ent ways (so that ever new aspects appear) show that derivative problems flow from the original problem. After subtle logical and emotional repetitions, lead on to the resolution of the original problem. Finally, stress the favored image set forth in the original statement and leave the unfavorable one behind. In the analogy of an ocean voyage, the problem is to recognize that you are in Port A and want to go to Port B. The various difficulties and events on the trip furnish the development, and the anchoring in Port B is the resolution. This analogy makes it clear that everything that happens during the voyage is always referred to the objective of Port B, and grows out of the departure from Port A.

Presentations that do not keep their eyes, brains, and hearts on the anchorage at Port B can degenerate into random cruises. The passengers (your audience) who thought they had bought a ticket for some other place, even if unspecified, are usually exasperated if you return them to Port A. While this seems obvious, many presentations end in disaster because their proponents never knew where they wanted to go. These people are often perplexed and hurt at an audience's reaction. "After all," they think, "I know we came back to where we started, but it was really an interesting trip, wasn't it?" Just as cruises are a form of luxurious escape which appeal to a special class, such presentations are appreciated only by those who have nothing else to do. You have given them a vacation from boredom, nothing more. Audiences who like this sort of thing have no energy, power, or inclination to advance your idea. Serious members of an audience seek those with real insights and programs. They do not waste their time or resources on triflers.

In the next chapter we will explore various approaches to Development. This phase requires that you capture and sustain attention by playing variations on the clear and simple theme of your problem-statement.

3

How to Get and Hold Attention or *Creating Sleeplessness*

With the problem-statement form selected, the next phase in development is how to generate interest in the path you want to take to get from one state of affairs to another. Your subsidiary objective here is to get attention—that subtle aspect of psychology whose underlying process is still in doubt. However, throughout history men have known how to do this. From their practice and the investigations of modern research, sufficient knowledge is available for the purposes of any presentation, even if the theory is shaky. Children still blow soap bubbles without encumbrances from the physics of surface tension or topology. Let me use a personal case to illustrate the point.

Over ten years ago a good friend of mine was invited to make a presentation of how electronic computers could be used in a large business. The audience was to be the president and all of the vice presidents of the company, and they were to assemble in an awesomely baroque room used by the board of directors for their meetings. His appearance was the result of the enthusiastic

suggestion of only one of the vice presidents, who secured the resigned acceptance of his colleagues. My friend is an alert man and knew that he should expect less than passionate interest from this audience, whose greatest compliment would be attempts to suppress yawns. Still, he had the job to do and wanted to do it right. He was convinced that he had a good idea of real merit, but if he failed to excite real interest, he might kill the idea's chances for many months. If he muffed the attempt, even though under adverse circumstances, people would remember that: "They turned it down." Valuable time would be needed to fall back and regroup for counterattack. His problem: How to get the attention required for a fair understanding of his proposition?

Since the subject was known in advance by everyone to be technical, the attention had to be even greater than normal. My friend, a true expert, spent little time on the material itself, but instead concentrated constantly on the best method to rivet attention at the outset. He told me later that the idea came to him while raking leaves on the Saturday before the Monday meeting. It was such a startling solution that he did not chance telling anyone at all about it—including his sponsor. Convinced it was the only way, he immediately put down his rake and took off for the local antique shop.

On Monday he arrived in the board room, and things were even worse than he expected. As the members arrived, he experienced more heartiness than usual, probably as a compensation for what the audience really felt about their ordeal ahead. Fine, darkly luminous portraits of past presidents looked down on the proceedings as though alert for breaches of the traditions of great events that had taken place there. Doric columns, subdued lighting, the green-covered long table, and walnut paneling all hinted that only the best of taste and gentlemanly behavior would be welcome here. The total atmosphere nearly panicked my friend, but he decided to burn his bridges and blanked his mind to every signal that counseled decorum.

When everyone was settled in his chair, and the clublike banter fell off, the sponsoring vice president informed his colleagues that they were about to hear one of the world's experts, a

man of probity and experience, who would initiate them in the mysteries of the arcane equipment that held such promise for all of their areas of responsibility. Amid a general shifting of position, every eye centered on my friend as he strode to the head of the table. Without a word, he opened his coat, reached down deep in his pocket and slowly extracted a Colt .45 revolver, the "Peacemaker" model, with its 8-inch barrel. He held it for a while pointed toward one of the more popular presidential portraits, and then brought it to rest on the table. Everyone in the room was aghast, but glued their eyes to the gun. Some sat bolt upright.

Before the inevitable reaction began, my friend said in quite a loud voice, "This, gentlemen, is a computer. Please examine it and pass it around." That done, he handed the pistol to the Treasurer with a courtly gesture.

He then went on to explain that the notches cut in the handle were a method of storing information (the number of persons who had stood in front of the gun with fatal results) in symbolic form. But, more importantly, the form was binary—a notch was either there or it wasn't. This is exactly the number system used in electronic computers. Instead of notches, they use things like light switches which can also be only "on" or "off." With this transition back to reality, everyone relaxed, and my friend delivered a first-class exposition to the most attentive audience he ever had.

A few months ago I was talking to one of the members of his audience, and computers entered the conversation. He stopped and said, "I never hear the word computer mentioned without thinking about a Colt revolver. You know, that was when Kelfer gave us our first presentation, and I always link up the two ideas. It's silly, but I just can't help thinking about the two together." This, after ten years, is high praise for any opening.

Here we get a clue to the method of arresting attention for an event: Create a clash between the background environment and the event. In this case with background of quiet elegance, a normal, courteous talk in good form insured a minimum of attention. Do something incongruous, like bringing symbols of violence into that environment, and no man on earth could resist

the clash in his consciousness. Conversely, in an uproarious background of chaotic frenzy, a strong, calm statement, delivered with maximum gravity, is most effective.

Attention *attraction* is rooted almost entirely in the emotions. Reason is possible only *after* attention has been directed to the assumptions and logic used. Unless attention is secured, the audience will literally not hear the story. It becomes only another set of noises in the background. This is why some men, dragged to an opera by their music-loving wives, can sleep undisturbed through all the commotion at the end of a work by Wagner. At the other end of the scale, a mother can hear the whimpering of an infant through several walls as she sleeps in the dead of night; she will awake with a start at sounds so slight that no one else even hears them.

We can learn something about what attracts attention by examining its opposite, the art of camouflage, whose purpose is to minimize the chance that someone will notice some object. Animals represent evolution's greatest attainments in this art. Zebra stripes, giraffes' reticula, bird plumage, and insect colors have all evolved *in their natural surroundings* in ways that make them difficult to see in those surroundings; we often say that they "blend in" with them. During World War II the British developed a paint for ships which was reputed to make them invisible at dusk and dawn, favored hours for submarine attack. Its hue was a very light grayish white! (The familiar zig-zag, crazy quilt camouflage of World War I was designed to fool the eye of a man tracking a ship's movement for laying fire—not to hide the ship.) Soldiers putting twigs in their helmets or placing nets of foliage over artillery pieces have an origin that goes far back in time. In *Macbeth* Shakespeare arranges the usurper's downfall by having the opposing army advance under cover of a portable forest: "I will not be afraid of death or bane, till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane." Malcolm's forces met the specification by cutting their camouflage in Birnam Wood. If a pickpocket practices his profession during Mardi Gras, he had best buy an outlandish costume. But if his success then leads him to work Wall Street, that same outfit will not be very effective.

Zebras, giraffes, and tropical birds stand out in zoos because

they clash with the city surroundings. A Chevrolet, anonomyous on a freeway, is transformed into a news event if found in the African bush. Recognition of your own state's license plate in a foreign country is the homely case.

We see then that attention depends on some kind of clash between an object and its environment. *Nothing has intrinsic attention-attraction power of itself.* Whether it is a thought, clothing, or word; a gesture, house, or rock, the measure of its attention-getting power is "How much is it out of kilter with its context?" In other words, attention is a *relation*, not a *quality*. Whether the attention developed produces a favorable or unfavorable subsequent reaction is another matter, which we will discuss later. But note the enormous difference between securing legitimate attention for an idea and crude exhibitionism of oneself. Few who saw it can forget Khrushchev's shoe-banging at the United Nations. How many remember what caused his outburst?

This digression on camouflage suggests why those presentations which are too closely tailored to the expectations of an audience turn out to be bland, with no bite and, most importantly, no impact. As one weary government official described a case he had to hear: "The same old tired answers to the same old tired questions." We see this sometimes in individuals who have such a compulsion to "fit in" a group or organization that they repress every aspect of their instincts or beliefs that clashes with their idea of what the group expects. These are the faceless men whose behavior is predictable, who don't make waves, and who are never looked to for an idea or opinion. They have developed camouflage as their perfect defense, like a mallard who prefers the safety of the swamp to a flight that silhouettes her against the sky. We need not waste time on their needs, for they are never concerned with presentations except as neutral members of an audience.

Securing attention for your idea compels you to risk the flight and its accompanying exposure. You must show your idea as a contrast to existing expectations, beliefs, feelings, or attitudes of the audience if you want them to notice it.

The key to getting and holding attention lies in having something *new* happen continually. This calls for a sense of *move-*

ment forward or backward, development, or the feeling of "something going on." Development suggests that what we are seeing *now* grew out of something before, and is going to turn into something else. Consider the difference between the attention a child gives to a basket of eggs on the kitchen table and his concentration on an egg that is being cracked from the inside by a chick straining to emerge.

Another illustration, probably old when the pyramids were under construction, is the attention given to workers and their machinery on a large building project by sidewalk superintendents. The same project on a Sunday morning will hold no interest from passing crowds, because "there is nothing going on." Yet the structure's design is clear, and all the machinery stands ready, but silent. Clearly, the sense of development is dead, and with it dies attention. The fundamental aspect of development derives from its continuity with the past and the future. This unfolding of your presentation must parallel nature. Even the most spectacular and dramatic event in the story must be related to what has gone before. A sunset so splendid that no painter would dare attempt it, still grows from the everyday path of the sun across the sky, even if the rest of the day has been rainy and gray. Clear problem-statement is important because it allows a development related constantly to both aspects of any problem: that which exists, and that which is desired.

Everyone subjected to a presentation brings with him several unseen retainers. Kipling called them his "six honest serving men": Who, What, Where, Why, How, and When?

Like six unruly children, each of these will tug at your audience's minds until they get satisfaction—or at least a lollipop. They are not nasty kids, but inquisitive, and their presence furnishes the basic structure of *any* presentation on *any* subject. The *order* in which they are answered depends on your own inclination, taste, and the style appropriate to the subject. They don't need equal time, but every one demands *some* recognition. Not one can be assumed safely asleep, no matter how sophisticated the audience. Persons listening want to know *your* answer to each one somewhere in your story.

Every successful presentor has his mind divided into the six

compartments. They are used in the composition stage like six file folders for accumulating your basic ingredients: facts, opinions, and methods.

My nine-year-old daughter was once assigned the task of making a report on the Aztecs. Her teacher told her to "do research on it first."Since she was only nine, she lettered in a fine title on the cover sheet: "History of the Aztecs." Were she twenty-nine, and an expert on the subject, she would concoct a title like "Some Preliminary Notes on Aztec Grain Cultivation in the Period 1316-1319 A.D.," and take five-hundred pages to do it.

With the title inscribed and laid aside, she then enthusiastically accumulated a small pyramid of books and began to plough through them. Disillusionment set in fast after a couple of sessions. "Before I knew all this, I could have made a good report, but now all these things are buzzing around in my head, and I don't think I can unscramble them at all. What should I do?" she asked, with the soulfulness only girls her age possess.

I suggested she get her copy of Kipling's *Just So Stories* and read the page on which you meet his "honest serving men." After she understood the passage in new light, I asked her to write at the top of six separate sheets of paper each of the single question words. She then filled in a meaningful question behind each one, like "*Who*—were the Aztecs?"; "*Where*—did they come from?"; "*What*—did they do?"; "*When*—did they live," and so on.

Now her pile of books made sense, for what she had read let her answer each of the questions—or made her find out more for the ones she couldn't. All she had to do then was to shuffle the sheets about and place the precious title page on top. It is true that a definitive *History of the Aztecs* still needs to be written, but what her classmates got was a lot better for the help from Kipling.

A few months ago she was assigned another report, this time on "Primates." On this I was not consulted. As I saw her labeling six separate sheets with the same words, I thought how pleased the old Britisher would be if he could see his continued influence on young minds.

Once information has been accumulated in these bins, it is then arranged into a meaningful design, like a mosaic, or rather a

necklace of different-colored beads, for the information must be presented in some order over the span of time available to you. What is the string that carries the beads? You can't just staple the sheets together and get away with it after the fourth grade. It is not wise merely to dump a pile of unstructured information into the laps of your audience. They will have the same reaction as if you take a watch apart, fling the pieces at them, and say "Here's all you need to make a watch." You may get high marks for research and energy, but that is a low-class consolation prize. By doing this you confess that you don't know what to do with all the stuff you've dug up. Audiences expect structure, not a happening.

Without structure, there can be no idea. It is easier to write sentences without verbs. Presentations all hold out the promise of some kind of *action;* without action, there can be no development. In fact, the word *development* itself comes from the Latin words for *unfold* or *unwrap.* Both meanings assume that something is there to unwrap, and that someone is doing the unwrapping. As each layer of material is removed, more and more aspects of the idea are laid before the audience. The process of unwrapping is the *style* of the presentation, and can range from the quick flick of the magician's cloak to the most involved and tricky angles of a mystery. (We will discuss various styles in Chapter 4.)

The dramatist presents his problem and develops its aspects for ultimate disclosure entirely through the conversation and movements of his characters. If the playwright wants to let you know that one of them is feeling or thinking things that he wouldn't tell the other characters, then he has to risk a soliloquy. This is a very high-powered, dangerous device, since it demands the greatest suspension of disbelief by the audience.

The novelist invents quite artificial and cut-down conversation for his characters. He supplements these fragments with narrative passages in which he tells you about things happening to them and around them, which they don't know about, but which will have a great effect on their behavior as he unfolds the story. The novelist also lets characters talk to themselves for your benefit.

Neither of these dramatic methods can be used effectively in a presentation of your ideas, except in unusual cases, where a skit or "role-playing" sequence is *part* of a presentation. These can never be the whole show, and cannot be used at all when the audience is small in size. All the background scenery and all aspects of the problem must be set forth by you alone, or by your colleagues in a multiple presentation. But you have great advantages over the playwright or novelist. You do not have to keep your remarks constrained to a character's personality or history; you can use all kinds of visual and audio aids; and you are not hampered by keeping all of the action tied to a specific place and time. You can also deal with future consequences of different hypotheses and courses of action, and present all kinds of information from a wide range of sources. Most importantly, you can tailor your message to take account of the backgrounds and experiences of the people in your audience.

But you *must* include one indispensable quality of a good novel or play: There must be some kind of conflict perceived by the audience, if you are to keep their interest.

What is a good way to do this? One of the best, and oldest, is the method of *opposites.* To understand its nature and to control its power requires a slight excursion to the fringes of philosophy. But as lawyers say, when the judge chides them for wandering, "We will link it up, your honor."

Every idea can be understood only by its relationship to other ideas or experiences. Whether the idea is about education, military strategy, furniture design, proper behavior of your friends, or an explanation of experiments in astrophysics, we grasp it only by relating the idea to our own previous thoughts and experience of its subject matter. These have been formed by the uneasy trio of reason, common sense, and emotion. This lists them in order of increasing importance.

For example, if you wish to know how you really feel about another person, imagine the feelings stirred on receiving an unopened letter from him, which you recognize only by his handwriting on the envelope. The attitude you have before you see the letter's contents is based entirely on emotions resulting from

past experience with him. This has its parallel in the reactions members of your audience have when first being invited to a presentation by you, even before they know the subject. Sometimes this emotional reaction is so strong that they don't even come. Happily, these are often balanced by those who come even though they have had no previous interest in the proposed subject, but who always enjoy what you have to say.

Past experience puts an unconscious slant on what we hear or see. We sense the idea or proposition as fitting one of these slots: it is *similar* to something we already know or believe; it is *different* from everything we know or believe.

The more powerful relation for attention is that which is different; the more comfortable relation is that which is similar. Both are necessary in the development phase of a good presentation. The method of opposites (differences) is like the crashing wave; the method of analogy (similarities) is like the slack water between the crests. Together they produce a satisfying internal rhythm. We will hold the method of analogy for later, and concentrate now on the method of opposites.

Opposites

Attempts to understand how development takes place have occupied the best minds of every discipline over the last 2,500 years. I am not about to give the final answer. In fact, some theories of development hold that no final answer is ever possible. But there is one view that is extremely useful for anyone faced with the job of stringing together the various aspects of a problem in order to produce acceptance for his particular solution, i.e., the presentation of an idea. This is the method of the *dialectic*, as propounded by a great, but verbose, German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). The idea of the dialectic is one that has been known to every wise man since prehistory. Aristotle embodies it in his quest for "the Golden Mean," where he believes that truth lies between the extremes of viewpoints. Middle-of-the-road politicians sense that the bulk of voters are found there, and proverbs in every language counsel the wisdom of the Latin *Audi Alterem Partem*,

i.e., "Listen to the other side." In Spanish it is: "He who has heard only one side has heard nothing." The idea permeates every court of law from Auckland to Zurich, for all men distrust with their most primitive instincts the one-sided story. Goethe found the basis in a peculiar quirk of the human mind: "Every word that is uttered evokes the idea of its opposite." A presentation that does not deal with the cumulative "evoking of opposites" finally founders on the shoals of disbelief. It is necessary to convince your audience that you see the contrary view better than they, and that in spite of its power, your proposal remains superior.

All development, whether of a child, a plant, an organization, a society, an economy, or a civilization takes place by a process that involves both additions of the new and rejection of the old. New cells form, old cells die; this process on a larger scale we call development. A tennis match is not a mere summation of the *individual* strokes played. Once the ball is served, the return has been influenced by the serve, the second response is determined by the initial return, and so on, until a stroke that violates the accepted limits of the net or boundaries produces points for the other player. The fascination of spectators springs from the observance of the *total process*, not from appreciation of individual swats. The dialectic is such a tennis match, but its action takes place in the mind. Its boundaries are fixed by the experience and imagination of the thinker and his audience; its net is the minimum logic needed for respectability, and its height varies with the players.

Hegel laid it out this way: Every statement about a person, organization, event, institution, doctrine, or phenomenon—anything in human experience—can give us knowledge about only one aspect of it. Since everything is much more complex in real life than words can describe, as soon as you select one aspect, the other unmentioned ones spring to mind. Of these, the ones most likely to get attention are those that appear to contradict the one you selected. But the contradiction itself is as faulty as the original statement, for the same reason of partial knowledge. However, the two statements combined *approach* the truth —but never achieve it absolutely.

This worries philosophers, but men of affairs acting in the

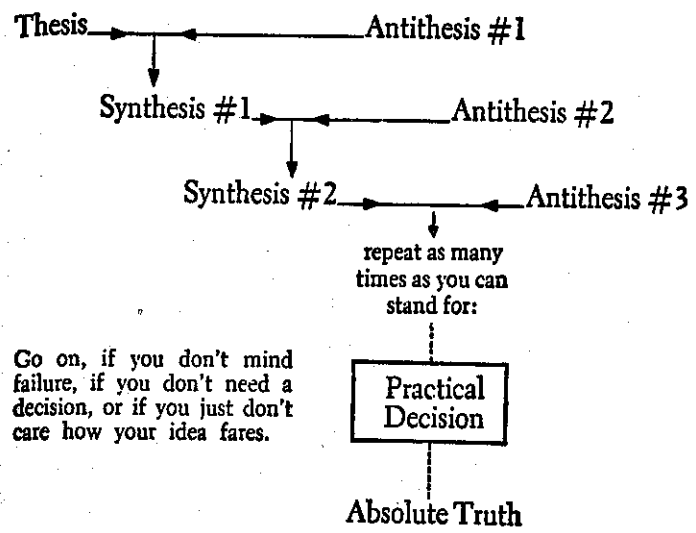
world as we see it, always act on imperfect knowledge. Uncertainty in human life begins with this fact of faulty knowledge, yet men *do* make decisions constantly. Alas, you can never make a presentation of an idea that contains the *whole* truth, for you can go only as far as time and knowledge permits. The great appeal of the method of opposites is its power to *suggest* the nature of the whole truth of an idea by showing the buildup of its various aspects. There is always the inference that one *could* go on to infinity, but that isn't advisable. (Many presentations give that hint quite quickly, and members of the audience then pray for any excuse to get away.)

There is a practical limit of the aspects that can be used, and that limit should be dominant in the design of the presentation. One should only go as far as necessary in order for the audience to make up its mind about the validity of your idea. You should settle for tipping the scale of *probability of belief* in your favor. When the balance goes your way, do not keep on adding extra burden to the material required for a judgment, or the method of opposition will turn back on you. Laborers on oil well rigs all know this injunction: "When you strike oil, stop the drill."

Philosophers will clap hands to heads in horror at this simplification of Hegel's life work, but we are attempting to apply his insight, grabbing only what we need. Before we leave him entirely, for examples, let's do him the justice of diagramming the core of his *system:* The first statement in the dialectical form is called the "thesis." The contradiction to the first statement is called the "antithesis" (anti-thesis). The combination of the "thesis" and "antithesis" is called the "synthesis" (syn-thesis, i.e., together-thesis). The syn-*thesis* calls forth a new antithesis, and so on to infinity, or as Hegel would say, to "the Absolute" or Pure Truth (see diagram page 85).

Here we see what wise folk in every walk of life call "the swing of the pendulum." They know in their bones that if any program, group, or idea goes too far, it will call into play opposing forces which will attempt to restore the balance. Leaders wish to retain both power and a reputation for probity. They unconsciously use the method of opposites in forming their judgments, though most of them would never expose their decisions

THE METHOD OF OPPOSITES



in such analytical form. If you make a presentation to such leaders and synchronize with the rhythm of *their* thought, your idea is nearly irresistible. This, of course, is the ultimate in development. Few achieve it, but that's the target.

Analogy

Once we see the architecture of a development as a continuous welding of opposites, we can examine how and where analogy fits in the structure.

Analogy, anecdotes, examples, or illustrations are the ornaments and embellishments of a presentation. They appeal almost entirely to imagination, emotions, and common sense. As pure reason they are faulty, since no analogy ever fits an idea perfectly. Their great power is to link the similarities of the audience's experience with various *parts* of the development of your idea. An example brings an idea down to earth. It reinforces the truth of a specific part of the presentation, so that the next floor

of development takes off from a firm base. Since examples and illustrations are drawn from similar situations in real life, they contain a blend of opposites. Consequently, they belong at those points in a development where a new synthesis occurs. A thesis or its contradiction does not lend itself to illustrations because they are extremes, and the audience expects a resolution of their conflict in a synthesis.

After the clash of a resolution, give them the analogy as a restful period for absorption. Recognize it as the fun of bringing in the paint, draperies, and furniture after the floor has been completed. Frankly, the appeal of analogy is aesthetic and restful. As such, it enhances the attention to your next stage, in which you start hammering away with logic again. The alternation of starkness and decoration attunes your presentation to the span of attention normal to human beings. They will not, and truly cannot, sustain involved logical construction for too long a time without a relaxation or interruption. Whenever a presentor ignores this, he will find that someone in the audience, with the lowest threshold of tolerance, will perpetrate any kind of interruption merely to get the relief everyone needs. It is extremely rare for an interruption of this type to be helpful. Most inflict fatal wounds, since presentors whose methods provoke this audience reaction are so rigid that they lack the flexibility to turn an irrelevant interruption to their advantage. (Handling of cross-examination is covered in Chapter 7.)

Another reason for alternating examples with hard propositions lies in the physiological connection of body and mind. There are two states of life that are unique to human beings: laughter and weeping. They both involve an imperfectly understood relation between the imagination of a person and his bodily reactions. During laughter or weeping, what takes place in the imagination affects what happens in the body, and what happens in the body affects, in turn, what happens in the imagination. There is a continuous and complex interplay until the heightened activity of both subsides to normal.

Compare some of the physical reactions (from a description by A. Koestler).

	LAUGHTER	WEEPING
Face	1. Eyes sparkle, corners wrinkled	1. Eyes blinded by tears, lose focus
	2. Brow and cheeks taut and smooth	2. All features crinkled and crumpled
	3. Expression radiant	3. Expression languid (even in joy or rapture)
	4. Lips parted, corners lifted	
Breathing	1. Expiratory puffs	1. Short, deep, gasping inspirations
	2. Long, deep intakes	2. Long, sighing expirations
Posture	1. Head thrown back	1. Head drooped
	2. Muscles contracted (slapping table or knees)	2. Muscles flabby, shoulders slumped
Sounds	1. Chuckling, giggling, or roaring	1. Laments, moans, appeals for sympathy

It is interesting that the specific physical reactions are almost complete reversals of each other, but this is not our main concern. The above table maps a physiological uproar. Both states are releases from unbearable tensions built up in the body by the imagination. As these tensions discharge they produce a feeling of relaxation. The safety valve pops. The application of this for making a presentation lies in two insights: No reasoning process can go on in the mind when it is occupied with laughter or weeping. During the relaxed period *immediately* following laughter or weeping, the critical faculty is at its lowest level.

We can connect these with our structure of development by this advice: 1. Use the example from real life, especially if humorous or emotionally moving, to reinforce the statement of a new synthesis. 2. Follow the example immediately with either the contradictory antithesis, or a restatement of the synthesis in a

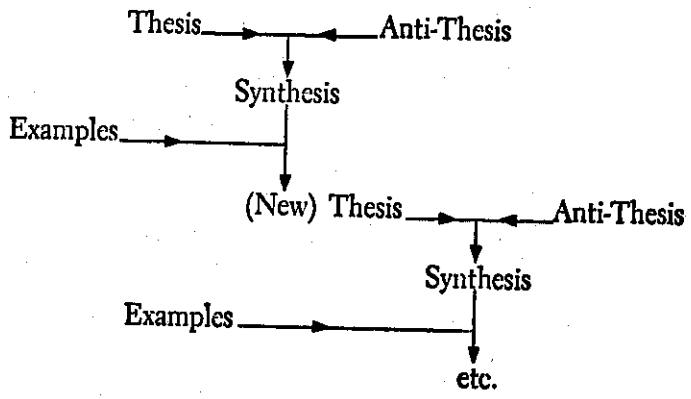
new way, if it makes the presentation of the next contradiction easier.

No human mind can resist taking in a statement made during the relaxed state following laughter or weeping. It will often be remembered for years afterward.

A word of warning is necessary. If your example or anecdote is not to the point of your synthesis, you will encounter both embarrassment and bafflement, for you have misled your audience. A few may be amused, but not those who have been following your development. Those previously interested will either resent the irrelevancy, or keep trying to fit it to your story. Both reactions distract their eyes from the ball and are disastrous for securing consent and acceptance of your idea.

Insertion of illustrations and anecdotes is a powerful device. But like all powerful forces, if not controlled and kept to their job, they become dangerous. Analogies must be selected with great care, for if they are too far off the mark, critical members of the audience will turn them back on you. I cannot overemphasize that every story from real life carries possibilities for drawing out differences as well as similarities. Hegel may have disappeared into a verbal swamp of his own making, but on this he is a trusty guide.

This diagrams the above:



The preceding discussion has been somewhat arid and abstract. Structure is always so, and this perhaps accounts for its neglect. However, once the process is grasped, it can then safely

be taken for granted, but not until then. An aspiring pianist must master the structure of keyboard and scales; an efficient typist must match the structure of her keyboard to hand and eye. Neither can become proficient if they continue to look at the keys instead of the copy or music. It is not an exaggeration to say that the overwhelming number of presentations that fail do so from structural deficiences, not from lack of content.

It is time now to follow my own advice and place some flesh on the dialectical skeleton.

A SITUATION: In the suburb where you live there has been increasing concern about recreational facilities. Population has risen, there have been more incidents of juvenile vandalism during the summer, and a new housing development and shopping center are planned for construction in the year ahead. A recent bond issue for the town park expansion has been defeated, and rezoning of a formerly residential area has been asked for by an industrial firm which wants to build a plant there.

In the past few weeks you and several of your friends have talked about what you should each do about these questions. Then one evening someone came up with the thought that perhaps all these things could be tied together in some way for everybody's benefit. In the heat and excitement of the discussion (by a process no one now remembers) you were selected to make a presentation to the town council for the great idea: the construction of a swimming pool and picnic ground.

How should you lay out the basic structure of the presentation?

Let's see how the application of the "six serving men," the method of opposites, and use of analogy might help. First, make up your questions to Who, What, Where, How, Why, and When, without regard to order. Just get them down. (One good method is to write them on 3″ × 5″, or 5″ × 8″ cards, one for each question. You can later move them about at will.)

FOR EXAMPLE: *Who*—will benefit? Later add population statistics, income groups, etc., for the "number-minded" on the council.

What? Swimming pool and picnic ground, accessory facilities; dimensions and acreage later.

Where—can it be placed? Start collecting alternatives; also ask your friends for some (they got you into this!).

How—can it be paid for? Here you must separate the initial cost and the operating expenses, the land and construction. List alternatives (more on this later).

Why—do we need it? Collect examples of the children going to neighboring towns or unsafe rivers, quarries, and lakes; get statements from physical education teachers, the Red Cross, church leaders, and other experts. Local newspapermen can often furnish hair-raising cases.

When—could it be completed? Here you need expert estimates. You can also use the experience of others who have faced similar problems. In extreme cases you can guess and let someone at the meeting give his correction.

Notice that this classification of the six questions sets up a natural *framework for factual information gathering.* You will certainly never use all of the details you gather, but it is better to have more than you need before you begin the arranging process. No artist ever finished a painting and then looked at his palette to find it completely empty. You will also find that the information you have gathered but don't use in the final presentation produces the subtle effect of building up your own confidence. It also plays its part as the reserve ammunition for fighting the battle of cross-examination (covered in Chapter 7).

Another value of the classification-by-question is its use in organizing the efforts of your helpers, whether volunteer or in a formal working group. You can give each person involved one of the cards, or questions, and he then knows fairly well what you expect of him. By concentrating on *what* you want and leaving the *how to do it* details to him, you tap wellsprings of human nature: personal involvement, creative contribution, and sense of achievement.

This is the way committed allies are born.

Now for the method of opposites. Before you lay out the sequence of presentation, you must have a clear answer in *your* mind to this question: "What do I want the council to *do* when I'm finished?" They are going to keep trying to figure this out as

you go along. They can't keep from doing that, even if they want to. The whole setting and customs of their meetings tell them that you *want* something or you wouldn't be there. Let's look at some possible answers, but as you scan them, notice how each answer suggests a different development for your presentation. A presentor who hasn't picked *one* both confuses those who might be favorably inclined to his idea, and offers an easy target for those who want to shoot it down.

You may want the council to: 1. *Organize* a citizens' task force to study your specific proposal and submit a report to the council at some specified time. 2. *Approve* your idea on the spot. 3. *Submit* your proposal to a vote by all taxpayers. 4. *Instruct* the town manager to investigate the subject and report at the next meeting. 5. *Appoint* you as a recreation committee chairman.

Many presentations disappear in a muttered babble of: "He doesn't know what he wants." Without knowing where you want to go, it is impossible to lead others. A presentation, however much you may dislike the thought, *is* an exercise in leadership. At the very least, you are trying to lead the *opinion* of others; at the most, you are asking them to entrust their *fates* to your care.

In our example, let's assume you want the council to organize a citizens' task force to study the proposal. Now think of people you consider suitable, who enjoy the respect of the council, and who represent the various skills and interested groups. You will want to mention their names at certain places in your presentation, not as prospective members, but in the natural course of development point-by-point. Suggestion will do the rest. With your facts in front of you, begin to sketch in:

Possible structure: Problem-statement (historical narrative) —"We have taken pride in the growth of the town, but unless we face up to the neglected area of recreational facilities, we will find it a less and less desirable place to bring up our children."

Thesis 1: The town *has* grown (population statistics).

Antithesis 1: Growth has brought problems (mention some well-known irritations, e.g., traffic, parking, noise, etc.).

Synthesis 1: People who are now in town as a result of its

growth have brought new energies, skills, and "know-how" equal to the problems. *Example 1:* Mention one of the council who is a new man, and the kind of contribution he has made in the past, due to a special skill.

Antithesis 2: Past success in coping with difficulties has attracted additional influx of new types; industry and housing development wish to capitalize on the town's reputation as a good place to live.

Synthesis 2: Recent defeat of the park bond issue shows that old solutions are not equal to the task today. Coupling of the town's problem with the desires of industry and home builders may offer the needed new solution, benefiting all. *Example 2:* Sketch in the requests of builder and industry.

Antithesis 3: But such a new solution may *not* be able to benefit all. There is increasing evidence of the youngsters' dissatisfaction.

Synthesis 3: This has produced parents' concern. The concern of citizens becomes a concern of the council. *Example 3:* Here use examples of children traveling outside the town for swimming; emphasize safety and diminution of loyalty to town.

Antithesis 4: This worry has created a new wave of interest in you and your friends who are loyal to the town. You believe there are many others who have become interested.

Synthesis 4: This has led you to come up with a possible solution. "Why not build a swimming pool and picnic ground?" *Example 4:* Mention the success of other communities.

Antithesis 5: There are many difficulties in the way: Where? How?

Synthesis 5: Yet recreational facilities are an important factor to industry (attracting workers and supervisors) and to home builders (make property more valuable). *Example 5:* Mention the opinion of a local real estate dealer, preferably one on the council.

Antithesis 6: If they know taxes will increase drastically, perhaps they will change their minds about locating here.

Synthesis 6: Therefore the proposal must be fair and offer a good balance of benefits versus cost to industry and home builders. *Example 6:* The industry is asking for a valuable right (rezoning) and will probably be willing to compensate the town

in some way (other's experience), perhaps in a cash contribution to pool construction. The home builder has excess land for expansion; perhaps he may be willing to make over a suitable parcel for the area.

Antithesis 7: But no one knows for sure. The council can sit still and do nothing and see what happens.

Synthesis 7: The history of the town shows that whenever that has happened, the town has lost. *Example 7:* Name previous factories, roads, or housing construction. Mention council members who unsuccessfully fought those battles.

Antithesis 8: The council cannot let that happen now.

Synthesis 8: The need is urgent, there are many factors to investigate, and you realize that the council is overburdened. Suggest that the council organize a task force of people with requisite qualifications. *Example 8:* Allude to previous successes where the town benefited from this approach.

Antithesis 9: There is a danger that your idea may shove aside other worthwhile improvements.

Synthesis 9: You trust the wisdom of the council to decide, but this is all the more reason they should have a good fact-gathering job done, and alternatives to choose from. The right kind of task force would give them this. You would be happy to furnish the head of the task force the incomplete data you have assembled if he wants it to help get started.

You may then get cross-examined, but as we will point out in Chapter 7, that can be dangerous for your opposition at this time, *if you are well prepared.* They may try a test question or two merely to find out.

This is a severely simplified and somewhat artificial case, but it does illustrate how structure is necessary to development. A hundred variations will do just as well, and each allows different kinds of embellishment with visuals, recordings, handouts, etc. But unless embellishment be related to structure, it degenerates either to pedantry or to a bazaar of trinkets. Notice how your ultimate objective begins to influence the development quite early, and how the use of opposites disarms your potential antagonists by stating their points before they get a chance to do it for themselves.

Members of an audience sometimes pay this great compliment to a presentation, "It is well thought out." They really mean that you have taken account of all the possibilities, especially of the things that may miscarry. This causes their anxiety to decline. Their confidence in your idea goes up in proportion.

Another aspect of getting and holding attention, related to creating the feeling that "something is going on," is the concept of *progress*. I don't mean the idea of uplift, or a Victorian belief that things are always getting better, or faith in the automatic grand sweep of civilization, which was blown out of the water in the First World War. No, I have in mind the idea that something is continually developing: a sense of *motion*. Since most backgrounds are static and taken for granted, when something is *moving*, either physically or symbolically, we alert ourselves. This probably comes from our hunting ancestors who ambled about in skins, constantly alert for a disturbance to their environment, because disturbances spelled either trouble or a chance for food. In fact, there are animals, such as certain frogs, which see moving things with great clarity; but if an object is at rest, they literally do not see it at all. Audiences are much like these animals.

Progress is a tricky concept, for one can view it two ways: motion *away* from where you began, or motion *toward* a goal. Notice its parallel to the nature of a problem: a clash between the image of what exists, and the image of what you want to exist. When there is a difference between what you've *got* and what you *want*, you say, "I have a problem."

These two ideas of *progress* and *problem* lead to the most fundamental rule for successful persuasion. It is so important that I put it in italics:

Start where THEY are, not where YOU are. In order to start where an audience *is*, you must know something about them. Their familiarity with the subject, their present attitudes toward it, past views on similar subjects, what they are anxious about, limitations on their actions, and their goals in life all contribute to what they call their "position." The more precisely you get a fix on this position, the higher your probability of success. For this reason we tend to trust those who show that they understand

us and our situation. The greater the understanding shown, the greater the trust we will risk, for trust *is* fundamentally risk in its most noble appearance. You must justify this risk, or it will not be taken.

Too many people with ideas are so eager to have others share their apocalyptic visions that they neglect this dictum. After they have suffered defeat, you can find them either staring into a flat beer, or backing luckless souls at random into corners of rooms, haranguing the trapped victims with laments on this theme: "Why can't *they* see what *I* see so clearly?" You can often escape by stating the rule above: Start where *they* are. It stuns the poor unfortunate long enough for you to shoot past him.

By stating, however briefly, your understanding of the current situation facing the audience, the mere fact of your presence in front of them silently shouts that you are going to *move away from that current situation*. This seizes their attention. You continue to hold attention by then showing where you are going, and how, using various methods. At the end of a really skillful presentation, the audience has a feeling that the route you took, from where they were to where you went, was an obvious one, now that they think about it. The most treasured remark is: "That makes so much sense and is so obvious, why didn't I think of it?" When you hear this, you can be sure that you started where he was!

Great teachers have always known that new knowledge can only build on old. The human mind cannot make great leaps across chasms of ignorance. This is the wisdom of the old aphorism: "There is no royal road to learning." While solemnly dispensed to students, its deeper meaning goes to those who would teach, and every presentation is a form of teaching. The presentor is presumed to know things the audience does not. A presentation gives a chance to bridge the difference.

The worst offenders against this view are those with special, expert, or technical knowledge. Narrowness of concentration, which is the fee exacted to become a specialist, often distorts the specialist's vision of his audience. Jargon, esoteric concepts, and arcane knowledge are flung at the audience as though they were also specialists in the field. Such presentations might just as well be given in Chinese, Swahili, or an unbreakable code, for all the

conviction they produce. I mention this case here (even though how to cope with it is covered in Chapter 9) because it illustrates the contrary attitude to starting where the audience is. This is bad enough when the presentation is sincerely, if ineptly, designed to help the audience learn; but when obscure and unfamiliar terms are used merely to show off superiority in a speciality, they are worse than useless. They properly diminish the reputation of the presentor.

Distraction

With a variation of the method of opposites, we will conclude this chapter on holding attention. One can measure the height of a tree by the shadow it casts, or get information about someone's character by knowing who his enemies are. Knowledge of things that distract attention can help neutralize their disturbing effects on presentations. When eliminated, there is a reinforcement effect on your ability to hold attention.

Distraction possibility lurks constantly in the minds of the audience, and silently competes for attention with the presentation itself. Impressions from sight, hearing, touch, and smell continually assault the brain for primacy. Subconscious anxieties and desires are also on the prowl, waiting for an opening, and enjoy additional advantages when the audience is fatigued or preoccupied. Conducting a presentation is much like conducting a battle against a clever enemy: inattention. Only fools give odds, professionals never do. Persuasive presentations are difficult enough to run under perfect conditions; putting additional lead on the saddle by lack of preparation of the environment marks the amateur. Here are a few specific items which may appear trivial, but every one of them can derail fast trains of thought.

HEARING

Noises, especially vibration or hissing from projector fans, air-conditioning systems, workmen's power tools, leaking steam

from radiators, or a whistling public address system are unnerving to an audience. With the advent of universal air conditioning, even archaic Broadway theaters are now equipped, some not too well from an aesthetic viewpoint. Their noise level is so high that directors insist on the system being shut down during crucial scenes. This has had a new dramatic effect all its own, since dozing critics now know that "something's up" when the fans stop!

Random noises are also ruinous. Banging in radiators, the clatter of dishes in an adjoining room, air hammers and pile drivers outside the building, or repairmen's hammers and chisels inside, upset the audience more than the presentor. Even though they may sympathize with your predicament, they cannot pay close attention to the unfolding of your ideas. In fact, their surge of sympathy distracts them even more. Skilled presentors usually have a person assigned to do the legwork necessary to fix those nuisances that can be fixed.

I once saw a very dignified executive negotiating with a hotel mechanic for the oiling of squeaky restaurant carts during his reconnaissance of the room where his boss was scheduled to speak. If you can get a man like that, you're lucky.

SIGHT

Sight distractions come from two sources: those that make it difficult for the audience to see what you want them to see, and those that suggest more pleasant activity than listening to you. Many rooms, especially those designed for other functions, have lighting fixtures that strain the eyes. Unshaded tiny bulbs or crystal chandeliers behind or in front of you will cause an audience to avoid the glare by averting their eyes from the lights and you. (If all else fails, remove the bulbs from their sockets.) Columns and pillars often require a degree of neck bending to see around, which few people tolerate for long. Also, when visuals are not scaled to the size of the audience, people quickly give up the effort (see Chapter 6). Wide changes in lighting intensity are actually painful to older people, and uncomfortable to all. Brainwashing psychologists use this technique to create

anxiety on purpose, as it helps achieve the disorientation they primarily work for; but disorientation is the last thing you want in a serious presentation.

Visual *comfort* of the audience is your goal—and they resent being deprived of it.

Rooms with a splendid view have deadly distracting power. Few presentations can compete with the glories of nature for more than five minutes. If you have to use such a place, draw the draperies. Also, it is best to avoid locations with a great many works of art on the walls. These are powerful stimulants to the mind, even those whose content or style repels the audience. If you can't escape from such a room, refer to the art works as your development progresses. In this way, you enlist their stimulating power on your side, and impress the audience with your ability to turn potential obstacles to your advantage.

TOUCH

Uncomfortable chairs are tough opponents; they always win in the end, when the presentation is too long. This is so obvious, yet often neglected. It is a wise rule: The harder the chair, the shorter the presentation. Never forget: "The behind is oft persuader of the mind."

Temperatures too warm fertilize the ever-present tendency to doze; air too chilly creates an itch to move about. Outdoor revolutionists instinctively heat up their audiences with strong hints to shout, shake their fists, applaud, and wave their arms. But this kind of thing doesn't work too well in more sedate circumstances. It's much easier to get hold of the thermostat.

SMELL

This is the sense that really takes over, even though we do not compare as well as we once did with our animal cousins. Offensive odors will wreck the meeting and pleasant ones turn our minds to food. Both are undesirable. This kind of distraction is

more common than one would think, especially where rooms are near eating facilities. The makings for coffee breaks should always be kept from the presentation area until you're finished. After-dinner speeches are the rule, rather than before-dinner ones, for similar reasons.

Attention to the above items may be odious to those who believe that the world is on tenterhooks awaiting their message, but emotions *are* influenced by the physical environment. Wisdom demands that you offset the adverse effects of the senses on emotion, for only then can your reason and common sense get a proper chance.

It is true that failure can occur even if the environment is perfect and the plan of development worthy of genius. Such possibility for miscarriage leads us to the next chapter, where we will consider the subtle relations between style and content.

4

Matching Style to Material

or

Don't Cut Meat with Scissors

None of us wears one suit of clothes for all occasions. Yet well-intentioned advisers to presentors of ideas unwittingly give dangerous counsel when they say "Don't pay any attention to style. Just be yourself." Which "self" should they use? Each of us is presenting many different "selves" to others throughout the course of a single day. Depending on the circumstances and mood of the moment, someone who has not known us previously will form his own judgment based on those of our expressions and actions that he personally experiences. The "self" he perceives will differ in many ways—some absolutely contradictory—from the "selves" we have shown to others at various times.

During the nostalgic period before World War I, known as the Edwardian age, English society would spend long weekends at each other's country estates. Their activities marked the high point of frenzied leisure on our planet. On Sunday, if you were a guest at one of these houses, you would be expected to change clothes completely at least four times during the day. A different