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Soc. Rel 110
Mr. Keesing

A Decision*model for Dressing

Excellent -
I got a lot dirty going
through your flow diagrams &
and am not sure there is a
way out of all of them -
but I'll take your word for it -
Would like to Xerox a
copy of this after Xmas -

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1. My informant was I myself, that is, an alienated American first-year graduate student, typically poverty-stricken and underfed. I will outline my eliciting procedure giving results only where they exist. The problem was to determine the principles my informant uses in selecting which clothes to wear (from his immense wardrobe) in various situations. The informant was able to distinguish situations for which he had not the proper clothes, situations for which he knew not the proper clothes, and clothes for which he knew no proper situations. One fact which emerged from the investigation was that, far from situations determining clothes, to a very large extent clothes determine situations. was used

The following initial set of questions ~~was asked and was asked~~:

1. What kinds of clothes are there? (The answer, which we only summarize, gave types in order of donning of this order: /underwear/, /shirts/, /pants/, /socks/, /belts/, /sweaters/, /shoes/, and many more).
2. What kinds of 'underwear' (etc. etc.) are there?
3. What clothes do you have? (A finite, if not small, list.)
4. What grades of clothes are there? (This subtle linguistic subterfuge revealed a long list of ~~the~~ special terms relating to 'formality': /formal/ (~~white~~ "white tie", "tails"), /semi-formal/ ("smoking", ..), /informal/, ~~and~~ /coatandtie/ ("dining hall"), /schoolclothes/, /sundaybest/, /birthdaysuit/, /sweatsuit/, ...)

It was decided to restrict attention to the items of clothing which the informant could actually present. We thus sidestepped clothes which are recognized as appropriate in situations in which our informant would never find himself. (Contingency rules were obtainable and will be suggested later.) The result of the questions, combined with the results of the next section, yield a list of the discrete types of clothing possessed by the informant classified

by type and graded within each type.

2. It became apparent in questioning that certain regularities could be formalized between different types of clothes. Hence, the pants known as 'suit pants' can be worn only with 'suit jacket', and 'belt' is used only in conjunction with certain examples of pants. Similarly, the item 'sweater' or 'outer coat' was used only under cold weather conditions, as 'sandals' ~~are~~ were worn only in warm weather. 'Shoes' and 'boots' were always accompanied by 'socks.' Eliminating weather conditions as a factor, and collapsing clothing types which are uniformly predictable (egg., shoe --> socks), we were able to arrive at the following 'phrase structure' description, by type, of outfits.

- i Outfit --> (Clothing) (Parentheses indicate optional items)
- ii Clothing --> Underwear (Outers) (Footwear)
- iii Outers --> Bottoms (Uppers)
- iv Uppers --> Shirt (Jacket) (Tie)
- v Footwear --> {Shoe}
{Boot}
- vi Underwear --> List (For our informant: underpants)
- vii Bottoms --> List (might include shorts, bathing trucks, as well as pants)
- viii Shirt --> List
etc. etc.

These rules indicate merely how items of clothing may be combined to form legitimate outfits. (Hence, for example, an outfit consisting of underwear, pants, and a ~~suit~~ jacket without a shirt would not be legitimate.) The descriptions ~~generated~~ generated by these rules will not, of course, necessarily be 'normal'; we have no specification about the appropriateness, e.g., of bathing trucks together with tweed jackets, and outfits may be bizarre. What becomes apparent from the examples is that for our gradually contracting system, the clothing categories to ~~deal~~ deal with explicitly are: Bottoms, Shirts, Jacket (+ Tie), & Footwear. At least, these

are the categories which we will concentrate on for expansion.

3. Isolating the four categories of clothing may be done by asking, of a displayed corpus of apparel, ~~the~~ which of the items can be arranged first into type and then graded. Underwear is not a graded item. (Informant notes that for some, especially promiscuous bachelors, the state of one's underwear might be more crucial.) Informant wanted to rate (grade) his clothes by the general ~~xxx~~ characteristics "good clothes", "crappy clothes," and these which were neither one nor the other. The inventory so ~~character~~ ordered (eliminating duplicated items) is given below.

The Top Drawer Principle, Hasland's 14th Law

Pants (Bottoms)

Suit pants
Brown Pants
Grey Pants
Corduroy pants
~~New blue jeans~~
Old blue jeans
Hole-filled blue jeans

Shirts

White shirt
Blue shirt
Flower-power shirt
Cowboy shirt
Itchy light sweater
Mexican 5-peso shirt
Sweatshirt
---- (No shirt)

Table 1.

Jackets (+Tie)

Suit Jacket + Tie
Tweed Jacket + Tie
~~Highly jackets~~
---- (No jacket)

Footwear

Good Shoes
Regular shoes
Cruddy regular shoes
Cowboy boots
Tennis shoes
---- (No shoes)

The items above the first line are graded as 'good'; those below the bottom line are graded as 'crappy.' Note that in the category Jackets, there are only items in the 'good' grade.

This list of clothes, we repeat, is not exhaustive. Our informant located these items as the ones which participated ~~into~~ in the variation which governs the acceptability of different composite outfits in different situations.

4. To understand the informant's intuitions about how situations

govern outfits, or are related to 'good' and 'crappy' clothes, We asked questions like: what is a clear case when you would be apt to wear 'good' clothes; or 'crappy' ones? The infinite (or potentially infinite?) set of ~~xxxx~~ situations indicated that there were rules, perhaps extension rules~~m~~ which allowed particular cases to count as evidence for wearing 'good' or 'crappy' clothes in the unclear situations. Or, alternatively, there may just be cases where there is no way to decide. By a process of listing and generalizing we arrived at the following lists. It is important to note that the informant has given cases where: "it would clearly be appropriate to wear good (crappy) clothes." Border-cases are hopefully excluded, though exceptions are possible (and will presumably be handled by the contingency rules below.) The lists are open-ended, as, evidently, are the operations ~~rules~~ ^{of actual choice}.

Table 2: Good and crappy clothes situations

<u>Good</u>	<u>Crappy</u>
Events in Churches	Relaxation or work in house
Institutional Events in the Arts	Repair work outside
Invited Social Events	Sport (participation)
Business dealings in an office	Travelling
Visiting in 'Dress-up' Cities
...	

On the 'good' side the informant includes weddings, concerts, going to dinner, asking for bank loans, and walking around New York. Informant points out that much more structured standards exist for some (look in Amy Vanderbilt, institutionalized experts, fashion mags), but that given the limitations of his own 'role' the most realistic model is given by clearly 'good' situations, clearly 'crappy' ones, and in-between ones with varying degrees of 'goodness' determined by contingency rules, to which we proceed.

5. According to the model we have developed so far, certain broadly defined situations tend to suggest certain broadly defined articles of clothing. There is no suggestion, so far, of the possible variations and modifications that are possible at the level of the outfit. One broad sort of modification from an initial conglomeration of garments may ~~be~~ brought about by weather conditions. We did not quiz our informant on the full complexity of 'dressing ~~warmly~~ warmly' etc., but concentrated on the special effects of weather conditions on our basic clothing categories. Hence, we determined that cold weather often implies donning a heavy sweater, and that warm weather quite often means shedding shoes or boots for sandals. But, our informant insisted, neither of these --- sweater or sandal --- was possible with a suit ensemble. Weather modifications which would not imply special constructions ~~include~~ include the donning of special outerwear: heavycoats, raincoats. (Informant notes that though we can explain his dressing principles simply by some rough rule about putting on a raincoat (overcoat) whenever it's raining (~~is~~ cold), for some segments of the population who have more than one overcoat, other choice elements are present; informant is not aware of guiding principles in such affluent cases.) We will note such clothing changes only as regularities contingent upon weather. (In a similar way we shall assume that each category of clothing is in principle able to have warmer or lighter members at ~~any~~ any one line in Table 1. Hence, there may be both long and short sleeved "blue shirts") ^{except that for a full description you might need a contingency rule up your sleeve}

*tailored's 15th
-aw: the more
defiant the
reductive the less
flant the model*

The major sort of modification that takes place in adjusting an entire outfit, according to our informant, is not explained by

postulating equivalence classes of outfits and moving relatively freely between members of classes. Rather, one has implicit principles according to which a slight (or rather major) revision of certain parts of an outfit will effectively upgrade or downgrade the whole outfit on some scale of 'goodness' to 'crappyness.' Thus, by a process of comparing and grading different combinations of elements (generated by our first provisional grammar) we located the following principles.

1. The easiest way to upgrade an outfit ~~xxxx~~ is accomplished by adding a jacket (plus or minus a tie: adding a tie is an improving adjustment.)
2. Given such changes, an improvement could be effected by improving the pants (just moving up the scale).
3. Improving the shirt only is useful in upgrading an entire outfit given that all possible improvements in the above areas short of putting on a suit have been made.

The case of the suit must be treated with especial care, since it ~~is~~ presupposes a unique combination of items, namely suit pants and jacket, white shirt and tie, with good shoes. ~~This~~ Furthermore, the suit elements and the good shoes appear only in this context: we can, in our explicit formulation, thus collapse the complex description into just 'suit', meaning here the unique constellation mentioned.

6. It remains to mention the principles which guide this last sort of modification before we specify the model in all its formality. The informant gave examples of the special circumstances under which he might modify (upgrade or downgrade) an outfit. We have generalized our ~~six~~ principles from these examples, taking as basic categories the circumstances which produce a particular degree of modification. (I.e., we tried to build a category of

circumstances which would result, e.g., in an especially strong upgrading, etc.) Examples of the sort of statement made follow:

When my parents come I dress better.

Sometimes I go to class I ~~put on blue jeans~~ I select old rather than new bluejeans because they are a little crappier and come closer to projecting the accepted careless image prevalent among my supposed friends.

If I want to have a ~~respectable~~ certain influence among 'respectable people' I normally am slightly more careful (Q: better?) .. yes, in my dressing.

From questioning it emerged that the informant had a different outfit which might best be called a 'costume' --- namely ~~an~~ cowboy shirt, old bluejeans and cowboy boots used to play folk music. This turned out to be the only context in which cowboy boots ~~are~~ actually occur (they hurt the feet otherwise). We thus collapsed this constellation into the single unit 'costume' and revised the ~~is~~ list of shoes or footwear as follows.

Footwear

Regular shoes
Regular shoes
 Tennis shoes
 ---- (no shoes)

(That is, in the grades of 'good' and 'indifferent' regular shoes are offered. In the special cases of 'suit' or 'costume', the appropriate footwear is included in the whole constellation.)

The major ~~series~~ categories of extenuating circumstances emerged tentatively in the following form:

1. Impose 'costume' in any folkmusic role.
2. Upgrade severely in situations involving elder in position of authority (parent, professor, etc...) who is apt to be exercising that authority. (Getting this to be explicit obviously involves ~~some~~ principles of wide operation in the culture.)
3. Upgrade slightly in presence of general elders and non-friend or conservative peers.
4. Downgrade slightly in presence of tolerant peers or friends. (This situation would be qualitatively different. If I were able to wear mod clothes. The informant's closest approximation to the world of fashion comes with dressing badly, i.e., crappily.)

These principles are all modified slightly by unconscious feelings of formality of general sloppiness which must be personal. Similarly, all these principles are subject to the general state of mind which determines whether the informant wants to influence the people in question favorably or unfavorably. In the latter cases the direction of 'grading' will presumably be reversed (though perhaps modified slightly).

7. We now proceed to show, by flowchart, the dressing principles uncovered on the modest scale to which we have been reduced. It is worth noting that what we give below is a 'dressing model,' That is, we do not give a model by which one chooses a particular full outfit according to a typology of situations. Rather we present the model by which informant creates and modifies a uniform, showing the sort of decision problem he faces at each juncture. Tables 1 and 2 are used by the flowchart as sources of information for making some decisions as indicated.

^{Also}
~~For example~~, the question of whether one can 'upgrade' an item, like pants asks whether it is possible to move upwards ~~in the x-part x-part x-part x-part x-part~~ on a scale of pants according to 'goodness.' The tables to give upgrading and downgrading are shown here:

<u>Pants</u>	<u>Shirts</u>	<u>Jackets</u>
Brown Pants	White shirt	Tweed Jacket
Grey pants	Blue shirt	---- (no jacket)
Corduroy pants	Flower-shirt	
Blue jeans (unspec.)	Cowboy shirt	
	Light sweater	
	Mexican shirt	
	Sweatshirt	

~~Regular~~

~~Regular~~

~~Grade~~ For our purposes, if an item is not found on a list here it is neither possible to upgrade or downgrade it. (Old and new blue-

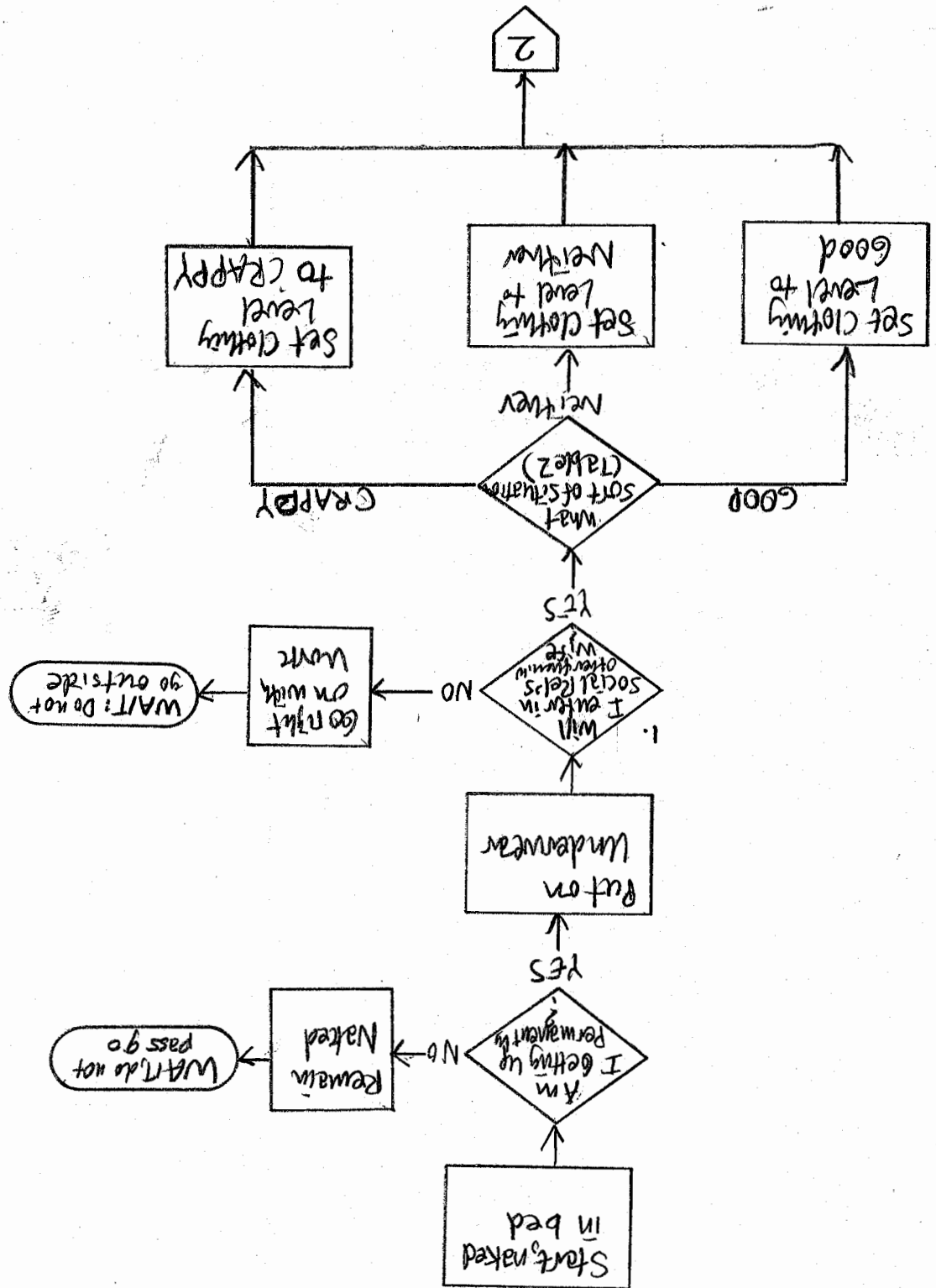
jeans are considered to be bluejeans.) Also, e.g., it is not possible to upgrade the highest element on a list or downgrade the lowest. To upgrade an element means to substitute for it the next element in the list above, and similarly for downgrading. These tables were obtained from the informant by asking whether, e.g., it improves one's outfit by keeping pants and jacket constant and switching a blue shirt for a ~~flax~~ flower-power shirt.

Notes on the diagrams: (numbers refer to boxes labelled)

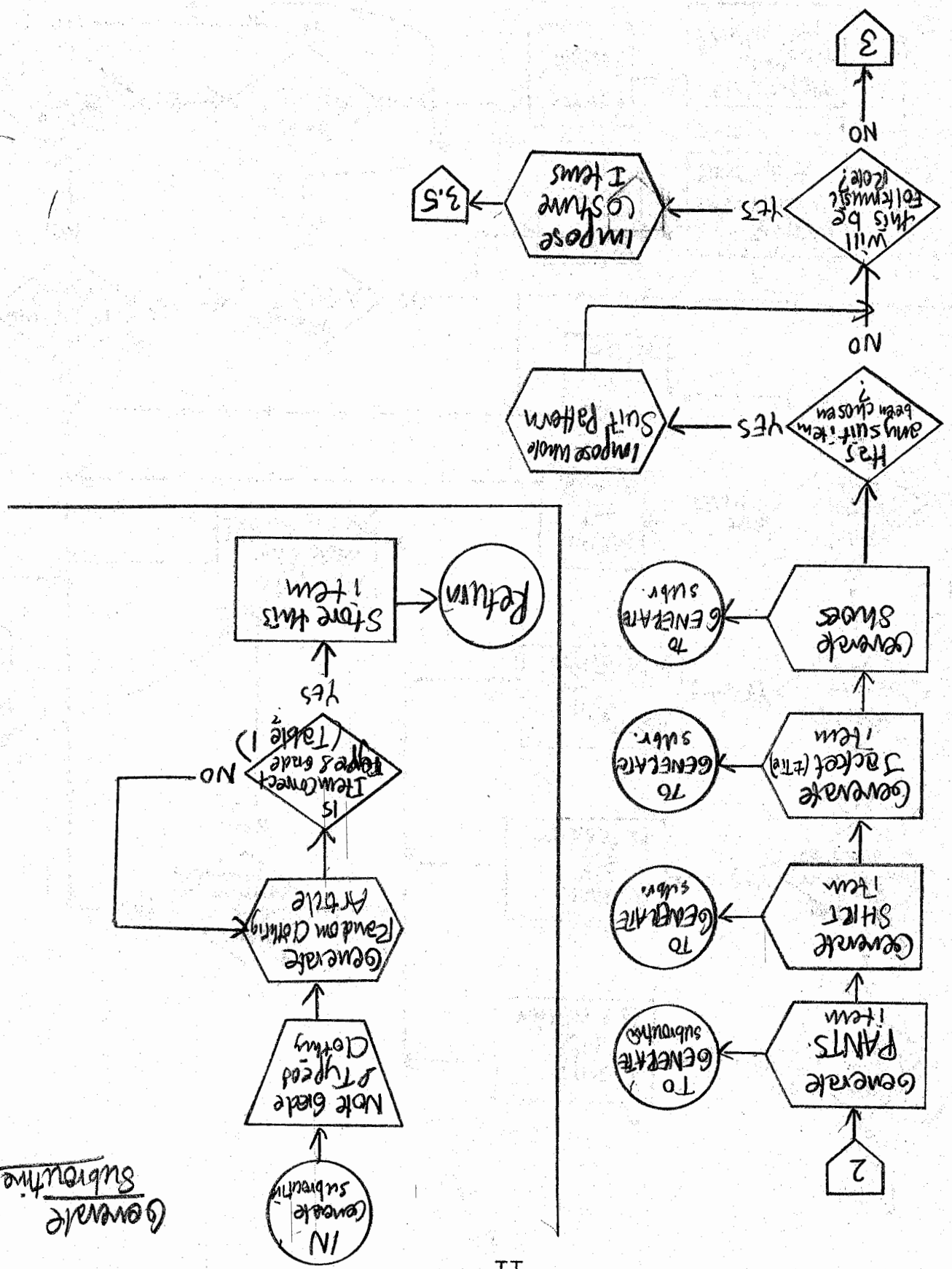
- 1) Decision involves knowing whether I will be going outside the house, or seeing anyone but wife: i.e., whether or not it is necessary to put pants on.
2. This subroutine merely picks the correct sort of clothing of the indicated grade out of the drawer.
- 3) "Modifier" is the name of a number which scales, roughly, the strength of extenuating circumstances which tend towards formality.
- 4) This decision involves choosing whether or not the situation will be one in which the extenuating tendencies will be followed or deliberately bucked: i.e., whether I will have elder authority respect me or get a bad impression.
- 5) This decision allows us to up- or downgrade the outfit according to the strength of extenuating circumstances. Only possible values for Modifier are -1, 0, +1, +2.

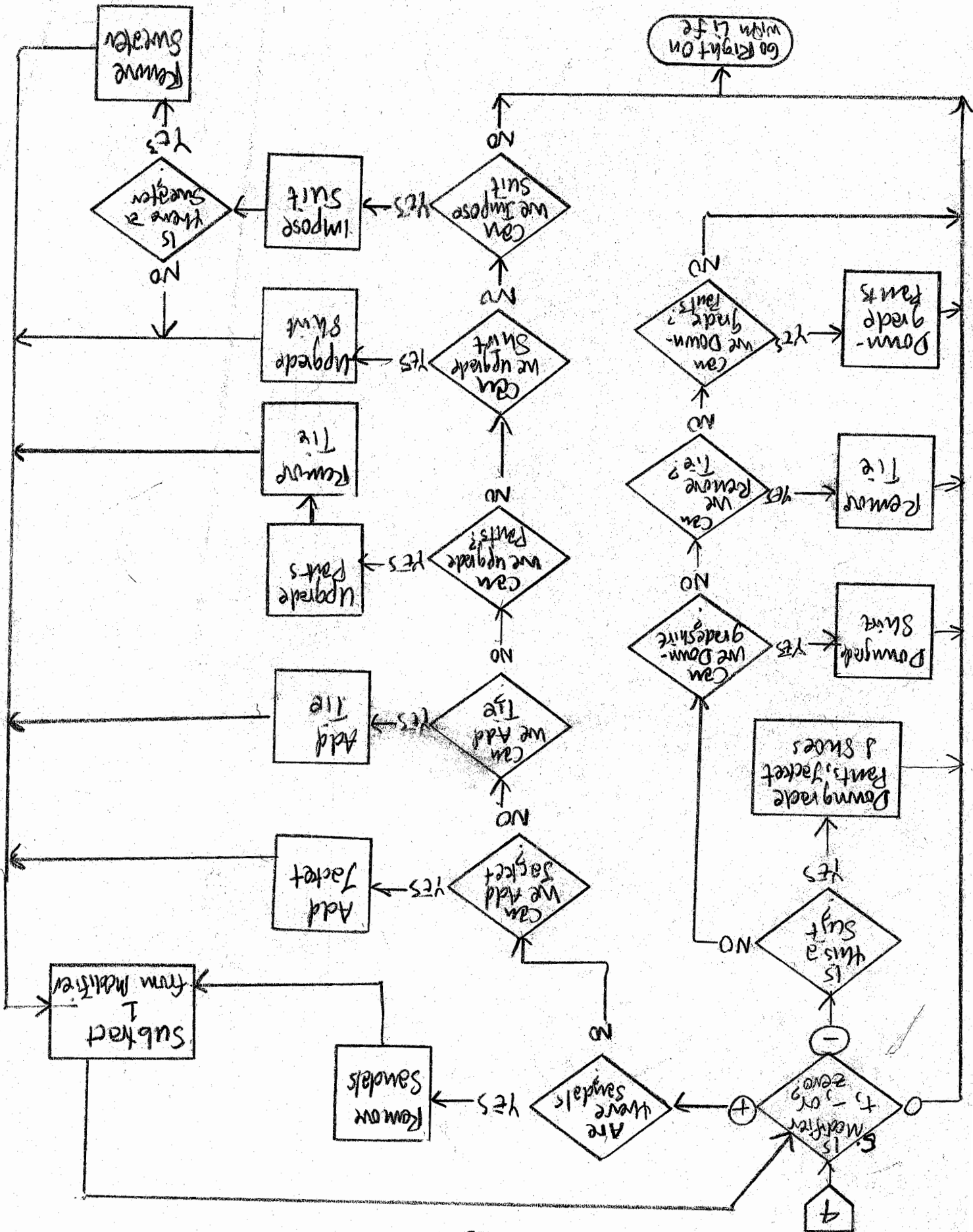
We may now give the flowdiagram, which contains certain idealized principles by which we can ~~construct~~ reconstruct the process of deciding on an outfit of clothes given certain knowledge of situations to be entered and given the arrays of information shown in Tables ~~E E~~ 1 & 2, plus the grading scale of p. 8.

do not collect \$200



Generate Subroutine - 2.





9. We will conclude with some general comments about this approach as opposed to others. We did not attempt to classify outfits by equivalence class and to give an exhaustive (or even partial) categorization of situations. For the role in question (our informant's) there are relatively limited numbers of major ~~xx~~ outfit sorts. Rather, the situation is best expressed by the implicit variations which effect the over-all grading of outfits. Similarly, the exact standards for dress in a wide range of situations are culturally determined only weakly: special circumstances induce one (with some regularity) to improve or crap up the outfit that one will wear. There are certain absolutes: the suit outfit, for example. But as far as the categorization of situations is concerned, regularities seems best expressed by a weak classification by 'clearly good' and 'clearly crappy' clothes called for.

The system could be further formalized (i.e., by showing an explicit sequence of outfits varying individual items and showing grading). And there is possible quarrel with the inclusion of variables (decisions) like "how do I feel: more formal, or sloppier?" The rationale for including such a decision is that by doing so we can show its subordinate place to certain, more or less specifiable conditions, which govern cultural appropriateness. Hence, this decision becomes operable only after one has considered the relevant aspects of a situation which is expected.

The system easily lends itself to expansion by specifying situations better and to the following added complexity:

- 1) What principles govern mid-stream changing of outfit, i.e., to adapt oneself to changing situation (loosening tie, etc.)
- 2) How do new clothes fit into a pre-existing scheme?
- 3) Are there other grading schemes which rate, e.g., color.