: "Julie, how do you know Smith and Jones Ltd. is a firm?"

Julie: "Because it's got a comma Miss."

Miss Keene explains why this is wrong.

Miss Keene: "So you would file it under 'S'. How do you file Miss Mary Brown-Curtis?"

Mona: "'C' Miss."

Miss Keene: "No"

Carol: "'M'?"

This is the other rule they have just learned which says if it

does not go under a surname of a person then it must go under the first name because it is a company. Carol seems to be searching for the rules but has not noticed that it is Miss Mary Brown-Curtis. Miss Keene explains that it is a double-barrelled name.

Miss Keene: "So how do you file it?"

Debbie: "You put Brown-Curtis, Mary (Miss)."

Miss Keene: "Right. How do you file Harold Mowbray & Co. Ltd.?"

Valerie: "H, because it's the first surname;"

Valerie is still confused, now about double barrelled names.

Miss Keene: "No, this is a company."

Valerie: "Oh er it still goes under 'H'"

Here the pupils are actively searching out the rules the teacher is using in filing names. By repeating the rules and giving examples Miss Keene is trying to build up in their minds the interpretive rules that she recognises. In trying to understand what the examples meant to Miss Keene we can picture the pupils making suggestions and either abandoning them if they are 'wrong' or locking in on them if they are corroborated.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike normal face to face interaction the teacher is not attempting to move to the pupils' interpretations of events. The reciprocity of perspectives, if it is achieved at all is created by movement all in one direction. This can be seen as the essence of the authority relationship between pupils and teachers - it is demonstrated and maintained by participants addressing themselves to the creation of meanings in this one directional way. It is the pupil who has to search out what the teacher means by appropriate behaviour on each occasion that they meet, and it is the pupil who must move to what the curriculum means to the

teacher. When pupils direct themselves to the teacher in this way, as in the example above, the authority relationship is maintained in the very process of learning.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast with this 'normal' classroom situation where the generation of meanings is a one sided activity, when pupils engage in an interaction set we can see them as having far more equal rights. In line with Schutz' ideal model, pupils engaging in face to face interaction put aside their own possible meanings for the situation and agree to interpret events in the same way. Thus from this ethno-methodological perspective an interaction set is a group of pupils, who through the process of interaction with each other, rather than with the teacher agree to build up a common interpretation of the situation they face. They take the 'evidence' they see as documents of the same underlying theme. In so doing they create for themselves a common reality and legitimate a common course of action. Because their action flows from their construction of reality as long as they continue to interpret the teacher's acts in a particular way, they will be able to maintain their sense of rationality in what they do, however extreme<sup>6</sup>

Most interaction sets were therefore to some extent deviant because they involved the pupils in face to face interaction, constructing their own meanings rather than moving towards those of the teacher. (In other more progressive pedagogies this would not be the case as pupil interaction would be established by the teacher as an integral part of the learning process).

The recognition of the teacher's authority was therefore central to pupil interaction. Pupils who addressed themselves to him as

someone who was strict did not have the opportunity to engage in an interaction set, for then meanings were not to be created but taken. It was only when, to a greater or lesser degree, pupils did not construe the teacher as strict that they had freedom to take part in an interaction set.

#### 4. Authority, Leadership and the Interaction Set

##### (i) Authority

It has already been pointed out that when pupils are engaged in classroom work, they are automatically conforming to the meanings and definitions of the situation subscribed to by the teacher. The very process of learning as defined in most school work involves moving to the teachers' system of relevances. Therefore, almost by definition, when pupils are concerned with creating their own meanings for the classroom situation and for the curriculum, they are engaged in an anti-authoritarian activity to some extent. There are of course exceptions. If we take the notion of participant structures (patterns of verbal interaction established by teachers) as developed by Philips (1972), we can see that in some participant structures pupils generating their own meanings will be more disruptive than in others. When for example the teacher is engaged in lecturing then any pupil interaction is disruptive - if pupils are creating their own meanings rather than turning to those of the teacher, then they are deviant. In other participant structures for example in practical work the pupils can interact on their own level, but even here only a certain amount of noise will be tolerated before it becomes apparent to the teacher that the pupils are misbehaving.

For the most part then, taking part in an interaction set is deviant, and when pupils interact in this way we can suggest that the teachers do not have authority in Weber's sense of having legitimacy of control. A teacher's authority depends entirely on pupils interpreting his talk and acts as the talk and acts of an authority figure.<sup>7</sup> This of course is not to deny that a teacher has power. He can take progressively more serious sanctions to force pupils to grant him authority, but it is always up to him to manage the pupils, by the judicious use of power and efficiently recognising and dealing with deviance so that they do address themselves to him as a person in authority.<sup>8,9</sup> For different teachers this will involve different amounts of work. For example, however 'interesting' Mr. Marks might have been he was first and foremost a strict teacher for everyone. He only had to walk into a room for there to be absolute silence. Mrs. Newman on the other hand was consistently seen as soft by a great many pupils and if she wanted to re-establish her authority it involved fetching the headmistress to talk to the class. Because of their different reputations that these two teachers had built, they had to carry out vastly different actions to achieve the same result, that is for pupils to document their acts as those of strict teachers.

Looking at the teacher's authority from the pupils point of view, it might be suggested that a girl who consistently addressed a teacher as strict had considerably less freedom in the classroom than a girl who construed the same teacher as soft. The first girl simply had to conform - she had to move into the system of meanings subscribed to by the teacher. The second pupil by contrast had a choice. If she wanted to she could work hard and 'learn' but she also had the

choice to muck about and even miss the lesson altogether.

It has been apparent in many of the cases already cited that these 15 girls saw their teachers in quite different ways. Some of them were 'scared' of a large number of staff, and always did what they were told, and others saw the same teachers as 'really soft'. What constituted trouble was different for everyone. Monica even took Mrs. Newman's discipline seriously and according to Valerie would 'chicken out' when things got difficult. Valerie on the other hand even reports trying to manipulate the headmistress. The pupils who, for whatever personal/historical reasons were 'unafraid', had considerably more freedom in the classroom to define matters as they wished and hence to take part in interaction sets. It was these pupils who were most frequently recognised as 'leaders'.

(ii) Leadership

One of the problems with the phenomenological and symbolic interactionist perspectives developed earlier in this thesis has been the difficulty of conceptualising social power, a notion central to many traditional studies of group life (See for example Hargreaves 1967). In placing the emphasis on the individual's own subjective perspective and raising each pupil to the level of a creator of a social world, it has been difficult to include the idea of leadership. Because of this, the importance of particular girls in influencing the course of classroom events has been underplayed. The ethnomethodological perspective allows that imbalance to be redressed.

The notion of leadership is a natural one to teachers. For them Carol and or Valerie were the leaders of this class. For example the new History teacher said at the end of his first week "well I

identified Carol as the leader straight away and went down to the headmistress with her." Carol and Valerie recognised this characterisation by the teachers too

Valerie: "They think that some of us lead the gang around. If they see all of us together in the classroom mucking about they say 'Right, it's Carol, because she's the leader' or they say 'It's Valerie, she's the leader.' "

Question: "Is that right?"

Valerie: "Not all the time, no."

In fact Carol and Valerie were not always leaders, neither were they the only ones to take the initiative. The most significant characteristic of a girl who became an important 'reality definer' was that she was not scared of the teachers. She must construe their actions as soft, and not recognise their attempts to make trouble. As has been shown, girls who behaved in this way had greater freedom, for they could decide for themselves whether to work that day or not. Carol and Valerie were of course the 'bravest' in the class and in this sense they often became leaders, but this was not a consistent trait. Some days, for their own personal/historical reasons they would not be stronger than their teachers and they would find themselves having to conform. On other occasions, normally quiet girls would become more forceful and take the initiative in misbehaving. For example

The teacher is 10 minutes late. The whole class are basically sitting down, though occasionally pupils get up and walk around. Anne starts to entertain the whole class by shouting out comments at various boys who poke their heads round the door. Eventually one of them hits her and she runs out after them shouting and laughing.

The rest of the class laugh very loudly as well.

The reasons for these sudden bursts of leadership are individual and therefore beyond the scope of this thesis as are the reasons why Carol and Valerie had a higher 'threshold' of trouble than the rest of the class. What is relevant though is the part that their actions had on the group realities that emerged.

Pupils who consistently saw a particular teacher as soft had a number of decisions to make every time they entered the classroom. They had to decide whether to work or whether to misbehave, whether the lesson was likely to be interesting or dull and also whether the teacher would try to 'get tough'. These were difficult decisions to make and they often had to be constructed from rather fragmentary evidence. For example they might simply have to guess whether a particular topic was likely to be interesting (but this was difficult to assess if they knew nothing about it) or they might have to decide from the way a teacher looked if she would try to 'get tough' that day. Given these rather difficult questions, an important source of information on what the situation 'was' became the reactions of other pupils. The girls frequently looked to each other for help in deciding how to define the lesson that day. In these circumstances any pupil who took the initiative could literally 'create' a reality, for other pupils if they so wished could begin to document events in the same way.<sup>10</sup>

Carol and Valerie for their own personal/historical reasons saw very few teachers as strict. They therefore had more freedom and frequently took the initiative in establishing a reality for those around them. One final example from a Domestic Science lesson shows Carol operating in this way,

Miss Lane has been demonstrating how to make spaghetti bolognese. Carol, Valerie, Diane, Linda and Jill, as in so many Domestic Science lessons had been talking throughout the demonstration. They are now writing down the recipe from the board, but paying little attention to the task. They are more concerned with chattering and making jokes.

Miss Lane makes a cynical comment about Carol being enthusiastic.

Carol: "Pardon."

Miss Lane: "I said you were really enthusiastic at school."

Carol: "Don't talk shit!"

This is said as a joke and causes a great deal of amusement to Valerie, Diane, Linda and Jill. They fall about laughing.... Two Sixth formers are baking a cake for a teacher's leaving party.

Carol (aggressively) "What's all that cake for?"

Miss Lane: "Don't be so rude to sixth formers, don't speak to them like that."

Carol: "I don't care if they're fifth formers, sixth formers they can't beat me."

At this point Miss Lane gives up and Carol continues "What's all that cake for?" She is ignored, and eventually loses interest. During this outburst the four girls sitting with her have been listening intently. They are very amused Miss Lane announces that they are going to be given a 'fact test' on the recipe.

Valerie protests: "You didn't tell us about that!"

Linda: "I'm not doing it."

Carol: "She's always got a headache when a test is on."

They eventually settle down in silence as the test begins.

We do not know who actually initiated the misbehaviour in this lesson but it is certainly obvious that Carol is central to *its* maintenance. She is the most outspoken and the others take part in a reality which she in part creates. Miss Lane is ineffectual because Carol makes her so for herself and for the rest of her interaction set. It is in this sense that she is a leader for she is actively helping to create a reality. Those who interact with her come to document Miss Lane's actions as meaning the same thing - they see her as ineffective too. (It is interesting to note that the introduction of a test induces a total re-evaluation of what the situation 'is'. Tests would seem to be legitimate whatever the teacher was like and the pupils chose to conform).

It is important to distinguish this type of leadership from that of the teacher. Unlike the teacher neither Carol nor Valerie had any institutionalised power. Neither of them could make their fellow pupils conform. There was very little bullying nor were there any 'names' given to deviants as often reported in other subcultures. If pupils felt strong enough to ignore the teacher, they were free if they wished to interact with Carol or Valerie and establish an alternative reality together. In contrast, the teacher has the institutionalised power to demand recognition as an authority figure. When the pupils interact it depends on a willingness to create a common meaning and to move into an intersubjective relationship.

Not all pupils did this, for example Jackie and Terrie often saw the teacher as soft, but they did not interact with other class members. They formed their own interaction set and created their own reality. The same was true in English and Geography lessons where there were both boys and girls in the class. Even when they all misbehaved, girls and boys seldom created common meanings; they chose not to take part in the same interaction set.<sup>11</sup> In this classroom membership of interaction sets was voluntary; if there were leaders then they were 'created' by their followers.

##### 5. Summary and Conclusion

When the concept was first introduced the interaction set was defined as those pupils who at any one time saw what was happening in the same way, communicated this to each other and defined appropriate action together. That formulation arose within a symbolic interactionist framework and it has been argued that because of the thrust of symbolic interactionist theory it remains an external, descriptive concept.

The introduction of both social phenomenology and ethnomethodology has been directed at opening up the process by which pupils go about creating these common perceptions. The objective has been to see if the concept of the interaction set can be grounded in their perceptions of reality. As a result of this analysis it is now possible to see the way in which a group of pupils document classroom events and produce for themselves a common reality. In other words, on one level the concept of the interaction set remains unchanged and the original definition still stands; it is those pupils who see classroom situations in the same way. But by the addition of other theoretical perspectives we are aware of the 'work' that pupils do in creating and maintaining these common perceptions.

Looking at how those common realities are made has illustrated a number of further points. It has shown that pupils create realities in line with 'normal form' definitions. They selectively view teachers action and classroom events and so produce recurrent or 'cultural' definitions. These common definitions are reflected in the vocabulary they coin to describe their classroom life. In other words their descriptive vocabulary represents very broad 'frames' or themes around which they document events.

Finally, this concern with 'process' has highlighted the influence of power and authority on the realities that emerge. When pupils are concerned with learning, they are by definition not interacting amongst themselves because they are concerned with moving towards the teachers' meanings. It is in this way that the teacher's authority is maintained. The interaction set represents the situation when the pupils are creating their own meanings and they are therefore nearly always to some extent deviant.

Given an interest in creating an alternative definition from that of the teacher, certain pupils (those who are consistently 'unafraid' of teachers) can emerge as leaders. By taking the initiative in 'undefined' situations they can establish a particular reality. They may not be able to force their fellow pupils to see events in the same light, but by consistently taking the initiative they emerge as important reality definers.

The final model of the interaction set is therefore more complex and detailed than the original formulation. It still involves those pupils who "see what is happening in the same way, communicate this to each other and define appropriate action together", but the pupils

first order reasoning and practical theorising that lies behind these common perspectives is also relevant. The interaction set emerges because pupils agree to interpret events as meaning the same thing. It is always up to individuals to document events for themselves, but when a girl takes part in an interaction set she agrees to do so in the same way as her fellow members.

By concentrating on the active process of creating classroom realities the concept of the interaction set has been shown to be more than just another aptly illustrated account for it conforms to the criteria of validity established by Phillipson. As a second order construct it is compatible with the pupils' own common sense interpretations of classroom life. It is therefore not only a grounded theory, but also a way of formulating events that the pupils themselves would recognise.

Notes for Chapter VIII

1. The work of Hargreaves, Hestor and Mellor (1976) can be criticised on this point. By trying to write down the rules of classroom deviance they have attempted the impossible, and at times they seem to get lost in the maze of different rules that can be formulated. It would have perhaps been more fruitful to provide a little less detail, and ask instead how a few basic rules were creatively used to 'produce' deviance.
2. These sorts of observations suggest a different interpretation of Schutz' consociate/contemporary continuum. For Schutz those who inhabit a common spacial/temporal world will become consociates and develop a reciprocity of perspectives. This example shows that not to be the case. Something more is needed for people to become consociates; there must be a willingness to enter into that sort of relationship.
3. Naturally this raises considerable problems of interpretation. Nevertheless it can be argued that arriving late for a lesson is just as much an appeal to a 'code' as saying 'You know I won't snith'. They are both symbolic statements which fellow participants 'read', and interpreting them involves the researcher in learning their meaning. In the last resort it is only possible to say "This is what this statement means to me" and provide enough detail in the data to show how that interpretation was reached and allow the reader to construct an alternative interpretation if he wishes. (See Turner 1972).
4. For a more detailed analysis of teaching in this way see Cicourel (1974b) and Edwards and Furlong (forthcoming).
5. There were a few instances when this traditional relationship was changed. For example on one occasion the girls prepared a West Indian lunch. They chose the menu, the ingredients, and the recipes, and they did the shopping

and the cooking. It was apparent that during this exercise the role of the Domestic Science teacher changed. She was no longer an 'authority', merely a 'consultant' who entered on equal terms to discuss any difficulties with the pupils. She was no longer the expert, it was not 'her' knowledge.

6. This perhaps explains the expediency of splitting up children when disciplining them. When they are alone it is easier to put forward an alternative meaning to what they have done (e.g. "You know you must work if you are to pass your exam.")

7. See Wegman (1976) for an example of what happens when this breaks down completely.

8. The need for speed and accuracy in noticing deviance is something Kounin (1970) emphasised.

9. This might explain why it is frequently necessary for teachers to devote so much time to deviants. They demand attention because if they are allowed to continue unchecked the teacher would soon have no authority at all. He must work to make them address him as an authority figure.

10. This helps explain why it is an advantage for a soft teacher to 'catch the pupils' interest' in the first few minutes of the lesson if they are going to succeed.

11. See note 2.

APPENDICES

Appendix IPercentages of Different Nationalities\* in the School's Population

Country	United Kingdom and Ireland	West Indies	Europe (excluding Cyprus)	Cyprus	India & Pakistan	Other Asian Countries	Africa
% of school pop.	57.5	32.5	5	2	1.5	1	0.5

\*To be classified as an 'immigrant' in the school's official statistics, a child had to be born of foreign national parents, outside Great Britain and Ireland. An unknown number of pupils born in this country to foreign national parents would therefore be classified in these statistics as 'British'.

## Appendix II

Subjects taken by the 15 girls

	English I	English II	English III	Music	Domestic Science	Commerce	Science	P.E. & Games	R.E.	Typing	History	Geography	Art I	Art II	Art III
Carol	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		
Valerie	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
Diane		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		
Monica	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x
Debbie	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		
Angela		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x
Anne		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
Mona		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
Julie		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
Francis	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x
Terrie	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		
Jackie	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		
Jill			x	x	x			x	x				x		
Linda			x	x	x			x	x				x		
Dorothy			x	x	x			x	x				x		

Appendix III

Breakdown of Staff at Randall Upper School by Employment  
Status, Years in Teaching Service, Years in Randall School  
and Qualifications. Easter 1973

Total Number of Staff: 39

Employment Status	N	Years in Teaching Service	N	Years in Randall School	N	Qualifications	N
Permanent	27	Under 1 year	3	Under 1 years	12**	Teacher Training	15
		1-5 years	14	1-5 years	16		
Supply	5	6-10 years	6	6-10 years	4	University Degree	15
Part-time	7*	10-20 years	8	10-25 years	8		
		20 years +	8			Graduates with PGCE	9

\*Several of these part-time staff were only employed on a temporary contract by the I.L.E.A.

\*\*Staff recruited after September 1971 were not guaranteed a post in the new comprehensive school. Many of these new teachers were therefore only temporary, even though they were on a permanent contract.

Appendix IVA Post Script - Two Years On

Two of the class of 15 were separated from their friends before the end of the fifth year. Francis was promoted to a higher stream. She gained three C.S.E.s at the end of the fifth year and went on to take four 'O' levels during the first year sixth. In September 1975 she began an 'O' and 'A' level course at the local college of further education.

Valerie on the other hand started work during the fifth year, even though she was under age. She took a job in a local supermarket and only attended school three times between Christmas and summer during her final year. Out of the rest, five girls stayed on an extra year after they were sixteen to take some C.S.E.s. The following conversation, transcribed verbatim, was tape recorded with two of these girls, Debbie and Monica, on their very last day at school - July 18 1975. They discuss what they are going to do, and what has happened to the rest of their friends in their class.

Question: "What C.S.E.s did you do then?"

Debbie: "I did English, Biology, Needlework and Social Studies."

Question: "Four. What did you do Monica?"

Monica: "I didn't do much, it was only English, Human Biology and Social Studies and that was all."

Question: "Three?"

Monica: "Yeah, I didn't do Housecraft again 'cos last year I got a grade two."

Question: "Oh you did it last year?"

Monica: "Yeah, I did housecraft last year and I got a grade two and I didn't both to do the C.S.E. again."

Question: "Did you get anything else last year?"

Monica: "Yeah. I only did two last year. That was scripture grade three."

Question: "Did you do any last year Debbie?"

Debbie: "Yeah. English and Needlework."

Question: "How did you get on in those?"

Debbie: "All right."

Question: "What are you going to be doing now?"

Monica: "I'm going college."

Question: "What will you be doing there."

Monica: "Psychology, Physicology and - can't remember all of them - er. Maths, English, French, Biology - can't remember the rest."

Question: "Is that a special course, or is it just 'O' levels or what?"

Monica: "It's just general course, leading to 'O' level and 'A'. I'm doing about four 'O' level and the rest 'A's. It's a two year course."

Question: "Yeah. And what is it you're going to do Debbie?"

Debbie: "I'm going in for Business Studies."

Question: "Where?"

Debbie: "At . . . College."

Question: "So you'll be doing what? Typing and . . .?"

Debbie: "Typing and calculation, office practice and all them general things that you do on a Business Studies course."

Question: "Yeah. Do you know what happened to the other girls. I mean what's Carol doing?"

(Debbie and Monica laugh.)

Question: "Why are you laughing?"

Monica: "She's in the club."

Question: "Oh dear."

Monica: "Linda's working."

Question: "What is she doing, any idea?"

Monica: "As a filing clerk. Let's see Valerie's in the club. Actually she had hers already."

Question: "Yeah?"

Monica: "Jennifer and Faith (two girls from the same year) had their already too."

Debbie: "Yeah."

Monica: "And the only other person who hasn't had hers yet is Carol. Jill is OK."

Question: "She's OK. Do you know what job she's doing?"

Monica: "No, she's not working. She just went back and live with her mum."

Question: "She's not working?"

Monica: "No, she hasn't got a job."

Question: "She's doesn't want a job or can't get one or what?"

Monica: "I think she's trying to get one or can't be bothered to get one."

Question: "Who else was there. Oh I know, what about Diane, Diane Wilson."

Debbie: "Oh, she's gone back to Jamaica."

Question: "But she wasn't from Jamaica."

Debbie: "She was from Jamaica."

Question: "I thought she was born here."

Monica: "Yes she was born here, but here family was from

Jamaica and then she went back there. In the fifth year did she went?"

Debbie: "Yeah, the fifth year."

Question: "What did she think about that? Was she pleased to go?"

Monica: "Not really I don't think so. She still write to Linda and them lot says she misses England and so on.

I don't think she'll return back."

Question: "So Dorothy is working?"

Monica: "Yeah, Dorothy is working. When did she leave?"

Question: "She must have left in the fifth year."

Monica: "No, she left in the sixth year. She didn't even finish to take her exams she didn't bother to come. She took English."

Debbie: "And Housecraft."

Monica: "Yeah I think housecraft. She took half of the housecraft she took - ."

Question: "Then she just left?"

Monica: "Then she just left."

Question: "What's she doing?"

Monica: "I think she's working in a shoe shop. Don't think she's got a good job anyway."

Question: "Well who else was there? Anne. What happened to Anne?"

Monica: "Anne's working. Her sister died."

Question: "I heard about that. Why what happened?"

Monica: "No one don't know really. Everyone said it was because of brain or some such. They're not sure actually. Anne's working."

Question: "What's she doing?"

Monica: "I don't know."

Question: (to Debbie) "Do you know?"

Debbie: "No."

Monica: "I think she's working with her sister. I don't know what her sister do?"

Question: "Angela?"

Monica: "Angela is working. I still write to her. We write to each other."

Question: "Write? Why don't you see her? Where does she live?"

Monica: "Yeah. She's just living down (half a mile away) She works in Woolworth's up . . . . Rd in the office."

Question: "In the office."

Monica: "Yeah."

Debbie: "She left in the fifth year."

Question: "Yeah that's right."

Monica: "She doesn't do typing, she just do accounts and filing and - things to do with the checkouts, you know."

Question: "I don't suppose you know what happened to Jackie and Terrie do you. They left in the fifth year didn't they."

Debbie: "No."

Monica: "No. They're working though 'cos we always see see them in the bus stop."

Question: "So they got jobs?"

Monica: "Yeah."

Question: "Yeah I think they said they were going to work for the electricity board or something like that. I think Jackie said she was."

Monica: "Julie."

Question: "Oh yeah what happened to her? Wasn't she still at school?"

Debbie: "Yeah. She just left in the sixth year."

Monica: "She left."

Question: "Did she do your courses? C.S.E.'s and things?"

Debbie: "Yeah."

Monica: "She wanted to go college for design, but her mum wouldn't let her. It's stupid."

Debbie: "Her mum wanted her to be a secretary."

Monica: "And she doesn't want to be a secretary."

Question: "Was she any good at drawing then?"

Debbie: "Oh yeah she's really good."

Monica: "She's really good. That's what she used to do all the time in the class. Didn't bother to do the work, only draw and so on - fashion - it was really good."

Question: "You got any idea what you're going to do when you finish. You gonna be a secretary?"

Debbie: "I don't think I want to be a secretary. I really want to be a social worker."

Question: "A social worker?"

Monica: "Yeah but she's not really taking the right subjects and things like that. She should take the same course like I am 'cos Mrs - in the college told me I can stay for five years and do that - be a social worker."

Question: "Oh year Mrs - I met her. What part of the college are you going to be in the one at . . . .?"

Monica: "Yeah at . . . ." (the remedial department).

Question: "Has it been different in the sixth year. I mean you've all stayed on and worked. Has it been different.

I mean think back to what it was like in the fourth year."

Debbie: "Well in the fourth year we didn't settle down or nothing and do our work, but since I've come in the sixth year I think I've done better than I've done in the fourth year."

Question: "What's different?"

Monica: "I think I've done better in English (intranscribable) because the same thing happen in the fourth year, the same thing happen in the sixth year we didn't even have a teacher. When Miss . . . left we never got a replacement and then we have to do the C.S.E. and we haven't done human biology for a year and we have to do the exam. It's nearly the same thing always short of teachers. Except for English Mrs . . . she really make us work hard for it. I think all of us is going to get a good grade."

Question: "What about Julie did she settle down in the sixth form?"

Both: "Oh no no." (laugh)

Monica: "She's still the same."

Question: "Really?"

Debbie: "Yeah."

Question: "I was talking to Miss . . . and she said Julie was going to be suspended or kicked out early or something."

Monica: (laugh) "Julie was still the same."

Question: "What about Mona? We havn't talked about Mona. What's she done?"

Monica: "She did the same thing as Debbie."

Question: "What's that?"

Debbie: "Needlework, English, Biology and Social Studies."

Question: "What's she going to do?"

Debbie: "She going to college. Same course as I'm doing."

Monica: "They're going to the same college. I'm the only one who's not going to be mixed up with them any more. I won't miss them because Mona goes to work with me in the weekend with me and I'll be seeing her then."

Question: "Oh yeah you both work at Sainsbury's."

Monica: "Yeah up in . . . I've been there for a year now."

Question: "Has Mona settled down now? Is she quieter?"

Both (laughing) "Oh no."

Monica: "She used to be quiet in the fourth year, but in the sixth year she was noisy."

Question: "Yeah I know in the fifth year she was noisy."

Monica: (laughing) "She's gone bad now, Mona. Couldn't believe it - She's rude you know. She's OK I suppose. She works when she feels like it - in child care and that."

Question: "Who took you for social studies?"

Debbie: "Mr - ."

Question: "And you did the C.S.E.?"

Monica: "Yeah. I don't think I want to do nothing else in that school because you know, we always short of teachers and never did get the right subjects so I did the C.S.E. over again."

Question: "Well I think I've covered all of you lot now."

Monica: "Well all the rest is in the club. They are mothers, unmarried mothers. It's gonna be a bit tough for them a bit later on."

Question: "I wonder what Valerie's doing with her baby?"

Debbie: "She's living with her boy friend."

Question: "Is she? And I wonder what Carol will do too?"

Monica: "Don't know really. She's not living with her mum. She's living with Anne's sister."

Question: "Well how come you two aren't in the club?"

(Laughter)

Debbie: "You must be mad!!" (laughter)

Monica: "Oh, no, not on your life."

Debbie: "Don't wanna tie myself down so early."

Monica: "If I do I'm sorry, I want to get married first.

Anyway career comes first for me. That's all I ever want it to do really."

Question: "Well that's about it. Are you pleased to be leaving?"

Both: "Not really."

Monica: "That's what we thought, we was gonna be really pleased but this morning when we said goodbye to them, then it was a bit sad. You know Mr -."

Question: "Yeah. He's retiring isn't he?"

Monica: "Yes. It was really good because he tried so hard for me to get a nursery training and so on and I still didn't get through, they were full up and so on. So we try college and so on and afterwards I got to . . . college. I had to do tests and things like that."

Question: (To Debbie) "You sad to be leaving?"

Debbie: "Yeah. Don't wanna leave really. I think college will be different from school."

Question: "I think they work harder at college."

Debbie: "Yeah they do."

Appendix VCommon Sense and Theory: an account of the development of the research

In this appendix I want to provide the reader with some background to the present study as well as an account of how it actually developed. Such an operation provides a useful addition to any thesis, but it is particularly important to a study which purports to develop grounded theory within a phenomenological framework.

The positioning of such information with the thesis presents a problem. It has been argued throughout that in a study intended to be 'grounded' in its data it is essential to set out the 'guiding perspective' that influenced not only how the data was analysed but how it was collected too. Without such an explanation the concepts developed are difficult to evaluate. This point is echoed in phenomenological writing too. There, authors underline the importance of explicating one's commonsense that has been used in the development of the analysis - they argue for a reflexive, self aware sociology.

Unfortunately though, many of the points that need to be made about how this study developed can only be properly understood after reading the thesis - it is necessary to be familiar with the different ideas developed in it before discussing the interaction of common sense and theory used in their development. Thus the appendix comes at the end - not because it is separate (indeed, I would now argue that it forms an integral part of the whole, and reading it is essential in evaluating the analysis), but because the issues can only be discussed after that analysis has been developed, in much the same way as it can only be written afterwards.

### General Background

During my first degree I developed a particular interest in studies of organisations. In that field social psychology had a long and vigorous history. The Hawthorne studies may have been undertaken 30 years previously but the message they brought was still reverberating throughout organisational theory. Each successive movement might have 're-worked' their concepts, but the idea of the informal group developed by the Hawthorne workers was as central to the 1960's studies of socio-technical systems as it had been to the human relations movement twenty years previously. Within the industrial sphere there was already a lengthy bibliography on studies of face to face interaction in organisational settings.

By contrast, work in education had not followed this tradition. Research there had been dominated on the one hand by macro analyses of the different chances of educational success of the different classes, and on the other hand by studies relating teacher characteristics and methods to educational outcomes.

Of course there were a few exceptions. The work of Hollinshed and Coleman has already been mentioned. Both studied group culture on a fairly large scale; Hollinshed taking an American town as his 'group', while Coleman (who had also worked in industrial settings) compared different schools. Apart from these though it was not until the work of Hargreaves and Lacey emerged in this country in the late 1960's that a more sensitive and detailed analysis on the lines of that carried out in industry was developed. Hargreaves working from a background in psychology produced a social psychological account of a single school; Lacey on the other hand pursued the same question of differential success that had interested earlier sociologists but brought the insights of social psychology to open up the 'black box' of the school.

As a research student working in a psychology department (I later transferred to sociology) I was drawn more directly to Hargreaves' work which was more clearly in the social psychological tradition. Like Hargreaves, my objective was to look at pupil group cultures in the school. The idea that there were such groups which had a significant impact on how pupils experienced school life formed an important part of my common sense. My initial question arose as a combination of this common sense knowledge of groups and a first reading of symbolic interactionist theory - I wanted to ask how a common group culture arose through face to face symbolic interaction.

It is now apparent to me that this background, and particularly my assumption that groups 'existed' and were important to pupils, had a strong influence on the data recorded and consequently on the form that the thesis took later.

#### Choosing the group

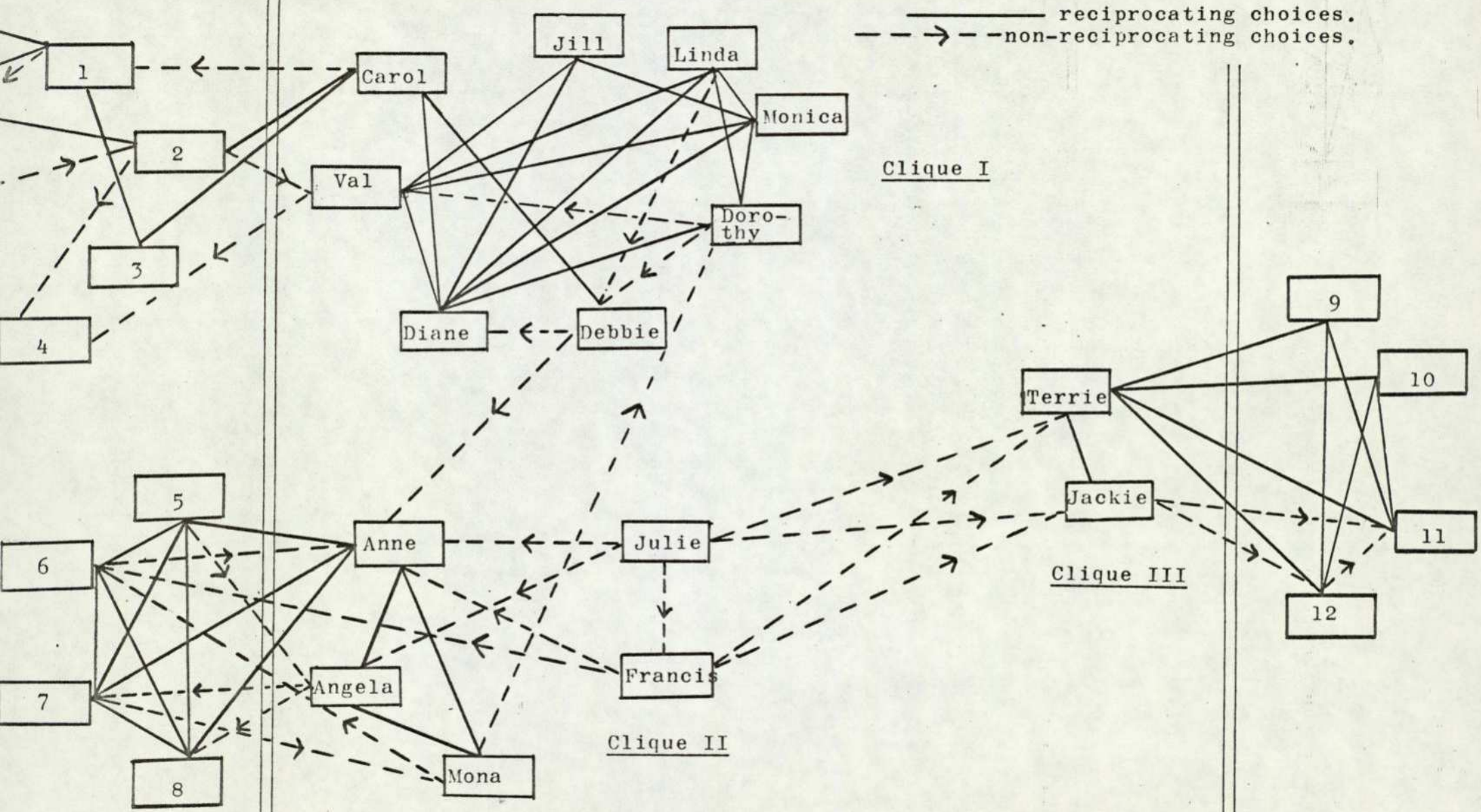
While teaching full time I began observation notes for the classes that I taught, I also administered a number of 'orientation questionnaires', sentence completion tests and built up a number of portraits of individual pupils by recording things they did and said as well as comments made on them by other teachers. By and large this early work was rather unsuccessful. Not only was it difficult to extract my attention from the more immediate problems of actually teaching, but the observation notes took on no form - without a more precise framework it was impossible to know what to record. I therefore began my full time observation work by administering a sociogram questionnaire to the whole of the fourth year. In this way I 'plotted' the various friendship networks throughout the 120 pupils. In the first place I intended to observe all of the

groups as they interacted in the classroom but this was soon abandoned as impractical. Unlike the school Hargreaves had studied where the pupils were rigidly streamed, the pupils at Randall worked in 'sets', and the friendship networks I had identified consequently involved the pupils from many different teaching groups. If I was to examine how a group constructed and maintained a common culture through face to face interaction it would be easier to look at a group that was mainly confined to one class. It was for this reason that I chose to work with the girls of 4G and in the first place I only concentrated on eight of them who formed one clique. From their sociogram questionnaires, this clique did seem to form a fairly cohesive unit, and although they were not all in the same tutor group, they spent a considerable amount of classroom time together. This was the framework that I needed. Once I had identified a 'group', the observation work became easier and more structured, though as I will explain below, not exactly in the way that I had expected.

Figure V. The 4G Sociogram.

The group I initially wanted to observe has been labelled Clique I. Although Dorothy, Jill and Linda were in a different tutor group from all the others on the sociogram, all of their friendship choices were into Clique I and they spent about 40% of their classroom time with them. The only significant external choices by Clique I are by Carol and Valerie who were both linked to a large group of West Indian girls; they spent no classroom time with these girls. Despite these external choices they are also linked by a large number of reciprocating ones to Clique I. It was this relative cohesion that encouraged me to concentrate on this group.

Of the rest of the class I have labelled Clique II as such not because they form a very integrated group of themselves, but because



OTHER CLASSES

OTHER CLASSES

they are linked to a quite tightly knit clique in another class, in which Anne is particularly central. Finally I labelled Jackie and Terrie Clique III as they obviously formed part of another tight knit group that extended beyond the class.

These then were the 15 girls I chose to observe. Twelve of them were in the same tutor group and they were joined by the three other girls in Domestic Science, R.E. Music, P.E., Games and one double Science lesson a week. The sociograms were not intended to be part of the analysis as such, that is why they were not reported in the main body of the report - the objective was to simply use them as an initial guide to observation. Was there such a 'thing' as Clique I, could its influence be observed in face to face interaction in the classroom, and if there was a common culture, what was it? These were all important questions and had an influence on what was observed.

### Observation

Most earlier work on groups, including that in schools had tended to present the groups studied in a somewhat simplified rather 'one-dimensional' form. Hargreaves presents his 4A as being consistently 'pro-school' while his 4D are fairly uniformly deviant, and this one dimensional approach is traded on by Sugarman who develops his whole analysis on the 'key' values of different friendship groups. Thus when I began observation the fact that the pupils in Clique I apparently behaved in what looked like quite contradictory ways stood out at once. The early observation notes are full of such questions as "Why are these girls so boisterous in other lessons, but always so quiet in here (English)", or in Typing "The pupils seem much more 'verbal' in a public sense than in other lessons." These observations soon became crystallized into an awareness that there were conflicting standards of 'working' and

'mucking about' in virtually every lesson. During the fourth week of observation I noted "There is evidence of what could be called a dual idea in this group i.e. that they strongly legitimate work in one sense, particularly written and practical work....but at the same time they also want to play the fool". In retrospect it can be argued that such observations only emerged as relevant and 'noticeable' in the light of my expectation of a 'one dimensional' culture; they stood out for me as unusual and noteworthy precisely because of those expectations.

The other preconception that I had was that the pupils of Clique I would interact as a group. I thus took note of where they sat and who they made verbal and non-verbal contact with. Once again it was the contrasts that struck me as unusual that appeared most frequently in my observation notes. For example in one of the early science lessons I note "In this lesson Anne and Mona (Clique II members) seem more part of the group (Clique I)". It was also noticeable when one or two pupils of this clique separated themselves off and worked alone. As a teacher, my eyes were particularly sensitive to pupils' misbehaviour and it was apparent that when performing deviant acts there was an increased amount of verbal and non-verbal communication between the 'culprits'. But it soon became apparent that this type of supportive interaction was not just confined to specific cliques. The following example took place in Music;

"Carol and Francis are sitting opposite each other, both have one symbol each. They both start hitting them with pencils, then they lean across the table and bash them together. This makes a great deal of noise, and they both laugh and look round the class every time they bash them together."

Interaction patterns such as these became noticeable for me because they were unusual. It was becoming clear that it was not sufficient to concentrate only on those who were in Clique I as defined by the sociogram - interaction took place between different pupils at different times, but essentially the same processes of watching each other and talking together were involved whether or not they were identified as friends on a questionnaire.

These ideas crystallized towards the end of the second month when I was observing a Domestic Science group. Linda, Diane, Jill, Valerie and Carol had all arrived late and sat physically separated from the rest of the class. At the time I noted

"these girls are identified as a 'group' in this lesson by their slow process of working and their hostility to those around them. They seem to be aware of each other as a group direct their comments to each other. Dorothy and Monica are outside for the moment."

Although I still operated with some notion of a group (see reference to Dorothy and Monica, both Clique I members), my 'common sense' approach had been somewhat modified and I was aware of a varying membership and the importance of common behaviour in defining that membership.

During the rest of the observation period my understanding of classroom interaction did not change dramatically. I remained interested in the variety of behaviour shown by any one pupil on different occasions, and my awareness that interaction was in no way confined to my hypothetical sociogram cliques led me to take an increasing interest in other class members particularly when they interacted with my original eight girls.

Two principal features emerged during observation which eventually became integrated into the concept of the interaction set. The first

was that different pupils moved in and out of the interaction set at different times, and the second was that any one pupil could take part in a vast range of behaviour implying to the external observer quite contradictory conceptions of classroom life.

### The Analysis

Although its foundations had been laid, the concept of the interaction set did not emerge during the observation period itself. It only took its final form after a more detailed reading of symbolic interactionist theory which was to provide the 'guiding perspective' during the first part of the analysis. From that reading two important and relevant concepts emerged. The first was the importance of the individual in constructing his own definition of the situation. The responsibility for action was placed firmly on the shoulders of the individual himself as opposed to some reified notion of a 'group' apparent in more traditional social psychological writing. The second was the notion of 'joint action' - the process by which individuals take each other into account in deciding what the situation 'is'. With these two concepts in mind I continually re-read my observation notes and the concept of the interaction set grew up. To quote page 143

"An interaction set at any one time will be those pupils who perceive what is happening in a similar way, communicate this to each other and define appropriate action together"

Fundamental to the concept was the recognition that pupils could define situations in different ways and they could move in and out of contact depending on whether they agreed with the emerging definition.

In Chapter I the importance of the guiding perspective in influencing what emerges in grounded theory was emphasised. In the development of the concept of the interaction set, what was critical

was the inter-relationship of symbolic interactionist theory and traditional studies of group culture - both were important in the collection of data and the analysis afterwards. But they did not dictate prior to starting what was to be observed - the concept of the interaction set grew out of some sort of dialogue between these perspectives and the events witnessed in the classroom. It is in this sense that the concept is a grounded one and is substantively different from a concept developed prior to any work in the field.

Before turning to the later analysis it should perhaps be re-emphasised that because what I 'saw' in classrooms and how I interpreted those events was influenced by a body of theory does not undermine the value of the analysis that was developed. Observation without some orientation is impossible as I found out in my early attempts - either one's attention 'scatters' in an attempt to get everything in, or one records only the most flamboyant events that catch the eye for no particular reason. The observer must work with some sort of framework, yet this is not the same as knowing before hand precisely what you wish to find. Striking a balance between 'pre-conceived' ideas and 'foreshadowed problems' is difficult and in the end will always be a matter of compromise. What harms research is where the inherent selectivity of observation is overlooked and the data is presented in a precoded way so that it can support no other interpretation of events. (See Furlong and Edwards (1977)).

#### Later work

During this stage of the analysis I was consciously working with the approach to research expounded by Glaser and Strauss though as has been pointed out before, more self consciously concerned with the impact

of the guiding theory on the concepts that emerged. At the same time I became increasingly aware of the movement towards social phenomenology in the sociology of education and I consequently became interested in the relationship between symbolic interactionism and phenomenology. It was apparent from my reading of Schutz and his followers (particularly Berger) that although the concept of the interaction set may have been grounded in my data it was not necessarily part of the actors' consciousness. Symbolic interactionism's objective may be to deal with the actor's perspective, but it does so in a rather external way. Phenomenological theory on the other hand provided clues as to how the pupils reality was experienced. Although I had provided a grounded concept in the interaction set, it did not answer my new questions about subjective reality. Rather than abandon what I had already achieved, I decided to look at the same body of data from a different perspective. It was at this point that the idea of constructing an ongoing dialogue between the theory of the different 'guiding perspectives' was developed.

In this second stage I concentrated on the interview transcriptions in the hope that there would be some correspondence between the language concepts the pupils used to typify teachers and classroom events and the variety of behaviour that had been observed in the classroom. In fact this section of the thesis is the least satisfactory. Analysing language demands accurate recording - not conversations reconstructed from notes and I was therefore confined to examining talk in interviews. An interview is by definition a different situation from a classroom, and the accounts the children provided of their behaviour therefore have a problematic and unknown relationship to how they would talk about events in the classroom. Any research based on accounts suffers from this

problem and at the very least some attempt should be made to 'triangulate' the analysis by feeding it back to the participants. Unfortunately this was not possible as by this stage both I and many of the pupils had left the school. The analysis therefore remains largely at the descriptive level, being my interpretations of pupils accounts.

The final section of this thesis reflects a search for a framework to explain the apparently contradictory findings that had emerged from the interview data. Analysing the talk in interviews had shown how pupils typify teachers and teaching situations in that context. But it was apparent that their accounts of why they acted as they did, did not consistently correspond with what had been observed. The concept of the interaction set developed in the symbolic interactionist framework, highlighted the variety and fluidity of the pupils' behaviour, yet in their talk they presented themselves as acting in an organised and consistent way. Teachers were strict or were soft and they behaved accordingly. There was obviously some contradiction between what they said they did and what I had seen them doing as an observer. The search for a different theoretical perspective was directly stimulated by this problem in understanding the data.

There was also the other point that it was obvious that some girls had more influence over what happened in the classroom than others. In my rush to abandon the concept of the 'group' as some external reality, and with phenomenology's emphasis on the self directed individual, I had overlooked the common sense interpretation that there are such things as leaders. It might easily be that the realities so firmly avowed in the interviews were influenced by dominant pupils, and reality could

constructed in different ways when different personalities were involved. The importance of finding some way to satisfactorily conceptualise 'power' and 'authority' was apparent.

An earlier draft of this final section developed a 'structural' analysis on much the same lines as that made by Green (1972) but it was difficult to integrate with the phenomenological part of the research and anyway further considerations showed this to have considerable weaknesses (see Chapter II). The ethnomethodological paradigm finally answered these problems. With its emphasis on the noesis - the process by which reality is constructed - it allowed for events to be seen in different ways by pupils using the same language categories and for the influence of certain key pupils as important definers of reality.

In the way that the final section is constructed, with the separation of the theory and data it may appear that Chapter VIII does no more than 'example' ethnomethodology. In fact this is not the case. Although no 'new' theory emerges, the 're-working' of the data from the ethnomethodological position introduced some fundamental changes to the concept of the interaction set, particularly in the nature of authority and leadership. The final model of classroom interaction thus remains a grounded theory and because of the new guiding perspective is substantively different from earlier formulations.

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