person and the direction of his actions are not physical but social in nature. With this in mind let us return to the social experiment which was undertaken at the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station.



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II

It is well known that the amount of success a teacher has in the classroom depends not only on her *skill* but to a great extent on the *atmosphere* she creates. This atmosphere is something intangible; it is a property of the social situation as a whole, and might be measured scientifically if approached from this angle. As a beginning, therefore, Lippitt selected a comparison between a democratic and an autocratic atmosphere for his study. The purpose of his experiment was not to duplicate any given autocracy or democracy or to study an "ideal" autocracy or democracy, but to create set-ups which would give insight into the underlying group dynamics. Two groups of boys and girls, ten and eleven years of age, were chosen for a mask-making club from a group of eager volunteers of two different school classes. With the help of the Moreno test both groups were equated as much as possible on such qualities as leadership and interpersonal relations. There were eleven meetings of the groups, the democratic group meeting always two days ahead of the autocratic one. The democratic group chose its activities freely. Whatever they chose the autocratic group was then ordered to do. In this way the activities of the group were equated. On the whole, then, everything was kept constant except the group atmosphere.

The leader in both groups was an adult student. He tried to create the different atmospheres by using the following technique:

Democratic

1. All policies a matter of group determination, encouraged and drawn out by the leader.
2. Activity perspective given by an explanation of the general steps of the process during discussion at first meeting (clay mould, plaster of Paris, papier-mâché, etc.). Where technical advice was needed, the leader tried to point out two or three alternative procedures from which choice could be made.
3. The members were free to work with whomever they chose and the division of tasks was left up to the group.
4. The leader attempted to be a group member in spirit and in discussion but not to perform much of the actual work. He gave objective praise and criticism.

Authoritarian

1. All determination of policy by the strongest person (leader).
2. Techniques and steps of attaining the goal (completed mask) dictated by the authority, one at a time, so that future direction was always uncertain to a large degree.
3. The authority usually determined autocratically what each member should do and with whom he should work.
4. The dominator criticized and praised individual's activities *without giving objective reasons,* and remained aloof from active group participation. He was always impersonal rather than outwardly hostile or friendly (a necessary concession in method).