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DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE FOR THE SYSTEMATIC

OBSERVATION OF BOUNDARY PROCESSES

by

Elaine Marie Lesonsky
B.A. University of Windsor

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Psychology
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Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE FOR THE SYSTEMATIC
OBSERVATION OF BOUNDARY PROCESSES

by

Elaine Marie Lesonsky

The primary purpose of the present study was to develop a scale, the
Boundary Process Scale, which would represent an attempt to operation-
alize the Gestalt Therapy formulation of experiential boundary processes.
Experiential boundary processes refer to immediate regulatory processes
that either restrict awareness of certain aspects of one's experience
or conversely allow and integrate new aspects of experience. The scale
categories represent points along a continuum, with "confluence" and
"contact" representing the poles of the continuum. The constructs
confluence and contact refer to two basic modes of experiential function-
ing which describe how persons organize their self-experience in relation
to boundary processes. A sample of verbal behavior was generated by
presenting twenty couples with a Gestalt awareness exercise. The
couples' interactions were audio recorded and four raters were hired
to code the twenty transcripts. Two separate coding manuals were compiled
to enable raters to code the verbal interactions in accordance with two
distinct rating methods in order to determine which rating method would
result in more reliable ratings. Assessment of inter-rater reliability
using Cohen's (1960) kappa indicated that both rating methods allowed
for significantly reliable ratings of verbal behavior, and that the
objective method (Method A) yielded a higher overall measure of inter-
judge agreement after chance agreement had been removed. Moreover,

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additional analyses indicated that Method B (intuitive method) did not allow for reliable ratings of contactual functioning. Assessment of inter-rater reliability should be interpreted with caution since the sample of verbal behavior generated in this study did not allow for an adequate spread of ratings across all five scale categories. Since the scale was demonstrated to have adequate reliability, it was possible to pursue a second goal. This was to test the assumption that the quality of boundary process functioning manifested by one partner affects the quality of boundary processes expressed by the other. Because the scale categories were developed as points along a continuum of greater contact to greater confluence, it was predicted that a specific mode of functioning on the part of one individual (as identified by the scale categories) would more often be followed by the same or a similar mode of functioning by the other person. Comparison of the overall pattern of observed transitions with the pattern predicted from the boundary process formulation supported this prediction. Perhaps the most important implication of this study was to demonstrate the viability of operationalizing the Gestalt Therapy formulation of experiential boundary processes. Although the scale categories are in need of refining and inter-rater reliability should be re-assessed using a broader sample of verbal behavior, the results suggest that the Boundary-Process Scale has the potential to be further developed into a reliable measure of experiential organization processes. Moreover, although not all transitions followed the predicted pattern, overall, results of the transition analysis suggest that the boundary process assumption that individuals exert mutual influences on experiential organization appears to be a tenable one deserving of further investigation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

place additional demands on their already hectic schedules was 'greatly appreciated.

My appreciation is also extended to those couples who shared of themselves by participating in this research; without them this project would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Dave Lesonsky, who provided me with encouragement, moral support, and love not only through the stresses of completing a thesis but throughout our life together.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study was to develop a scale, the Boundary Process Scale, which would provide a method for systematically observing individuals' interactions from a Gestalt perspective. Although the practice of Gestalt therapy has become increasingly popular among mental health professionals, the theory of Gestalt therapy has not gained wide acceptance and little empirical research has been carried out to test Gestalt therapy theory. Kaplan and Kaplan (Note 1) propose that the neglect of Gestalt therapy theory may have something to do with the theory itself and how it has been articulated. Gestalt therapy has usually been presented in terms of principles, values, and approaches to therapy, while its concepts and their inter-relationship have not been explicitly defined. For example, the concepts of "contact" and "confluence" are central in describing a person's functioning from a Gestalt perspective. Contact refers to the "nature and quality of the way we are in touch with ourselves, our environment, and the processes that relate them" (Latner, 1972, p.65). When we are in contact we are aware of our feelings and our experience as distinct from others. Confluence, on the other hand, refers to a blurring of the self/other boundaries. In confluence, as contrasted with contact, we experience ourselves as less distinct from our environment. Thus the terms contact and

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confluence refer to alternative modes of reaching or engaging one's environment. They may be described as end points on a dimension of processes by which a person maintains a boundary with the environment. One of the main goals of Gestalt therapy is to help the client focus attention on his/her experience in order to reduce confluent functioning, helping the client become more aware of self-functioning; yet these concepts, confluence and contact, have never been operationalized. Development of the Boundary Process Scale represented an attempt to operationalize these concepts. In order to determine if this scale would allow for reliable ratings, a sample of verbal behavior was generated by presenting couples with a Gestalt exercise. This data served as the content of the interaction.

The remainder of the chapter will include: an exposition of the Gestalt field approach which provided the theoretical framework for development of the Boundary Process Scale; a review of other process analysis instruments, with an emphasis on how these differ from the scale developed for this study; the potential usefullness of the Boundary Process Scale.

Theoretical Framework

The work of the early Gestaltists (i.e., Koffka, Kohler, Wertheimer) represented an attempt to overcome the sense of fragmentation and disorientation engendered by the positivistic tradition (Leichtman, 1979). Contemporary Gestalt therapy theory

continues to challenge the dominant theories in psychology today as reductionistic and based on structural assumptions which disregard the active, holistic nature of human functioning. Whereas traditional approaches in psychology have created formulations of people passively being controlled by forces from within and from without, Gestalt therapy theory views human functioning as ongoing and active (Kaplan & Kaplan, Note, 1).

A basic principle of Gestalt therapy theory is that of "organismic self-regulation". According to this principle "the organisim is striving for the maintenance of an equilibrium which is continuously disturbed by its needs and regained through their gratification or elimination" (Perls, 1947, p.7). However, organismic self-regulation does not imply that the organism will always be able to satisfy its needs appropriately. Need satisfaction is limited by the capabilities of the organism, the resources available in the environment, and the organism's ability to recognize its needs and to recognize resources that are available. "Organismic self-regulation does not ensure health, only that the organism does all it can with what is available" (Latner, 1972, p.19).

Therefore, the organism cannot be viewed in isolation. The organism is embedded in an environment and the unity of organism and environment represents the "field". As a need arises, this need becomes the focus of attention and becomes "figure"; what does not become part of that focus remains background. "The process of forming foci of attention and activity is called Gestalt formation

or figure formation; the process of gratification and disappearance of needs and their attendant gestalts is called gestalt destruction or figure destruction" (Latner, 1972, p.27).

The process of gestalt formation is a dynamic ongoing process and contact is an essential aspect of gestalt formation. In order for figure to emerge, the organism must be aware of its experience. Contact can be thought of as "the forming of a figure of interest against a ground or context of the organism/environment field" (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951, p.231). In healthy functioning, the organism contacts its experience and strives for completion of the gestalt. In pathological functioning, the organism fails to make good contact with self or environment; "the figure is dull, confused, graceless, lacking in energy" (Perls et al., 1951, p.232). In pathological functioning, some vital need is not being expressed and completion of the gestalt cannot occur.

Gestalt field approach. The organisim does not exist in isolation. All behavior is embedded in the field, which refers to the unity of organism and environment. The field includes other individuals in the environment. Although Perls and other Gestaltists introduced the field concept, they did not extend their thinking to how fields are generated and maintained as the individual interacts with his/her environment. The Gestalt field approach has been elaborated by Kaplan and Kaplan (1980, 1981, 1982) and represents an extension of Gestalt therapy theory to how persons interact. The Gestalt field approach views patterns of interaction as being maintained by the current organization of experience of the participants.

According to this perspective (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982) when two or more people are interacting they are engaged in immediate mutual experiential regulatory processes. At each moment, thoughts, feelings, and other experiences exist which are both part of, as well as outside of, each person's awareness. This perspective attends to the relationship between experiential organization and the environment. "The interactional mutually causal stability of the whole is termed a field. The field exists as the members mutually support one another's currently dominant organization of experience" (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982).

Boundary Processes refer to immediate regulatory processes that either restrict awareness of certain aspects of one's experience or conversely allow and integrate new aspects of experience. Boundary processes are instances of how individuals and field organizations are mutually linked. An individual's behavior is embedded in "self-referential" perceptual processes which are in turn embedded in immediate experiential organization. By self-referential it is meant that the individual receives information or feedback via processes that are within his or her current dominant organization. For example, an individual who is currently organized as "powerless" perceives the environment as limiting his or her choices; when this same person is organized as "assertive", he or she perceives the environment as being amendable to change. The field maintains each individual's dominant organization of experience and these self-organizations simultaneously support the field (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982).

How a fluctuation is "read" and responded to determines the next
step in whether an existing boundary is maintained or modified.
To illustrate, a man who is organized as angry does not see the
hurt look on his wife's face, or if he does, perceives it as man-
ipulating him in order to "get her own way" or "win the argument",
and so he holds on to his anger. He fails to contact that aspect
of his exprience which perceives the hurt. On the other hand, if
the hurt on his wife's face can be recognized and responded to, this
man's self-organization is altered and the field will be modified
simultaneously. An underlying assumption of this approach is that
individuals interacting exert mutual influences on moment to moment
experiential organization which in turn determines supports avail-
able for further communication.

Contact and Confluence. The constructs contact and confluence
refer to two basic modes of boundary functioning that represent the
poles of the Boundary Process Scale continuum. Confluence refers
to functioning that is at the restrictive/organizational-rigidity
end of the continuum, while contact refers to functioning that is
at the discovery/change end of the continuum.

From a field perspective, confluence refers to "experiential
organization in which self and others are perceived in terms of
familiar, a priori, restricted formulations. A person is confluent
when he or she sees or hears others in terms of expectations that
are embedded in his or her current restricted organization, so the
person cannot recognize what does not fit" (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982).

Contact, on the other hand, is a process of mutual discovery involving active exploration of experience. Contact refers to recognizing more of what exists in self and others, a process that often involves risk in encountering unfamiliar or unpredictable experience. Contactual functioning permits recognition of a wider range of experience. Whereas confluent processes create the experience of an environment that is rigid and relatively fixed, in contactual functioning a person's experiential organization is less rigidly restricted.

Confluent or contactual functioning is supported by and is supportive of corresponding simultaneous field supports. When one participant is functioning confluently, she or he acts on the field to support mutual restrictive functioning in the other. The opposite occurs in contactual functioning. When one partner acts in an exploratory manner, he or she supports contactual field processes that may be recognized by the other (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982).

The following illustrations cited in Serok, Kaplan, and Kaplan (Note 2) will exemplify how the organization of the field is maintained or modified.

> As his wife speaks, the husband turns aside, his body
> seems to sag and his face takes on a sad look. A moment
> later he straightens up, his face takes on a hard look,
> and he resumes his rebuttal and attack. As her husband
> speaks, the wife's eyes moisten in a way that appears to
> express sadness but the husband does not notice, or if he
> does, he sees her glare at him. She herself does not
> seem attentive to her own sadness as she harshly retorts
> to her husband.

In this example, each individual perceives the other self-referentially from within their current self-organization. The field does not provide support for recognition of boundary intrusions and the

field is maintained.

> Two friends meet, exchange greetings, and begin to chat in a casual manner. At one point, one friend looks at his colleague and notices a worried, haggard look. He feels inclined to act as if he has not made this observation, after all, his friend has said that he is well and has not provided an opening for such a personal observation. However, he tells himself that this is a good friend, one whom he is concerned about. He weighs anticipated outcomes and risks saying: "Jim you look a bit low. Is everything O.K.?" His friend seems taken aback, hesitates, and seems about to deny any special concerns, but seeing his friend's concerned look, he sighs and says, "I guess I am upset; I'm worried" and he tells his friend some of his concerns.

In this example each individual crossed boundaries of current field supports. The sequence was contactual in that each ventured beyond the current boundaries and acknowledged more of what existed at the moment. As a result the field was modified.

Dyadic interaction is confluent when couples perceive one another in terms of assumptions, according to rigid roles and expectations, and relate to one another according to these preconceptions. In contactual interaction, an individual reaches out to recognize or discover what exists in the other at the moment, rather than perceiving the other in a fixed and rigid way. Contact involves, for example, noticing an expression or tone which tells one more about the other's present experience than is evident from his or her overt functioning. Recognition of, and responding to, such subtle or unrecognized experience alters existing field supports and opens the way for further contact.

To summarize, the Gestalt field approach represents an extension of Gestalt therapy theory to how individuals interact. This perspective

attends to the relationship between experiential organization and the environment. According to this perspective, when two or more people are interacting they are engaged in immediate mutual regula-tory processes (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982). These regulatory processes are referred to as boundary processes since they regulate what aspects of experience will be recognized and integrated within the current boundary of self-organization, and conversely, what aspects of experience will be unrecognized or remain outside the boundary of one's current experiential organization. In confluence, the boundary is relatively fixed and rigid; new aspects of experience remain outside one's current self-organization. In contrast, in contactual functioning, the boundary is more permeable, so that the individual explores, discovers, and recognizes more of self and of environment.

Review of Process Analysis Instruments

A wide variety of instruments have been developed for the analysis of interaction processes. These differ with respect to the purpose or context in which they are used, the methods utilized, and the kinds of processes being inferred. A brief review of previous systems will be presented in order to explicate how the Boundary Process Scale provides a new approach to interaction based on Gestalt field theory.

Although methods for analyzing interaction processes were begin-ning to be developed within the sociological literature by the late

twenties (e.g., Carr, 1929; Covner, 1944; Steinzor, 1949; Thomas, 1929; Zander, 1948), in 1950 Bales published the first comprehensive observer classification system that permitted observers to make reliable ratings of small group interaction (Bales, 1950). Whereas previous instruments were designed for a particular kind of group or to test a particular hypothesis, Bales (1950) used an empirical approach to evolve a set of twelve descriptive behavioral categories that were general enough to be applied to a wide variety of groups.

Most of the systems for exploring interaction in couples have been based, at least in part, on communication theory (e.g., Scoresby, 1975; Gottman, Markman, & Notarious, 1977; Peterson, 1979) and have attempted to identify differences in interaction patterns between satisfied and dissatisfied couples (e.g., Becker & Miller, 1976; Gottman et al., 1977; Hooper, Roberts, Hinchliffe & Vaughan, 1977; Margolin & Wampold, 1981; Peterson, 1979). The general methods used have been self-report inventories (E.g., Bienvenu, 1970; Scoresby, 1975) and observer ratings (e.g., Gottman et al., 1977; Margolin & Wampold, 1981; Peterson, 1979). Regardless of the method used, the nature of the behavior studied and the processes inferred will depend on the theoretical framework on which the system is based. With few exceptions, instruments for analyzing client and/or therapist behaviors have been derived from an analytic framework (e.g., Dollard & Auld, 1959; Gottschalk & Gleser, 1969; Leary & Gill, 1959; Murray, 1956; Strupp, 1957) or from a client-centered framework (e.g., Klein, Mathieu, Gendlin, & Kiesler, 1970; Rice, Koke, Greenberg,

& Wagstaff, 1979; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967; Wexler, 1975). Those
derived from an analytic framework have, for the most part, utilized
content analysis, while those instruments derived from a client-
centered framework have considered both content and paralinguistic
aspects of communication. Paralinguistic aspects refer to non-
lexical aspects of speech such as expressive style and vocal quality.
That is, paralinguistic aspects refer to how something is expressed
rather than the content of what is being expressed.

One system has been developed from within a Gestalt perspective.
Nelson (Note 5) devised a psycholinguistic scoring system based on
the principles of Gestalt therapy. He states that "although verbal
behavior has been analyzed and interpreted from numerous theoretical
views, no attempt yet has been made to study verbal behavior from a
Gestalt viewpoint" (Nelson & Groman, 1975, p.732). In Nelson's
system, a verbalizing ratio is calculated by summing the total number
of avoidant verbalizations uttered by the client in each speech
sample and dividing this by the total number of words in the speech
sample. This index represents the degree of neuroticism exhibited
(Nelson, Note 5). Although the Boundary Process Scale, developed in
the present study, and Nelson's (Note 5) system are both based on a
Gestalt framework, they differ in several important respects. First,
Nelson's system examines one aspect of a client's functioning (i.e.,
avoidant verbalizations), whereas the Boundary Process Scale was
designed to explore a range of functioning, which can be viewed as
falling on a continuum, with confluence and contact representing the
opposite poles. Secondly, the Boundary Process Scale, as well as

allowing for the observation of individual regulatory processes, also provides an approach to how couples interact. Third, while Nelson's system provides an overall measure of a client's functioning, the present scale provides a description of moment to moment changes in a person's functioning over time.

While the majority of process analysis instruments have attempted to provide an overall assessment of a person's functioning or attempted to locate stable patterns or styles of functioning among different classes of persons or situations, a few previous process analysis instruments have explored moment to moment process events. These have been developed within a client-centered framework and include: The Experiencing Scale (Klein, M.H., Mathieu, P.L., Gendlin, E.T., & Kiesler, D.J., Note 3), The Client Vocal Quality Scale (Rice, L.N., Koke, C.J., Greenberg, L.S., & Wagstaff, A.K., Note 4), and the Expressiveness Scale (Wexler, 1975).

Scales for exploring moment to moment process events. The Experiencing Scale (Klein et al. Note 3) is a seven point rating scale which provides a technique for evaluating the quality of a patient's self-involvement in psychotherapy. The dimension of experiencing refers to the quality of an individual's experiencing of himself as revealed in his verbal communications. The seven point scale ranges from impersonal, superficial, or abstract-intellectual content and progresses through intermediate stages where bodily feelings and experiencing are more fully described, to more advanced stages where feelings are purposefully explored and emergent levels of experiencing serve as referents for problem resolution and self-understanding (Klein et al., Note 3).

The Client Vocal Quality classification system (CVQ) (Rice et al., (Note 4), like the Experiencing Scale, was designed to assess the quality of the client's involvement in the therapy process. Whereas the Experiencing Scale utilized both content and paralinguistic aspects in their rating method, the CVQ system is designed to identify and describe "stylistic qualities that reflect the momentary deployment of energy and attention on the part of the speaker" and is rated independent from the content that is being discussed (Rice et al., Note 4). Moreover, this system is the first to specify explicitly the paralinguistic aspects on which judgments are to be based. For example, in this system voice quality is classified into one of four categories based on perceived energy, accent (pitch and loudness), accentuation pattern (regular versus irregular), pace (even or uneven), and terminal contours (ragged and unexpected versus pre-planned and expected).

Wexler's (1975) scale for the measurement of client and therapist expressiveness is another example of a system designed to examine moment to moment process events in a therapeutic context. His scale is a seven point continuum ranging from least expressive to most expressive. Expressiveness is rated from the style with which something is said rather than from the specific content of what is being said and is assessed from two basic aspects of the response: the vocal style and the form of the language. Wexler defines vocal style as "essentially a paralinguistic dimension that centers on the pitch, range, tempo, energy (loudness), and stress of the voice" while

language form pertains to the "activity and vividness of the words used" (Wexler, 1975, p. 487).

These instruments designed to assess moment to moment client processes have focused on operationalizing some aspects of behavior that are encompassed within the boundary approach. For example, at higher levels of experiencing "the patient tries to attend to and hold onto the direct inner referent of his experiencing and make it the basic datum of his communications" (Klein et al., Note 3, p.6). This is similar to how contactual functioning is viewed from a Gestalt approach. Also, the styles of vocal quality described by Rice et al. (Note 4) are consistent with some aspects of expressive stance described in the Boundary Process Scale (e.g., the "limited" and "externalized" vocal pattern described in the CVQ system are both associated with confluent functioning in the Boundary Process Scale, while their "focussed" vocal pattern is associated with contactual functioning).

However, because the Boundary Process Scale was derived from the Gestalt field perspective, it appears that this scale attends to a wider range of functioning. The Gestalt field approach views individual functioning as being embedded in "the mutual causal stability of the whole" (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982, p. 8) which is termed the field. This approach focuses on the quality of experiential engagement of the environment, thus it attends to the relationship between individual functioning and interpersonal functioning. Indeed, according to this perspective, the two cannot be separated since the individual and his/her environment are not

independent entities, but together constitute a functioning, mutually influencing, total system (Perls et al., 1951).

The dimensions of "experiencing" (Klein et al., Note 3), "vocal quality" (Rice et al., Note 4), and "expressiveness" (Wexler, 1975), are each descriptive of phenomena relating to the manner and degree that a person appears to engage in self-reflective functioning. However, "self-reflective" as used by them is derived from a client-centered perspective rather than one of Gestalt process theory. The client-centered framework views self-reflection as a behavioral step in which the person allows himself/herself to experience differently, thereby attaining deeper levels of experiencing.

A further difference lies in the factor of immediacy. The quality of experiencing is seen quite differently from a Gestalt framework when a person refers to past or future events as compared with those that are immediate. Some functions described in the Experiencing Scale as representing high levels of experiencing are seen in a different manner from a boundary process perspective. For example, conceptualizing experience in relatively abstract terms such as is implied by the terms "self-analysis" and "resolving issues" (Klein et al., Note 3), pp. 6-7) is taken in a boundary perspective as relatively remote from immediate experience and as avoidance of contact.

In summary, previous process analysis instruments have either attempted to provide an overall assessment of a person's functioning or have attempted to identify stable patterns or styles of functioning. Those systems which have explored moment to moment changes in a person's functioning (e.g., Klein et al., Note 3; Rice et al., Note 4; Wexler, 1975) have been derived from a client-centered framework and

therefore the processes being inferred differ somewhat from the
Gestalt approach.

Potential Usefullness of the Boundary Process Scale

Since the kinds of processes which are inferred from any set
of observations will depend upon the theoretical orientation of the
observer, the Boundary Process Scale provides a method for examining
human functioning from a different perspective. Development of this
scale was an attempt to operationalize two constructs, contact and
confluence, which are essential to the understanding of human
functioning from a Gestalt perspective. These constructs are
assumed to refer not to stable qualities in persons, but to processes
that are holistic and in continual change. Whereas "experiencing",
as described by Klein et al. (Note 3), appears to be viewed as a
depth variable whereby moment to moment changes in functioning are
viewed as variations in the depth or level of experiencing, from a
Gestalt field approach, changes in functioning are viewed as manifest-
ations of boundary processes which fluctuate from moment to moment
as the individual relates to his/her environment. According to this
approach, individuals relate to each other in terms of maintaining
or modifying their boundaries of experiential organization.

The purpose in developing the Boundary Process Scale was to
devise a more systematic method for observing both individual function-
ing and interaction processes from a Gestalt field perspective. Such
a scale would appear useful in teaching how moment to moment organ-
izational processes can be discerned in ongoing functioning. The

scale can be used to call an observer's (e.g., therapist's) attention to how to recognize any given expression as capable of being seen within a person's experiential organization, that is as "foreground", and from an alternative perspective, as boundary process. It can provide a systematic way for the therapist to focus on moment to moment shifts in a client's functioning and in this way help the therapist assess the client's readiness for intervention. Conversely, the therapist can use the scale to track his or her effect on boundary processes. The Boundary Process Scale would also appear to be useful as a teaching guide to facilitate trainees in recognizing the boundary aspects of clients' functioning.

In addition to the scale's usefulness in helping an observer focus on fluctuations in boundary processes, a further potential of the Boundary Process Scale may lie in its usefulness as a research tool. For example, if reliable ratings can be made of a person's functioning, the scale can be used to compare later stages of therapy with earlier stages to determine if the therapeutic process generates a more contactual mode of functioning. Also, the degree of confluent versus contactual functioning could be compared between well-adjusted couples and couples who have come for marital therapy. These examples illustrate how the scale could be used to identify the dominant mode or pattern of functioning for specific persons or couples.

From the Gestalt field approach, an individual's or a couple's functioning is an ongoing process which fluctuates from moment to moment. Fluctuations reflect changes in how the participants experience their environment in relation to shifting arousals of experiential

needs. From this perspective, the Boundary Process Scale could

be used to identify moment to moment fluctuations in functioning

in order to explore how fields are generated and maintained.

Statement of Problem

Development of Scale. Although the practice of Gestalt therapy

has become increasingly popular, the theory of Gestalt therapy has

not gained wide acceptance and little empirical research has been

carried out to test Gestalt therapy theory. A major factor contrib-

uting to this situation is that Gestalt therapy has usually been

presented in terms of principles, values, and approaches to therapy

and its concepts and their inter-relationships have not been explicitly

defined. Therefore, the primary purpose of the present study was

to develop a scale which would allow for reliable ratings of verbal

behavior, thereby providing a more systematic method for observing

ongoing interaction processes from within a Gestalt framework.

Development of the Boundary Process Scale represented an attempt to

explicate two concepts, confluence and contact, which are central

to understanding a person's functioning from a Gestalt perspective

in the hope that this will provide the impetus for more empirical

research to test Gestalt therapy theory.

Test of "mutual influences" hypothesis. The Gestalt field approach

emphasizes two aspects of interaction. First, that the participants

simultaneously react and "act on" one another and each person's

functioning is embedded in his/her current organization which in turn

is embedded in the field. Second, that interaction processes are

not viewed as enduring patterns of relating, but rather, the individual's mode of relating fluctuates from moment to moment as his/her perception of field supports changes and this, in turn, alters the field. Therefore, a secondary purpose of the present study was to apply the Boundary Process Scale to a sample of verbal behavior in order to test the assumption that individuals interacting exert mutual influences on moment to moment experiential organization which in turn determines supports available for changes in experiential organization on the part of the partner. If this assumption is accurate, changes in functioning in one person will relate to contemporary shifts in the partner's functioning. That is, couples interacting are more likely to be functioning in the same mode than in different modes, and a change in functioning on the part of one individual is likely to lead to a change in the same direction by his or her partner.

Therefore, it was predicted that a specific mode of functioning on the part of one person (as identified by the scale categories) will more often be followed by the same mode of functioning by his/her partner. For example, if a statement by person A is coded confluent, the probability will be increased that the subsequent statement by person B will also be coded confluent.

METHOD

The goal of the present study was to develop a scale, the Boundary Process Scale, which would enable an observer to systematically observe verbal behavior from a Gestalt perspective. Such a scale would provide an approach to interaction which focuses on moment to moment shifts in functioning reflecting mutual regulatory processes.

The general methodological considerations were: (1) to develop a scale, based on Gestalt therapy theory, which would allow for reliable ratings of experiential boundary processes, (2) to compile two manuals to enable raters to use the scale to code these processes in accordance with two distinct rating methods, (3) to generate a sample of verbal behavior by presenting couples with a Gestalt exercise, (4) to assess the inter-rater reliability of the scale by having raters independently code transcripts of the couples discussing the exercise, and (5) providing adequate reliability has been established, to use the scale to test the hypothesis that individuals interacting exert mutual influences on moment to moment experiential organization.

Subjects

Twenty couples were recruited for this study. At least one member of each pair was enrolled in an undergraduate course in psychology at the University of Windsor and this student member of each pair received two bonus marks for taking part in the study (i.e., two percentage points were added to his/her final grade). All

the couples had been married or co-habitating for a minimum of six months. A further requirement was that all subjects have English as their first language. This requirement was to facilitate coding of the audio tapes and to ensure that ratings of the segments would not be influenced by differing linguistic styles characteristic of other language groups. The subjects ranged in age from 22 to 48 with a mean age of 31. The length of time subjects had been in their relationship ranged from six months to 20 years with a mean of 8 years.

The subjects were told that the research project they would be participating in was a study of communication processes in couples. During the recruitment procedure they were told that they would be asked to participate, as a couple, in a Gestalt "awareness" exercise and that they would then be asked to discuss what it was like for them to do the exercise. At this time they were also informed that the entire proceedings would be tape recorded. A sign-up sheet was circulated for interested persons who met the requirements to record their names and phone numbers. Potential subjects were contacted by telephone and appointments were arranged. All twenty couples with whom appointments were made were included in the study.

Procedure

Setting and Apparatus. Each couple was seen individually at the University of Windsor. On arrival, they were taken to a room designed for research where privacy would be assured. They were seated opposite one another with the tape recorder on a table beside

them. A Bell & Howell 406B tape recorder with condenser microphone was used to audio record the couples interactions. It was explained to the subjects that the purpose of the study was to investigate communication patterns in couples who are involved in an ongoing relationship. The three phases of the experimental task were described to them and any questions were answered.

Experimental Task. The experimental task consisted of three phases: (1) casual conversation, (2) a Gestalt "awareness" exercise, and (3) processing of the exercise. The purpose of the casual conversation phase was to relax the subjects, give them some time to take care of "unfinished business" before beginning the exercise, and to help them become accustomed to being taped.

Phase I began with the couple being asked to carry on a casual conversation for five minutes. They were asked to continue with this conversation until the experimenter asked them to stop. The experimenter then started the tape and left the room. She returned after five minutes. At this time the couple was introduced to the "assumtpion" exercise. This exercise was taken from Stevens (1969) and is designed to facilitate awareness in couples. The exercise consisted of having the partners alternate making statements to one another that began with the words "I assume that you" or "I assume that you know". Instructions for this exercise were read to the couple and a card with the typewritten instructions was left with the subjects (Appendix A). Gestalt exercises such as this one are assumed to serve as awareness amplifying procedures in the sense that they are used to facilitate individuals in attending to their immediate experience.

When individuals who have an ongoing relationship are observed, it is expected that contact can be facilitated by amplifying the awareness process. The couple was asked to continue with the exercise until ·the experimenter returned. This phase was terminated after five minutes.

The third phase of the task involved processing of the exercise. This phase of the task was introduced to the subjects and the guidelines for processing the exercise were left with the couple (Appendix B). These guidelines were typed on 13 individual cards and left in a stack, face down, between the subjects. Subjects were asked to read and answer the question on one card at a time, going on to the next card when they were ready. There was no time limit on this phase and the subjects themselves terminated this phase when they were finished answering the question on each card. Processing the exercise in this way was designed to facilitate the couples in examining their experience. Because it was expected that it would be during this phase of the task that movement along the contact-confluence dimension would be most observable, this phase of the verbal interaction provided the content for the rating task.

Upon completion of the experimental task subjects were de-briefed. They were asked how they felt about the experimental task and allowed to express any aroused feelings. The purpose of the study was explained to the subjects and they were told that only the raters and the experimenter would be listening to the tapes; they were also assured that no names would be attached to the audio tapes and that confidentiality would be observed. This procedure was repeated for each of the twenty couples.

Preparation of the data. Phase III of each audio tape was transcribed and typed transcripts were prepared for the raters to use in conjunction with the audio tapes. The segments were delineated by the reasearcher and each segment or speech unit was numbered. A speech unit ended when the other partner began speaking or when the speaker finished addressing himself/herself to a particular question and continued to the next question.

Scale Description

The Boundary Process Scale represents an attempt to operation-alize a dimension of experiential functioning (contact-confluence) based on the Gestalt field approach. This dimension of functioning describes how persons organize their self-experience in relation to boundary processes. The scale is intended to measure a person's current or immediate functioning rather than what type of person he or she may be or how he or she typically functions. The coding is an attempt to assess the couple's functioning within a range on the scale as a measure of moment to moment processes. Analysis of a number of pilot tapes of couples interacting suggested that the terminal points of confluence and contact and three intermediary levels along this dimension appeared to offer an adequate number of gradations that would allow for reliable ratings. The scale categories are: (1) confluent (2) stable (3) tentative (4) seeking (5) contactual. These categories represent arbitrarily defined steps along the contact-confluence dimension.

The dominant style of functioing characteristic of each scale category is described in terms of three clusters of specific manifest-ations: (1) quality of organization, (2) expressive style, and (3) language useage.This schema is presented in Table 1. Quality of organization refers to how the individual experiences self (e.g., self-experience as victim/self-experience as responsible) and whether the overall mode of experiencing is assumptive or exploratory, disowning or owning. Expressive style refers to vocal or tonal qualities of the communication (e.g., rapid/slower functioning; externalized or limited voice/focused voice; flat or emotion venting tone/excited, energetic tone). Language useage refers to the choice of words used by the speaker (e.g., concrete and specific/intellectual, abstract, vague; present tense/past or future tense).

The rating task is to observe each speech unit with respect to quality of organization, expressive style, and language useage, since these three aspects taken together determine the rating category. In other words, the assignment of a speech unit to one of the five scale categories is based not on just one aspect, but rather a judgment is arrived at from consideration of all three aspects collectively.

The coding manuals (Appendix C; Appendix D) provide a more complete description of specific manifestations of the three aspects of functioning (quality of organization, expressive style, language useage) for each of the five scale categories, however, a brief description of each category along the dimensions are as follows:

Table 1

Boundary Process Quality Scale

	Confluent	Stable	Tentative	Seeking	Contactual
(a) Quality of Organization	disowning			owning	
	assumptive perceptions			perceptual exploration	
	self-experience as victim			self-experience as responsible	
(b) Expressive Style	more rapid functioning			slower functioning	
	externalized voice quality			focussed voice quality	
	flat tone or emotional venting			excited, energetic voice	
(c) Language Useage	intellectual, abstract, vague			concrete, specific	
	there and then			here and now	

Confluent. The person appears to maintain a position of things happening to self. He or she sees fixed traits or forces in self and in others. Self is experienced as reacting to "what exists". There is evidence of "disowning" aspects of self and others are responded to in terms of a priori assumptions. There is minimal exploration and self-reflection or perception of self as able to test alternatives. The confluent expressive style is either flat and monotonous, lacking energy and excitement, or it may be remote, matter of fact, or have a mechanical or rehearsed quality to it. Language useage may be vague, abstract or intellectual or the person may be presenting a detached recounting of events, ideas, or feelings, without personal involvement or without attending to present experience.

Stable. There is little concern or attention being paid to feelings, self-experience, or the relationship. This is typical of casual conversation about impersonal or day to day topics or focused discussions of a business nature. The voice quality is at a stable, intermediate level. The pace is even and the tone is crisp and precise rather than either overly flat or highly charged with emotion or excitement. The language useage is concrete and specific as opposed to abstract and vague but unconcerned with present experience or affective feelings.

Tentative. The person is paying relatively more attention to contemporary events. Tentative statements give the listener the impression that the speaker is beginning to recognize and acknowledge some present aspect of experience, although in a somewhat tentative or guarded manner. The person's functioning seems less based on a

priori assumptions and there is more evidence of listening, at least in terms of consideration of input. The tone is usually softer and the pace more irregular and somewhat slower. The voice may suggest hesitation or questioning.

The outstanding feature of tentative language useage is that qualifiers such as "maybe" or "I guess" may be used to de-emphasize the experience. Language useage may be somewhat vague, indicating some confusion or a struggle to discover more of the experience of self or other, however, it will not be highly intellectual.

Seeking. There is evidence of exploration, seeking data, recognition of doubt and uncertainty, and some encountering of alternatives. There is an attempt to break away from a priori assumptions and evidence of "active listening" in terms of checking out the perceptions and experience of the other rather than assuming to know what the other is thinking or feeling. The pace is somewhat slower and more irregular and uneven. Although the tone may, at times, be soft, there is greater energy in the voice. Language is more concrete and the speaker "owns" his/her feelings and reactions.

Contactual. The person is engaged in risky venturing in recognizing self-experience and in testing or seeking new perceptions of others. There is greater energy invested in the voice and the tone indicates a high degree of personal involvement in what is being said. Language is present centered and is concrete and specific as opposed to vague and intellectual. Language is in the active tense rather than the passive tense, indicating recognition of choice and responsibility. There is a high degree of acknowledgment of self-awareness that appears new and as a challenge to self.

Development of Coding Manuals

The coding manuals represent an attempt to operationalize the scale constructs in order to allow for reliable ratings of verbal behavior. This effort to provide concrete descriptions of functioning which would encompass the five scale categories was accomplished by gathering together diverse descriptions of contactual and confluent functioning from a review of Gestalt therapy theory. The sections on language useage were derived largely from Passons (1975) and the sections describing expressive style borrow from the work of Klein et al. (Note 3 and Rice et al. (Note 4).

The manuals present an introduction to the boundary process approach to interaction and a general description of the scale constructs. This is followed by a description of the rating task and specific instructions for the raters. A statement pertaining to the confidentiality of the materials (tapes and transcripts) is provided, followed by a description of specific manifestations of each mode of functioning (Appendices C and D).

Two separate manuals were compiled to enable raters to code the transcripts in accordance with two distinct rating methods: Method A - objective approach to rating, and Method B - intuitive approach to rating. The purpose in using two rating methods was to determine if one method of coding would provide different or more useful information with respect to modifications in boundary processes. The intuitive approach (Method B) is based on the assumption that in order to discern an individual's mode of functioning at any one point in time, it is essential that the behavior be viewed in the

context in which it is embedded. This approach is in keeping with the boundary process approach which assumes that an individual's functioning is affected by his/her perception of currently available field supports. Method A (objective approach), on the other hand, is derived from the view that a "slice" of verbal behavior can be extracted and interpreted without taking into consideration the ongoing flow of events, providing the criteria for interpretation are objective enough.

Both manuals provide the same detailed descriptions of each of the five modes of functioning. It is in the instructions to the raters that the two manuals differ since the two methods differ in terms of the rater's approach to the rating task. For example, one major difference between the two rating methods is that raters using the objective approach (Method A) were instructed to use the descript-ions laid out in the manual as objective criteria on which to base their judgment when assigning speech units to one of the five categories, whereas Method B raters (intuitive approach) were to use these descriptions as guidelines only and to rely more on their intuitive judgment in deciding on a rating for each segment. A second major difference was that Method A raters were instructed to rate each segment independently, such that rating of any one segment should not be influenced by any prior or subsequent segments. In contrast, method B raters were to consider the context in which each statement was embedded in making a rating. This method required that the raters read through the entire transcript in an attempt to understand the process going on between the two people in terms of the contact-confluence continuum. The most critical difference between the two rating methods

was for method B raters to bring in information that the other
raters had been asked to omit, i.e., the ongoing processes that
may be inferred from the directional flow over an entire transcript.
Both of these methods were used to determine which method would
provide the most reliable ratings.

Rating Task

The rating task was to assign each individual segment to one
of the five scale categories. A segment, however, could be left
unscored when all or most of the segment was inaudible, when the
segment did not contain even one complete thought, or when not
enough information or content was included in the speech unit to
allow for a rating. The raters were to examine each segment with
respect to quality of organization, expressive style, and language
useage, and to consider all three aspects in combination in arriving
at a single judgment for each segment. All raters were required to
listen to the audio tapes in conjunction with the typed transcripts
since expressive style was one important dimension on which their
ratings were made.

Method A: Objective Approach. Method A raters were required
to base their judgments on the specific criteria laid out in the
manual and to rate each segment independently. That is, Method A
raters were asked to ignore any prior or subsequent statements in
making a rating and to base their ratings only on what they actually
see or hear and not on any inferences they might make about the
ongoing process.

Method B: Intuitive Approach. Method B raters were asked to

read through each transcript before beginning the coding task

in order to develop a sense of the couple's functioning in terms

of the confluence-contact continuum. This pair of raters used

the scale descriptions as guidelines only and rated each segment

in context, i.e., in relation to prior and subsequent events. These

raters were asked to observe trends in a couple's functioning over

a series of speech units.

Raters

Four raters were hired to code the twenty transcripts. Two

raters, one male and one female, utilized the objective approach

(Method A) and two raters, one male and one female, utilized the

intuitive approach (Method B). Three of the four raters were

advanced graduate students in clinical psychology at the University

of Windsor. All three had received their M.A. degree in clinical

psychology and had completed their Ph.D. course work and internship

training. The fourth rater had just recently received her Ph.D. in

clinical psychology at the University of Windsor. All raters had

some previous experience with Gestalt therapy and all were monetarily

reimbursed for their work on the rating task.

Method of Analysis

Inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability was assessed

separately for each of the two distinct rating methods. Two frequency

matrices were generated based on the ratings of all segments by

rater 1 and rater 2 (Method A) and by rater 3 and rater 4 (Method B).

In each case Cohen's (1960 kappa was computed. Cohen's (1960)

kappa provides the most stringent measure of inter-rater agreement

since this method assesses the proportion of judgments in which

there is agreement after chance agreement has been excluded.

Another approach to reliability testing is the use of the

correlational method to determine to what extent ratings by one

rater relate to ratings by a second rater. The most common corre-

lational technique used is the Pearson Product Moment correlation

(r). One of the conditions required for application of this coeffic-

ient is that the form of the distribution be fairly symmetrical and

unimodal. The important consideration is whether the distribution

meets the condition of homoscedasticity, i.e., whether the disper-

sion in all the columns and rows of the frequency distribution are

approximately equal (Guilford, 1956). Because the distribution of

the data in this study was markedly skewed, departing significantly

from homoscedasticity, the coefficient of contingency (C) was computed

to provide further assessment of inter-rater reliability using a

correlational approach. The contingency coefficient (C) is a

variation of the phi coefficient (ϕ) that is used when more than two

categories are being utilized. The contingency coefficient (C) provides

a measure of the degree of association between two variables (i.e., in

this case, ratings by rater 1 and ratings by rater 2).

In order to conclude that a scale is reliable it is necessary

to determine if all gradations of the scale allow for reliable ratings.

In order to determine if all gradations of the scale allowed for

reliable ratings a chi square (x^2) analysis was carried out for
each of the two rating methods. The chi square (x^2) value for each
cell identifies those combinations of ratings on which the two
raters agreed more frequently than could be expected on the basis
of chance. This method of analysis provides additional information
in that it not only identifies those categories in which the raters
agreed, but it also identifies those categories which the raters were
unable to discriminate between.

Test the assumption that individuals interacting exert mutual
influences on one another. A Markov chain analysis was applied
to the data. The Markov chain model has been the most widely used
of the stochastic models for the analysis of communication (Penman,
1980). The Markov chain model assumes that the immediate past has some
effect on the present and this effect depends on the nature of the
preceding event(s). A stochastic model, rather than implying a linear,
cause and effect relationship between two events, only suggests that the
occurrence of the first event alters the probability of the occurrence
of the second event; it does not imply that the events are fully deter-
mined by the other (Hertel, 1972). This type of process analysis focuses
not on the relative frequency of assignment to a specific category,
but rather, the relative frequencies of the transitions between
categories; not how many times did confluent, stable, tentative,
seeking or contactual behavior occur, but what tended to happen in the

partner's functioning immediately after a confluent, stable, tentative, seeking, or contactual behavior occurred on the part of one person.

According to the boundary process formulation, individuals interacting respond to one another's expressions of boundaries of experiential organization. If this assumption is accurate, changes in functioning in one person will relate to contemporary shifts in the partner's functioning. That is, according to this formulation, transitions between the same or similar modes of functioning should occur with greater than chance frequency while transitions between dissimilar modes of functioning should occur with less than chance frequency.

In order to determine if the two different rating methods yielded different transition patterns, data from raters 1 and 2 (Method A) and data from raters 3 and 4 (Method B) were analyzed separately. The procedure FREQUENCIES of the Statistical Analysis System (SAS, 1979) was used to generate three transition matrices. These three matrices indicated the frequencies and the expected frequencies of transitions between categories for three samples of data: a) data derived from rating method A, b) data derived from rating method B, and c) data derived from method A and B combined (i.e., all four raters).

In order to determine if the observed transition patterns for each sample were consistent with the pattern predicted from the boundary process formulation, chi square analyses were carried out to identify those transitions which occurred with greater than chance frequency, those which occurred with less than chance frequency, and those which occurred with chance frequency alone. The observed

pattern of transitions were then compared with the pattern expected

based on the boundary process formulation. Finally, an overall

chi square value was calculated for each sample by summing the

individual chi square values of those cells which fit the predicted

pattern in order to determine if the antecedant events had a

significant effect on the occurrence of the consequent events.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Inter-rater Reliability

The primary purpose of this study was to develop a scale
which would allow for reliable ratings of experiential boundary
processes as postulated from a Gestalt field perspective. Two
distinct rating methods were used to determine which method would
yield more reliable ratings. Two raters independently scored all
twenty transcripts of the subjects' verbal expressions using the
objective approach (Method A) and two other raters independently
scored all twenty transcripts using the intuitive approach (Method
B).

One approach to inter-rater reliability is to simply count
up the proportion of cases in which the raters agreed. This approach
yielded inter-judge agreements of .63 and .71 for Method A and Method
B respectively. The limitation of this approach lies in the fact
that a certain amount of agreement can be expected from chance alone.
Cohen (1960) presents a coefficient of inter-judge agreement which
corrects for this factor. Cohen's (1960) kappa (k) provides a
measure of the proportion of inter-rater agreement after chance agree-
ment is removed from consideration.

Cohen's (1960) kappa is calculated by the formula:

$$k = \frac{Po - Pc}{1 - Pc}$$

Po represents the proportion of cases in which the judges agreed; Pc represents the proportion of agreement expected by chance; and k represents the proportion of agreement after chance agreement has been removed. Table 2 indicates the proportion of ratings in each scale category and the proportion expected from chance for rater 1 and rater 2 (Method A). Table 3 indicates the proportion of ratings in each scale category and the proportion expected from chance for rater 3 and rater 4 (Method B). Calculation of Cohen's (1960) kappa (k) yielded inter-rater reliabilities of .47 and .37 for Rating Method A and Rating Method B respectively (Table 4). Both rating methods yielded statistically significant coefficients of agreement with $z = 32.20$, $p < .0001$ for Method A and $z = 15.91$, $p < .0001$ for Method B.

Another approach to reliability testing is the use of the correlational method to determine to what extent variables are related. The most common correlational technique used is the Pearson Product Moment correlation (r). One of the conditions required for application of this coefficient is that the form of the distribution be fairly symmetrical and unimodal. The important consideration is whether the distribution meets the condition of homoscedasticity, i.e., whether the dispersion in all the columns and rows are approximately equal (Guilford, 1956). Because the distribution of the data in this study is markedly skewed, departing significantly from homoscedasticity, the coefficient of contingency (C) was computed to provide further assessment of inter-rater reliability using a correlational approach.

Table 2

Proportion of Ratings in Each Scale Category
and Proportion Expected from Chance
for Rater 1 and Rater 2 (Method A)

Rater 1	Rater 2					
	CF	ST	T	SK	CT	UN
CF	.2225 (.1176)	.0353 (.1123)	.0212 (.0304)	.0042 (.0048)	.0024 (.0048)	.0160 (.0316)
ST	.0974 (.1836)	.3119 (.1754)	.0141 (.0474)	.0033 (.0075)	.0014 (.0075)	.0428 (.0494)
T	.0484 (.0418)	.0085 (.0399)	.0433 (.0108)	.0028 (.0017)	.0028 (.0017)	.0014 (.0112)
SK	.0052 (.0079)	.0075 (.0075)	.0005 (.0020)	.0052 (.0003)	.0000 (.0003)	.0019 (.0021)
GT	.0080 (.0163)	.0042 (.0156)	.0202 (.0042)	.0000 (.0007)	.0089 (.0007)	.0005 (.0044)
UN	.0085 (.0227)	.0052 (.0217)	.0014 (.0059)	.0005 (.0009)	.0005 (.0009)	.0423 (.0061)

Note: Bracketed Values Indicate Proportion Expected from Chance

Table 3

Proportion of Ratings in each Scale Category
and Proportion Expected from Chance
for Rater 3 and Rater 4 (Method B)

	Rater 4					
	CF	ST	T	SK	CT	UN
CF	.5716 (.5047)	.0080 (.0645)	.1022 (.1018)	.0151 (.0186)	.0061 (.0056)	.0033 (.0109)
ST	.0843 (.1221)	.0815 (.0156)	.0019 (.0246)	.0005 (.0045)	.0005 (.0014)	.0024 (.0026)
T	.0179 (.0360)	.0005 (.0046)	.0297 (.0073)	.0009 (.0013)	.0014 (.0004)	.0000 (.0008)
SK	.0207 (.0272)	.0014 (.0035)	.0066 (.0056)	.0094 (.0010)	.0000 (.0003)	.0005 (.0006)
CT	.0038 (.0057)	.0000 (.0007)	.0038 (.0016)	.0005 (.0002)	.0000 (.0064)	.0000 (.0001)
UN	.0165 (.0185)	.0000 (.0024)	.0000 (.0037)	.0000 (.0007)	.0000 (.0002)	.0094 (.0004)

Note: Bracketed values indicate Proportion Expected from Chance

Table 4

Inter-rater Reliabilities for

Method A (Objective Method) and Method B (Intuitive Method)

Rating Method	Po	Pc	K	
Method A	.63	.31	.47	.0001 *
Method B	.71	.53	.37	.0001 *

Note: Po represents the proportion of cases in which the judges agreed

   Pc represents the proportion of agreement expected by chance

   k represents the proportion of agreement after chance agreement

     has been removed

The coefficient of contingency (C) yielded reliability coefficients of .70 and .66 for Method A and Method B respectively. Table 5 provides a summary of inter-rater reliability assessment based on these three approaches to inter-rater reliability.

In order to determine which categories yielded the most reliable ratings for the two rating methods, a chi square (x^2) analysis was carried out. Tables 6 and 7 indicate the frequencies and expected frequencies for each scale category for Method A and Method B respectively as well as chi square values for those frequencies which were significantly greater than expected frequencies. The values along the diagonal indicate the frequency with which the two raters agreed on a rating. Table 6 indicates that rater 1 and rater 2 (Method A) agreed on each category more often than would be expected if assignment to categories was completely random. Moreover, chi square (x^2) values for these cells indicate that these differences between observed and expected frequencies are statistically significant, $p < .001$. The only other combination of rating which occurred significantly more frequently than expected between raters 1 and 2 was the contactual and tentative combination. Table 6 indicates that rater 2 frequently scored segments tentative that rater 1 scored contactual and this combination occurred with greater than chance frequency ($x^2 = 129.4$, $p < .001$). This observation suggests that raters 1 and 2 (Method A) had difficulty discriminating between contactual segments and tentative segments.

Table 7 presents the frequencies and expected frequencies for each scale category for rater 3 and rater 4 (Method B) as well as

Table 5

Assessment of Inter-Rater Reliability

for Method A and Method B

Rating Method	Proportion of Inter-judge Agreement	Cohen's kappa (k)	Contingency Coefficient (C)
Method A	.63	.47	.70
Method B	.71	.37	.66

Table 6

Frequencies and Expected Frequencies for Each Scale Category

for Rater 1 and Rater 2 (Method A)

		Rater 2					
		CF	ST	T	SK	CT	UN
Rater 1	CF	473 (250) $x^2 = 199.1$	75 (239)	45 (65)	9 (10)	5 (10)	34 (67)
	ST	207 (390)	663 (373) $x^2 = 225.7$	30 (101)	7 (16)	3 (16)	91 (105)
	T	103 (89)	18 (85)	92 (23) $x^2 = 207.7$	6 (4)	6 (4)	3 (24)
	SK	11 (17)	16 (16)	1 (4)	11 (1) $x^2 = 154.6$	0 (1)	4 (5)
	CT	17 (35)	9 (33)	43 (9) $x^2 = 129.4$	0 (1)	19 (1) $x^2 = 217.1$	1 (9)
	UN	18 (48)	11 (46)	3 (13)	1 (2)	1 (2)	90 (13) $x^2 = 455.8$

Note: Bracketed Values Indicate Expected Frequencies

Table 7

Frequencies and Expected Frequencies for Each Scale Category

for Rater 3 and Rater 4 (Method B)

		Rater 4					
		CF	ST	T	SK	CT	UN
Rater 3	CF	1214 (1072) $x^2 = 18.8$	17 (137)	217 (216)	32 (40)	13 (12)	7 (23)
	ST	179 (259)	173 (33) $x^2 = 589.8$	4 (52)	1 (10)	1 (10)	5 ((6)
	T	38 (77)	1 (10)	63 (15) $x^2 = 146.9$	2 (3)	3 (0)	0 (2)
	SK	44 (59)	3 (8)	14 (12)	20 (2) $x^2 = 147.2$	1 (0)	1 (1)
	CT	8 (12)	0 (2)	8 (2) $x^2 = 12.6$	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	UN	35 (39)	0 (5)	0 (8)	0 (2)	0 (0)	20 (1) $x^2 = 429.0$

Note: Bracketed values indicate expected frequencies

chi square values for frequencies significantly greater than expected. Examination of Table 7 confirms that these two raters did not agree on category assignment of contactual functioning (i.e., no segments were categorized as contactual by both raters 3 and 4). However, for all other categories, rater 3 and rater 4 agreed on a rating more often than would be expected from chance alone (Table 7). Moreover, chi square values for these cells indicate that these differences between observed and expected frequencies are statistically significant, $p < .001$. The only other combination of rating which occurred significantly more frequently than expected between raters 3 and 4 was the contactual and tentative combination. Table 7 indicates that rater 4 frequently scored segments tentative that rater 3 scored contactual and that this combination occurred with greater than chance frequency ($x^2 = 12.6$, $p < .001$). This observation indicates that raters 3 and 4 (Method B) also had difficulty discriminating between contactual segments and tentative segments.

It is of interest that although the intuitive rating method (Method B) yielded higher inter-rater agreement overall before adjusting for chance agreement (Method B: Po = .71; Method A: Po = .63), inter-rater reliability using Method B was actually lower than the objective approach (Method A) once chance agreement had been removed (Method B: k = .37; Method A: k = .47). This large decrease in reliability for Method B when chance agreement is removed may be a result of the lack of spread in ratings across all categories. Table 8 presents the percentage of segments assigned to each category for both rating methods. Although the sample of verbal behavior used

Table 8

Percentage of Segments Assigned to Each Scale Category

for Both Rating Methods

Category	Rating Method A			Rating Method B		
	Rater 1	Rater 2	$\overline{X}$	Rater 3	Rater 4	$\overline{X}$
Confluent	30%	39%	34.5%	71%	71%	71%
Stable	47%	37%	42%	9%	17%	13%
Tentative	11%	10%	10.5%	14%	5%	9.5%
Seeking	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%	3.5%
Contact	4%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Unscoreable	6%	10%	8%	2%	3%	2.5%

in this study allowed for only a minimum number of ratings at the contactual end of the continuum (i.e., seeking, contactual) regardless of the rating method used, Table 8 indicates that Method A yielded somewhat greater variability in category assignment. For example, Method A raters categorized an average of 34.5 percent of all segments confluent while Method B raters categorized an average of 71 percent of all segments confluent. Moreover, Method B raters categorized only 1 percent of all segments contactual while Method A raters categorized an average of 3 percent of all segments contactual.

In summary, assessment of inter-rater reliability using Cohen's (1960) kappa indicated that both rating methods allowed for significantly reliable ratings of verbal behavior, however, the objective rating method (Method A) yielded a higher overall measure of inter-judge agreement after chance agreement had been removed than did Method B. Examination of chi square (x^2) values (Tables 6 and 7) indicated that Method B did not allow for reliable ratings of contactual functioning. In contrast, Method A raters agreed on a rating to a significant extent on all scale categories, including contactual.

Test of "Mutual Influences" Hypothesis

A secondary purpose of the present study was to apply the Boundary Process Scale to a sample of verbal behavior in order to test the assumption that individuals interacting exert mutual influences. These influences are assumed to create field changes that in turn determine supports available for changes in experiential organization on the part of the partner. If this assumption is accurage, changes in functioning in one person will relate to contemporary shifts in the partner's functioning. That is, a particular mode of functioning

on the part of one individual (confluent, stable, tentative, seeking, contactual) is more likely to be followed by the same mode of functioning by his or her partner. This type of analysis focuses not on the relative frequency of assignment to a specific category, but rather, focuses on the relative frequencies of the transitions between categories; not how many times did confluent, stable, tentative, seeking, or contactual behavior occur, but what tended to happen in the partner's functioning immediately after a confluent, stable, tentative, seeking, or contactual behavior occurred on the part of one person.

Moreover, because the scale categories actually represent arbitrarily defined points along a continuum, it was of interest to determine if transitions between similar modes of functioning (i.e., those categories falling next to one another on the continuum) occurred more frequently than expected while transitions between dissimilar modes of functioning (i.e., those categories falling at opposite ends of the continuum) occurred less frequently than expected.

The procedure FREQUENCIES of the Statistical Analysis System (SAS, 1979) was used to generate three transition matrices which indicate the frequencies and the expected frequencies of transitions between categories for all the data (i.e. ratings of all four raters), transitions for data based on rating method A, and for transition data based on rating method B. Chi square analyses were carried out to identify those transitions which occurred with greater than chance frequency. The values of the chi square (x^2) provide a measure of the discrepancy between the observed cell frequencies and those

expected on the basis of independence.

Table 9 presents the frequencies of transitions between each scale category, the expected frequencies, the deviations from the expected, and the chi square value for each transition, for all the data (ratings by all four raters). The bracketed value in each cell indicates the frequencies to be expected if an antecedant event had no effect on a consequent event (i.e., if antecedants and consequents were independent). The positive and negative values indicate the deviation from expected frequencies. The positive values indicate that a particular transition occurred with greater than chance frequency. The negative values indicate that a particular transition occurred less frequently than would be expected. The chi square (x^2) value indicates whether the discrepancy between observed frequencies and expected frequencies are statistically significant.

It was hypothesized that a specific mode of functioning (i.e., confluent, stable, tentative, seeking, contactual) on the part of one person, would more often be followed by the same mode of functioning than by a different mode in his/her partner. Therefore the values along the diagonal are the ones of interest since these indicate the frequency with which a category was followed by itself. If our prediction is accurate, the frequencies along the diagonal should be larger than the expected frequencies for that particular cell. Table 9 indicates that each category was followed by itself (i.e., the same category) more frequently than could be expected if the antecedant and consequent events were independent. For example, a confluent

Table 9

" Frequencies, Expected Frequencies, Deviations from Expected

and Chi Square Values (χ^2)

for all Transitions

Consequents

Antecedents	CF	ST	T	SK	CT
CF	2906 * (2297.4) 608.6 $\chi^2 = 161.2$	657 * (1112.6) -455.6 $\chi^2 = 186.6$	320 * (435.8) -115.8 $\chi^2 = 30.8$	116 (113.8) +2.2 $\chi^2 = 0.0$	40 * (79.4) -39.4 $\chi^2 = 19.5$
ST	688 * (1199.0) -511.0 $\chi^2 = 217.8$	1095 * (580.7) 514.3 $\chi^2 = 455.5$	237 * (227.5) 9.5 $\chi^2 = 0.4$	22 * (59.4) -37.4 $\chi^2 = 23.5$	66 * (41.4) 24.6 $\chi^2 = 14.6$
T	382 * (443.7) -61.7 $\chi^2 = 8.6$	177 * (214.9) -37.9 $\chi^2 = 6.7$	161 * (84.2) 76.2 $\chi^2 = 70.1$	47 * (22.0) 25.0 $\chi^2 = 28.5$	13 (15.3) -2.3 $\chi^2 = 0.4$
SK	113 (117.7) -4.7 $\chi^2 = 0.2$	27 * (57.0) -30.0 $\chi^2 = 15.8$	46 * (22.3) 23.7 $\chi^2 = 25.1$	13 * ((5.8)) 7.2 $\chi^2 = 8.8$	8 (4.1) 3.9 $\chi^2 = 3.8$
CT	49 * (80.2) -31.2 $\chi^2 = 12.1$	48 (38.8) 9.2 $\chi^2 = 2.2$	21 (15.2) 5.8 $\chi^2 = 2.2$	7 (4.0) 3.0 $\chi^2 = 2.3$	16 * (2.8) 13.2 $\chi^2 = 63.1$

segment by one person was followed by another confluent statement by
the partner 2906 times while the expected frequency of this transition
was 229.4. The discrepancy between this observed and expected
frequency (608.6) is statistically significant ($x^2 = 161.2$, $p < .01$).
Likewise, a stable statement was followed by a stable statement 1095
times while the expected frequency of this transition was 580.7. This
discrepancy between observed and expected frequencies (514.3) is
statistically significant ($x^2 = 455.5$, $p < .01$) (Table 9).

In order to determine if transitions between similar modes
of functioning (i.e., those categories falling next each other on
the continuum) occurred more frequently than expected while transitions
between dissimilar modes of functioning (i.e., those categories
falling at opposite ends of the continuum) occurred less frequently
than expected, it is necessary to compare the overall pattern of
observed transitions with the pattern predicted based on the Boundary
Processes formulation. Since the scale categories actually represent
arbitrarily defined points along a continuum, if individuals exert
mutual influences on one another's functioning, then a specific mode
of functioning is more likely to be followed by the same or a similar
mode of functioning by the partner.

The Boundary Process formulation postulates the following pattern
of transitions:

> Transitions to like categories should occur with greater
> frequency than expected (i.e., CF/CF; ST/ST; T/T; SK/SK;
> CT/CT).

> Transitions between similar categories should occur with
> greater frequency than expected (i.e., CF/ST; ST/T; T/SK;
> (SK/CT).

Transitions between dissimilar categories should occur
less frequently than expected (i.e., CF/CT; CF/SK; ST/CT;
(ST/SK).

Transitions between the extreme categories (i.e. those
categories falling at the opposite poles of the continuum)
and the middle category should occur with approximately
chance frequency (CF/T; CT/T).

Table 10 presents the pattern of transitions that would be
predicted based on the Boundary Process formulation. A positive sign
(+) denotes those transitions which should occur with greater than
chance frequency. A negative sign (-) denotes those transitions which
should occur with less than chance frequency. A zero (0) denotes
those transitions which should occur with approximately chance frequency.

Table 11 presents the observed pattern of transitions for all
the data. Table 11 indicates that thirteen of the 25 cells followed
the predicted pattern for transitions between categories. An overall
chi square was computed by summing individual cell chi values of only
those cells which fit the predicted pattern. The overall chi square
for this transition matrix, $x^2 = 855.8$, $p < .01$ indicates that the
antecedant events had a significant effect on the occurrence of the
consequent events.

In order to determine if the two different rating methods
yielded different transition patterns, data from raters 1 and 2
(Method A) and data from raters 3 and 4 (Method B) were analyzed
separately.

Table 12 presents the frequencies, expected frequencies,
deviations, and chi square values for each transition for the data
coded by raters 1 and 2 (Method A). Table 12 indicates that

Table 10

Pattern of Transitions Predicted by the Boundary Process Formulation

Consequents

Antecedents	CF	ST	T	SK	CT
CF	+	+	o	−	−
ST	+	+	+	−	−
T	o	+	+	+	o
SK	−	−	+	+	+
CT	−	−	o	+	+

Note: A positive sign (+) indicates greater than chance frequency, a negative sign (−) indicates less than chance frequency, and a zero (o) indicates chance frequency

Table 11

Observed Pattern of Transitions for All Data (Raters 1,2,3, and 4)

Consequents

Antecedents \ Consequents	CF	ST	T	SK	CT
CF	+	−	−	o	−
ST	−	+	o	+	+
T	−	o	+	+	o
SK	o	−	+	+	o
CT	−	o	o	o	+

Note 1: A positive sign indicates greater than chance frequency, a negative sign (−) indicates less than chance frequency, and a zero (o) sign indicates chance frequency

Note 2: Shaded areas indicate those transitions which fit the predicted pattern

Table 12

Frequencies, Expected Frequencies, Deviations from Expected,

and Chi Square Values (x^2)

for Method A Transitions

consequents

Antecedants		CF	ST	T	SK	CT
CF		619	415	142	39	31
		(464.3)	(569.5)	(145.5)	(25.7)	(41)
		154.7	-154.15	-3.5	13.3	-10.0
		51.5	41.9	0.1	6.9	2.5
ST		422	9292	168	11	58
		(591.8)	(725.8)	(185.4)	(32.7)	(52.3)
		-169.8	203.2	-17.4	-21.7	5.7
		48.7	56.9	1.6	14.4	0.6
T		159	147	56	13	11
		(143.8)	(176.4)	(45.1)	((7.9)	(12.7)
		15.2	-29.4	10.9	5.1	-1.7
		1.6	4.9	2.7	3.2	0.2
SK		30	20	16	0	6
		(26.8)	(32.9)	(8.4)	(1.5)	(2.4)
		3.2	-12.9	7.6	-1.5	3.6
		0.4	5.1	6.9	0.0	5.6
CT		37	43	15	7	6
		(40.2)	(49.6)	(12.6)	(2.2)	(3.6)
		-3.2	-6.4	2.4	4.8	2.4
		0.3	0.8	0.5	10.3	1.7

for this data, only two of the five scale categories followed themselves more frequently than expected. Confluent segments were followed by confluent segments 619 times while the expected frequency of this occurrence was 464.3. This discrepancy between observed and expected frequency (154.7) was significant (x^2 = 51.5, p < .01). Also stable segments were followed by stable segments 929 times while the expected frequency of this transition was 725.8. This discrepancy between observed and expected frequency (302.2) was statistically significant (x^2 = 56.9, p < .01). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies for transitions from tentative to tentative, seeking to seeking, or contactual to contactual. Examination of the overall pattern of transitions indicated that nine of the 25 possible transitions followed the predicted pattern (Table 13). The overall chi square value for this transition matrix, x^2 = 142.4, p < .01 indicates that the antecedant events had a significant effect on the occurrence of the consequent events.

Table 14 presents the frequencies, expected frequencies, deviations, and chi square values for each transition for the data coded by raters 3 and 4 (Method B). Table 14 indicates that for this data, each category was followed by itself (i.e., the same category) more frequently than could be expected if the antecedant and consequent events were independent. (CF/CF 2287/2069.3; ST/ST 166/60.4; T/T 105/39.5; SK/SK 13/4.7; CT/CT 10/0.3). Moreover, these differences between observed and expected frequencies were statistically significant

Table 13

Observed Pattern of Transitions for Method A Data

		Consequents			
Antecedents	CF	ST	T	SK	CT
CF	+	−	o	+	o
ST	−	+	o	−	o
T	o	o	o	+	o
SK	o	o	+	o	o
CT	o	o	o	+	o

Note 1: A positive sign (+) indicates greater than chance frequency, a negative sign (−) indicates less than chance frequency, and a zero sign (o) indicates chance frequency

Note 2: Shaded areas indicate those transitions which fit the predicted pattern

Table 14

Frequencies, Expected Frequencies, Deviations from Expected
and Chi Square Values (x^2)
for Method B Transitions

Antecedants	Consequents				
	CF	ST	T	SK	CT
CF	2287 * (2069.3) 217.7 22.9	242 * (3324.3) -82.3 20.9	178 * (279.7) -101.7 37.0	77 (97.3) -20.3 4.2	9 * (22.3) -13.3 8.0
ST	266 * (385.3) -119.3 36.9	166 * (60.4) 105.6 184.7	69 (52.1) 16.9 5.5	11 (18.1) -7.1 2.8	8 (4.2) 3.8 3.5
T	223 * (291.9) -68.9 16.3	30 (45.8) -15.8 5.4	105 * (39.5) 65.5 108.9	34 * (13.7) 20.3 29.9	2 (3.2) -1.2 00.4
SK	83 (100) -17.0 2.9	7 (15.7) -8.7 4.8	30 * (13.5) 16.5 20.1	13 * (4.7) 8.3 14.6	2 (1.1) 0.9 0.8
CT	12 (24.4) -12.4 6.3	5 (3.8) 1.2 0.4	6 (3.3) 2.7 2.2	0 (1.1) -1.1 1.1	10 * (0.3) 9.7 359.1

(CF/CF: $x^2 = 22.9$; ST/ST: $x^2 = 184.7$; T/T: $x^2 = 108.9$; SK/SK: $x^2 = 14.6$; CT/CT: $x^2 = 359.1$). Table 15 indicates that ten of the 25 possible transitions followed the predicted pattern. The overall chi square value for this transition matrix, $x^2 = 750.9$, $\underline{p} < .01$ indicates that the antecedant events had a significant effect on the occurrence of the consequent events.

In summary, analysis of the transitions from one mode of functioning to another indicated that a particular mode of functioning on the part of one individual was more likely to lead to the same mode of functioning in his or her partner. However, this pattern did not hold up in all cases when data from raters 1 and 2 (Method A) was analyzed separately. Moreover, the overall pattern of observed transitions did not follow the predicted pattern in all cases, however, the chi square analyses indicated that overall, the antecedant events had a significant effect on the occurrence of the consequent events.

Table 15

Observed Pattern of Transitions for Method B Data

Consequents

Antecedents	CF	ST	T	SK	CT
CF	+	−	−	o	−
ST	−	+	o	o	o
T	−	o	+	+	o
SK	o	o	+	+	o
CT	o	o	o	o	+

Note 1: A positive sign (+) indicates greater than chance frequency, a negative sign (−) indicates less than chance frequency, and a zero sign (o) indicates chance frequency

Note 2: Shaded areas indicate those transitions which fit the predicted pattern

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of the present study was to develop a
scale which would allow for reliable ratings of boundary processes
as postulated by the Gestalt perspective. Two aspects of inter-
rater reliability will be discussed in this section. First, the
differential reliability results for the two rating methods will be
discussed in terms of how the two methods differ. Second, the effect
these different rating methods had on assessment of inter-rater
reliability and the implications this presents for future application
of the scale will be discussed.

A secondary purpose of the present study was to test the hyp-
othesis that as couples interact, each person's mode of experiential
functioning affects the functioning of the other. Analysis of the
transitions from one mode of experiential functioning to another
provided tentative support for the hypothesis. Finally, the implications
of these results for future research on this scale will be discussed.

Assessment of Inter-rater Reliability

The purpose in developing the Boundary Process Scale was to
provide a method for the systematic observation of boundary processes
as postulated by the Gestalt field approach. The scale categories
actually represent different modes of functioning which can be viewed
as points along a continuum. Two rating methods were devised in order
to determine which method would allow for more reliable ratings of
verbal behavior. The two rating methods differed in two respects.

First Method A raters used the descriptions laid out in the manual
as objective criteria on which to base their judgments when assigning
speech units to one of the five scale categories, whereas Method B
raters used these descriptions as guidelines only and relied more on
their intuitive judgment in deciding on a rating for each segment.
A second difference was that Method A raters rated each segment inde-
pendently, so that rating of any one segment would not be influenced
by any prior or subsequent segments. In contrast, Method B raters
considered the context in which each statement was embedded in making
a rating.

Results indicated that Method B yielded a higher proportion of
inter-judge agreement before chance agreement was removed from con-
sideration, however, when chance agreement was removed, Method A
yielded higher inter-rater reliability. Because the proportion of
agreement expected from chance alone is calculated from the joint
probability of the marginals, this large decrease in reliability for
Method B when chance agreement was removed is attributable to the lack
of spread in ratings across all categories. Although the sample of
verbal behavior used in this study allowed for only a minimum number
of ratings at the contactual end of the continuum, regardless of the
rating method used, Method A yielded somewhat greater variability in
category assignment and hence the smaller drop in reliability when
adjusted for chance agreement.

Moreover, inter-rater reliability assessment for each scale
category separately indicated that Method B did not allow for reliable
ratings of contactual functioning. This result may be attributed to
the infrequent scoring of behaviors as contactual by Method B raters.

Although we would have to conclude that Method A allowed for more reliable ratings on this particular sample, it remains problematical which method of rating would actually prove to be more reliable on other samples of verbal behavior with a more equal distribution of the various modes of functioning.

In order to test if a scale is reliable it is necessary to determine if all gradations of the scale allow for reliable ratings. Therefore, one of the major problems in the present study was the lack of spread in ratings across all five categories, with the majority of segments being rated at the confluent end of the continuum and very few ratings at the contactual end of the continuum. The purpose in using a Gestalt awareness exercise in generating the sample of verbal behavior was to promote more contactual functioning since exercises such as these are designed to facilitate individuals in attending to their immediate experience. However, it appears that the exercise was relatively unsuccessful in generating contactual functioning.

One must also consider the possibility that contact was too rigidly defined and that this kind of "ideal" functioning does not occur very frequently in actual interactions. That is, it may be that most individuals do not make very many clearly contactual statements and most interactions are in fact comprised of predominantly confluent and stable statements. Moreover, because the subjects participating in this study were couples who were involved in a stable relationship, one must also consider the possibility that these couples have developed their relationship based on confluence. It is possible that pairs of

strangers interacting would exhibit more contactual functioning

than couples who are involved in a stable relationship. Of course,

the process of being tape recorded would also have inhibited, to

some extent, more contactual functioning.

Evidence for "Mutual Influences" Hypothesis

A secondary purpose of the study was to test the hypothesis

that couples interacting exert mutual influences on one another. An

underlying assumption of this hypothesis is that each person's function-

ing will have some effect on the other person's functioning. It was

predicted that a specific mode of functioning on the part of one person

(as identified by the scale categories) would more often be followed

by the same mode of functioning by the other person. This hypothesis

is consistent with a Markov chain statistical model in that it assumes

that the immediate past has some effect on the present and this effect

depends on the nature of the preceding event. The Markov chain model

has been the most widely used of the stochastic models for the

analysis of communication (Penman, 1980). A stochastic model suggests

that the occurrence of one event alters the probability of the occurrence

of a second event; it does not imply that the events are fully determined

by the other.

Comparison of the overall pattern of observed transitions with

the pattern predicted from the Boundary Process formulation indicated

that, overall, transitions to like or similar categories occurred more

frequently than would be expected if the antecedants and consequents

were independent. That is, the occurrence of one mode of functioning

increased the probability that the immediately subsequent mode of functioning on the part of the other individual would be the same or similar. Also, in many cases, though not in all, transitions to dissimilar categories (i.e., categories falling at opposite ends of the continuum) occurred less frequently than would be expected if events were completely random. Results of the chi square analysis indicated that this pattern was statistically significant, suggesting that the antecedant events had a significant effect on the occurrence of the consequent events. These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that as couples interact, each person's mode of experiential functioning affects the functioning of the other.

These results suggest that the "mutual influences" hypothesis is a tenable one deserving of further investigation. However, these results should be interpreted with caution for two reasons. First, not all transitions followed the predicted pattern, and reasons accounting for these discrepancies remain unanswered. Secondly, when data derived from the objective scoring method, which appears to be the more reliable of the two, was analyzed with respect to transitions, this data yielded the pattern most discrepant from the predicted pattern. Therefore this type of analysis might better be reserved for use when the reliability of the scale has been firmly established and the best rating method determined.

Implications for Future Research

The major limitation of the present research appears to be that the sample of verbal behavior generated did not allow for an adequate spread of ratings across all five scale categories. In order to

conclude with conviction that a scale is reliable it is necessary to determine that all of the scale categories allow for reliable ratings. Therefore, the inter-rater reliability of the present scale should be re-assessed utilizing a sample of verbal behavior which includes more behaviors at the contactual end of the continuum. Since this kind of functioning defined as contactual does not occur with great frequency in normal conversation, perhaps future samples should be generated from therapy sessions in which the therapist is actively promoting more contactual functioning or in advanced group therapy sessions in which the group members have already been "trained" in contactual functioning. Also, since it is possible that the couples participating in this study had developed a stable relationship based on confluence as a result of many years together, more contactual functioning might be observed in an experiential group involving strangers.

One obvious question remaining is which of the two methods of rating will consistently result in the most reliable ratings? Post-experimental discussions with the raters indicated that Method A raters experienced frustration at being requested to leave out information they had available to them (i.e., the context in which each statement was embedded). These raters indicated that often their rating of a segment would have been quite different had they not been rating each segment independently of prior and subsequent statements. Moreover, since the Gestalt field approach proposes that all functioning is embedded in the field, this would suggest that the context in which all behaviors are embedded is an important aspect of information

which should not be ignored when rating experiential functioning.
Therefore, future reliability assessment on this scale may want to
use a combination of these two approaches in which the category
descriptions are used as objective criteria on which to base ratings
but where the context in which the behavior occurs is also taken into
consideration.

A further question arising from this study pertains to the
refinement of this scale. That is, could reliability be improved if
the descriptions of each scale category were refined in such a way
that those descriptions which did not contribute to category discrim-
ination were eliminated and distinctions between the different modes
of functioning were sharpened. Our analyses indicated that raters
using both methods had difficulty discriminating between tentative
and contactual functioning. This suggests that these two scale categories
are in need of refinement. One approach might be to have raters determine
samples of contactual and tentative behaviors and extract what contributes
to each. Furthermore, since the scale descriptions were written on a
priori impressions of what kinds of behaviors constituted confluent,
stable, tentative, seeking, and contactual functioning, the next step
would be to write items based on these descriptions and subject them to
an item analysis. A cluster analysis could then be performed on these
items which would create a scale having items that are internally consistent.

Once the scale is refined to the point where inter-rater reliability
is consistently hight and the best rating approach has been discerned,
then further sequential analysis could be performed using this scale.
Analysis of sequences involving several transitions might

provide more information about how fields are generated and maintained.

Summary and Conclusions

The primary purpose of the present study was to develop a scale which would provide a method for the systematic observation of human functioning from a Gestalt perspective. Two distinct rating methods were devised in order to determine if one method would provide more reliable ratings of verbal behavior. Although both methods provided reliable ratings, Method A (the objective method) yielded higher inter-rater reliability after chance agreement had been removed than did Method B. Because the sample of verbal behavior used in the present study resulted in an unequal distribution of ratings, these results should be interpreted with caution.

A secondary purpose of this study was to test the hypothesis that individuals interacting exert mutual influences on one another. This hypothesis was tentatively supported in that, overall, transitions from similar or like categories occurred with greater frequency than would be expected if the events were random, and in some cases, transitions to unlike categories occurred less frequently than would be expected by chance. These results suggest that attempts to operationalize aspects of Gestalt therapy theory hold considerable promise.

APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS FOR "ASSUMPTIONS" EXERCISE

While facing each other and maintaining eye contact, alternate making statements to each other that begin with the words "I assume that you" or "I assume that you know". Don't discuss these assumptions or say anything that doesn't begin with the words "I assume that you". You will get a chance to discuss or respond to these assumptions later. Do this until I tell you to stop. If you get stuck, just say the beginning of the sentence again and see what words come to you. The sentences should begin "I assume that you" or "I assume that you know". Are there any questions?

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR PROCESSING THE EXERCISE

1. Would each of you close your eyes and notice how you feel at this moment and how you feel about the exercise that you've just done. When you're ready, share with each other your feelings.

2. Take a few moments to be aware of what you are feeling now. Tell each other what you are feeling.

3. What part of the "I assume" exercise was most meaningful to you? Tell each other what was most meaningful to you.

4. Take a few moments to be aware of what you're feeling right now. Tell each other what you're feeling.

5. In the "I assume" exercise, what did you feel was most risky for you? Tell your partner what you felt was most risky.

6. Take a few moments to be aware of what you are feeling right now. Tell each other what you're feeling.

7. Did you discover anything about yourself or your partner in doing this exercise? Tell your partner what you discovered.

8. Take a few moments to be aware of what you are feeling right now. Tell each other what you're feeling.

9. Is there something you've become aware of that you would like from your partner? Can you tell each other what you would like.

10. Is there something you've become aware of that you feel your partner would like from you? Now share with your partner what you think he or she would like from you.

11. Take a few moments to be aware of what you are feeling right now. Tell each other what you're feeling.

12. What was it like for you to do this exercise? Share this with your partner. Describe to your partner how you are feeling now.

13. Take a few moments to reflect. Is there anything more that either of you would like to say to each other? Say it now.

APPENDIX C

BOUNDARY PROCESS SCALE

CODING MANUAL -   METHOD A

BOUNDARY PROCESS SCALE

CODING MANUAL - METHOD A

Introduction

This manual presents a technique for the systematic observation of "boundary" fluctuations in dyadic interaction directly from tape recordings and transcripts of a couple's communication. Boundary processes refer to immediate regulatory processes that either restrict awareness of certain aspects of one's experience or conversely allow and integrate new aspects of experience. Boundary processes involve maintaining stability and also encompass modification in experiential organization, i.e., how an individual "let's go" of stabilized experience and recognizes, explores, and discovers "more" of self and the other. The boundary approach presents an approach to interaction that examines mutual influences on moment to moment experiential organization. Such a method can bring greater clarity to how couples communicate and relate to one another.

Scale Constructs

The constructs "confluence" and "contact" refer to two basic modes of boundary functioning that represent the poles of the boundary process scale continuum. Confluence refers to functioning that is at the restrictive, rigid, end of the continuum, while contact refers to functioning that is at the discovery, open to experience, end of the continuum. Confluence refers to experiential organization in which self and others are perceived in terms of familiar, a priori, restricted formulations. A person is confluent when he or she "sees" or "hears" others in terms of expectations that are embedded in his/her current restricted organization so the person cannot recognize what "does not fit". Contact, on the other hand, is a process of mutual discovery involving active exploration of experience. Contact refers to recognizing more of what exists in self and other, a process which often involves risk in encountering unfamiliar or unpredictable experience. Contactual functioning permits recognition of a wider

range of experience. Whereas confluent processes create the experience of an environment that is rigid or relatively fixed, in contactual functioning a person's experiential organization is less rigidly restricted.

Dyadic interation is confluent when couples perceive one another in terms of assumptions, according to rigid roles and expectations, and relate to one another according to these preconceptions. In contactual interaction, an individual reaches out to recognize or discover what exists in the other at that moment rather than perceiving the other in a fixed and rigid way. Contact involves, for example, noticing and responding to an expression or tone which tells one more about the other's present experience than is evident from his/her overt functioning.

Scale Description

A schema of the scale is presented in Table 1. The scale categories, which should be viewed as points along a continuum are: (1) Confluent (CF), (2) Stable (ST), (3) Tentative (T), (4) Seeking (SK), and (5) Contactual (CT). The global descriptions of each category along the continuum are as follows:

Confluent: The person appears to maintain a position of things happening to self. He/she sees "fixed" traits or forces in self and in others. Self is experienced as reacting to "what exists". There is minimal exploration and self-reflection or perception of self as able to test alternatives.

Stable: A holding position of non-involvement in concerns about the relationship, self-experience, or position with respect to the environment. This is typical of casual conversation about impersonal or day to day topics or focussed discussions of a business nature.

Tentative: The person is paying relatively great attention to contemporary events. There is more evidence of "listening", at least in terms of consideration of input. The person's functioning seems less based on a priori assumptions.

Seeking: There is evidence of exploration, seeking data, recognition of doubt and uncertainty and some encountering of alternatives.

Table 1

Boundary Process Quality Scale

	Confluent	Stable	Tentative	Seeking	Contactual
(a) Quality of Organization	disowning ←——————→ owning				
	assumptive perceptions ←——————→ perceptual exploration				
	self-experience as victim ←——————→ self-experience as responsible				
(b) Expressive Style	more rapid functioning ←——————→ slower functioning				
	externalized voice quality ←——————→ focussed voice quality				
	flat tone or emotional venting ←——————→ excited, energetic voice				
(c) Language Useage	intellectual, abstract, vague ←——————→ concrete, specific				
	there and then ←——————→ here and now				

Contactual: The person is engaged in risky venturing in recognizing self-experience and in testing or seeking new perceptions of others. The tone and speed appear to involve steps in discovery. There is a relatively high degree of acknowledgment of self-awareness that appears new and as a challenge to self.

Although the boundary process scale allows a rater to assign a speech unit to one of the five points along a continuum, this coding is an attempt to assess the couple's functioning within a range on the scale as a measure of moment to moment process. The scale is intended to measure a person's current or immediate functioning rather than what type of person he or she may be or how he/she typically functions. You, the rater, will be looking and listening for three different aspects of functioning in relation to the scale categories. These aspects are a) quality of organization, b) expressive style, and c) language useage. Quality of organization refers to whether the statement is exploratory or assumptive and whether the speaker appears to experience self as responsible or victim. Expressive style refers to vocal and tonal qualities of the speaker's voice, i.e., Is the tone flat, externalized, energetic or excited and involved? Is the vocal functioning rapid or slower? Is the pace even or irregular? Language useage refers to the content of what is being said or the choice of words being used by the speaker. These three aspects of functioning are described in relation to each scale category on pages 80-87. Your assignment of a segment to one of the five scale categories (CF, ST, T, SK, CT) will be based on all three aspects (quality of organization, expressive style, and language useage). These three variables taken together will determine the dominant mode of functioning for a particular segment.

The Rating Task

The rating task is to assign each individual segment to one of the five scale categories (CF, ST, T, SK, CT). You, the rater, are to examine each segment with respect to quality of organization, expressive style, and language useage, and all three aspects should be considered in combination in arriving at a single judgment for that

particular segment. A rating should never be made based on just one
of these aspects but rather must be judged in accordance with the
dominant mode of experiencing for that particular segment. Even if
a particular aspect catches your attention, check out the other
aspects also before deciding on a category rating.

· The segments have been delineated by the researcher and each
segment or speech unit is numbered. A speech unit ends when the other
partner begins speaking or when the speaker has finished addressing
himself/herself to a particular question and continues to the next
question. The content of the transcripts was derived from subjects'
responses to a series of questions following their participation in
a Gestalt "awareness" exercise. It is these responses that make up the
content of the transcripts that you will be coding.

It is essential that you listen to the audio tapes in conjunction
with the typed transcripts since expressive style is one important
dimension on which you will base your judgment. The number on the
far left of the page on each transcript represents the approximate
position on the audio tape where each segment occurs. This is
provided for your convenience in locating a particular segment on
the tape.

Instructions to Raters

Raters are to code each segment on a transcript into one of
the five scale categories: confluent (CF), stable (ST), tentative (T),
seeking (SK), or contactual (CT). However, if a particular segment
does not fit into one of the five categories it may be left unscored.
This may occur when all or most of the segment is inaudible, when
the segment does not contain even one complete thought, or when not
enough information or content is included in the speech unit to allow
for a rating. However, keep in mind that an incomplete thought is
not always unscoreable. For example, when a speaker is assuming that
his/her partner knows what he/she is about to say and fails to complete
a sentence even though not interrupted, this may indicate confluent

functioning. Be sure that none of the five categories are applicable to the segment before leaving it unscored.

Code each segment directly onto the typed transcript. Remember you are to assign each segment to only one scale category. Some segments may be comprised of more than one thought which allows for more than one rating. In these situations if the last thought is clearly at either extreme of the continuum (i.e., contact or confluence) the code which applies to the last thought will constitute the score for the entire segment. However, in those cases where the scoring of the final thought is in the middle range of the continuum, (i.e., ST, T, SK) the final score for that segment will be based on the predominant score for that segment.

In developing the Boundary Process Scale we have attempted to establish clear and precise guidelines or criterion for each scale category. Ideally it should be possible to anchor each rating you make to specific criteria for that category. However, the scale is not completely objective and some statements may not fit easily into any of the categories or may present exceptions to the specifications for a certain category on one or more dimension. In these cases you will have to rely on your general understanding of the scale constructs to make a rating. You should try to formulate a definite rationale for your decision. It is essential that you listen to the audio tapes in conjunction with the typed transcripts since expressive style is one important dimension on which you will base your judgment.

It is natural to have positive or negative reactions to certain speakers. You must be careful not to let your feelings about the speaker interfere with your rating of a segment. Your ratings should be based only on what you actually hear and not on any inferences you might make about the speaker or what you think the speaker means. Each segment should be rated independently and previous segments should not influence your rating of a specific segment.

Be sure you are thoroughly familiar with the scale constructs and criteria for each category before you begin coding. If you find you are having difficulty, take a break, re-read the scoring criteria for each scale category, and listen to the segment again.

It is recommended that raters work at the rating task no more than six hours per day and that a ten to fifteen minute break be taken after two consecutive hours since raters' fatigue may affect your rating discrimination. Rating for less than two hours will usually prove inefficient since it will be necessary to re-read the scoring criteria at the beginning of every rating session.

Confidentiality

It is essential that you consider all tape-recorded and transcribed material as private and confidential. Persons participating in this experiment did so with the understanding that the materials would be used only for research purposes and that those people using the materials would maintain professional conduct and ethics, treating their confidences with respect. You are not to discuss or refer to the content of the materials with anyone who is not directly connected with your rating task.

CONFLUENT

Quality of Organization:

While in a confluent state the speaker does not appear to be
experiencing choices, but rather, is indicating that he/she is being
operated on by persons or events outside the self. The speaker may
be blaming or criticizing others or defending his/her own position.
The speaker is not taking responsibility for his/her own feelings and
behavior, i.e., "He makes me depressed because he's always criticizing
me" or, "My job is so demanding I can't help it if I'm cranky when I
get home" or, "He doesn't make me feel loved or wanted".

A confluent quality of organization is also characterized by
dichotomizing continuous dimensions of self and others. That is, the
speaker is describing his/her self and others in terms of polarities
such as weak/strong, lazy/hardworking, good/bad, i.e., "I'm a very
stubborn person, always have been". This can prevent the person from
recognizing that part of himself/herself that would like to let go of
the "stubbornness". The speaker is giving the impression that the
subject is powerless to act in other ways.

When in a confluent state the speaker is relating to self and others
in terms of a priori assumptions. He/she appears to be perceiving the
self and/or other in terms of what is expected rather than what is. The
speaker is reacting to self and others based on preconceptions, stereotypes,
categorizations or role expectations. These unchecked assumptions prevent
the individual from feeling, seeing, or hearing what exists at the moment.
For example, "He's so easy-going, he never gets angry"; This woman's
preconception conerning her husband may prevent her from recognizing
that although he may often act in an "easy-going" manner, the tone of
his voice and the look on his face right now is indicating that he is
indeed experiencing feelings of anger. Likewise, a woman's stereotype
of herself as a selfless, nurturing mother may be preventing her from
recognizing that at this moment she is experiencing frustration and
resentment towards her children.

A confluent quality of organization is also characterized by negating
or denying feelings and self experience. Denial of self experience can
sometimes be observed as agreement with the other that is later negated

in the same sentence or in a subsequent statement, i.e., "I agree
that it was superficial but I felt that there was something important
that came up". Feelings, when verbalized, are described without
personal involvement, as though the speaker were talking about someone
else. At times a speaker may appear to be exploring his/her feelings,
behaviors, reactions or his/her relationships but is doing so in an
analytical, intellectual way, searching for reasons or explanations,
with no attention being paid to his/her personal experience. This mode
of communicating is usually accompanied by the "externalized" voice
described below and is also indicative of confluence.

Expressive Style:

Confluence is usually accompanied by either an "externalized" voice
quality or a "limited" voice quality.

The externalized voice quality is characterized by more rapid
functioning, with a steady, unhesitating pace. The pattern of accents
is regular for English and though the pace may speed up slightly as the
speaker approaches an accent point, the overall effect is that of an
even, unhesitating, and fairly rapid pace. The speaker's manner of
expression may be remote, matter of fact, or have a mechanical or
rehearsed quality. This style gives the listener the impression that
what is being said is being spoken without actually being aware of one's
own or the other's present experience. The externalized voice can have
a lecturing quality to it, as though the speaker were reciting a speech.
Any energy invested in the voice seems to be directed outward in an
effort to produce an effect on the listener rather than arising from the
self experience of the speaker.

A limited voice can also be indicative of confluence. The limited
voice is flat and monotonous, lacking in energy and excitement. The
pace is slower but, like the externalized voice, fairly even and regular.

Language Useage:

Several aspects of language useage can indicate confluence. Since
contact can only be made in the present, relating incidents from the
past or predicting the future is a means of avoiding contact and is
indicative of confluence. In confluence, here and now experience is
neither recognized or attended to. The listener may be aware of some

feeling that is not being recognized or acknowledged by the speaker.
Confluent language will sometimes have a vague, abstract, or
intellectual quality. The speaker does not explicitly state his/
her feelings or reactions or does so in a detached, impersonal manner
as things which exist outside the self to be reported, labeled, or
explained.

The content or the choice of words used by the speaker is often
an indication of the degree of confluence in a given communication.
The words a person chooses to express him/herself are a reflection of
his/her current experience. The use of impersonal referent pronouns
such as "it", "you", "they", "we", "everybody", "one" can be indications
of lack of self-other differentiation, i.e., "Suddenly it became very
tense in the room" rather than "suddenly I felt very tense". The use
of "won't" versus "can't" and "I have to" versus "I choose to" is used
when the speaker is avoiding responsibility for his/her choice and
responsibility. Feelings of powerlessness, of being controlled and
manipulated by outside influences are often suggested by the use of the
passive tense, i.e., "The dishes didn't get done this morning" or "My
last paycheck is all spent". In contrast, the active tense suggests
owning or responsibility, i.e., "I didn't do the dishes this morning"
or "I spent my whole paycheck this week".

Confluent relationships are marked by an intolerance for and a
downplaying of differences. Often a question is used rather than a clear
statement of the individual's experience and wants, i.e., "Aren't you
hungry?" versus "I'm hungry. I'd like to go for dinner now." or, "Isn't
it cold in here?" versus "I'm cold. I'd like to get a sweater, turn the
heat up, etc.". Another means of downplaying differences is through
seeming to agree while qualifying the agreement. This can be observed
in the use of qualifiers such as "but", "I guess", "maybe", or "sort of"
which give mixed messages or sometimes totally contradict or disqualify
the first part of the message. For example, "Yes I'm hungry too but
it's so early to eat." This statement leaves the listener confused as
to what the speaker actually feels and wants. The responder appears to
be agreeing while at the same time indicating that he/she is not really
hungry and would prefer to eat later. No clear statement is made with
respect to his/her actual experience and wants. The language is often
vague, with the speaker "skirting around" the issue rather than getting

to the point. The speaker may be presenting incomplete thoughts
as though expecting the listener to be able to "read his/her mind".
The speaker is not clearly stating his/her experience or feelings.
This vagueness leaves the listener confused as to what the speaker
is trying to communicate. Often one partner will complete a sentence
or fill in a word for his/her partner. If this is done without an
inflection to indicate a question, it is indicative of confluence since
the person is assuming that he/she knows what the other is thinking
or feeling. Also, incomplete sentences where the speaker assumes
the other knows what they meant or what they are implying by the
unfinished statement are indicative of confluence.

STABLE

Quality of Organization:

There is little concern or attention being paid to feelings, self-
experience, or the relationship. Statements are concerned with dicuss-
ing or planning day to day matters. There is little evidence of emotions
in this category, either in the form of being in touch with feelings
or in actively avoiding them due to discomfort.

This category is comprised of statements which are unrelated to
the couple's feelings, relationship, or present experience. For example,
reading the question from the cards or the use of idiomatic expressions
commonly used in English such as "right", "sure", "um hum", "of course",
are scored stable. The rater will have to rely on tone of voice to
determine if the use of a word or words are in fact idiomatic expressions
or not. For example, if there is evidence of some emotion not being
expressed or if the tonal quality is incongruent with the language
useage, confluence may be indicated.

Expressive Style:

The voice quality is at a stable, intermediate level. The pace is
even, lacking the pauses indicative of searching or exploring and
moderately rapid, as in a business discussion. The tone too is at an
intermediate level - crisp and precise rather than either overly flat
or highly charged with emotion or excitement. The listener is given the
impression that the speaker is efficiently "taking care of business"
with relatively little emotional involvement.

Language Useage:

Language is most likely to be either in the past, relating facts relevent to the discussion, or in the future, planning what is to take place. Language is concrete and specific as opposed to abstract and vague but unconcerned with present experience or affective feelings. Listening is focussed on gathering information about the topic as opposed to discovering something of the experience of the self or other. Speaking is focussed on imparting facts rather than sharing experience.

TENTATIVE

Quality of Organization:

Tentative statements give the listener the impression that the speaker is beginning to recognize and acknowledge some feeling in relation to what is being said although he/she is not explicitly describing the feeling. When a feeling or an aspect of self-experience is stated, it is described briefly, without elaboration, and somewhat reluctantly. However, the speaker does seem more willing to share aspects of his/her experience although in a somewhat guarded manner. With respect to the partner, the speaker is beginning to recognize some aspect of the others experience although somewhat tentatively. Often the feelings expressed are down-played or explanations are provided for the feeling.

Expressive Style:

The tone is usually softer than either the confluent or stable state. It is neither business like and precise nor flat and uninvolved. The pace is more irregular and somewhat slower. The voice may suggest hesitation or questioning.

Language Useage:

The outstanding feature of tentative language is that qualifiers such as "sort of", "a little", "I guess" or "maybe" are often used to de-emphasize the experience in order to test the other's reaction. Self-experience is stated briefly, without elaboration. Language may be guarded or hesitant. Sometimes language will be somewhat vague indicating some confusion or a struggle to discover more of the experience of self

or other. However, it will not be highly intellectual. Although the content may be in the past, present, or future, the statement is always referring to the experience of self or other rather than outside events.

SEEKING

Quality of Organization:

This category involves a willingness to explore more of the experience of both self and other. This exploration may involve examination of how the feeling came about, what it means, or what the implications are for self and for the relationship. However, it does not involve an explanation or rationalization for the feeling.

There is an attempt to break away from a priori assumptions. The person may verbalize doubt or uncertainty. There is evidence of openness to seeing or hearing something he/she has not previously been aware of, a willingness to encounter new experience of self and other. An active attempt is being made to discover the experience of self and other. When the seeking is in relation to the speaker's partner, there is evidence of "active listening" in terms of checking out the perceptions and experience of the other rather than assuming to know what the other is thinking or feeling.

Expressive Style:

The pace is somewhat slower than the previous three categories and more irregular and uneven. Although the tone may, at times, be soft there is greater energy in the voice. The speaker appears to be personally involved in what he/she is saying. Seeking expressive style gives the listener the impression that the speaker is focussing on his/ her own experience or the experience of the other rather than speaking to make an impression on the listener.

Language Useage:

The speaker is focussing on current experience rather than past or future events. Language is more concrete and the speaker "owns" his/her feelings and reactions. There is less use of questions and qualifiers in this category and when used they are used for the purpose of exploration rather than manipulation or downplaying differences. For example, "I wonder if I get angry when I feel inadequate?" or "Maybe I get angry when

I feel inadequate". Questions, when addressed to the other, are aimed at discovering more of the current experience of the other, i.e., "You sound like you're getting a little bored, are you?" or "You're more relaxed now, now that we've finished?" with an inflection in the voice to denote a question.

CONTACTUAL

Quality of Organization:

The speaker is recognizing self-experience and acknowledging it as his/her own experience without projecting it onto others. The speaker is taking responsibility for his/her experience without explaining or rationalizing it and without blaming and criticizing others. The speaker may be recognizing aspects of the self and/or other which had been unacknowledged. There may be evidence of an integration of polarities, i.e., "I've always thought of myself as independent but I recognize that I can also be dependent on others." These usually involve discovery of something new in self or in others rather than perceiving self and others in a priori terms. Contact is made when a person looks beyond preconceived expectations and stereotypes to discover what actually exists at the moment. For example, "Although I think of myself as a selfless, nurturant mother, right now I can recognize that I feel resentful towards my children.", or "Although my stereotype of you might be that you are easy-going, I can recognize that right now you sound angry." In contact the speaker is allowing him/herself to see or hear what is outside their current self-organization.

Contact is also characterized by self and other differentiation including the recognition and acceptance of differences between self and other. In confluence the ideas, values, beliefs, and feelings of others are accepted as his/her own without checking these against self-experience. A statement that is truly representative of the feeling state that is being described will possess congruence between the voice and the content. Willingness to express differences without explaining, downplaying, or rationalizing them and without denying the experience of the other is an indication of good contact.

Expressive Style:

Contactual expressive style is characterized by a much slower pace and an uneven, irregular pattern, sometimes with pauses in unexpected places, as though the speaker is thinking aloud or "working through" his/her experience. There may be phrases which are more evenly paced, as when the self questioning gives way to recognition of self-experience that is now fully integrated. The tone is softer than the externalized voice quality and has a greater amount of energy than the flat, limited voice quality. The tone is indicating a high degree of personal involvement in what is being said.
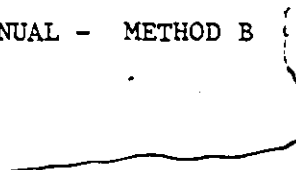
Language Useage:

Contact can only be made in the present. Therefore, in this category, the speaker is always focussing on present experience rather than past or future events or feelings. The language is specific and concrete as opposed to vague, abstract, or intellectual. The speaker is explicitly stating his/her feelings, reactions, attitudes and opinions and recognizing them as his/her own experience. The speaker is using the personal pronoun "I" rather than impersonal referent pronouns (you, they, we, one, everyone, it, people) and is not explaining or rationalizing his/her experience in terms of environmental influences.

Contactual language makes use of the active tense rather than the passive tense indicating recognition of choice and responsibility, i.e., "I broke the plate" or "I didn't complete my assignment" as opposed to "The plate got broken" or "My assignment isn't done". The use of "I won't" versus "I can't" and "I choose to" or "I want to" versus "I have to" are also indicative of the recognition of choice and responsibility inherent in contact.

APPENDIX D

BOUNDARY PROCESS SCALE

CODING MANUAL -   METHOD B

BOUNDARY PROCESS SCALE

CODING MANUAL - METHOD B

Introduction

This manual presents a technique for the systematic observation of
"boundary" fluctuations in dyadic interaction directly from tape recordings
and transcripts of a couple's communication. Boundary processes refer to
immediate regulatory processes that either restrict awareness of certain
aspects of one's experience or conversely allow and integrate new aspects
of experience. Boundary processes involve maintaining stability and also
encompass modification in experiential organization, i.e./how an individual
"let's go" of stabilized experience and recognizes, explores, and discovers
"more" of self and the other. The boundary approach presents an approach
to interaction that examines mutual influences on moment to moment exper-
iential organization. Such a method can bring greater clarity to how
couples communicate and relate to one another.

Scale Constructs

The constructs "confluence" and "contact" refer to two basic modes of
boundary functioning that represent the poles of the boundary process scale
continuum. Confluence refers to functioning that is at the restrictive,
rigid, end of the continuum, while contact refers to functioning that is at
the discovery, open to experience, end of the continuum. Confluence refers
to experiential organization in which self and others are perceived in
terms of familiar, a priori, restricted formulations. A person is confluent
when he or she "sees" or "hears" others in terms of expectations that are
embedded in his/her current restricted organization so the person cannot
recognize what "does not fit". Contact, on the other hand, is a process of
mutual discovery involving active exploration of experience. Contact refers
to recognizing more of what exists in self and other, a process which often
involves risk in encountering unfamiliar or unpredictable experience. .
Contactual functioning permits recognition of a wider range of experience.
Whereas confluent processes create the experience of an environment that is
rigid or relatively fixed, in contactual functioning a person's experiential
organization is less rigidly restricted.

Dyadic interaction is confluent when couples perceive one another in terms of assumptions, according to rigid roles and expectations, and relate to one another according to these preconceptions. In contactual interaction, an individual reaches out to recognize or discover what exists in the other at that moment rather than perceiving the other in a fixed and rigid way. Contact involves, for example, noticing and responding to an expression or tone which tells one more about the other's present experience than is evident from his/her overt functioning.

Scale Description

A schema of the scale is presented in Table 1. The scale categories, which should be viewed as points along a continuum are: 1) Confluent (CF), 2) Stable (ST), 3, Tentative (T), 4) Seeking (SK), and 5) Contactual (CT). The global descriptions of each category along the continuum are as follows:

Confluent: The person appears to maintain a position of things happening to self. He/she sees "fixed" traits or forces in self and in others. Self is experienced as reacting to "what exists". There is minimal exploration and self-reflection or perception of self as able to test alternatives.

Stable: A holding position of non-involvement in concerns about the relationship, self-experience, or position with respect to the environment. This is typical of casual conversation about impersonal or day to day topics or focussed discussions of a business nature.

Tentative: The person is paying relatively great attention to contemporary events. There is more evidence of "listening", at least in terms of consideration of input. The person's functioning seems less based on a priori assumptions.

Seeking: There is evidence of exploration, seeking data, recognition of doubt and uncertainty and some encountering of alternatives.

Contactual: The person is engaged in risky venturing in recognizing self-experience and in testing or seeking new perceptions of others. The tone and speed appear to involve steps in discovery. There is a relatively high degree of acknowledgment of self-awareness that appears new and as a challenge to self.

Table 1

Boundary Process Quality Scale

	Confluent	Stable	Tentative	Seeking	Contactual
(a) Quality of Organization	disowning ←——————————→ owning				
	assumptive perceptions ←——————————→ perceptual exploration				
	self-experience as victim ←——————————→ self-experience as responsible				
(b) Expressive Style	more rapid functioning ←——————————→ slower functioning				
	externalized voice quality ←——————————→ focussed voice quality				
	flat tone or emotional venting ←——————————→ excited, energetic voice				
(c) Language Useage	intellectual, abstract, vague ←——————————→ concrete, specific				
	there and then ←——————————→ here and now				

Although the boundary process scale allows a rater to assign a speech unit to one of the five points along a continuum, this coding is an attempt to assess the couple's functioning within a range on the scale as a measure of moment to moment process. The scale is intended to measure a person's current or immediate functioning rather than what type of person he or she may be or how he/she typically functions. You, the rater, will be looking and listening for three different aspects of functioning in relation to the scale categories. These aspects are a) quality of organization, b) expressive style, and c) language useage. Quality of organization refers to whether the statement is exploratory or assumptive and whether the speaker appears to experience self as responsible or victim. Expressive style refers to vocal and tonal qualities of the speaker's voice, i.e. Is the tone flat, externalized, energetic or excited and involved? Is the vocal functioning rapid or slower? Is the pace even or irregular? Language useage refers to the content of what is being said or the choice of words being used by the speaker. These three aspects of functioning are described in relation to each scale category on pages 96-103. Your assignment of a segment to one of the five scale categories (CF, ST, T, SK, CT) will be based on all three aspects (quality of organization, expressive style, and language useage). These three variables taken together will determine the dominant mode of functioning for a particular segment.

Concept of Directional Movement

Contact and confluence represent the poles on the boundary process dimension and directional movement can be observed along this dimension either towards or away from contact or conversely towards or away from confluence. Contact and confluence refer to modes of functioning that can change from moment to moment depending on the field supports available. In an effort to systematically observe the functioning of these postulated processes, it may be useful to also observe trends in a persons functioning over a series of speech units. For example, a husband continues to speak about how he is feeling, attempting to draw his wife's focus to their immediate experience; he continues for three "speech units" until he appears to succumb to the lack of response, at this level, in his wife. At this point his directional movement is redirected away from contact. Conversely, a husband may speak of fixed traits in self with no exploration of his

current experience. He may continue in this way for several speech units until his wife responds in terms of her current experience or responds by seeking information about his present feelings. At this point he may begin to pay attention to his current experience and show evidence of encountering new information. At this point his directional movement is redirected away from confluence and towards contact. Segments such as these may stand out as points at which the directional movement changes either towards or away from contact. This is what we refer to as "boundary fluctuations" in the introduction of this manual.

The Rating Task

The rating task is to assign each individual segment to one of the five scale categories (CF, ST, T, SK, CT). You, the rater, are to examine each segment with respect to quality of organization, expressive style, and language useage, and all three aspects should be considered in combination in arriving at a single judgment for that particular segment. A rating should never be made based on just one of these aspects but rather must be judged in accordance with the dominant mode of experiencing for that particular segment. Even if a particular aspect catches your attention, check out the other aspects also before deciding on a category rating.

The segments have been delineated by the researchers and each segment or speech unit is numbered. A speech unit ends when the other partner begins speaking or when the speaker has finished addressing him/herself to a particular question and continues to the next question. The content of the transcripts was derived from subjects' responses to a series of questions following their participation in a Gestalt "awareness" exercise. Appendix B contains the instructions for the "awareness" exercise. Appendix C contains the questions the subjects were responding to. It is these responses that make up the content of the transcripts that you will be coding.

It is essential that you listen to the audio tapes in conjunction with the typed transcripts since expressive style is one important dimension on which you will base your judgment. The number on the far left of the page on each transcript represents the approximate position on the audio tape where each segment occurs. This is provided for your convenience in locating a particular segment on the tape.

Instructions to Raters

First you will want to familiarize yourself with the scale constructs as described in this coding manual. To do this read through the coding manual and the descriptions of each aspect of the various modes of functioning in Appendix A. Raters following Method A used these descriptions as objective criteria on which to base their judgment when assigning speech units to one of the five categories. However, raters using this method (Method B) are to use the descriptions set out on pages 96-103 as a guideline only and to rely on their intuitive judgment in arriving at a rating for each segment.

The second major difference in using Method B is that you will consider the context of each speech unit in making a rating. As you begin a tape/transcript, read it through in an attempt to understand the process going on between the two people in terms of the confluence-contact continuum. Listen to it more than once if you need to in order to develop a sense of the ongoing process between the partners. The most critical difference between the two rating methods is for method B raters to bring in information that the other raters have been asked to omit, i.e. the ongoing process that may be inferred from the directional flow over an entire transcript. Raters using Method A were instructed to rate each segment independently, while you will consider the context in which each statement is embedded and your rating will be influenced by the ongoing processes inferred.

Each segment or speech unit is to be assigned to one of the five scale categories in terms of your sense of what it represents in the ongoing flow. As was discussed under the concept of directional movement, some segments may stand out as points at which the directional movement changes either towards or away from contact. You may want to code these segments which are somewhat sharper first and then go back and code the remaining segments.

Code each segment directly on to the typed transcript. Remember you are to assign each segment to only one scale category. Some segments may be comprised of more than one thought which allows for more than one rating. In these situations the rating for that segment will be based on the predominant mode of experiencing for that segment. Also, if a particular segment does not fit into any one of the five categories it may be left unscored. This may occur when all or most of the segment is inaudible, when the segment does not contain even one complete thought, or when not enough information or content is included in the speech unit to allow for a rating. However,

keep in mind that an incomplete thought is not always unscoreable. For
example, when a speaker is assuming that his/her partner knows what he/she
is about to say and fails to complete a sentence even though not interrupted,
this may indicate confluent functioning. Likewise, even one word can often
be scored when the rater considers the context in which that word is ex-
pressed. As with all the ratings, you will have to rely on your intuitive
judgment in deciding whether or not a segment should be left unscored. Be
sure that none of the five categories are applicable to the segment before
leaving it unscored.

It is natural to have positive and negative reactions to certain
speakers. Although this is a more intuitive rating method you must be
careful not to let your feelings about the speaker interfere with your
rating. Your rating should be based only on what you actually hear and
not on any inferences you might make about the speaker. Be sure you are
thoroughly familiar with the scale constructs and guidelines for scoring
before you begin coding. If you find you are having difficulty, take a
break, reread the coding manual and guidelines, and listen to the tape again.
It is recommended that raters work at the rating task no more than six hours
per day and that a ten to fifteen minute break be taken after two consecutive
hours since raters' fatigue may affect your rating discrimination. Rating
for less than two hours will usually prove inefficient since it will be
necessary to reread the coding manual at the beginning of every rating session.

Confidentiality

It is essential that you consider all tape-recorded or transcribed
material as private and confidential. Persons participating in this experi-
ment did so with the understanding that the materials would be used only
for research purposes and that those using the tapes and transcripts would
maintain professional conduct and ethics, treating their confidences with
respect. You are not to discuss or refer to the content of the materials
with anyone who is not directly connected with your rating task.

CONFLUENT

Quality of Organization:

While in a confluent state the speaker does not appear to be experiencing choices, but rather, is indicating that he/she is being operated on by persons or events outside the self. The speaker may be blaming or criticizing others or defending his/her own position. The speaker is not taking responsiblity for his/her own feelings and behaviour, i.e. "He makes me depressed because he's always criticizing me." or, "My job is so demanding I can't help it if I'm cranky when I get home." or, "He doesn't make me feel loved or wanted.".

A confluent quality of organization is also characterized by dichotomizing continuous dimensions of self and others. That is, the speaker is describing his/her self and others in terms of polarities such as weak/strong, lazy/hardworking, good/bad, i.e. "I'm a very stubborn person, always have been." This can prevent the person from recognizing that part of him/herself that would like to let go of the "stubborness". The speaker is giving the impression that the subject is powerless to act in other ways.

When in a confluent state the speaker is relating to self and others in terms of a priori assumptions. He/she appears to be perceiving the self and/or other in terms of what is expected rather than what is. The speaker is reacting to self and others based on preconceptions, stereotypes, categorizations or role expectations. These unchecked assumptions prevent the individual from feeling, seeing, or hearing what exists at the moment. For example, "He's so easy-going, he never gets angry." This woman's preconception concerning her husband may prevent her from recognizing that although he may often act in an "easy-going" manner, the tone of his voice and the look on his face right now is indicating that he is indeed experiencing feelings of anger. Likewise a woman's stereotype of herself as a selfless, nurturing mother may be preventing her from recognizing that at this moment she is experiencing frustration and resentment towards her children. ..

A confluent quality of organization is also characterized by negating or denying feelings and self experience. Denial of self experience can sometimes be observed as agreement with the other that is later negated

in the same sentence or in a subsequent statement, i.e., "I agree that it was superficial but I felt that there was something important that came up." Feelings, when verbalized, are described without personal involvement, as though the speaker were talking about someone else. At times a speaker may appear to be exploring his/her feelings, behaviours, reactions or his/ her relationships but is doing so in an analytical, intellectual way, searching for reasons or explanations, with no attention being paid to his/ her personal experience. This mode of communicating is usually accompanied by the "externalized" voice described below and is also indicative of confluence.

Expressive Style:

Confluence is usally accompanied by either an "externalized" voice quality or a "limited" voice quality.

The externalized voice quality is characterized by more rapid functioning, with a steady, unhesitating pace. The pattern of accents is regular for English and though the pace may speed up slightly as the speaker approaches an accent point, the overall effect is that of an even, unhesitating, and fairly rapid pace. The speaker's manner of expression may be remote, matter of fact, or have a mechanical or rehearsed quality. This style gives the listener the impression that what is being said is being spoken without actually being aware of one's own or the other's present experience. The externalized voice can have a lecturing quality to it, as though the speaker were reciting a speech. Any energy invested in the voice seems to be directed outward in an effort to produce an effect on the listener rather than arising from the self experience of the speaker.

A limited voice can also be indicative of confluence. The limited voice is flat andmonotonous, lacking in energy and excitement. The pace is slower but, like the externalized voice, fairly even and regular.

Language Useage:

Several aspects of language useage can indicate confluence. Since contact can only be made in the present, relating incidents from the past or predicting the future is a means of avoiding contact and is indicative of confluence. In confluence, here and now experience is neither recognized or attended to. The listener may be aware of some feeling that is not being recognized or acknowledged by the speaker

Confluent language will sometimes have a vague, abstract, or intellectual quality. The speaker does not explicitly state his/her feelings or reactions or does so in a detached, impersonal manner as things which exist outside the self to be reported, labeled, or explained.

The content or the choice of words used by the speaker is often an indication of the degree of confluence in a given communication. The words a person chooses to express him/herself are a reflection his/her current experience. The use of impersonal referent pronouns such as "it", "you", "they", "we", "everybody", "one" can be indications of lack of self-other differentiation, i.e., "Suddenly it became very tense in the room" rather than "suddenly I feel very tense". The use of "won't" versus "can't" and "I have to" versus "I choose to" is used when the speaker is avoiding responsibility for his/her choice and responsibility. Feelings of power-lessness, of being controlled and manipulated by outside influences are often suggested by the use of the passive tense, i.e., "The dishes didn't get done this morning", or, "My last paycheck is all spent". In contrast, the active tense suggests owning or responsibility, i.e., "I didn't do the dishes this morning" or "I spent my whole paycheck this week".

Confluent relationships are marked by an intolerance for and a downplaying of differences. Often a question is used rather than a clear statement of the individual's experience and wants, i.e., "Aren't you hungry?" versus "I'm hungry. I'd like to go for dinner now." or, "Isn't it cold in here?" versus "I'm cold. I'd like to get a sweater, turn the heat up, etc.". Another means of downplaying differences is through seeming to agree while qualifying the agreement. This can be observed in the use of qualifiers such as "but", "I guess", "maybe", or "sort of" which give mixed messages or sometimes totally contradict or disqualify the first part of the message. For example, "Yes I'm hungry too but it's so early to eat." This statement leaves the listener confused as to what the speaker actually feels and wants. The responder appears to be agreeing while at the same time indicating that he/she is not really that hungry and would prefer to eat later. No clear statement is made with respect to his/her actual experience and wants. The language is often vague, with the speaker "skirting around" the issue rather than getting to the point. The speaker may be presenting incomplete thoughts as though expecting the listener to be able to "read his/her mind". The speaker is not clearly stating his/her experience or feelings. This

vagueness leaves the listener confused as to what the speaker is trying to communicate. Often one partner will complete a sentence or fill in a word for his/her partner. If this is done without an inflection to indicate a question, it is indicative of confluence since the person is assuming that he/she knows what the other is thinking or feeling. Also, incomplete sentences where the speaker assumes the other knows what they meant or what they are implying by the unfinished statement are indicative of confluence.

STABLE

Quality of Organization:

There is little concern or attention being paid to feelings, self-experience, or the relationship. Statements are concerned with discussing or planning day to day matters. There is little evidence of emotions in this category, either in the form of being in touch with feelings or in actively avoiding them due to discomfort.

This category is comprised of statements which are unrelated to the couple's feelings, relationship, or present experience. For example, reading the question from the cards or the use of idiomatic expressions commonly used in English such as "right", "sure", "um hum", "of course", are scored stable. The rater will have to rely on tone of voice to determine if the use of a word or words are in fact idiomatic expressions or not. For example, if there is evidence of some emotion not being expressed or if the tonal quality is incongruent with the language useage, confluence may be indicated.

Expressive Style:

The voice quality is at a stable, intermediate level. The pace is even, lacking the pauses indicative of searching or exploring and moderately rapid, as in a business discussion. The tone too is at an intermediate level - crisp and precise rather than either overly flat or highly charged with emotion or excitement. The listener is given the impression that the speaker is efficiently "taking care of business" with relatively little emotional involvement.

Language Useage:

Language is most likely to be either in the past, relating facts relevent to the discussion, or in the future, planning what is to take place.

Language is concrete and specific as opposed to abstract and vague but
unconcerned with present experience or affective feelings. Listening is
focussed on gathering information about the topic as opposed to discovering
something of the experience of the self or other. Speaking is focussed
on imparting facts rather than sharing experience.

TENTATIVE

Quality of Organization:

Tentative statements give the listener the impression that the speaker
is beginning to recognize and acknowledge some feeling in relation to what
is being said although he/she is not explicitly describing the feeling.
When a feeling or an aspect of self experience is stated, it is described
briefly, without elaboration, and somewhat reluctantly. However, the
speaker does seem more willing to share aspects of his/her experience although
in a somewhat guarded manner. With respect to the partner, the speaker is
beginning to recognize some aspect of the others experience although somewhat
tentatively. Often the feelings expressed are downplayed or explanations
are provided for the feeling.

Expressive Style:

The tone is usually softer than either the confluent or stable state. It
is neither business like and precise nor flat and uninvolved. The pace
is more irregular and somewhat slower. The voice may suggest hesitation or
questioning.

Language Useage:

The outstanding feature of tentative language is that qualifiers such
as "sort of", "a little", "I guess" or "maybe" are often used to de-emphasize
the experience in order to test the other's reaction. Self experience is
stated briefly, without elaboration. Language may be guarded or hesitant.
Sometimes language useage will be somewhat vague indicating some confusion
or a struggle to discover more of the experience of self or other. However,
it will not be highly intellectual. Although the content may be in the past,
present, or future, the statement is always referring to the experience of
self or other rather than outside events.

SEEKING

Quality of Organization:

This category involves a willingness to explore more of the experience of both self and other. This exploration may involve examination of how the feeling came about, what it means, or what the implications are for self and for the relationship. However, it does not involve an explanation or rationalization for the feeling.

There is an attempt to break away from a priori assumptions. The person may verbalize doubt or uncertainty. There is evidence of openness to seeing or hearing something he/she has not previously been aware of, a willingness to encounter new experience of self and other. An active attempt is being made to discover the experience of self and other. When the seeking is in relation to the speaker's partner, there is evidence of "active listening" in terms of checking out the perceptions and experience of the other rather than assuming to know what the other is thinking or feeling.

Expressive Style:

The pace is somewhat slower than the previous three categories and more irregular and uneven. Although the tone may, at times, be soft there is greater energy in the voice. The speaker appears to be personally involved in what he/she is saying. Seeking expressive style gives the listener the impression that the speaker is focussing on his/her own experience or the experience of the other rather than speaking to make an impression on the listener.

Language Useage:

The speaker is focussing on current experience rather than past or future events. Language is more concrete and the speaker "owns" his/her feelings and reactions. There is less use of questions and qualifiers in this category and when used they are used for the purpose of exploration rather than manipulation or downplaying differences. For example, "I wonder if I get angry when I feel inadequate?" or "Maybe I get angry when I feel inadequate". Questions, when addressed to the other are aimed at discovering more of the current experience of the other, i.e., "You sound like you're getting a little bored, are you?" or "You're more relaxed now, now that we've finished?", with an inflection in the voice to denote a question.

CONTACTUAL

Quality of Organization:

The speaker is recognizing self experience and acknowledging it as his/ her own experience without projecting it onto others. The speaker is taking responsibility for his/her experience without explaining or rational- izing it and without blaming and criticizing others. The speaker may be recognizing aspects of the self and/or other which had been unacknowledged. There may be evidence of an integration of polarities, i.e., "I've always thought of myself as independent but I recognize that I can also be dependent on others." These usually involve discovery of something new in self or in others rather than perceiving self and others in a priori terms. Contact is made when a person looks beyond preconceived expectations and stereotypes to discover what actually exists at the moment. For example, "Although I think of myself as a selfless, nurturant mother, right now I can recognize that I feel resentful towards my children.", or "Although my stereotype of you might be that you are easy-going I can recognize that right now you sound angry." In contact the speaker is allowing him/herself to see or hear what is outside their current self-organization.

Contact is also characterized by self and other differentiation including the recognition and acceptance of differences between self and other. In confluence the ideas, values, beliefs, and feelings of others are accepted as his/her own without checking these against self experience. A statement that is truly representative of the feeling state that is being described will possess congruence between the voice and the content. Willingness to express differences without explaining, downplaying, or rationalizing them and without denying the experience of the other is an indication of good contact.

Expressive Style:

Contactual expressive style is characterized by a much slower pace and an uneven, irregular pattern, sometimes with pauses in unexpected places, as though the speaker is thinking aloud or "working through" his/her experience. There may be phrases which are more evenly paced, as when the self questioning gives way to recognition of self experience that is now full integrated. The tone is softer than the externalized voice quality and has a greater amount of energy than the flat, limited voice quality. The tone is indicating

a high degree of personal involvement in what is being said.

Language Useage:

Contact can only be made in the present. Therefore, in this category, the speaker is always focussing on present experience rather than past or future events or feelings. The language is specific and concrete as opposed to vague, abstract, or intellectual. The speaker is explicitly stating his/her feelings, reactions, attitudes and opinions and recognizing them as his/her own experience. The speaker is using the personal pronoun "I" rather than impersonal referent pronouns (you, they, we one, everyone, it, people) and is not explaining or rationalizing his/her experience in terms of environmental influences.

Contactual language makes use of the active tense rather than the passive tense indicating recognition of choice and responsibility, i.e., "I broke the plate" or "I didn't complete my assignment" as opposed to "The plate got broken" or "My assignment isn't done". The use of "I won't" versus "I can't" and "I choose to" or "I want to" versus "I have to" are also indicative of the recognition of choice and responsibility inherent in contact.

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