

Outline to complete Dysfunction at the Junction

Ch. 13 Why the spirit touched me in the ballroom is explained, as our discussion is revealed/analyzed as an (abortive) example of a model social form/process for merging many into one without loss of individuality and autonomy. It is a simple model, addressing the issue of effective democracy in a plural society. Other examples of it are cited, extending first to revolutionary tradition, then to group learning processes, then to interior self-governance, making universal the terms of the issue. With this, arbitrarily (as it did happen) the ballroom party ends.

Ch. 14 An interlude with Peter on the grass outside, during which these lofty concerns recede and I touch, in mind and memory, the earth. Then a visit, that night, to friends in LA, whose work-biographies testify not only to the difficulties, frustrations and slowness of working to integrate the personal/social modes in human service, but also to a subtler problem and thesis: that the directions of organizational evolution/transformation which open out "naturally" from human potential learning have been artificially inhibited, and remain genuinely to be explored.

Besides this thesis, this chapter is meant both as a human leaven to the general abstraction of 9-13, and as a break (or rather a cusp, a passage-passage) in the narrative flow and texture -- kind of a ritard, preparing for the essay's fourth & final movement: my workshop on Self-Determination with Vasconcellos.

Ch. 15 I come to the workshop, hear the other speakers (2) out, say my piece; a minor shitstorm breaks out; Vasconcellos is distanced from me. On the bones of this slow simple narrative, several fabrics are hung.

One concerns V. and me, couched both very personally and very professionally. My take on the man, the legislator; our relation man-to-man, philosopher-to-statesman. How he sought me out; what it meant to me; what's become of the several years of my arguing with him about his ideas; my admiration for his daring to take the plunge of change and combine it with social vision; my distrust and dread of how he is doing so; what it is to live with such contradictions of feeling.

Another concerned with his networking effort "Self-Determination". The drama is posed: he expects me to say something furthering. The issue is profound though the venture is primitive: it is the present-day social version of the issue named in ch. 13, as well as the issue simply of how to bring human potential people and modalities both into social integration and influence. How can people (of the New Age?) in the human potential orbit and in law, education, social work, politics, health, etc. bring both themselves and the ideas/techniques they bear together for mutual support in what they're doing and also to form a synergic force to change society, in this case ("Self-Determination") by pursuing a social movement and mechanisms to make sure humanistic lifeaffirming legislators are elected who will discompose themselves like roses?

How, indeed? The issue is crucial; it is of networking networks and generating new social forms to replace massive hierarchical bureaucracies, as well as of the goals V. sets. Yet SD itself was largely an inept, and perhaps cruelly-useless, caper that dissipated a lot of people's energy, besides being used fraudulently by Rogers et. al. as noted in earlier chapters.

The split between personal/social activities is only one aspect of the general fractionation of change-work during the past decade. As an early prototype venture to synergize the fractions, SD's failure deserves some analysis, and perhaps some comparison with other ways people are now trying, and might try, to make a whole of our parts again. In the workshop I call the shots as I see them, V.'s check for my airfare down being still uncashed as I write, exposing my conflict. As I take V. & Co. to task publicly for the media-shuck they have helped Rogers, Marilyn, etc. to perpetrate, the writer considers V.'s extensive use of self-descriptive, nominally-self-exposing media as a legislator, both in terms of its efficacy and egotism, and finding it also remarkable and admirable. I don't know yet where or how I will fit in the passage about SD's ideology, perhaps as a small chapter in itself depending on what it harbors; but fit it in I must, for it defines a vision of the Ideal Humanistic Legislator and a process for the citizenry to assure itself that it gets IML's. It is thus represents the human potential movement's mandate for enlightened governors and a first program for getting them; and deserves analysis since within three years (i.e. as the book is hopefully published) a more serious crusade for this mandate will emerge.

- Ch. 16 I draw back from V. as human potential symp-sap and front man to see him more fully as a force in education -- indeed, given his committee positions he is said to be the most powerful person influencing education in California now. On the whole, his influence has been quite good. I want to credit it as such, in terms of the politics of democratization and decentralization which I've been pushing previously, in order then to address him as a schizophrenic: in effect to say: look, man, with one head you're pushing a social mandate for education descended from sixties' democratic politics; with the other head you're guiding the integration of human potential technology-and-culture into the educational system. There's no connection between the two, and the challenge/problem lies open: to connect them, make each true to and generative of the other. It is your problem; it is ours, product of two decades, problem of the large.
- Ch. 17 ~~xxxx~~ By now the conference is over; I shift henceforth into the mode/device of direct address to my legislator as a citizen/friend (so briefly established at the beginning.) I may detail more fully ways in which human potential stuff is presently infusing classrooms to work retrogressively in despite of complementary social-potential invigoration. Mainly I am concerned with laying out first lines of vision/program for what the integration of 60's social concerns and 70's personal concerns may look like in the classrooms of the young. I mean to use my son's school and staff as an example of real-world potential and difficulties with this prospect. It likely will not stretch to cover all that consideration of that "integration" will lead me to say, as the integration bodes a general reconstruction of both the group and the private processes of education. (Chs. 12,13 and part of 9 & 4 tie in to this one.)

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- Ch. 18 The principle of ch. 17 is a particular form of yoga, a practice of consciousness joining the inner and outer domains (and perhaps demands analysis in such terms as a New Age pursuit key to all the rest.) Here it is described as extending to other sorts of learning communities than formal-educational, beginning with a socially-holistic vision of holistic health, or rather a conceptual and social program for its development as a democratizing enterprise (in the senses I've defined), and extending it more generally to the other human services.

Re the questionable half:

Chap. 8 is a hybrid, serving several ends; but the arguments about avoidance of the dark and about the artifice of the Good seem essential to preserve in some form.

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Someone said chs. 9 & 10 were too much/kindergarten philosophy. I have no perspective. To me they seem rigorously within the essay's mandate, which is to draw the whole out from my own experience/perception; I announce their naivete but don't apologize for it. The connections and arguments they make seem important and (minimally) adequate even as the mss. stands, let alone that I mean to build on their ideas in chs. 13 et seq.

Ch. 11 then stands as a kind of spiritualization of 9-10. It is probably self-indulgent, but I love it, I think it's a coup for its deadpan mimicry of esoteric line, and doubly so for being absolutely honest.

Ch. 12 is a straight pedagogic text. It gains more force in the context of NAB; it is in essence a first answer to the questions about autonomy which that book poses, and I suppose, since DJ is no longer a chapter of NAB but a sequel to it, that I should make the context of questions this chapter answers clearer somehow.

The Ideal Holistic Health Project, Considered From First Principles
or, How Whole/Holy Can You Get?

1. The IHHP relates to both the physical and the emotional (material/mental) dimensions of health and disease, and relates them to each other.
2. It is a spiritual project as much as a secular one. It involves both clients and practitioners in the respiritualization (resacralization) of their experience.
3. It relates both to private experience of dis-ease and health, and to the social factors bearing on these; and it relates them to each other, both in the consciousness of the people it involves and in enabling this consciousness to affect the social world.
4. The IHHP involves both changed health services and changed health service delivery. The natures of these changes reinforce each other.
5. The IHHP involves diverse practices and practitioners in intensive interaction.
6. Its emphasis is as much upon preventative education and action, and the nature of health, as it is on disease and its remedy..
7. Its diagnostic methods are therapeutic.
8. The IHHP involves its clients/beneficiaries in determining what happens to them within it, and teaches and empowers them to be more consciously responsible for their own health maintenance.
9. It involves them in being, and teaches them to be, responsible for helping maintain each other's health.
10. The IHHP demystifies health and medicine, and erodes the class distinction between client (dependent) and practitioner (authority), through shared decision-making and mutual education.

11. It further heals the segregation of health expertise by exploring the rich potentials of 'paraprofessionalizing' the community.
12. It decentralizes medical action into the community. "Home care, not hospitals," etc.
13. The IHHP is self-sustaining and economically healthy. It does not enable inequitable profit from misery, or even from health.
14. The IHHP involves unique treatments for unique individuals, and involves and promotes the development of uniquely differentiated practices. The IHHP itself is a unique and irreplicable model. Not its form and substance, but the process of its generation can be repeated.
15. The IHHP treats disease as the occasion for growth.
16. The IHHP itself is a response to a condition of disease in health treatment, hence is in itself a health treatment of a field and culture, and is conscious about this responsibility. This means, at the least, that it integrally incorporates the potential for making its learning, and the judgement of its accomplishments, sufficiently visible.
17. It involves all its participants in this judgement.

All these criteria come to mind directly from contemplating a broader (deeper?) vision of what 'holistic' means, than the one currently fashionable. No doubt there are more, as important.

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"... only connect ..."

-- E. M. Forster,
epigraph to Howard's End

(A Draft Preface)

This essay is concerned with certain ideas in social history. Some are current in the loose human potential/Growth/New Age movement, and now coming to influence the shaping of society; the others represent alternatives to them.

I've tried to confine myself to illustrating the ideas through my own encounter with them and my own experiences. Likewise with the social history: I have tried, not to reduce it to but to expand it within my own, while presenting myself as a unique, identifiable person, speaking from a concrete time and place as an actor in this history.

In this unrelenting person-centeredness or Narcissism, as in so many lesser ways within this essay as I could, I have tried to accept the terms of conception and dialogue offered by this movement -- to speak from within them as well as from without while criticizing them; to illustrate some ways of taking them more seriously; and to suggest by example a less-impooverished idea of what is involved in a whole human being.

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Of Divided Vision

In which the Author indicates his mission and concerns, and offers a vivid example.

"Connections." That was the name and theme of the 1977 Western Regional Conference of the Association for Humanistic Psychology. And I came away feeling connected indeed, from many hours spent after sessions with old dear friends and a few new ones. I needed their embrace, for the conference itself left me feeling dreadfully disconnected -- torn, in fact, and yelping with pain in public. My cries disappointed at least one other friend, who later wrote to say that I seemed to be just looking for things to be cynical and picky about, and that he hoped I would someday find myself believing again.

But in what? Ah, that's the question, dear John Vasconcellos. And it's to you, both as my friend whom I may have betrayed, and as my representative in my state's legislature who may be betraying us both, that I dedicate this disconnected reflection on what is unconnected still.

The immediate context

The AHP is now the largest professional organization associated with the human potential movement and "New Age" consciousness. Founded in 1962 by the pioneers of humanistic psychology, it has grown into a sprawling, amorphous network linking some 0,000 people working in therapy, education, health, social welfare and other human services. Though the AHP's purpose is still the advancement of that psychology, its related concerns now include holistic health, new body therapies, transpersonal

psychology, spiritual studies, parapsychology, affective education, and so on. Most of its members are short-term, passing through the AHP in the course of choosing or changing their vocations, and in other life transitions. The AHP's frequent public conferences reflect its function for them, and in the whole. The conferences are meeting-grounds, where the people and ideas of these various fields converge and connect; they are market-places, where wares of experience are offered to sample and views set forth to pursue; they are forums, where new themes, trends and concerns are announced and sometimes even discussed.

Altogether, then, the AHP and its affairs represent a focal point of change in our society, a place where the many ideas and forces involved in "human potential" and "new age" thought can be seen passing together into social currency and institutional practice.

My mission and doubts

I have come to this conference to do a workshop with John, to help him put forth a faith-full vision of how we can connect the personal with the political, mobilize the insights of the human potential movement in the service of social self-determination, to create "a more humanistic politics." We've been talking about this for two years, for we both believe there is a vital mission to be accomplished here. But my enthusiasm is cautious, for all along I've been complaining to him about the mind-paralyzing jargon of this movement (not the ideas, but the way people reduce them for use), and about the very conception of "human potential" which underlies this movement and informs the common currency of its thought.

What disturbs me is the way "human potential" is routinely understood to mean our potential for personal health and joy, interpersonal authenticity and intimacy, transpersonal connection and private power -- and not also (no, more than also: equally and integrally) to include our potential for social health and justice, collective commitment and creation, and even self-'sacrifice for the common good. It is as if each person's social and political being were something quite separate from its private core -- a distinction I'm used to from college, where they taught us to see Psychology and Sociology as different arts, but one which seems a disastrous foundation for any effort to make our lives more whole.

So I'm worried about what effect the human potential movement will have upon politics and society, as it comes to them based in and bearing this artificially-amputated vision of human being, as well as the vital and genuine gifts discovered while exploring it. And my worry is timely, for our workshop to discuss a wholer vision forms part of what may be, in its modest way, a momentous occasion indeed.

Ten years before, during his freshman term, Vasconcellos went down to Esalen to taste the repressed fruit of human potential; and returned to the State Capitol to lead others there to explore the mysteries among the hot-baths. Slowly their network of intelligent concern has grown to include dozens of their colleagues and to influence more, while they have come to occupy key positions on the committees forming public policy, particularly in the human services. And now at this conference, besides Vasconcellos, two other State Assemblypersons and a State Senator are presenting simultaneous workshops on how to organize legislative support for

"humanistic health" and "humanistic education", while a Los Angeles City Councilman is discussing the accomplishments of the "humanistic administration" of L.A.'s current mayor. For the first time a whole group of legislators influenced by the human potential movement is returning to advise that movement's people on how they can advance its concerns and visions in society. A potent cycle is completing itself, opening a new phase. It is a harbinger of what may lie ahead, not only for California but for the nation. For during this depressed decade, following the disintegration of the domestic political consensus in the sixties, the ideas and alliances which will determine the politics of the eighties have been taking form. The "new Right" is rising rapidly; the many streams of progressive politics descended from the sixties' Movement are seeking connection; and somewhere between these camps, quite independently at present, the human potential/new age movement is gathering to form a third major force.

A meditation on cancer

Wondering what to say to mark this occasion, in the workshop I will share with John, I go to some earlier workshops to refresh myself in the vision which is to be advanced. Gabrielle Roth's movement workshop, "My Body Is My Temple", is divine. She is Dance incarnate, her feelings and motions are so integrated that her radiant energy infuses us as she leads us through exercises, leads me to feel my own connection with the flow again, and my joy in this connection with someone who has unmistakably got it. It's only when we stop, half-exhausted, and she talks to us again, that my mind returns, and with it some subtle sense of disconnection.

What brings it back is not Gabrielle's remark that masturbation is a juvenile activity which one should outgrow -- at which half the people in the room flinch audibly -- but her brief, fervent reference to our ability to heal ourselves from cancer by using visualizations to focus our positive energy. Heads nod in reverent agreement. This time I seem to be the only one who flinches. For I am thinking this:

I have myself experienced the autogenic power of healing meditations, and my friends use guided visualizations in their work with terminal cancer patients. I know we are exploring a mystery that promises fuller power and responsibility in our lives. But I also know that current scientific opinion suggests that 80-90% of cancers are caused at least partially by environmental stresses, mainly chemical and radiative ones. And I know more, I know that men are still hiring the best commercial artists of our society to use our media to sell us foods with carcinogenic poisons, though they have had reason for twenty years to know or suspect what they were doing, but instead ignored it for the sake of profit and bought off the Food and Drug Administration.

Where then does a "humanistic" approach to cancer, an "holistic" approach to health, begin? And how can we heal the disconnection of our language? For every casual reference to the promises of "human potential" expresses a social judgement and implies a political program. To speak of cancer as "caused" or "cured" by private means is to assign responsibility to one set of actors and to relieve others from responsibility; and to define what we should do. Granted, in other conferences concerned with regulating environmental impacts, media, the food industry and the government, other people are busy defining and assigning different responsibilities for cancer's cause and cure. But where is the

between these complementary descriptions and programs? Rather, a deep disconnection is preserved -- for among this conference's 150 workshops not one deals with such inquiries of those other conferences, just as they no doubt are void of visualization workshops -- which reinforces our familiar schizogenic categories of idea and experience, rather than healing them and us in them.

So human potential people continue to speak of cancer's cure as if it were only a matter of private responsibility to think right and eat right -- as if the person and the society were separate things, and healing them separate tasks. And humanistic psychology continues its "person-centered" evolution, avoiding the task which a more integral psychology would engage here: to comprehend also the dynamics of social consciousness which maintain our carcinogenic state, and to undertake their change. These social-psychological dynamics are manifest only through persons, and are as much the stuff of personal consciousness as are the most private realms of light. What then does "person-centered" mean? And isn't our present "person-centered" psychology also an artifice of disconnection, for ignoring half the whole?

A more social humanistic psychology might not see this ignorance as natural or neutral. It might understand the present flourishing of the human potential movement not only as a genuine advance, but also as part of the reaction in which America, after a decade of largely-frustrated attempts to change its social institutions to fit the people within them, turned instead to changing persons to fit the institutions. In schools whose governing structures and processes remain unchanged despite a decade's efforts at reform, drugs and meditation are being introduced not only for their singular virtues, but also because they serve to adapt client populations to "proper" participation in deeply-troubled systems.

And in such casual references to cancer's cure as the one which set me off, we may recognize, besides a testament to human wonder, a key instance of this reaction, and this compensatory thrust.

For cancer is the single most dreadful agency in our culture now, a nightmare more intimate than the Bomb; and its power to inspire us to irrational reaction rises steadily with the mortality rate. It is no coincidence that the current popular enthusiasm about autogenic cancer remission is developing precisely when we are coming to realize that almost our whole civilization -- our food, agricultural, chemical, transportation, electromagnetic and manufacturing industries, and the modes of life which accompany them -- is involved in generating cancer; and that the medical industry meant to cure it has not only failed but has fed on it, in the process of itself becoming a social cancer, a complex of ungovernable cells expanding at the expense of the whole. To remedy these social circumstances is beyond anyone's private power, and seems (to most people not engaged in those other conferences) so totally beyond our collective power, that the natural reaction is to ignore or withdraw from them as much as possible, refuse to engage the social tasks of change, and grasp hopefully instead at private ways of health and healing.

In this light there can be no "neutral" statement or action about cancer. To speak of the cancer-prone personality without speaking simultaneously of the cancer-peddling merchant is to direct our attention towards one and away from the other, and worse: to disconnect our awareness, divide the whole. To teach people to reorganize their inner energies without simultaneously reorganizing healthier ways to deploy the electromagnetic energies by which we extend ourselves is to repeat this fundamental violation -- which remains even if we reverse these pairs of clauses to concentrate

on cancer's social face.

A similar analysis applies to almost every sort of "private" dis-ease -- of the body, emotions, relationships, the spirit -- which the new consciousness/health/potential movement attempts to treat. By its ^(socially) privatistic orientation it defines itself as an alternative to, rather than an integral complement of, the concurrent, broad and equally one-sided movement for new social consciousness/health/potential. And worse, each such partial perspective implies a political program which in practice works against the program implied by the complementary perspective, unless they work together as one. These two movements function at present more in an adversary than in a dialectical relationship; and must so long as one directs attention and energy to work within the self as preferable to and distinct from work outside the self, rather than as the ground and complement of the other, and conversely.

The obvious question is what the teaching of privatistic orientation means and portends in a society and time realizing that its social machinery is out of control; and whether this does not betray in one fundamental dimension the liberation it pursues in another. The less-obvious question is this: Is this privatistic orientation of "new consciousness", etc., simply "natural" and necessary? Or is it instead a consequence of the fact that many of the seeds of "new consciousness" have been inherited from cultures in which social and personal change were conceived in adversary relationship; and that they are now growing in a society whose own traditions include this adversity, and in a time in which the private exploration is undertaken and supported in large part in reaction to the difficulties of public engagement? Such social conditions intimately influence the shapes of our "private" conceptions; and we may come in time to recognize the present shapes of

our conceptions of human health and potential to be artificially limited -- as if they were, as foundation, a foot which, so to speak, had been permitted to grow only within the cramping shoe of capitalist commerce -- and to reconceive them.

Only a "holistic" perspective can describe our state and meet our need. But where is the adequate psychology in which it can be grounded? This example of cancer again displays the general problem. Our culture is struggling to comprehend this fundamental truth: within some limits set us by the universe, we are responsible for what we are and do, and can change this as we will. It is a truth which turns subtly and deeply false as soon as we divide it, concentrate on either its personal or its social face, as we do each time we speak of it. And the problem of an integral psychology remains. For at the heart of any true psychology is the mystery of the will, which takes form here in this question: what is the will which enables us to realize our power and responsibility to free ourselves from cancer? It is a personal will, governing the human body; it is a social will, governing the social body; it is a spiritual will, a political will. It is one will; and we have no language, no psychology or politics, to describe it as such.

Instead we have these partial frames, which deepen our divisions even as we pursue their partial promises. And for the most part all we can do now is to deepen our awareness of this situation, by attempting the cumbersome task of speaking of all that must be spoken of, each time -- not to save ourselves from righteous criticism from spokespeople of the omitted, but to honor the striving for wholeness to which we must be committed.

Forgive me then, dear Gabrielle, for hinging so much weight upon your spontaneous brief remark. It is not fair to you, but it is accurate, at least as an example of how the human mind works.

As I danced to your lead and felt the joyful energy rise, I had quite forgotten my phone-call that morning to my good friend Shoshana, she of the organic almonds and good vibrations, after hearing that she had just lost a breast and twenty-five lymph nodes, before ever her first child; and only with your words did my grief return.

And with it these cold thoughts, angry because this was not necessary, because we have the power to reform our ideas, our lives, but not the will to use it. Nor do I feel exempt from this critique. I worked for a year in a serious psychic healing group; we dealt with cancer a number of times, seemingly with some positive results. I put a lot of energy into bodily visualizations -- but I never once thought to visualize the psychic structures of the food additives industry or the FDA's commissioners and try to influence them. Nor did I lead our group to write our congressman, as healers concerned, about some cancerous product as part of an integral cure; nor did we picket a local store to have it taken from the shelves.

Such connections lie open at literally every focus of human-potential/humanistic-psychological thought and action, if we but choose to recognize and pursue them -- for a similar discussion applies to the missing social face in every case. But until we have a "humanistic psychology" which suggests them, and a vision of human potential which incorporates them, we will have . . . tools which are at best inadequate, and more likely misleading.

2.

The Aquarian Conspiracy and the Übermensch

In which the Author, imagining a nightmare within a dream, is introduced by the former to the latter; thanks his hosts for the occasion; and considers the development of our Übermensch (Superhuman) potential and his own.

With such thoughts on my mind, the next day I attend Marilyn Ferguson's lecture, "The Aquarian Conspiracy: How the Radical Center is Changing America." As Marilyn sees it, the Aquarian Conspiracy is a network of self-actualizing individuals consciously working to transform our nation's social institutions -- government, medicine, education, management, family and religion -- to bring the New Image of Man forth in the New Age, as so many people say so casually these days. And for the moment I forget my misgivings about that image, fascinated with the story she unfolds.

For Marilyn is an excellent magpie, and has put bits and pieces together into a history of the "human potential" conspiracy: from its ancient roots in other cultures and its blind beginnings in America early in this century, through the early researches of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, through the founding of such centers of industrial and cultural influence as National Training Laboratories and Esalen, up to the social policy formulations of Willis Harman and his group at Stanford Research Institute. Along the way she relates such vivid anecdotes of how the Aquarian network came slowly to link itself up and to realize its purpose, that I almost believe her when she tells us that the Conspiracy became fully conscious of itself as such only two years ago, and has since been moving deliberately to determine our social future.

Her history flows, it has coherence and meaning; it is a positive history, a history of hope. And it's only when she reads us, in all solemnity, Carl Roger's testament to the effect that Self-Determination is the very model of a modern humanistic-political organization, it's only then that I can verify directly ^{my sense} that she is just repeating what she has been told, with an inadequately-critical eye. For I have sat by giving sour advice during the past two years

while John Vasconcellos and his friends have been busy trying to organize Self-Determination, and I know its reality is different from what Marilyn believes. And I realize, uncomfortably, that I must say something about this difference, not here but in the workshop on "Self-Determination" that I share tomorrow with John, if I am to play my own part in the conspiracy responsibly.

Yet Marilyn's story is all the more important for such differences, because (as any history is) it is a mythology. It's precisely because she is neither a seminal thinker nor a critical journalist that she is able to fill another honorable function -- to gather and arrange the information and the myths of this sub-culture, and feed these back to it. She does this well, just as she edits well the Brain/Mind Bulletin, a quite important newsletter in its mostly-scientific field, and works well as a networker connecting people in research and the broader human potential community. I imagine her forthcoming book on the Aquarian Conspiracy will sell well, for its message as previewed here is surely one that many people now want to hear.

[The message takes no effort of the mind to grasp, and indeed grasps us at a more primitive level -- for Marilyn is retelling a familiar legend in new dress. It is the story of the Übermenschen, the fellowship of "realized" individuals who, not content to stand just as a spiritual elect, spreading grace by example and conversion, turn also to secular salvation, using their realized powers to take charge of human society and transform it along with its members in the image of the Millenium. Legend has it, indeed, that such clandestine fellowships were involved in writing the Declaration of Independence, and in founding the First International, the forebear of Communism. But in our own century, the public flag of this presumption has

so far been raised most strikingly and effectively by the Nazis.

If I hear this theme early, it's perhaps because I have recently buried my grandmother's remains, and remember how it felt to take the old Jewess' bones and teeth from the furnace and hold them in my hands before we scattered them among the ferns and late spring flowers. But as her talk goes on the stench of the Übermensch and his ovens becomes so apparent that Marilyn herself has the wit to stop, a bit flustered, and say that this is not what she means, that she believes everyone has these potentials and these powers. I do believe she believes this -- and so do I, as I will tell her weeks later when we talk together, unable then to explain why our visions and forebodings are so different, or how much depends on how we move to realize them.

Still this Übermensch story is the one she's telling, sure enough, a core myth underlying the whole human potential movement, howsoever humanistically its rough edges and implications may be camouflaged. The social face of this myth, the divine responsibility to transform secular society, has been taking on its shape and substance slowly as the movement has grown. The theme first appeared explicitly -- to my eyes, at least -- in the fringe reaches of the movement, as Scientology, the Divine Light Mission, and Sun Myung Moon's KCIA-financed Unification Church each announced their own crude versions of the secular crusade. It became respectable as the Transcendental Meditation organization declared itself already embarked on a mission to bring peace to the whole world through social transformation, which would enter a new phase when one per cent of the population had been converted to TM practice; and set about with the aid of converted legislators and administrators to introduce the many mundane and genuine benefits of meditation into the instructional curricula of the

public schools.

And now more sophisticated and detailed visions of the social mission are being developed, no longer only by such outfield groups as these (though each has too large a following to be simply dismissed) but amid and in conjunction with major constellations of managerial power, economic and political, and under the flag of the New Humanistic Age. So it is with the version Willis Harman is assembling at the SRI think-tank, which seeks to futurecast the development of the human potential/ecological/continuing education/appropriate technology/etc. movements, and to guide them to a convergence which will leave unchanged the basic system and inequities of corporate capitalism.

Such forming visions are, in general, richly humane, and rich with contradiction. They do not refer to the Übermensch theme save in its mildest and most democratic aspect, the prospect of universal enfranchisement in the potentials of human power. The main theme instead is implicit, latent; it unfolds as we inquire into the practical questions of who shall manage the systems of society to achieve their transformation, and of how they shall be prepared and qualified for this responsibility. There is perhaps no way around the logic that better people make better managers; but there are other ways to work it out in practice, and other modes of social management, than the one which most present visions of the New Age social mission propose -- which involves enlightened individuals at the helm, working top-down through the existing concentrations and processes of power, or new ones modeled after them, to reform society to fit the New Man. Such visions are much more hospitable to the ancient corruptions of ego and power than their bearers are prone to notice or to admit. All that they lack

at present is the allegiance of a mass constituency, aching for private and social salvation, and the appearance of a few key charismatic leaders, vibrant with the passions of their own self-actualization and transpersonal connection, to bring the Übermenschen, their myth and its scenario, to a next stage of life among us, evoked from the mysterious treasury of our human potential.

Marilyn's lecture does not touch on such dark depths. Like the social mythology it encodes, it is bouyant with Aquarian confidence in the purity and efficacy of good intentions, and in executive perfectability. If I don't interrupt her to offer my forebodings, it's not only from fear of the anger that so often ^{comes mostly from the audience} comes when one tries to break such a spell, but ^{also} because the spell is contagious and I too feel a sort of shame at having nothing better to offer, no vision so fine and positive, but only the awkward bulk of my own thoughts and feelings, so complexly balanced between hope and dread.

Instead, as Marilyn recounts the train of its transmission ^{e--} from the Western Sciences Behavioral Lab to the National Training Laboratories, and from there the early penetration of "sensitivity training" techniques and perspectives first into managerial circles and then into the governance of industrial and educational relations, I wonder what it means that Human Potential's first main customer was Business, before the funding and publicity this first job generated helped it turn to stimulating mass consumer desire for the entertainment of Growth, and thus become a primary industry in its own right. I wonder whether its core conceptions of humanness and growth might have developed with a different content and integrity, had their development been differently sponsored; and

whether the New Age social mission, or at least its social means, might not have developed differently too.

But all that is by[^]the-bye now. For the present partial images of "human potential" have already been solidly formed and are now being firmly coupled with a certain character of social strategy; and the spread of these ideas in public consciousness is already -- less by anyone's design than by contagion, in the hungry mind of a culture whose old myths of meaning and systems of guidance are breaking down -- well-advanced, and gaining momentum. One could perhaps measure how much, by a content analysis of Psychology Today, Learning, and other such popular magazines of the human services; or by observing that here in California somewhere between one-sixth and one-fourth of the legislators have already been influenced sufficiently by the human potential movement to be busy applying its current images to the shaping of social policy, in a piecemeal flurry of "humane" legislation. ?

So far few of these proposals have been enacted, and their pioneers complain with much justice about the conservative investments and non-person-affirming stances of their colleagues in the Capitol. Yet support for their efforts and their state of mind is steadily growing; and it seems wiser now to see them not as isolated but as the tip of a social wave -- whose timing is reflected not only by their ceremonial participation in this conference, but also by the inner activities of the AHP itself. ?

Interlude: a plug for the AHP

For early the next morning, just before my workshop with Vasconcellos, I'll be privileged to sit in on a brief conference among some key long-term organizers of the AHP, as its Committee on Social Policy, reconvening after a year's retirement from earlier frustration, grapples again with the problem of how to help the AHP's members connect humanistic psychology's insights with their own social concerns. The several sub-networks in education, law, and so on which the AHP has set up to facilitate this have been functioning, after a fashion, but are still quite small and tenuous even as support-groups for people with common concerns, let alone as agencies of broader influence.

Yet the sense that it's time for a next step is strong among us all. Some broad cultural energy is gathering around the lines of work the AHP connects, preparing to turn them toward social expression; and we all feel the need now both to help bring some version of this turn about, for the good of a sick society, and to help bring it about intelligently, toward the best expression of our collective potential. We agree that the way to take a next step is not to have Chairman Carl announce the new line in the party organ, but perhaps to fund some people to take explicit responsibility for organizing this turn at the grass-roots level -- to catalyze and facilitate the meetings, conferences and other actions that might involve the people AHP connects in dialogue about what is to be done in society and how, and in projects stemming from that dialogue.

This seems the best that can be done now. And however small my own influence in this discussion and decision, I feel fully complicit in them. For I am not here as a cynic or a spy, to report on some clandestine game-plan; and this meeting has no such

melodramatic character, unless one quite believes Marilyn's thesis, as I do not. I'm here instead because I do believe that most of the insights of the human potential movement about who we are, how we work, and who we might become are genuine, so far as they go (and making some allowance for the way some are phrased); and believe that they are genuinely important to work out further in our lives -- a vital mission indeed, at this time of history. The only questions are what they mean and might be made to mean, and how to work these meanings out in personal/social practice.

I'm here also because I respect the others here, singly and together -- not simply "as persons", in proper New Age etiquette, but because I know something of their thoughts and works and allegiances -- and respect the AHP for harboring them at its core. Indeed, beneath the tone of cheery positivism that pervades such conferences as these, one need not seek far to find many AHP members who share both our broad social concern and some version of my own misgivings about how human potential may be coming to serve it; and the newsletters and keynote speeches of the AHP are slowly opening up to these topics. Yet if this be a wave, it is forming much more slowly than the primary wave of Growth -- for our small breakfast conference includes a good fraction of those AHP activists who have tried most consistently to advance both the social concern and the self-critical reflection that must accompany it. If their brooding is not so relentless as mine, neither are their enthusiasms one-sided and simple-minded; they are people of intelligent passion and complex mind, energetic and committed. And the best to be said of their efforts, as our meeting makes clear, is that they have not been very effective, and that they're not sure what to do to better them.

I don't know the answers either. I don't know who does. All I see to do is to involve as many people as directly as possible in

figuring them out. As the meeting adjourns the AHF's current Executive Director invites me to another meeting to help do this, and I say yes -- having in mind my hopes for a democratizing process, and not my discomfort about its potential fruit, or rather the fruit of its failure.

On getting in touch with my Ubermensch potential

Though my discomfort has other dimensions as important as those I experience while Marilyn retraces the advent of the Realized people, it is here that I see most clearly the way in which it is, in part, my own projection on the scene. For as she articulates the social face of the Ubermensch myth, in sweetly-innocent humanistic images, I feel rising within myself the interior psychic structure, the archetype at once personal and collective, which completes the myth. I grow aware of my own deep yearning to believe her, born of so many and so complex deprivations; and of its peculiar character.

It is not simply a yearning for relief from pain, from private and relational distress, social and spiritual alienation, such as traditional practices of therapy and religion address and sometimes meet, and ordinary friendship also. Nor is it only a yearning for balance, for connection and a potency of place in the human community and its history (such as a truly humanistic politics would provide.) It is more, it is a yearning for a certain sense of self and power -- a blind obverse of the deprivation which occasions it, the fantasy of impotence in meaninglessness.

With a fierceness which startles me each time I let myself glimpse it, I yearn not simply to be healthy or saved, but truly to attain a superior state -- to become "the superior man" in the worst sense as well as the best: miraculously empowered by the

agency of my own transformation, my conversion; and by my empowerment commissioned to extend its dominion of benefit, vision and meaning to my deprived inferiors, from within a fellowship of the elect.

I met this righteous self first in politics -- not through my Red father, for whatever arrogance his faiths had had ~~had~~ crumbled long before Hungary; nor yet during the early sixties as I worked in the New Left, for our visions, despite their force, were partial and modest; but only when the social energy flowing through us in the Movement increased sharply in mid-decade as our actions, political and "countercultural" both, came to perturb not a few institutions but the general structure of social reality.

Partisans of the human potential movement, attempting an analogous transition, should take note: the energy was more than we could handle. It blew us out -- i.e., into regressive behavior -- as much as government repression did. The potentials of revolutionary transformation we glimpsed were all too real and general; the ways of realizing them all too complex and obscure; and in the stress the "superior man" in us came forth, displacing and disrupting the fainter archetype we were striving to vivify, severing what we'd only begun to connect. By the decade's end our early dream of participatory democracy was all but forgotten, while the remaining splinters of SDS were, with the help of government agents, chopping each other to bits over who had the right grand Marxist-Leninist line, and the "countercultural left" was regrouping in insular utopias of culture or devotion. And about this all hung such a reek of superior arrogance, of messianic yearning in the face of national terror and meaninglessness, that many of us just recoiled.

As did I -- not in purity nor in simple retreat, but to struggle awkwardly with my own messianic self: the "superior man", whose deepest pretense is to be innocent of ego. To put this issue so bluntly may well provoke unnecessary attack, from some political enclaves as well as from spiritual quarters. So I hasten to add that I too, although I am in no sense an adept, have experienced states which I believe to be beyond ego -- not only through meditations and drugs, but in certain intense political processes, as well as in more mundane joys. - I have experienced them often enough to believe that they are at the heart of reality, and that their guidance (which can never be reduced to words) is as invaluable as the ability to accept it; and to know that they are quite distinct, yet not quite distinct, from the state of consciousness in which I am now writing.

But I also, proudly animal, believe that my species did not evolve its egos, these dimensions of selfhood we call "I", only for the privilege of struggling to eradicate or slip them off; and from beyond them (or so it has seemed, coming back) I have known that they serve a wholer purpose, involving not only the differentiation of consciousness and species survival, but all the pitiful glory of our human theater, which incorporates the transcendental even as it is therein incorporated. I know too -- with Jung, quantum physics, psychism, cultural anthropology and political history to correct the reductionism of Freud -- that this unique "I" which I experience, though centered within my skin, extends into each other "I" alive in all the realms of Time; and that it is subsumed in various collective "I"s or egos, two- and many-personed, which are similarly extensive and limited. All the wise and my own experience tell me that this complex mundane

"I" is both distinct from ^{and} yet miraculously continuous with that state of being which involves its apparent negation; and teach me that the state of grace involves accepting both wings of this paradox and pursuing them to realize their unity.

They teach me too, most finally and cruelly, that the capacities of egos to deceive themselves, even as to their nature or existence, may not be infinite, but ^{are} more subtle, varied and deep than egos can grasp -- and that this must be so, since even what arises from beyond them is, in the last analysis, made human knowledge only by being understood and interpreted through them. Nor have I met or read of one through whom Heaven or History seemed to speak, who did not seem still an ego lit from within (whether or not s/he said "I") -- though some have had the grace to not deny this. Who then will guide us in the dark or judge our light, as we go about the business of egos, our business here, which -- in whatever frame it be conceived -- is to manage the exercise of power?

All this contradiction is mine: I could not extirpate it in myself, and would not if I could, but am learning to live in its uneasy balances. And thus, as an integral child of my culture, I feel that old righteous yearning, both for an Answer and to be its Agent, rise in me every time I spend a weekend or an hour in one of the newer therapeutic or devotional ensembles. It's the same yearning that once rose to the lure of a politics too narrowly conceived, just as it's the same me, ^{howsoever} transformed since. And I trust the yearning, the Realized archetype, no more in this guise than in the other; for its vision is limited and it claims more than its share of power in the Law.

On getting in touch with ours

So of course it's my own projection -- for who can fully know another's consciousness? -- that leads me to identify the and intense come-ons Übermensch yearning behind the spacey stares of so many recent converts to so many schools of consciousness and self-transformation; and to sense that righteous archetype as a potential in us all, yearning to be evoked. So far the human potential movement's potential to evoke it in full social form has been largely undeveloped. The secular crusades of Charles Manson, L. Ron Hubbard and the boy guru Mahara-ji have come to little; even the righteousness of EST has lacked an explicit social face; and the broader spectrum of psychological/psychic/spiritual ventures have maintained their basic privatistic orientation -- leaving the behaviorists and the systems-theorists unchallenged to rule the day's management of society.

But this is changing now, or so I hope, though I also fear the forms of social enthusiasm that may develop in a land in which, for half my life, the forms of social meaning, the legitimacy of established authority, and our power in the whole to control our fate have been steadily falling apart, leaving a citizenry ripe for a secular Salvation. In this time it seems to me no simple "coincidence" that we have elected James Carter as our symbol of national leadership. For his functional connection with the Trilateral Commission, the Rockefeller-organized avatars of transnational corporate capitalism, is perhaps no more important than the psychic connection which he represents, between the Realized state and the mandate to rule the State, to transform society.

Lord knows, he has handled his religion modestly enough so far; and with his administration a genuine spirit of openness to

social vision has begun cautiously to emerge from its eight-year retreat (though this is due ~~as much~~ ^{more} to our projected longings ^{than} to his guidance.) Yet this is still how he represents us: as a "Born Again" Christian, a man who feels his conversion to be as much responsible as his political savvy for the strength and purpose which brought him to power; and who judges moral legislation, guides the public health, by the highest lights he knows. How could it be otherwise, he being an integral person? And to dismiss his ^{and this image} faith as superficial, a media tool to charm parochial interests, is itself a superficial and parochial judgement. For it is these, these connections, howsoever underplayed to preserve the formal separation of churchly and stately figures, which now resonate in the national imagination and psyche, more deeply even than do his promises of governmental systems-reform -- for we are hungry now, each and all together, to be represented by a core of realized purpose.

The immediate practical consequences of this do not so much concern me (other politics aside), for Charismatic Christianity's current program for society is at best vague and not readily translateable to detailed policies of institutional management. But the symbolism of this Presidency is unprecedented in American history, in that Carter represents not simply a practicing religious man, but one saved, transformed. It comes at a time of unique social and cultural crisis; and it opens us to further evolutions of this theme of holy government, more specific and potent in their programs.

Looking some years down the line, I imagine a society even more distressed by its accumulating sins against human being(s) and "nature", more sharply aware of them, conflictfully

preoccupied in trying to redeem them, while its old systems of meaning and management, of guidance, grind on, disintegrating. In this chaos, and with few competitors on the public stage, the "person-valuing" and "life-affirming" perspectives and visions of the present human potential movement have spread to a much broader constituency, through experience and the media, not simply preparing us to accept a few experimenting legislators, but inspiring us to elect a President, a Congress, of "self-actualized" persons incarnating these perspectives and pledged to implement them in detailed programs of social policy and reform -- both as the representatives of our will, and as our leaders in a holy mission. For what lies at the heart of the human potential exploration, as at the heart of all but the most reluctant politics, is the quest for the holy mystery incarnate in ourselves, to realize heaven on earth.

I am not alone in imagining this scenario for the political development of what is still largely a California craziness. If it is indeed among our possible futures, then what matters vitally are the specific qualities, the meanings, of the images of human potential by which we mean to transform society. And I shudder to imagine the present raw and partial visions of that movement coming to dominate the social action; for despite their goods they will need radical enlargement and maturation to grow worthy of grounding more than some piecemeal legislation.

Yet also, despite my misgivings about this scenario's likely content and style, I do believe that some process at least distantly akin to it need happen -- for if we are to move on from our predicament in history, rather than only drift within it, it will surely take some general fervor of vision and commitment. We do

need a secular crusade of sorts, grounded in our deepest visions of humanness, life and spirit. Moreover, there is scarcely an item of New Age concern now which is irrelevant to this grounding, and many (though their "newness" be often mostly a matter of phrasing) seem absolutely vital. We have every reason to seek to extend them into an adequate vision of social justice, purpose and self-determination.

Yet the bearers of visions more to my taste will run the same risks -- indeed, subtler ones -- of mistaking themselves and being mistaken. There is simply no way to avoid the danger of conjuring the archetypes I fear -- for there exists no simple line between the Übermensch and the responsible citizen, though it would be comforting to think so. All we can do is to be aware, and to do the best we can.

In this light what frightens me is not the prospect of Werner Erhard as President in 1984 -- though his EST, with its vulgarized teaching that you (as a private self, alone) are responsible for whatever "happens to" you, is a crude but potent summary of many techniques and implications of the present human potential field; though many receive this message as new, rather than as a timely restatement of the dominant mystification of capitalism; and though Werner is likely to be the first major figure from the human potential field to run for (or be appointed to) high office.

No, it isn't the arrogant Übermensch vibration I sense in Werner, and feel in myself, this movement, this land, which scares me, so much as the prospect of us being out of touch with it, moved by it but unaware, in an innocent proto-fascism sustained by the mystification that we act in purely positive spirit, selflessly and beyond the private ego. It is this disconnection, this lack of conscious engagement and struggle with key aspects of the self

that must be managed consciously if they are not to manage us,
which strikes me in the proselytizers of consciousness, as much
as does their nascent Übermenschship and even more consistently,
and which frightens me more.

3.

Histories of the Aquarian Conspiracy

In which the Author compares two visions of how history is made, and reflects on a premature birth of integral vision.

Yet listening to Marilyn reweave the legend of the Realized people and their game-plan for social salvation, despite these fears I feel good -- for I feel connected within myself to the urge which scares me, rather than divorced from it, numb to it, as to a part of my body which pains me and which I don't like to feel or think about. I even feel a little social connection here too, since Marilyn has at least said that the Übermensch theme is not what she means -- which perhaps opens the way to some dialogue between us about that.

Re historical vision

But what leaves me feeling violently disconnected, torn and angry, is what she does not say at all. For in the history that she recounts, there is not one word of reference to the history, and to the kind of history, that I know, that I live in. Hers is a classical view of history as the doings of great men, increasingly-enlightened or empowered individuals. It ignores completely the social context, the social history, in which their actions were formed and took effect; and ignores as well the "masses" of their co-participants, the ordinary people through whose rich, contradictory lives the ideas and action of "human potential" have so far taken form and effect.

I take Marilyn's account of the "Aquarian Conspiracy" so seriously, because it comes at a critical time, just when the "human potential" movement is turning self-consciously to act upon society; because it is a history, a coherent myth, describing this

development and meant to inform this self-consciousness and action; and because I hear it not simply as her own account, but as a summary of the content and kind of social/historical understanding which the movement has of itself at present. So far as I know, she has done a good job in capturing the common culture of the movement, the popular sense of what is important to know about its development; for rarely do I hear in its public conversations, or volunteered in private, any reference either to a more complex historical vision, or even to its absence.

It is natural, I suppose, if perhaps not inevitable, that a movement so focussed upon the private person and upon transcendence should have such a narrowly "person-centered" and transcendent vision of its own history. This harmony is manifest also in its ideas of social transformation, which so far are phrased as if the private and public ills they address had just sort of happened, by benign mistake, and were just sort of going on -- rather than being determined equally by social and economic interests and forces, by entities as tangible and momentous and primary in the gestalt of our reality as are the private and transpersonal entities they complement. Such thinking ignores the lessons to be learned from the fate of previous efforts to remedy these ills. It refuses to anticipate the ways in which these socio-economic forces will react to, accommodate and transform its own brave meliorative efforts; and refuses to recognize the ways in which these forces ^{already} have helped to determine the particular character, shapes and thrusts of its own efforts. I mean really, the lack of self-reflection is incredible! And incredibly irresponsible.

And this vision of history is tragic -- not simply because it is fundamentally incomplete, disconnected, but because it embodies

and reinforces a popular understanding of how history is made, which now will guide a popular effort to make history -- and in so doing, help make history indeed.

Notes on an alternative history
of the human potential movement (1955-1971)

As for my own historical experience as a random citizen of the "human potential" movement -- for that I am, howsoever aberrant and disgruntled -- the images which flood me as Marilyn recounts her version of its development would take a book to unfold properly.

As she speaks of the influx of Eastern wisdom to Western mind, I am 15 again, listening to Alan Watts' amazing popularizations of that vast heritage over KPFA, the first listener-sponsored radio station in America, formed to carry free speech on during the McCarthy years. I'm hitching into San Francisco to pick up on Beat culture, the first breath of social vitality following the years of Cold War and Red witch-hunts. At its heart, in North Beach, in the City Lights Bookstore, side-by-side with the political poems of Ginsberg, Rexroth, Ferlinghetti,

I find the subtle ^{metaphysical} poems of Lao-Tze and begin their study, unaware of how deeply the Tao will infect my imagination, my view of human potential and reality.

As she speaks of Carl Rogers' pioneering research, it is 1957, I'm at a famous college, the hip graduate students in psychology are already teaching us about Rogerian therapy in the coffeeshop, with their mocking yet earnest practice of "client-centered" techniques and formulas: "I hear you." "You said (insert/what client said), is that right?" In the ways they use them, it is already clear that these promise both profound human dignities, and subtler, more mystified ways of controlling human interactions -- and that we have no language yet to describe or to deal with the contradiction

As she speaks of the AHP's founding, it is 1961. California marijuana arrests have just doubled, as they will annually for ten years, reflecting the spread of this and stronger psychedelics among ten million people nationally -- who will use them to facilitate "new" states of consciousness through which to explore the yet-unnamed "New Age" curriculum of sensation, emotion, relation, psychic energies, the spirits of nature and mystery; and thus to continue the struggle of remaking their own personal and social values -- and reflecting society's reaction to such a potent and unmediated anarchy of exploration.

As she speaks of humanizing institutions, it is 1964, when this person-centered exploration suddenly connects with the social exploration I've pursued in the peace, civil liberties, and Civil Rights movements. For the first time I come to take my own full personal needs seriously as a basis for political and social action. This synergy, this alchemy, energizes thousands of us in the Free Speech Movement to generate not simply the first major campus revolt but (in our educational dialogue) the first mass challenge of a major human service institution, and of the very nature of its service, by members of the dominant class, on the grounds that it does not address our deep needs "as human beings".

As she speaks of Esalen and the start of the Growth Movement, it is 1966 and I'm drifting through the Haight-Ashbury, where five thousand mostly-young adults have brought these themes to convergence in a brief community of exploration and life-transition, personal and social.)

(The Haight is a marathon encounter group, a live-in Laingian therapeutic anarchy, a running psychodrama of sensual culture, astrologers, Zen meditators, nature-freaks, devotional cults and organic

foods, heavy into drugs and positive vibrations. It is total life-theater, and its inhabitants have put themselves at risk in all too many ways; in the jails, the VD and health clinics, the drug-crisis centers, psychiatric wards and crash-pad communes, in the streets and in blasted recesses of the spirit, the casualties are already piling up.

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A decade later, at conferences and weekend retreats of the Growth Movement, I shall be of two minds. One shall understand ~~these~~ ^{such} events)

as the sanitized playgrounds of the affluent middle class, where the middle-aged dabble at being hippies, with the help of a marketing system that has rationalized our funky plunge ^{reduced its integrity} to discrete commodities to be sold as our hair- and clothing-styles were sold, more slowly but with no more ultimate consequence. My other mind shall understand

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them and this system as a necessary way, compounded of defects and virtues, by which the Haight's signal of commitment to this exploration was extended in society to the class we represented -- with ourselves, symbolically and often in fact, now employed as the teachers and entrepreneurs of this system, recaptured by the very forms of professionalism and commerce we had left college for the Haight to escape, even as we labored on with our own small scraps of that incandescent ^{and premature fusion,} still-glowing, more advanced, to bring it about in society.

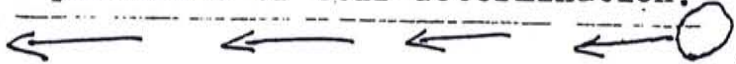


And as I recall the Summer of Love in '67, when media blitz, tourists, runaway orphans, ^{bad acid} and Mafia heroin swamped the Haight, reinforcing its inner failures ^{and} ^{ing} ~~creata~~ a social sewer which took years to recover health, I shall

developing

remember this also as the last ^{instant} in which the human-potential--
New-Age-etc. movement had a full social form and integrity, a natural
and unfettered political spirit, manifest in organic, integral
processes of self-determination.

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For into the Haight's crucible

go also the political persons and sensibilities of my generation,
to extend the FSM's alchemy. This time the personal/political
fusion happens not ^{simply} among the inmates of one institution, but in
a full neighborhood community within a city within a society. As
the Haight's early shapers are already dispersing to recolonize
the California foothills, as the first irresponsible images of
their play wing out to entertain the nation and signal the new wave,
sewage is born a seed-bed -- a whole ^{first} generation of alternative
institutions of human service, formed by the people of this
community to meet their own needs as they themselves understand
these, and embodying all the dimensions of their progressive understandings,
so far as they can.



They generate alternative schools with
affective curricula, free universities for an anarchy of adult
learning, the first "free clinic" and other health agencies,
legal aid and crisis-center collectives, counseling centers,
community information "switchboards", underground papers and
open-input news systems, free-form FM stations, welfare rights
organizations, food conspiracies -- in each attempting to honor
and work out together not only the emergent personal and inter-
personal values of their subculture, but also its social values
of participatory democracy, user-responsiveness, ~~and~~ community
control and economic collectivity.



NOTE Q-31



Not a one "succeeds" in this synthesis, for all the old forces and patterns are almost as strong still within them and their people as from outside; but their seed is viable and by 1970 two hundred independent versions of each will be spread across the land, struggling to integrate the same concerns and to link themselves into useful networks. By 1977, after hard seasons, their descendents will be visible as a semi-distinct fringe of the main body of institutional experiment with "humanistic" perspectives, which will have quite a different social character. And as I sit in the back, hearing Marilyn construe this effort's history with no mention of ~~the Haight~~ ^{the Haight}, the Haight's memory will strike me with anguish -- not as a Utopia accomplished and betrayed, but as a living instant of a wholer an integral vision historical process ^{am} which I am unable to deny having seen, and thus compelled to judge experience by.

NO

BREAK (except for paragraph)



As she speaks of NTL bringing sensitivity to Management, it is 1968. I'm a campus traveler, too tame to be much hunted by the FBI as I move among the many student-initiated educational reform efforts, helping to connect them. ^{By now} ~~Five~~ hundred campuses have convulsed in demonstrations, and I reach the fourth one in a row where the college administrators, instead of calling in the cops, have brought in teams of group-process specialists to involve the kids ⁱⁿ ~~encounter~~ groups -- both to cool out the energies of protest, and because they insist on believing that only "difficulties of communication" are involved (rather than genuine conflicts of interest between the managed and the managers, which are, indeed, being eloquently communicated, ignored, and by ~~such~~ ^{actual} means repressed.) By day I'm urging students to translate the ~~issues~~ ^{actual} issues into their educational concerns; by night I'm trying again to convince a local SDS chapter to explore "sensitivity techniques" in its meetings and decision-processes, for the sake of reshaping their traditional ego-combative tone, which so saps all our efforts. I'm arguing again that it's crazy to leave the development of such potent "soft" tools of change to be controlled by the managers of captive populations; but again they are all into studying Marx, and we cannot make the connection.

As she speaks of how the Aquarian Conspiracy came to embody the most positive spirit of its time, the sixties are coming to their crunching end while I choke in the teargas streets of Chicago, run from the shotguns ~~at~~

People's Park, stand out in protest with two million as bombs rain on Cambodia and the Kent State murders sear their definitive message in the public mind. It is a time of shame, ^{of} ~~terror~~ ^{and} confusion, ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~National~~ ~~Guard~~ and Vietnam technology control the

as heroin spreads and cities become unworkable and we learn to see ourselves as a killer species, as marriages, meanings and identities fall apart, as institutions rally to co-opt and rebuff the broad awakened wave of social demands while our brave motley of first experiments with alternative institutions and lives founders in a predictable first wave of failures, absorbed not as necessary learning but in depression as the economy chokes and staggers on.

And up from this grim chaos, innocent, serene, floats ... the Smile! ... like a sunny balloon, like the severed head of the media's Flower Child bobbing above the carnage and grinning in idiotic benediction: "Have a nice day!" It is a symbol for the new decade, to replace the clenched, demanding, affirmative fist of the sixties. It is a positive symbol, to be sure, for all that it looks like the skull of Alfred E. Neuman unfleshed of his wise irony; and people adopt it sincerely, wishing the best for all in the absence of a program to achieve it. But as the Smile multiplies on lapels I see it also as a rigid negation, a monstrous denial of complexity, doubt and fear. While the Seventies roll on, with nothing solved and much worsening and the private drift in full swing, the Smile takes over my meditating students, assails me from Scientologists and Krishna^{-ites} in the airport, from my old anti-war buddy preaching Bliss Consciousness, from graduates of EST and self-salesmanship courses. The Smile becomes the President's main feature, as Psychics, therapists and legislators are chanting at me, "Don't think negative thoughts!" Dizzy with paradox I imagine I see the Smile's program forming behind every positive proposal, and no longer know how to trust anyone until I have heard them both laugh and cry.

friendly
A



All this is a history of human potential, of the New Age, as surely as is Marilyn's, and as vitally. And how can the two be connected? And what am I to do with my own fragment of the whole, which is not only mine? I am a storm inside as Marilyn preaches on without a second thought about the meaning and side effects of her Aquarian medicine. But what can I say to this sweet sincere person, so dedicated and optimistic, that will not sound like Mr. Negative Himself babbling about how the Three Monkey Gods Sanō, Ceno and Hirno have taken over everyone's mind? In this room consecrated to the New Age there is in fact no space (nor permission) for the actual emotions I'm feeling to be engaged, connected in public life. To interrupt her, to remark that what she is doing to history (and myth) is as irresponsible as her blurb about Self-Determination, and that the irresponsibility leaves me angry and afraid for what it may help bring, would be both rude and pointless. Choking it all down, I rise and bolt from the room.

4.

On the Teaching of Conscience in the New Age

In which the Author introduces his guru and the mode of consciousness he teaches; considers the mixed reception his teachings have had, as a case in the general division of vision; and complains that it's a tough row to hoe.

Q - 36 B

I go to meet my guru

Outside my anger subsides, leaving only the wound of disconnection it springs from and deepens. Though I know better, I feel very much alone. I should be responsible, check out more workshops before sorting my thoughts out for my own; for I know there is more to the mind of the human potential movement than I have encountered in these two workshops and the others I pass over here. But by now I am aching so to hear some vision of reality and change, some set of thoughts and feelings, complex enough to respect and to connect with -- not simply in private, as with friends last night, but in a place of open public dialogue -- that I go where I know I can find it. For upstairs, in this same time-slot, my friend Peter Marin is having a dialogue with Julian

Silverman on the subject of psychology, morality and politics, titled "The Human Harvest". Indeed only duty had called me to hear Marilyn instead, for Peter had seemed positively cheerful when we crossed in the corridors earlier. It was the first time in years that I'd seen him without the look of patient suffering he habitually wears at such affairs. "Come on," he said, "I'm going to talk about Ecuador."

As I climb the stairs I'm trying to place this fellow Silverman, whose name seems vaguely familiar; but I can't quite, and quit trying as a rush of feeling for Peter floods me. For we are comrades, in the way that moody intense men who live far apart and in the solitudes of writing, and meet mostly during conferences, may become when they find themselves appalled and nourished by the same things. And beyond this, or rather as a part of it, Peter is my guru. -- not the only one, but right up there near the top.

Yes, Peter, it's a pleasure to kiss your clay feet in public, remembering that sad book, so well-written, in which I appeared as an anguished, futile buffoon, floundering in the confusing tides of the early seventies. The private hurt of that has long since faded, in your warmth; but a more-than-private hurt remains, which I describe here to heal in us both. For you portrayed me no more cruelly than you did your other friends and mine, including Jack Seeley (who is to us each a guru, in the precise sense you are to me), and no more cruelly than you portrayed yourself -- as if we had each and all been quite destroyed as social beings, as persons of public and social purpose, in some cataclysm too broad and deep to name that made our efforts blind and futile; and as if therefore the only work of meaning left were to pursue a private connection to the mystery, through the pleasures of the

(or of private relationships.)

Q-38

flesh) It was a fair portrayal, not only because you showed yourself as maimed as any, but because much of what you portrayed about our confusion and pain was accurate, and still is largely so. But there was more to us than that -- and by not crediting it even in yourself, your book became not only a testament to the destruction of the public realm, but an acquiescence to this destruction -- and thus a lie, for in our lives we had not acquiesced.

A salute in passing

I can't judge my own case, but I can estimate Jack's, so peculiarly pertinent to this essay. Even as you wrote of him, he was working to orchestrate the complex cooperation of campus, community and professional groups which succeeded in aborting the proposed Center for the Study and Reduction of Violence -- which, spawned in the mentality of the Nixon administration and with its LEAA funds, and so benignly named, was to have served as the most advanced base yet from which the modern behavioral sciences were to be applied to the management of ghetto, campus, prison and other "client" populations, as tools of softly authoritarian control, of Velvet Fascism. J Nor was ^{Sedley's} ~~his~~ presence in this effort accidental. For he had spent thirty years working explicitly to bring about the fuller realization of human potential in society, by applying the insights of psychological and of sociological science to each other, and in this fusion to the re-making of institutional practices. His quest led him to trouble and expand the epistemological foundations of both disciplines, to ^{enable us to} answer more clearly the ~~critical~~ question, "What is it that we do, when we attempt such applications of our knowledge?" As this work earned him the professional honor that in time would give him an inside role in the Violence Center's planning, so it informed

chose to
 the role he ^{chose to} play there. For it enabled him to describe, no longer only with poetic or political intuition but with the beginnings of scientific precision, both how and why the forms and contents of these sciences had been shaped -- by the social-psychological circumstances of the time, their formation and their employment -- to function in the service of a repressive homeostasis, and so to betray their deeper liberatory and transformative potentials.

* More about Seeley himself ^(and these themes) may be found in my version of his biography, "The Fool of Sociology", and the rest of the festschrift issue of Sociological Inquiry (Vol. 46, no. 3-4, 1976) honoring him, in which it appears (pp. 147-167). A thick slice of Seeley's own thought, ~~more than~~ ^{more than} ~~these things~~, may be found in his book The Americanization of the Unconscious ((citation-to-come)) -- whose very title suggests, accurately, that the human potential movement is a next stage in the development the book surveys; and that the book's analyses may bear importantly on this ^{development} development. They do, in ways too rich to summarize here, for Seeley is an undersung giant in his field. The thoughtful reader will note that I seem to have fallen to a bit of hero-worship myself; and I ^{mention} ~~note~~ in passing that Seeley and his work do have essential warts. But examples are still useful if we do not idolize them; and as this essay is on modes of thought I observe that Seeley's work, despite its blind sides and prosaic difficulties, provides a deeper and more integrated example of attention to both personal and social factors than almost any which now guide the dominant development of psychological trends.

Of my guru's teaching

So much for what Jack was doing, even while he was indeed spinning battered by the age -- except to note explicitly that his work applies in turn to the new "humanistic" psychology; that it is this sort of thought (not its particular conclusion, but its character and depth) which must inform the human potential movement if it is to affect society responsibly; and that so far as I can judge this has not yet begun. As for you, Peter, while you wrote this odd book that denied you were doing it, I see you engaged as deeply as Jack in a work as vital -- to which this book was integral, and thus paradoxically more positive than I have pictured it here in isolation. Indeed the entire structure of your doubt, like Jack's, seems to me not the "negativism" it is so often dismissed as, but rather an extended affirmation of what it describes as missing -- and more, an essential positive legacy, giving us terms to describe and to judge our condition, and our attempts to renew this.

For Peter Marin is my guru in the precise sense that he leads me to experience consciously certain fundamental dimensions of consciousness itself, and of the spirit. As profound teachings are, his are simple. He teaches that we are connected to the world -- the natural and transcendent realms too; but to the entire human world of flesh-spirit in history -- and through this connection connected again to ourselves in the way that makes us whole, given to ourselves in the way which makes our meaning. He teaches that the key medium of this connection is a state of consciousness, a condition of will, which he names "conscience" -- which exists both within and beyond the private self and which is cultivated

incessantly, for better or for worse, by the whole way we live. And he teaches, by describing, the way in which our connection to the world and to our selves is dissolving, as we choose ever more to live in ways which obscure the dimension of conscience and deny it as an act of will, a force in human life. It is this last teaching which leads many to discount him as an obsessive killjoy; but I think the lesson is worth calling to attention, and see his act of doing so, by print, word and his contradictory life, as restoring our connection, through the medium of conscience itself.

None of these teachings is quite new; and a better-read recruit to them than I might trace versions of each back through Marxist, pacifist, literary, etc. phrasings, and back yet into antiquity through the more-obviously "religious" traditions these extend. Nor is Peter the only one now teaching them, though his colleagues are too scarce and his phrasings more compact and explicit than most. Nor is any new to me: I am dimly aware of each, and somewhat more dimly yet teach each myself. Yet that is the proper way of the guru and the disciple, isn't it? -- that s/he lead you simply to deepen your awareness of what is, in the most important ways. And who ever can explain the magic, why the holy connection clicks? O listen to my guru's song:

What I am talking about [is] the growing solipsism and desperation of a beleaguered class, the world view emerging among us centered solely on the self ... Whereas the older [human]potential? therapies merely ignored moral and historical concerns, the new ones destroy or replace them,

[in becoming] not only a way of protecting or changing the self, but of assessing the needs of others and one's responsibilities to them -- a way of defining history and determining morality ... What lies behind the form[s] they now take is neither simple greed nor moral blindness; it is, instead, the unrealized shame of having failed the world and not knowing what to do about it. Like humiliated lovers who have betrayed what we love, we turn our faces from the world if only (in Paul Goodman's phrase) 'just to live on a while.'... What disappears [is] the ground of community, the felt sense of collective responsibility for the fate of each separate other. [And] the real horror of our present condition is not merely the absence of community or the isolation of the self ... It is the loss of the ability to remember what is missing, the diminishment of our vision of what is humanely possible or desirable. In our new myths we begin to deny once and for all the existence of what we once believed both possible and good. We proclaim our grief-stricken narcissism to be a form of liberation; we define as enlightenment our broken faith with the world.

Thus speaketh Peter on the Third Teaching, in a fragment which may hint at his literary art, and at why I say that his scarce public writings have come a stage closer to expressing the core of our situation than my own, and perhaps a stage closer than those of any other "social critic" in America concerned with such matters.

On his teaching's reception

The very essay from which these words are taken is a case in point; and its reception was an index to both the dis-ease and the nascent health of the human potential movement. When "The New Narcissism" hit the stands in the October 1975 Harper's, Peter realized the journalist-critic's dream: at a

height of one's power (o not one's alone!), to bite the live nerve of a key public issue, cleanly, truly, deeply, catalyzing an impulse which radiates out in the body-mind of society and informs and enables the good -- an impulse thus of pleasure, in this case like the pleasure of recognizing and scratching an itch, to inflame it and speed healing.

The itch was grave and widely felt, intensifying. Some scattered public scratchings of it, more oblique, had intimated Peter's; and after his followed a flurry, of which Christopher Lasch's* and Tom Wolfe's** were perhaps the most influential (though such works extended and complemented "The New Narcissism" importantly, they did not come as close to the spiritual core of the matter, and so also guided the public mind to an easier and cheaper assessment of the issues.) Nor was Peter's gesture just his own, as he absorbed and transformed many inputs. In such ways such an agent is neither definitive nor isolated.

But it was he who put the key finger even on the simpler itch, giving national voice to the growing feeling even within the movement itself that some essential sickness was involved in the growth of Growth. It is testament both to the peculiar quality of his scratching and to the urgency of the itch that I saw "The New Narcissism" spread by third-generation xeroxed copies and heard it talked about, within my subculture, more rapidly and extensively than any social essay since Jerry Farber's "The Student as Nigger".[#] From this time on a new dimension of

*"The Narcissist Society", New York Times Book Review, and

** "The 'Me' Decade and the Third Great Awakening", New York, August 23, 1976.

[#]First printed in The California Aggie, May 31, 1967; also Farber's book and many anthologies.

content appeared in private and public dialogue within and about the Growth movement, as the question of the social meanings of the movement's privatization was given status and definition, as the consciousness called conscience opened.

And if the resulting phrasings about ego, me-ness, narcissism, etc., did indeed enable many people to dismiss too simply or scornfully what these referred to (as Peter was accused by many to have done), still many others in and around the movement received them in gratitude and rephrased them more wisely for themselves. In keynote speeches at AHP conferences, in such small organizing meetings as the one I mention above, the questions of social purpose which follow logically from this questioning of the privatistic came increasingly to be expressed, and informed by this questioning, in what was, by itself, an integral and healthy process.

Alas, the human potential movement's addressing of the social question had already well begun, for it was visible in legislative proposals and through such ventures as Self--Determination well before this more-basic questioning had spread to inform it -- resulting in the present awkward situation I encode in this essay, of a cautionary impulse striving to catch up, to connect, with large actions already in motion.

My guru in context: notes on the re-disjunction
of educational vision in the early seventies

So much for the health. "The New Narcissism" also evoked from many a peculiar, fierce resistance, which confirmed that its message had found the raw nerve, and which still continues to dominate the human potential movement's attitudes and vision.

As I climb the stairs, an agent of caution late to the meeting, I recall the history which indicates the nature of that resistance -- which is also the story of how Peter and I come to be involved in such conferences as this one and to speak as we now do in them -- or to put it less personally, the story of how the human potential movement has accumulated some of such affiliated critics as it has and of how it has received them.

As the sixties were ending, the essay appeared which placed Peter Marin in the front rank of a phalanx of educators -- including Friedenberg, Holt, Seeley, Kozol, Kohl, Goodman, Taylor, Dennison and (class aside) myself -- who were striving in coordinate terms to describe both the integral system of human devastation which modern education had become, and the shapes and steps of a genuine alternative; and whose writings provided much of what guidance there was for the educational reform movement as it spread from its 1964 FSM outbreak through higher education into lower, where its spirit of experiment flourished even into the depression of the early seventies.

"The Open Truth and Fiery Vehemence of Youth"* came from the very core of this movement, grounded in Peter's experience directing a remarkable alternative high school; and spoke to the core of the problem, for it focussed the questions of conscience upon the process of adolescence, that key stage of our bringing the world into being within and among ourselves. The vision embodied was complex and deep. It offered no answers and was

*First printed in The Center Magazine, and widely reprinted.

equally weighted between tragedy and affirmation, in a time when resistance to these qualities of vision had not yet begun to crystallize among those who sought to work for change.

As the seventies rolled in, the alternative schools movement began to intersect the newly-gathering human potential/New Age movement; and as their relations sorted out, Peter spoke often at conferences of one incorporating workshops of the other. As the "humanistic" and "psychological" character of his concerns, and his power in articulating them, became more widely known, as he himself in time detached himself from the ed reform movement's activities and widened the orbit of his critique of our culture itself; and as humanistic psychology and the AHP gathered momentum as core forces in the human-potential-etc. movement, it seemed only natural that Peter be invited along, at least to keep sharing his vision from time to time.

Meanwhile those relations continued to sort out. The early (1965-70) work of that educational phalanx and the wave of experiment accompanying it had been, in a crude fashion, integral, attending to both the personal and social dimensions of education. As open times closed and the established educational institutions adapted to and absorbed the main impulses of reform, only part of this integral curriculum was adopted for further development -- roughly speaking, the part dealing with the growth of private persons, "affective education"; and not also that dealing with the growth of citizens.

The educational ideology which would legitimate this constriction and ground ^{thus} ~~that~~ further development had been forged

already, in George Leonard's Education and Ecstasy.^{*} As Look magazine's top West Coast editor, the man on the cultural hotspot during the sixties, he undertook perhaps the earliest and most full-fledged participant journalism of the time into the human potential scene, emerging to play a strong role in Esalen's later development and to devote himself to Transformation. He also, as the book's flap put it, had "received more national awards for education writing than anyone in the history of magazine journalism." George was, in short, of top calibre for his calling; and what emerged from this conjunction of his interests was a seminal vision indeed -- which translated the implications of Esalen into educational vision with such force, coherence and prescience that ten years later the vision of human potential education, which John Vasconcellos would competently accumulate in his role as humanistic education's chief legislator, would not be substantially enlarged or changed.

The ecstatic curriculum concerned itself of course with common skills and knowledge, in passing; but its focus was upon joy, creativity, awareness, empathy, relations, learning, personal change and such. It was indeed an independent creation: it neither descended from nor incorporated the society's traditions of progressive pedagogy (e.g. Dewey); and it was formed in complete isolation, insulated from the various social struggles which had informed the visions of the actual ed reform movement even then flourishing, and addressing none of their concerns. Thrust up from the dissolving edge of our culture precisely

^{*} Delacorte Press, New York; 1968.

when the Smile appeared, the vision was totally positive, with scant reference to present social ill or reminders of the actual griefs of change; and its influence prospered with the Smile's.* As the early seventies rolled on and the situation of institutional education grew steadily worse, such visions as inhabited them still, despite all the energy sapped by coping, came increasingly to concern themselves with ecstatic education's curriculum, to demand its simplistic affirmative quality, and to deny harsher callings-to-task.

In this light Peter's continuing stature as a critic was more precarious and less "natural" than I suggest above; and I too had a hard time keeping a finger in the ring after tolerance for used radicals grew thin. A more balanced picture of how the human potential movement received the critical thrust we represented may be had by observing that of that phalanx I name above, not one now exerts a significant influence upon its educational policies.

† Jonathan Kozol's case is perhaps the most dramatic. By 1972 his book Free Schools‡ defined the edge of vision for alternative schools of political character, rooted in and transforming the community, honoring the survival needs of colonized children, locuses of permanent struggle. Though the vision he spoke for

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‡ Houghton-Mifflin Company, Boston, 1972.

still included the child-centered, open-structure, individualized, etc. values it began with eight years previously, by then the bearing of it had come effectively to exclude him and it from participation in the growing movement to affirm such values in institutional education. For his critique was too stark, aroused (I think) too much guilt too directly for people to deal with.

In comradely love and admiration, for he was magnificent, I record his caricature at the conferences we attended then: as a vehement spirit of conscience, fed up with neo-hippie babble, demanding that all confront without compromise his comparison of middle-class rural free schools (and by association all the emergent New Age education) with sandboxes for the children of the SS guards at Auschwitz. Really, it was too much to take, for people who hadn't also spent ten years teaching in the Boston ghettos -- even though Jon's lines of reasoning were quite sound so far as they went, and remained completely unanswered by the reception they aroused.

A more cunning man might have tried to make the heart of the matter more palatable by suggesting instead that to have school children involve themselves in reclaiming the lead-poison--source windowsills of their ghetto homes, and in writing letters and taking actions to move the city to control the landlords and practices which produced this condition, would be an exercise in holistic, perhaps even in ecstatic, education. But the Kozols among us insisted also on calling racism "racism" and on demanding that we each address our own part and stakes in it as such, rather than just approach the correlated educational ravages as

"impairments of human potential" which could be remedied by the proper affective techniques. Truculent, direct, "negative", such messages provoked much hostility, to which Kozol and his ilk at times responded with an impatient anger (which some mistook simply for guilt-tripping but which involved, I think, true contempt); and soon they and such lines of pedagogy and sharply-political critique as these had vanished almost completely from the au courant public dialogue about reforming the schools.

My guru provokes resistance

By comparison Peter's phrasings of such matters were, like my own, much more oblique, general and poetic, or perhaps mealy-mouthed; and we kept on getting invited to conferences as we hung around the human potential fringe. It was not until 1975 that Peter came to appear at them, to many, as the sort of shrill harridan of guilt that Kozol had seemed earlier, because he was saying approximately the same things approximately as directly.

What brought him to this was, as I see it, the recognition that the human potential movement, whose ostensible purpose was to restore us to ourselves, had in this guise itself become an agency of disconnection -- not just an ordinary one, ^{but} by a primary and monstrous one. It was primary not only by virtue of its growing size and influence, but because it was rapidly appropriating our society's dialogue about what being whole, connected, and human meant. And it was monstrous not only for the meanings it defined, the disconnection advanced by its unrelentingly self-centered vision of human being and human good, but because it had become an enterprise of mystification, an iatrogenic therapy, advancing the disease it claimed to remedy.

From this recognition came "The New Narcissism," which focussed in part on EST as a microcosm of the tendencies it criticized. Besides widespread gratitude, a storm of protest answered it, principally from recent EST graduates outraged that Peter had dared to describe EST's dynamics and implications as Fascistic without ever having experienced EST himself. The predictable dialogues which followed quite obscured the essay's broader and deeper charges -- that (to put it crudely) the whole movement was lying to itself, and had become, in its religious aspect, a deep heresy -- but not the basic point about his public character: that he had become, to many in the movement which had clasped him to its bosom in admiration for the supple grace of his humanism, a biting asp, and even a sort of Anti-Christ.

God knows, Peter took to the role, preaching heresy in the pits of Positivism. By the Bicentennial his teaching had advanced beyond simply emphasizing its third wing, how we create our disconnection -- that standard, basic lesson which all good gurus of consciousness bear -- to prescribing the bitter medicine. For if conscience is what heals our disconnection, we have no choice but to accept its seminal terms -- which are not simply "positive," but include guilt and shame, wrong and even (dare I say so?) blame. And what gall moved Peter to re-introduce such terms at gatherings of people committed to teaching and believing that I am OK and you are OK and everything is OK, that blaming is only a way of avoiding responsibility and feeling guilty only a way of keeping oneself down, repressing one's

potentials! Really, Peter was cheeky; he deserved all the shit he got.

A good word for the guilt trip

Ah well. Besides living with a therapist, I have more personal reasons to know well how much truth lies in these upbeat lessons, so popular currently. But they do have their limits; and beyond these limits their very character changes. They become mistaken for descriptions of reality itself, rather than partial^v perspectives useful in this temporary circumstance or that; and thus become false lessons, lies destructive of human meaning itself.

For sometimes everything is not OK, sometimes I do not right but wrong -- either that, or there is no moral meaning at all in life, nor any other basis for choosing one's actions. And it is conscience, the consciousness of my connection with the world of others who connect me to myself, which informs me of violation, of wrong, as I participate in doing damage to those others and to our connection itself. Shame then is my feeling when I violate conscience. Blame is my assessment of responsibility for having done wrong, whoever done it; and guilt my own acceptance of that responsibility.

Howsoever we name these psychic entities, we must grant them existence or no one can be responsible for anything at all. Perhaps we must find new names, for them or for their dysfunctional aspects and uses. But for now, all I know is that we have been much too hasty in attempting to discard wrong, shame, guilt and blame in the name of affirmative action; and must, so to speak, go dig through the garbage to recover the part of our souls we have tried to lose.

For indeed it was too easy, to deal with the problem of how to deal with wrong, with evil, simply by declaring them null and void as we opted for a right and good which by this choice were rendered meaningless. It is precisely in this moral vacuum -- where the terms to describe half the states of moral being are abandoned, and those states themselves seemingly purged from consciousness; where the capacity of will to judge is thus without guidance destroyed, and to assess or to assume moral responsibility becomes impossible -- it is precisely in and from this amoral milieu that that peculiar mutation of the Fascist spirit, the Übermensch with the Smile, arises from within and strides forth into society.

Perhaps instead our problem is not that we have too much shame, guilt and blame, but that we have too little. Certainly much of the guilt we feel is bogus guilt, someone's useless crippling baggage; perhaps this confuses our recognition of the guilt we need to stay human. Perhaps we cannot deal with the real guilt and shame we feel, as we participate in dissolving our connection, because we have no way to deal with them, to do more than suffer them -- because we have no longer any effective ways to resolve and absolve them, and because without some real forgiveness possible we find them unendurable.

Observe then my guru, my comrade, my friend Peter as he bears his blessing to a New Age conference at the Bicentennial. He comes to teach realization, connection to that most deep and precious human potential, the consciousness called conscience, learned only through experience. His teaching is subtler than Kozol's was. He does not simply lead people to feel guilty about their wrong-doing. He teaches them why it is necessary to feel

guilty; and so leads them to feel guilty about not feeling guilty.* It is psychic jujitsu, using the reflexive nature of consciousness to work upon itself, in the grand guru tradition. And horror stalks him as he realizes that it is not working -- that except for some few already thus engaged, no one seems to want to care. The connection to conscience seems so dissolved that there is not enough conscience left to turn upon itself, to be concerned with its own state.

But even gurus may be mistaken in their judgements. Had there not been conscience enough left for people to feel themselves respons-able, Peter would not have provoked the scorching anger he received.

A brief cry of frustration

Oh Peter, Peter! What has happened to us, you, me, Seeley, Kozol, the others? Why are we so agonized, why can't we let it go? Why is there so much truth in the shrill caricature by which so many others dismiss us, as angry, tortured spirits dedicated to finding fault, unable to act civilly or to refrain from biting the hand that might feed us, arrogant, superior, obsessed with the importance of our visions of reality and the importance of our own roles, the Übermenschen of the Frown?

So far as I know, there is reason enough in our private lives to dismiss us as psychopaths, sociopaths. But our aberration is more than private. Together we are like those other researchers of consciousness who stare into the psychic mysteries too long, too deeply, too unguardedly, till their minds and spirits are sucked into the abyss and thrown back again torn, rigid, stammering stale images inadequate to express the visions that have transfixed them, the energies that possess them.

For conscience itself is a curse to bear in this time, though we claim it a blessing. A little is nice, yes, like a chat with God between the day's business appointments; but too much leaves us quite undone, by its own terms and ours. For to experience conscience fully does not mean simply to act in conscience as a person of conscience, as if conscience were a private possession which one could keep clean by oneself, with the help of a few friends. It is also to experience the full state of our connection, in particular the collective state of conscience itself, as one's own, not passively but actively -- and so, in our time, to experience a shame, a judgement, a pain, that is quite too great for any one to bear, given that there seems now no way to resolve it.

It drives us whacky, Peter. As much as we can we numb ourselves to it, trying to take on "only our share". But who can close what has been opened? -- the energy leaks through, driving us to twitch and gibber melodiously in public or strive in the caves of solitude to fit images to our torn song as we seek the only absolution we can comprehend: to share this condition as a force in the uncertain processes of history.

On bearing conscience (into the New Age)

But of course there's a simpler way to speak of us and our predicament; and I have come this long way around, through gurus and reflexive states of consciousness, both to speak in the terms of the New Age and to indicate what is missing from those terms. For Peter, with his quaint shrug and his passionate moral conundrums straight from the shtetl, anyone can see that he is my rabbi, just as gentle Jack is our minister, and stern Jonathan perhaps our preacher, each as willing and as uncomfortable in the role. And I, raised in the rootless sun of California with so little occasion to feel Jewish that I still do not know all the holy-days, who learned only last year that my heritage includes fourteen generations of Grand Rabbis (a succession broken only when we married into Karl Marx's line and my grandfather became a lumpen Bolshevik) -- I suppose I am a rabbi too, of sorts, and dreadfully confused about that.

And that is the point. The rabbi, the minister, do not exist alone -- they have their congregations, the communities who define their meaning as social beings, who have them in turn and are defined by them, in coherent relation. And who are we, but souls torn loose from institutions, to cry in the wilderness of the whole? Were we wandering preachers decrying the world's sickness and prophesying the Millenium, gathering small bands of the faithful about us, perhaps to found the New Eden -- as we might each have done, being no less charismatic than many who have tried -- that would still have been a coherent act, with its own traditions of assurance. But our act is different -- our message is not to escape this sick world but to return to it,

to restore oneself unto it, and in so doing to restore it. ^{and to be oneself restored} And our need is not to stand as special guides to this restoration, but in it to be companioned, in the simple works and peerships of community. It is a met need, for who hears us, answers us, has us, are already a community, thin-spread but richer by far than we can partake of. Yet it is also an unmet need -- for this community seems next to nothing in the whole, in which we stand, anomalous with our cry.

Who shall bear conscience in the New Age? How shall they be known, how shall they be connected in the whole?

At first glance a host of orthodox religious leaders might qualify, for most of America still looks to such for the guidance of conscience, insofar as it still looks. But of the 277 people named as teachers in this conference, only one identifies himself as a clergyperson; and his purpose here is simply to lead the closing celebration, titled "Hi Spirits."* And this reflects the larger situation: for though many progressive clergy have been involved in human potential activities and informed by Growth perspectives, their influence in turn upon these perspectives has been negligible; and the social conscience they represent has thus, in effect, been colonized by its negation. The case for

*To be fair, he is Reverend Cecil Williams, from San Francisco's Glide Memorial Church (United Methodist), whose ministry has served for more than a decade as an exemplary agency for the passions of both personal and social change.

the more "spiritual" edge of the New Age wave is as bleak: for though a few ecstatic and Kabbalistic rabbis count among the esoteric leaders, and born-again ministers lead the separate flocks of Charismatic Christianity, the conscience they bear is not noticeably more devoted to tending our social state as such than is that of the lamas and gurus of Eastern traditions whose spiritual teachings now dominate the wave and include, on the average,* no social conscience at all.

By default, then, the lead in bearing conscience falls to a host of practitioners in the secular human services, "The New Narcissism" argues that a peculiar ideology of conscience -- which, in ESTian summary, teaches that social conscience is itself an illusion -- is indeed emerging from the new therapies and models for Growth. This essay argues that this ideology and the visions of human nature with which it is configured are being extended, in their influence, to the practical management of social affairs, in the name of social conscience -- i.e., in a fierce innocent muddle of contradiction.

Who then bear conscience, in and around the human potential orbit, are not even its putative leaders in business, education, government, etc., but rather a great many quite ordinary people who have been affected by its visions, who still are conscious also of social and political concerns, and who are trying as best they can to make some connection between the two -- mostly alone,

*Again, to be fair, such a one as Sri Auribindo is a notable exception. His example suggests both that reasonable approximations of integral vision and conscience are already at hand, and that their influence is negligible.

and with little useful guidance. All this is as it should be, in a way; for in the true New Age conscience will no longer be borne by specialists in the matter but rather by all equally. What is wrong is the impoverishment, confusion and contradiction of the public dialogues of conscience, which brutalizes and inhibits the private dialogues.

And so we sally out, to help restore conscience through public dialogue, focussing here upon this restoration itself. Lord knows, it is not the work I wanted to choose; and during this time of writing on this book it has quite distracted me from the work I had chosen, to describe and animate social forms in which conscience might adequately be embodied (just as Peter has been distracted from his own main line of work, to play as reluctant a role.) But the dissonance in the public mind has grown maddening, and the beliefs abroad now undermine the very idea that our social forms can be conscientiously re-formed, as well as all practical efforts to do so. It seems necessary to question these beliefs, in the light of fuller vision.

Thus we appear at such conferences, twice a year, and likewise in print, as snappish wolves in literary lambskin -- full with love for the world itself, but so full also with anger and despair at what we see happening that any stray echo of benign idiocy may lance us like a boil, to spurt those "negative", repulsive feelings which, however reasonably we put them, quite disfigure the cosmetic of graceful argument, the pretenses of simple amity. In this guise we are, I think, part of the peripheral social theater of our time, a certain specialized class

of entertainer. Peter's gigs are classier than mine, but even so I don't find him in those \$700-featured-speaker slots, but rather in some such slot as this with Silverman, tucked among the throng, lucky to score his transportation.

5.

On Some Aquarian Attitudes

In which the Author encounters the other pole of (di-)vision, all-too-appropriately personified; and becomes more irritated by the attitudes displayed.

Q-60B

And so I come to the place where Peter and Julian, whom I'm still trying to place, are in dialogue together -- fresh from hearing Marilyn's legend of the Smile, and with so much turgid history aboil inside me. The big ballroom is nearly empty, for neither they nor the subject of discussion ("psychology, morality and politics") attract more attention here than the average massage workshop. But at least that means the thirty or so people listening up front are here seriously, I think, as I thread my way through them, having eyes mainly for Peter. He is slumped in a chair, arms crossed, wearing the usual scowl, all trace of the morning's mellowness gone; but his face brightens as I come sit beside him, and as we hug I relax and am surprised, though I shouldn't be, to feel my whole body start to shake. He starts to ask why, but I shush him and move apart, abashed by the distraction my entrance has caused; and try to balance as I tune in what Julian is saying.

The usual nonsense about change

What Julian is saying is the most appalling nonsense. He is explaining earnestly how it's a mistake to try directly to change the world, how the thing to do is to change yourself first, get in touch with your own positive potentials, and after that the right social changes will just sort of happen. And what's appalling is not only the content of his argument, but the fact that it is really no more sophisticated than this, and

that Julian -- a grown man, of stature and experience -- is talking like a businessman or seventeen-year-old fresh from his ^{first} encounter group.

History rises again in my gorge as I recall when I first heard Julian's simple reasoning, from blissful hippies in the early Haight. The naivete of this line was innocent then. Its bearers spoke as if they had invented it; and in a sense they had, for though the basic mystification that one's problems are a private condition to be worked on privately is old, no group in memory had extended this into a theory of social change. Julian's line, in fact, is a simplistic parody of the theory that the less-spaced-out of them evolved, which held that change could be advanced not "by changing yourself" but by living differently, in earnest of the world one dreamed -- which meant, to be sure, being authentic, sexy, transcendently high, etc., but which also and inseparably meant making decisions collectively, living in inter-racial community, abandoning consumer mentality, exploring barter economics and dodging the draft.

It was a way of life, fully in the world, rather than a way of self alone, which hippie ideology conceived as the agency of utopian change. And if this ideology, like Julian's, blithely ignored the question of how to relate to the existing structures of social power, it had still enough plausibility to be worth discussing and trying out in practice. Indeed it supported naturally most of the experiments in alternative institutions I mention above; and for a time there was quite a lively dialogue between acidheads and incipient Marxists about their transformative social potential.

But it's a decade later now, and the results are long in. The Haight was destroyed, and no sister "counter-community" has flourished without gaining clout at City Hall. In the networks of descendent alternative institutions are still many who believe, as do I, that to live differently is the essential core of transformation -- but few see these ventures now as more than modest footholds for work on the future, vulnerable to the economy and the State; and few are not sharply conscious of how deeply their living-differently is constrained by structural social realities. As for those who sought more privately to live differently^y and are still at it, the urban ones are working at urban jobs and devotion, or selling human potential, while the rural refugees are busy farming, cashing in on the domestic ^{Marijuana} ~~drug~~ boom. And nowhere yet has living differently given rise to significant institutional or structural change.

This history may be recondite in Des Moines, but it's as accessible to anyone of Julian's age and hip connections on this coast as it is to me. And in this light it is no longer innocent for Julian to be preaching his even-more-reductive "change yourself to change the world" as if it were a fresh and adequate answer, or even a promising one. It is malign, it smacks of a willful disregard, and I grow angry at Julian for this. And angry at myself too, in retrospect; for sure enough I was out there acting like a daft hippie at times myself, willing meat for the media image of the Flower Child smiling "Love is the Answer," which now returns to haunt me.

The Smile mocks me, I'm stuck in a time-warp. And Julian's no help, damn him, now he's rattling on with the basic catechism of Positivism, telling us how we give energy to whatever we put our attention on, and that therefore it is a mistake to give attention and energy to negative things like urban despair and the late Vietnam war, but rather we should give them to positive projects. Sweet gods who guard the world and all the inward places, who is this dude?! The theosophical line about positive and negative thought forms was current in the Haight in 1967, but no one had the indecency to dismiss the War in public that way while heads were getting split at Century Plaza. I can't stand it, and I regress completely to the boorish style of that decade.

"It didn't matter if you gave the War your attention, Julian," I yell, "as long as you gave it your money."

The poles of (the) dialogue (personified)

What I interrupt is, in its modest, personalized fashion, the key dialogue of our age ^{concerning which values shall govern our lives} -- which seems here no dialogue at all, but rather a shouting-match conducted across an implacable chasm; and which has come to this, as I learn later, well before I arrive to make it louder.

It begins amiably enough. Drawn South by the poet's lure of the ancient heights of Mac hu Picchu, in Ecuador Peter had met a group of peasants. The three families were squatters, on a marginal corner of some vast untended landholding, in a manner protected by Ecuadorian law; yet the landholder had had them driven off by the local army. They returned, having nowhere

else to go. After Peter left for the U.S. they were driven off again, some wounded, one killed. They returned, having nowhere else to go. And Peter returned, to hear them discuss the new offer made to one family to betray the others, in return for the tools to work the land.

So Peter tries to explain this bare fact: that he has encountered certain specific other human beings, in a different place and of a different circumstance, and has found himself connected with them. He doesn't dwell on the reports that our CIA furnished the army's guns, for his style is never so harsh anyway. Sunny as this Sunday morning, he tries to share the puzzle the connection of empathy has left him: why do these people seem so sweetly, so peacefully, so actually in possession of their experience, their lives, by comparison with the self--alienated condition he has left and returned to in America, and finds most intense among the most self-centered? It is a romantic idea, as simplistic as an Aquarian smile -- unless, of course, it happens to be true -- but Peter doesn't even blush, for what he is asking by this question is really, "What is the nature of a psychology which can comprehend this?"

Next Julian stakes out the other pole, the chasm. His enthusiasm is for Pirsig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance;* and the main metaphor and message of his talk, as Peter hears it, is about how one can tune oneself like a motorcycle -- though I imagine Julian too was asking, "What is

* Robert M. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, William Morrow and Company, New York, 1974; Bantam Books, New York, 1975.

the nature of a psychology which can comprehend this?" I I do confess, I loved the book, and thought it deserved to sell those 2,000,000 copies for its lucidity about coming to terms with machinery and about such private learning-processes themselves; and for its drama of a man struggling to reinhabit himself, connect with the self that shattered when he stared too long too deep into the paradoxical space between our culture's dualities, trying to heal their disconnection in himself.

Yet Zen... is equally the story of the search for some quality which will restore value and meaning to life, as undertaken by a solitary man wandering across a nation, unable to engage in any meaningful relation with the need-full son who rides behind him, the people and places he encounters, or anything save what relates to his motorcycle and the obsessive quest for his self and the shattering Idea. It is the lone horseman of Western myth who rides again, no longer with some crude direct connection to humankind but on vengeance bent inward.

The book is thus an exercise in social iconography; and Julian becomes perhaps more responsible than Pirsig for its social meaning when, as a public man and in this context, he adopts and advocates its metaphors and attitudes. The character, the texture of the human landscape informing the vision, are akin to those of Casteneda's Don Juan and their world,* where rich wisdoms of self-management, ever more astounding and graceful,

* Carlos Casteneda, The Teachings of Don Juan (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1968; Ballantine Books, N. Y., 1969); A Separate Reality (Simon and Schuster, N.Y.,; 1971); Journey to Ixtlan (Simon and Schuster, N.Y.,; 1972); Tales of Power (Simon and Schuster, N.Y.; 1974).

proliferate in a reality devoid of any human obligation other than that between sorcerer and apprentice, the self and itself. And that Casteneda's popularity has rivaled Pirsig's* is perhaps in part because both offered, to the Decade of Low Morale, visions devoid of the moral perplexities and demands of ordinary experience and relation, in which conscience itself was redefined to have no social referent.

Yet what unhinges Peter, as Julian makes his eloquent case for fine-tuning the self, is not simply which icon of meaning Julian has chosen to represent "the human harvest", nor the fact that it seems absolutely antithetical to Peter's own vision. It is that Julian -- who, so far as Peter knows, has asked to co-present this dialogue precisely because he knows and likes Peter's viewpoint -- does not seem bent on mischief or argument at all, but is offering his vision in innocent good will as an harmonious complement, an answer to Peter's question about what is missing from our lives.

Perhaps some calm dialogue is possible between these poles, but not today. When Julian finishes, Peter says, with histrionic precision, "This is the sort of thing that makes me want to weep for my country," and explains why; and after that the dialogue is downhill all the way into a chasm deepening with each exchange. And Peter, who is quite as contradictory and self-serving as anyone else, feels even more sour as the chasm devours his hope of hustling Julian for an invitation to spend a month or so in

* 00,000 sales for the Don Juan series, the selling 00,000 copies.

residence at Esalen, enjoying the hot-baths as he works on his book.

For Julian Silverman, as I learn only after our ^{subsequent} dialogue is done, has been the president of Esalen for 10 these many years; and is thus much more than the anonymous spokesman I encounter in my irritation.

How can someone say these things?

I do owe you some apology, Julian, for the way I am sticking pins into your caricature. I mean you no private malice; and because I know nothing of you "as a person" (as we say) and find much to admire in almost every person I come to know, I imagine I would find you admirable, "basically worthy", in many ways. But as one who has chosen to help organize a movement and to stand among its spokesmen and guiding lights, ^{to represent it} you are a public person with public responsibilities; and as such myself I call you to account as personally as I can. It is true, I quote you out of context and by hearsay here, in narrow bias and without forgiveness. But I swear that my portrayal is true to the ideas and spirit which I myself did hear you express; and though some allowance might be made for my condition at the time, I believe others heard their character similarly. And as for my judgement about this character, I cannot apologize.

The allowance I make in turn for Julian's condition is complex, and entirely my speculation. If his world-view is as simplistic and rigid as he makes it seem, this cannot simply be because he has performed the common act, broken through into new consciousness and grasped for a frame to explain its meaning and define its potentials. Such an event must lie, if at all,

a decade back in his life-line. If Julian still maintains this vision and its qualities, this may be in part because maintaining them has proven adequate and useful to him -- and more, because (being no monad, but a social creature) he has been enfolded^{ed}~~ed~~ in, and has helped to create, a community which accepts and supports them, and rewards him for his social role in maintaining them.

I don't think Esalen has been a great money-mill, despite its routinely-exorbitant tariffs. The rewards I imagine are richer, deeper -- they include prestige, self-affirmation, a confirmed sense of purpose and self-social identity; and various powers of mobility, connection and influence, as much private (perhaps even sexual) as social. All this and more goes with the role of a movement leader, however selfless be the banner of vision s/he unfurls, as I learned in my turn. Nor do I question this (apart from my deeper questioning of the very nature of our roles of leadership), for it is necessarily so.

But for every power to which one remains attached, there is a price -- or more precisely an impotence -- to pay, as the old tales tell. Often enough, in such cases as Julian's and mine, the cumulative price is to be bound in role, held static in an identity determined as much by others as by oneself through the interactions which sustain and validate it; and the impotence involves loss of the ability to see and to grow. Lines of vision once new and liberating become constraining boundaries in their turn, investments to be defended (the more so as they provoke attack); and the very capacity to recognize, entertain and

interact with other visions becomes undermined.*

My own experience with such impotence forms the ground of such compassion as I do have for Julian as a public man. I mean, the forces which tend to petrify his vision must be truly strong; it is all I can think of to explain or excuse the remark which, as I am later told, preceeds the little lecture about positive thinking which moves me to interrupt the dialogue. Speaking not of motorcycles but of his own work, with a group which included a survivor of Auschwitz, Julian complains in passing that we could not get him to give up his anguish.

Again, it is not simply the content of the intent, but its innocence, which leads me to despair. That Julian himself is a Jew who held, as he says, such strong feelings about the past that he could not bring himself to visit Germany until last year, is an irony which deepens yet obscures the basic horror: that Julian -- both as private person and as public man representing the human potential movement -- seems unable truly to grasp why others in the room hear his remark as an enormity.

I put Julian's statement so simply and cruelly not only because this is how it lingers in my friends' memories, but because it symbolizes the implications of the broader ideas which (insofar as I understand them) form the context of such statements by Julian and others. I imagine Julian believed that the Survivor was holding on to his anguish in a dysfunctional way, a way which

*It is not always thus; and the exceptions have as much to do with the character of the visions born as with the character of those who bear them. I think there are visions of transformation, of transformative process, which are reflexive, which transform themselves and their bearers continually as they grow more comprehensive and deep. But I do not think Julian's and his movement's are of this sort.

handicapped him, kept him from realizing his private potentials for pleasure, growth and wholeness, or even simple peace; and that it was merciful to help him relieve himself. I imagine this was partly true.

But I imagine also that the Survivor held his anguish in part precisely because it was not the product simply of a "personal" (i.e. private) experience which could be given up privately -- precisely because he was a Survivor, and had thus a social identity in history which could be cast off only by his literal re-birth. If he still held his anguish 32 years later, perhaps it was in part because that anguish, and its bestial source, are still held in society, held in check but ~~unaddressed~~ unaddressed -- and renewed each time some well-meaning Ubermenschling of human potential prates about what happened to the victims of Auschwitz and Hiroshima being only their own responsibility, i.e. fault.

The social anguish has not been and likely cannot be resolved. All that one can do, as a social being, is to acknowledge and address it truly, and work towards its resolution, while one holds one holds it as a compass or a light to guide the way. In this light the Survivor's need (if I may presume, with Julian, to judge it) was not to give his anguish up, but rather to transform it and his relationship with it so that he might be enabled to bear it properly -- freed from whatever handicap he might truly be freed from, certainly, for the sake of his "personal" growth; but also freed as a social being to work toward resolution of the social anguish in a way that he find meaningful.

These terms are quite general: they apply to every sort of Auschwitz, every survival of social enormity, no matter how mild.

No lesser terms will make us whole. And in their light for Julian, Werner Erhardt, or their lesser disciples to speak of the anguishes of Auschwitz, sexism, racism, Capitalism, etc., as if they could so simply be reduced and exorcised is not simply innocent and irresponsible, but criminal.

Ah well. It's just as well that I didn't hear this remark with my own ears. It might have shamed me to the grace of silence. For what can one say, in proper response to such a compact summary of such a world-view? And how could what I do say, unaware that my sermon has been thus announced, about my own refusal to give up my own lesser anguish, how can this say any more, to those with the will to hear, than Julian's statement itself, framed in silence?

6.

A Rave, Concerning Connection

In which the Author, stung by the injunction to divide himself, reflects on his own quest to connect during the seventies.

I can't stand it any longer

But I am ignorant of this. All I know is that I've walked back into the nightmare of Positivism from which I have just fled^{downstairs.} And though I feel simply as if I have in some way been goaded beyond endurance and am yelling to get my rocks off, strike back, I think (writing this) what happens is that I crack a bit; and through the crack voices of History speak, evoking the Shadow as charm to counter the spell of false Light.

"It didn't matter if you gave the War your attention, Julian, as long as you gave it your money!" I yell; and ^{stand}~~step~~ into the public space ^{up}~~thus~~ claimed; chattering in fright and indignation, to explain my intrusion. I summarize the tale of Aquarian Conspiracy I've just heard downstairs; its significance in light of the legislators' presence at the conference; and how Julian's line ties in. Then I return to the basic cognitive point: that beyond the importance of private attitudes, there is also a structural character to human misery and wrong, which must be addressed, which must be affirmed as real, before these can be remedied -- for no lesser perspective can enable us fully

to grasp our own complicity in the conditions we would change; and without this what we do is madness. I'm floundering, there's too much to say; I grab for a real example, and calculate aloud that we in the room, whatever else we did during the late sixties, must together have ponied up thirty grand a year in taxes to buy napalm to fry gooks.

"Put aside your passion, Michael," Julian chides me, patiently, lovingly, the sweet soul of reason, still striving for an harmonious dialogue. Put aside my passion. It is not just that I make him uncomfortable by actually getting personal; something has been anaesthetized in the man. Put aside my passion. But he is a master, he plays me like an accordion, he pushes all my buttons -- and I am lost, I break into a wail, I simply rave.

Concerning connection and the recent War

For all there is left to me is one moment in the warm Autumn of 1971. I am in the garden, bathing my young son. The air is abuzz with bees, the earth throbs with green vitality, ~~the~~ ^{the} great light enfolds us, warming the waters in which he kicks and shapes his first syllables. Already his body is almost too long for the bathinette, I think, as I run my soapy hands like a lover over his flawless limbs, ripe with summer sun -- and find myself suddenly sobbing without control as the pictures of napalmed children rise in my memory, pour through my eyes, superimpose themselves on his flesh and fuse with it, as I feel the ridged keloid scars rise beneath my hands and feel something fuse within my self, some connection made at last, deeper than I knew.

For Indochina was just another French Colonial postage stamp to me when I first Marched for Peace and to Ban the Bomb

half my life ago. Since then I have studied the politics of history, the strategies of imperialism, well enough to know why my country is savaging this distant scrap of land. I understand how the affluent privilege which I too enjoy, however oddly I employ it, depends on such engagements. I recognize my deeper self-interest in supporting such struggles for self-determination as the Vietnamese; and know how crucial a role our domestic protests play in them. I understand the anti-War movement's potential for opening further the springs of humane and democratic sentiment and energy on which depend our social future and the fate of my own work in educational reform; and I understand what the stifling of this movement will mean for all our progressive efforts and in history.

I know, in short, all the more-than-private reasons why I have chosen to help organize the actions of protest which have led me with my friends again and again into the streets to risk arrest, my neck, and at times my life. And yet -- though it's too trite to bear, and the wrong way round besides, since the burnt children of Dachau and Hiroshima have marched with me from the very start --

And yet I never fully knew -- until this moment in the garden when some connection never fully made becomes so in a terrifying and joyous fusion, as the spheres of being and experience, of meaning, become complete. Flesh of my son, my flesh, beneath my hands, we are one, the flesh of one child in a Ramparts photograph, flesh of all children, torn and whole, crisped and pure, flesh as it is. I am father and son, the

all-parent holding the future, one hand on the ravaged limb, one on the whole, completing some deep circuitry. Across a vast voltage-gap of human potential, from the charred hand to the fresh, the full current surges through me, heating those chains of social reasoning coiled neatly as tungsten filaments in my mind till they glow with a dreadful incandescence, illuminated by and illuminating all, this life I hold. And he is almost too large for the bathinette already, shaping his first words, he is one, he is seven as I write this, fourteen in 1984, almost my size already, as he asks me again, "Dad, what did you do in the War?"

And I tell him.

"I stood in the garden beside our dear cottage bathing you in an idle morn, and wept with simple gratitude and joy because this was all the bliss I could imagine life to bear -- and because I had it while other gardens and cottages and children were burning and other parents were fighting for their lives and freedoms, had it while other fathers labored in mine and field and factory to create the surplus from which I skimmed this blissful freedom, had it while my sisters and brothers risked themselves in the street in the protests going on that very day.

"I stayed home bathing you because I was scared of death. I went into the street for excitement and a lark, and came home and boasted about how dangerous it was, until they got serious with their guns. I turned out for action, but the planning meetings got to be a drag, so I cut out and learned to dance at

the Fillmore, and never quite got around to going door-to-door with the Mobilization leaflets on my block or having a serious talk with my suburban relatives about what one might do against the War in their situation. I walked precinct for Dellums and voted for McCarthy despite my distaste, but had no time to spare to help try to reform the local Democratic Party organization or to join the Radical Union and catch up on my ideological homework.

"Meanwhile, three weeks a year apart, I paid my taxes like a proper subscriber, pursued my ordinary work, thanked the shopkeeper and kept traffic moving on the streets, and slept gladly each night as if at each instant each twenty of us were not also making life a nightmare for one Vietnamese, as if that were a reality in a specialized museum I could visit when I pleased and only then. I did enough to be able to tell myself I was doing more than ~~many~~^{most}, and then ate lambchops and went to the beach. I never let the War distract my work for more than ten days at a time, though I knew that in some cold calculus my taking it on full-time for a year would mean ten fewer children dead in Nam and five less-brutalized at home.

"Instead I planted the garden, loved Karen, wrote you songs and courted psychedelic wonder as if this were all that made the other meaningful. I told myself I had to draw the line I was relieved to draw, I said it was right to save myself for the long run, to work at the work which might someday help people learn how to make lives without war, or at least help ten younger fathers choose to put in the year I did not the next time around. I told myself it was okay to do less than I could do even at this; and it is true, I did."

All this as well as the other is what I did in the War. It is my pride, my shame, my guilt, my joy, inextricable together, the truth I bear to give my son as he slips from my hands in the water, as I tell him I don't know what it means -- for I was only guessing all the time about how to draw my lines, and only history will make their meanings full, beyond the changing partial grasp I had of them as I went along.

This moment in the garden is his heritage from me, my truth I tell him that he may judge its meaning for himself -- as he judges the nature of joy, as I tell him that the napalm scars, the selfish gratitude, the complicity and impotence warring with purpose, which all rise within me as I caress his flesh are not just an ugly blot on the moment's pure bliss, but rather its completion, making it real, the threatened precarious real joy of flesh-spirit in history.

"Is this what they call a peak experience?" he asks, as we glow in the lights of sun and fire, glow with the full current surging through us, intimate and holy, social and holy. It is, I tell him, they come and they go, each of its own kind. They are moments only yet they are eternal, they resonate in our being, they take us beyond the self and restore our senses of self, and once experienced wait ever after to take us again in unexpected times and places and ways, even in hotel ballrooms, holy, holy, all holy.

On trying to connect in the mid-seventies:
notes from my itinerary

"And what did you do after that, Dad?" he asks, as wet from the bath he stands before me, already so tall. "What are

you doing in the ballroom, why are you always writing, do you want to come look at my Star Wars cards with me?"

And I tell him.

"I stayed home writing because I was exhausted and drained from ten years of front-line action in the larger War. I stayed home because I was partly convinced of our impotence, as many were, even while the momentum of our former protests helped bring the Vietnam conflict to an end -- for I had misjudged the situation, I had not read history well enough to recognize each escalation of foreign violence and domestic repression in response to our protests as more evidence of the loss of control which would lead the U.S. to withdraw from Vietnam.

"I stayed home because I recognized, in a broader, cultural sense, that we indeed were inciting a loss of control at home, with whose consequences we, unlike the Vietnamese, were ill-prepared to cope. I stayed home to work at preparation, observing your growth to deepen my understanding of education, pursuing the explorations of body and psyche that had grown naturally from my work despite the War's distraction, because they were terrifying and exciting and pure private delight, because I had come to believe them essential to reforming our politics and social being, in ways yet to be discovered.

"You were three while we lay in the sun on my couch beneath the big acupuncture charts as the Watergate hearings droned on and I taught you to feel the ch'i energy consciously, wondering how to connect these explorations to the concerns which had led me into the streets. I organized a modest learning-group, where we met as equals to explore the mysteries together, to heal ourselves

and prepare a search to make them useful in the world. I helped form a small cooperative, chartered as a religious order, where people trying to integrate psychic skills into healing, therapy, business and political action could connect free from fear of the State's badly-drawn licensing laws -- could connect as independent, co-inquiring equals rather than in charismatic hierarchy, to share our inquiries and self-grown understandings of the spirit, our efforts to demystify the psychic and make its practices ethical, our search for ways to be ^{professional} of service without being exploitive. I joined up with a small college, a struggling, promising descendant of the work I had helped begin in the sixties -- a decentralized school, radically re-organized to support and validate the self-directed learning of even such persons and groups as these, to inform its processes and help establish its social legitimacy.* Each step, it seemed, led on to another. And oh! how slowly! how long it took even to begin each step! And how precious, how utterly fragile and precarious each one seemed, as if it were the premature infant of our love, demanding no less than the total committment of one's attention and energy to ensure its even survival until the next day.

*The school is Campus-Free College,

Though CFC has itself no larger social aim, its forms are applicable to such. In this and other ways, it is one of the most interesting examples of educational experiment in operation now.

"During these years, to buy the time to be with you and play with ch'i and dabble in these ventures as I wrote the books on education that no one would print because the education fad had passed, to learn more about learning while cutbacks stifled change at every level of the educational system and our third--generation alternatives struggled on without even a tenth of what tangible help I might have given, I learned to do a minor orthodox psychotherapy well -- and found it hard to charge even what I did, because writing is so insanely detached a work and it healed me to do something real to help one other person at a time.

"But it didn't do a thing to heal the social mechanisms of distress. And neither did the rest, though I could dream about some day.

"Meanwhile the War for human dignity and distributive justice proceeded on every front in ways all too immediate and concrete, as miners choked with blacklung while the ionosphere eroded, as estrogens, nukes and microwaves proliferated while the Energy Cartel pillaged at will and the CIA covered its tracks and the Welfare State institutionalized its underclass, and lonely courageous people tried to bring each outrage to public consciousness and action. As the lines of our future were being determined I sat writing a biography of the nice man who calls on your birthday and mine, indulging myself in the intimate task of exploring another person as a spirit in history, learning from him to recognize how truly subtle and gross were the corruptions of consciousness and conscience involved as the human services boom prospered in symbiosis with the general distress by medicalizing and privatizing human misery.

"Though the streets were safe by day and the decade pretended to calm, I thought I felt the deep distress growing as almost everything continued to come apart faster than we could patch it up or put something else together, as new modes of social control and new modes of uncontrol deepened their hold on us simultaneously. Each thing I did, each gesture and work of my friends or of anyone else, each act of Congress, made some sense by itself -- but the whole was a madness, ²chaos, I could not tell if it were mine alone or of us all, since no one could bear any longer to discuss it as such.

"Instead, preserving the semblances, we bent ourselves each to some small patch of ground or to cobbling one together, tried each to focus our vision on some few real wavelengths, and took in no more of the broader landscape and spectrum than we could stand or were forced to bear. Yet beyond this each had his or her aliquot of curiosity, and mine perhaps undid me. Though I might have done more to help build your alternative school and my college than just teach part-time, or have gone on to get my license as a marital or physical therapist and then to the reorganizing of care systems, though such were the logics of work's maturation, the concrete investments in career and project which I saw others struggling to make and which I myself recognized (in kind, not particular content) as necessary to survive and to work for change, I did none of these. I chose not to tie myself to such a firm labor, or was too shattered and weak to be able to ground myself in one, or both.

"Instead, helpless and purposeful, I tried to keep a foot in every camp of my self-interest, a finger in every pie whose

potential I could identify as my own; and from this meager cosmos of incipient order to look out into the jungle, the furnace, the chaos of the whole. If things were sometimes a bit crazy around the house as you grew up when each summer's wave of visitors hit, it was because fifteen years of logic or growth or drift had led me through so much to connect that our social space was strange indeed -- for by then, due to my attitudes and theirs, most of my ongoing friends were involved in particular networks of transformational work. When I counted, on the Bicentennial, they were working, almost all not simply as practitioners but rather as organizers, in forty-two distinct networks,* spanning a cosmos of technological, educational, political-economical, psychological, spiritual, governmental, communitarian, parental, sexual, libertarian, ethnic and other such personal-social concerns.

"My connection with each was slight in the whole but intense in its way, and from each I absorbed some fractional hit of the genuine charge and potential it carried -- the personal and social energies, the elements of vision, the responses to essential aspects of threat and promise, born through its creators and manifest in their collective work. If I then looked out from my own small bits of tangible specific work, into the terrifying and holy chaos it seemed to me the social sphere, the structure of our collective consciousness and my own had become, it was as a conduit of perhaps more energy than I was prepared to bear --

to recognize, forming and re-forming in the Void, elemental visions and shapes of human substance; and to accept them as my projection.

"One vision was the intersection of the visions of those forty-two networks, one from their union, defining together a program for realizing human potential -- a program still fragmentary, yet quite more comprehensive and integral than anyone in the 'human potential' or any other sub-movement of the whole could manage to express or attend to. Nor could I manage adequately, though the typewriter claimed me for months as I stammered out thin versions of the vision while seeking to describe the modes of learning it incarnated, the educational forms which might help bring it into social being.

"Yet as in deepest mind and in society each thing is defined as the complement of what it is not, so each network and particular vision made visible the particulars of inertia and resistance, both social and private, and the conjugate, counter-active visions which it worked to undo, and which worked against it. Together these "opposing" visions and forces formed an entity no less coherent than the collective complement which I admired, and a great deal more massive and tangible in the present body of society.*

*As savages do with the gods they dread, I gave it a name -- not Capitalism, Technological Man, Non-Life-Affirming Habits nor Bad Conscience, but Authoritarian Learning Systems -- to invoke it in a form with which I might deal. In this light my work in education (including, in its way, this book) has been concerned with the transition from such systems to systems and processes of self-directed (autonomous, democratic) learning.

"The cardinal task of the age seemed to me to be to connect -- not simply to develop some particular one(s), but to connect all, of the visions, the works, the aspects of self and society which promised our wholeness and justice. And moreover to connect them in a particular way -- for they stood, within the self and out, with no one element superior, but rather as co-equals to be joined in democratic polity of mutual self-determination.

"Thus the cardinal problem of the age seemed to me to be disconnection -- in particular of the sort which brings within the self, society, or our mind, part only to rule at the expense of the rest and the whole. Nor was this disconnection a static condition, but rather a dynamic force which sapped and indeed destroyed the very abilities of our minds to conceive, and our wills to attempt, the potentials of democratic connection.

"Staring then into the chaos beneath our society's troubled calm and my own, besides the wisps of integral vision I recognized ancient agencies of disconnection forming anew, as people faced with the rich, incoherent potentials of their freedom resubscribed in a myriad ways to authoritarian systems, foresaking their own autonomy. And perhaps because I was myself so disconnected -- to balance the sure impulse that had led me to share in the seminal fusions of the FSM and the Haight, or to betray it -- I drifted or dove to the place in society where this process of disconnection seemed most clearly, most radically, and most mystifyingly to be occurring. I hung out around the human potential and New Age camps, investing my self in my own way in like concerns, as I wrote the essays which form this book, trying

to describe the disconnection I saw happening, what of it I could grasp besides my own, in the light of wholer purpose.

"You were five when we lay beneath the stars of the Utah desert, with our very first fossils cached in the Batmobile, en route to the Thirteenth Annual AHP National Convention -- where I got a rare main-session chance to propose, with the then-current case of EST in mind, that the AHP, as a public and ecumenical body, had perhaps some responsibility, or at least an historical opportunity, to develop and express some judgement of the social nature and moral meaning of the images of humanity brewing in the movements it serviced. The notion was novel and drew some applause, for such matters were on many minds in the summer of '75. But no one had much idea about what to do to implement this or any similar idea. Nor did I, save to sit at my desk grinding out more aberrant essays, like Pirsig's Phaedrus pursuing the ghost of the unifying Idea by critique, with you, my sweet one, ever at my back to ask the attention I could not give, obsessed, and so seldom even the Utah desert to grant us stars.

"Instead, in the heavens of psycho-social chaos I surveyed, I saw the constellation of the Übermensch growing clearer as it rose. The moon of the Smile grew brighter, fuller, the Smile grew teeth and nibbled away the social corners, the political edges, the historical rind and conscientious core of each human food and fruit it illuminated.

On our disconnection here

"And so I come to stand in this delirium, this ballroom, raving at some well-meaning stranger named Julian. I am choking with rage and grief -- yet within this mask I am perfectly calm, indeed serene, as I watch the illusory walls which define the

ballroom and divide me from Julian and the others dissolve, revealing us in broader perspective.

"At this conference called 'Connections', we are, I realize, approximately as disconnected as it is possible for persons on this Earth to be now. We are denizens of the most rootless coast and metropolis of a nation formed by tearing itself free from the culture and history of the Old World, the grasp of human tradition. Isolated even from the complex life of this city in a hotel in downtown L.A. where no one lives and all work has stopped for the long weekend, we are met in a great concrete box designed as a world in itself, surrounded by 10,000 square miles of land systematically purged of its native life, to invoke the human future.

"We are white, on the whole, more white than almost any large group of human services people to be found these days. We are middle and upper-middle class, with a narrowness of perspective further narrowed by our education (high), our politics (liberal), our social sympathies (vaguely progressive), our cultural tastes (hip), and all the other self-selection factors that make the AHP mailing list a demographic advertiser's dream, each index of its homogeneity an index of our disconnection. Our works are remarkably isolated from other streams of progressive effort; they have at best a secondary or tertiary relation to the primary productive order, and deal, on the whole, with disconnected individuals. Even in work we are trying to disengage ourselves from the old assumptions of our professions to explore new ones -- and so it is in our personal lives, where so many of us are in radical transit, making life-changes. Disconnected in

these dozen ways, to speak together we are shaping a new language, a jargon whose terms are stripped free of any social or historical reference.

"And none of this might matter much more than the norm, as our disconnection is only an extreme case of the American condition now -- except for the singular fact that we are taking it upon ourselves, explicitly and consciously, to redefine the nature of human being, of meaning and society. For Marilyn indeed has caught this piece of the truth in her mythology, though the state of our Aquarian Conspiracy is a bit more fuzzy and less-simply conspiratorial than she portrays.

"What an arrogance, peculiar, colossal! Who are we, what and whom do we represent, besides of course 'the human condition' itself; and is this enough to qualify us for the task? Why do I find this effort so appalling, believing as I do that we are redefining human nature and reality all the time anyway, all of us, and might as well be conscious and purposeful about it? Is it simply the particular definitions, the social content here involved; or is there something also about the thrust itself, that tone which says we are special, we are the ones, history is ours? And do I not share this arrogance, this tone? Isn't Julian right, don't I give energy and substance to the Aquarian illusion by fighting it? Doesn't my vehement presence here mean that I've bought and am re-selling the notion that these ideas and the people who bear them are special, that they do have the power to determine history, or at least to make a royal mess of it?

"And what will you think, my son, sweet frog, Star Warrior, my judge, thirty in the year of the millenium, as we look back to

ask the meaning of this time, my life, as I looked back with my own father, the old labor journalist, to ask the meaning of his? How will you judge what I was doing as the War went on, as the neutron bomb stewed while world hunger lurked in the wings, as in the spasms of advanced capitalism, the throes of cultural mutation, something was tortured to an extreme and this bolt of disconnected energy left me raving in a ballroom where history and meaning came apart?

"What will you think when I say again that I'm not sure what I'm doing here? Maybe Julian and Marilyn are right, maybe their positive attitude is all the force they claim and more, and I am some vicious irrelevant Neanderthal, poisoning the common pool. Maybe they are more simply wrong and irrelevant than I think, making me so too for the way I have chosen to connect myself with them; maybe the Growth movement is just another passing fad, of no consequence save for the way it tricks energy and attention away from the vital tasks of our time, and I have pissed five years of my life away to compound a vile deceit. I don't know, I don't know -- for I have only been guessing all along about how to draw my lines, and only history will make their meanings full."

Of the stakes, and the propriety of doubt

And that is the point, Julian. The point is almost too obvious to mention, so simple that I have taken the long way round through my life to dress the dry abstraction in human flesh -- and even so have sketched not a tenth of the intimate case, only a bit of its social face, enough to name the stakes involved.

We are staked here utterly, as men in history, as social beings. Whatever our other terms, private or cosmic, the meaning

of our lives is made still in these social terms (which determine and are determined by the others, not totally but fundamentally.) For indeed space and time are an illusion, and matter only the flesh of spirit's mystery; indeed we are bound by and transcend their limits. This ballroom extends to the torture chambers of Chile, this instant is the instant in which our children and our forebears judge us -- and we are making the meaning, our own and of all, knowing not what meaning we make. It is a condition of total risk, terrifying and joyous, unavoidable and holy.

History will record the way we spend this instant, this decade, as persons of the whole,^{as} potent members of community. For my son it may be a deep shame, to treasure, to pass on for its cautionary meaning, the story of how his father and others of his class and nation chose to occupy themselves while catastrophe grew in their name and through their inaction. Your daughter may find your act, or even mine, to be sanity's foundation. Me, I'd settle for them still being able to argue about the matter, given the grim odds abrew now. For Auschwitz and Vietnam are not over yet -- not simply because they remain as live wounds in my conscience, but because the vital energies they encoded breed still in society, in us all. In the clandestine and amoral conspiracies which have influenced America's leadership and foreign policies since the first Kennedy assassination, we are faced with agencies of historical determination whose nature and power are truly unprecedented.* In the struggle for global resources now

*To dismiss such ideas as loose talk without having looked into their substance is (to put it mildly) irresponsible. One might begin with Carl Oglesby's The Yankee and Cowboy War (Berkeley Medallion, New York, 1977) and J. Fletcher Prouty's The Secret Team: The CIA and Its Allies in Control of the World (Prentice-Hall, N.Y., 1973; Ballantine, N.Y., 1974).

shaping up lies the potential for a devastation of the colored peoples of the world by the pale, on a scale which will make Hitler's pogroms seem trivial. And what then will be the meaning of those frequent instants of existential joy and coherence and grace in our works and our lives, such as you so surely know, and I too, yea even in this instant's case? Will our children see us as brave, blind, potent, helpless, pitiful, blessed?

And who would we be now, to say "I don't care, the future can go hang, the meaning is just what I experience now and only that;" and how diminished?

If I speak here then as if I hold the whole past, the future and all meaning in my hands this instant as I hold my child in the garden, the ballroom, it is because I do -- and because in this I speak for you, Julian, as I speak for us all. For I am you and we are one, and my story -- beneath the ~~particular~~ idiosyncratic details that make it seem only my own and only this instant's, the melodrama that emphasizes the general case -- is the story of each person and each instant, in whom and in which so much is continually staked.

If I tax you then with this truism, Julian, to say how enormous are the risks and responsibilities we assume in the ordinary moment as full share of its serene, undeniable bliss, I do so to chide you not for having the wrong party line about what to do and why -- for you may, after all, be right -- but for an attitude. For it is proper, I believe, to have some doubt about our grasp on Right Action, about the meaning we are making. It is proper to have some uncertainty and fear, proper to share

them, even though the inner and outer demands of the moment for positive commitment and certainty make it seem an impossible luxury, a dangerous indulgence, to do so -- for we know not what we do and do not even the best we can, and it is hubris indeed to claim more.

There is a moment in every parent's experience, if I may speak from mine, when touching your child you realize for the first time fully the way in which the seeds of the worst in you as well as the best have been planted in her or him, to grow into a future you cannot determine or foresee -- in which you realize that what you have done and are doing for your child, for all the love and good purpose you have meant to bear, may prove in time to have been also fundamentally and dreadfully wrong. There is no returning from this moment: one can only accept it and go on, doing (at best) the best one can -- asking what help one can, perhaps in an attitude of prayer.

So it is with the child of human meaning we hold in our hands, in each action -- there is this moment for us each as parent, rarely spoken of, always latent. And until I know that you have experienced it, Julian, I cannot trust you with my child.

You do not speak as if you have. Nor does Marilyn, nor Werner, nor Jimmy Carter, nor John Vasconcellos, though I have many other reasons to admire him. Nor, to be fair, do most of the neo-Stalinists -- and milder ideologists, the appropriate technologists and ecologists, the various social reformers and fellow educators and agents of cultural change with whom I likewise find myself in part allied. In Peter's case and John Seeley's, however, to my eyes this moment's realization lies like a necessary wound fertilizing ~~the~~

the bodies of their works -- giving them the maturity, the grasp of tragedy, that makes them at least in this way whole, and binds me closer to them.

All this ^{is the main subject} is part of the passion, Julian, which you would have me put aside -- and not you alone, but the movement you represent, which too would put aside the questions of what our taxes for the War, our moments in garden and workshop and ballroom, mean, rather than face them in these terms of doubt, confusion, grief, blame, guilt, anger, fear and shame. Yet these are my terms, my feelings, in balance with the love and joy, the purpose, tenderness, pleasure and peace and amiable mischievousness which inspire me here equally, howsoever untrumpeted.

And how then should I, could I, dissect out all my "negativity", discard my distress, without being guilty of the deepest violation? This is my history, my passion -- my self, as you put it -- which I bear, which I come dragging, riding, striving for control and transcendence through surrender, not of but to my condition. Indeed the Positivists of your Growth movement have got my number, I can hear them tut-tutting in pity and diagnostic pride -- for I do hold on to it all, I do like to feel it: with this I feel human, feel real, feel whole. A sad case indeed, likely incurable, who rather than give up his wound would give it to the world and call that whole.

But I'll tell you this: if you-all were truly positive, you would embrace and affirm the "negative" as well. As in that quaint old moral saw two wrongs do not make a right, so to deny

the "negative" half of the whole in the name of positivism and integrity is a monstrous deceit -- a ruin of language, for which we all shall pay.

A homework assignment

I do not, of course, actually say all this to Julian in the ballroom, only some five minutes' worth -- but it is a genuine rave, with all these thoughts and feelings mixed together, quite unguarded, taking me aback as much as anyone; and as I subside, trying to tuck the unseemly adrenalin and tears back in the closet, I realize that I've shot my wad for the conference, and that I have no business even showing up for my workshop with Vasconcellos tomorrow with my cool so blown. Still there is a moment of silence in the room when I stop, and a peculiar peace, which is perhaps not mine alone.

When I can hear again, Peter is picking on Julian. Really, it's quite savage, the way we treat him, like hostile boys at the edge of town. Yet, after me Peter seems the very soul of calm reason, with even his cheer somewhat restored, as he patiently explains again the key cognitive points I have obscured by excess of emotion: (1) The relation between our privilege and distributive injustice is not only attitudinal and moral, but structural.

(2) Julian's line about simply changing the self to change society is patent nonsense, since one can realize one's potential* in any number of ways while continuing to play one's part in the same social-structural reality -- if somewhat differently, still

*As one can, in finest Horatio Alger tradition, secure for oneself more wages and a higher post in the firm.

leaving it unchanged. (3) Such nonsense follows naturally from the basic thrust of the human potential movement, which is to reduce to the subjective and intrapsychic, to psychologize, conditions and problems which have independent weight and integrity in other "objective" realms. (4) In this, despite the claims to a "new" psychology ("humanistic", "transpersonal", "holistic"), the movement continues and indeed accelerates the reductive modes of interpretation and use, and the social consequences (in particular, the diminishment of our senses of responsibility and power as social beings), which -- as Seeley has described in deep detail -- have characterized increasingly the evolution and employments of psychological science in America for the past half-century, and which must themselves be understood as integral to the psychologies involved.*

Perhaps it's Peter's words, perhaps it's his tone, perhaps it's just that my crazed attack has left space only for change

* Such modes of interpretation and use form, so to speak, the operant (tangible, social) psychology of the psychologies involved, which despite their evolution from Freudian to Jungian, Skinnerian to Maslovian, have in this regard not evolved at all, save perhaps for the worse. Curiously, each brand furnishes a (potential) conceptual basis to explain in its own native terms both how and why its development has been thus constrained, and so opens to its own transcendence; but that such reflexive potentials are unexploited follows as a consequence of the problems they might address, leaving a meta-problem to be remedied by deeper means not yet apparent. Seeley's work (op.cit.) is particularly rich in its examination of such maddening knots as this.

and rebuttal; but Julian is stung to say that he is as concerned about social justice as any of the rest of us. Peter is not cruel enough to say then why do you seem not to know anything about it? He is both kinder and crueler as he advises Julian to read history and political science, anthropology and economics and sociology, to grasp the weight and integrity of their realms; and says that though one might not particularly care for such studies or find them pleasant, one should attend them as deeply as one did psychology, or else one forfeit one's right to pronounce on the matters they treat.

I too feel shamed by Peter's curriculum, because I haven't read in any discipline enough to do more than grasp a few crude tools for use in my own patchwork of thought; but my mind is far from the failures beneath my own bravado. Instead I'm wondering what's missing from Peter's terms; and I remember that the heavy curriculum he has engaged and advises for Julian was not his own first choice, his home base being psychological and literary. How odd, I think, that he does not tax him with literature ... and then I am seeing Peter and Julian from a great distance indeed, as my sense of their personal identities dissolves completely and I hear them simply as two systems of language attempting interaction.

7.

On Some Systems of Language

In which the Author, after noting the way we mediate our social selves through our personal language-systems, reflects on current languages of disconnection and connection.

(A personal case)

We are revealed intimately by the languages we use. I think of the peculiar quality of Seeley's ^(my sociologist friends) prose, with its meandering yet inexorable clauses -- for every on the one hand an on the other, in scrupulous symmetrical enumeration of all the branching cases, attempting to be fair to each possibility; yet leading always to some therefore like an arrow into a knot, couched so courteously and polysyllabically as to disguise its sharp thrust. Perhaps the brutalized boy who internalized such a Millsian mode of ordering and arguing Truth as his main defense and weapon against what seemed insanity's reign at home is well-hidden here; but the man who extended it to deal with quite more vast and subtle authoritarian systems, in contexts where even to preserve his own sense of self, let alone his credibility, he had constantly to consider the other side of everything and undermine his conclusions with the qualifications that might assure his listeners' redemption, is scarcely so hidden. As for the fellow who often stops twice in a sentence to turn a phrase around or inside out, or to strip a word he's just used down to

Thus are our private and public persons configured together always, in each way we express ourselves. No doubt Peter and Julian have such private stories to their languages; but here I hear them simply as public persons, through the filter of my own considerable bias -- with reference not to why they themselves have chosen to speak as they do, but ^{to} the languages they use, which are not only theirs.

Smilese and the erosion of meaning

The system of language I hear through Julian has a characteristic style of action -- not structurally-purposive nor playfully self-reflective, as in Seeley's case, but rather incantatory and reiterative, like the thud-thud-thud of the ritual tom-tom. The key words strike me sharply by now, for I have become as sensitive to them, in my own way, as any other American bombarded by the vocabulary of the seventies; and as Julian speaks I cannot be sure which ones I hear and which others I supply in instant association:

... natural, holistic, positive, organic, authentic, aware, higher (consciousness), human/humanize/humanistic, life-affirming, joyful, supportive, self-evolutionary, transformational, connected(ness), experiential, synerg(ist)ic, transcendent, psychic, caring, touching, creative, open, eccological, balanced, energy/energetic, communication, reprogram(min)g, actualized, healing, growth,...

There does not seem to be a precise term in English for words of this sort in their current useage. "(Quasi-) gerundial"

is as close as I can come* -- for, though almost all are nominally adjectives (or adverbial forms, as they often appear), in their use they impact not as normal modifiers of nouns and verbs but rather with superior and independent force, permeating and displacing the meaning of the terms they seem to modify, and becoming themselves the primary substances, in effect the nouns, of New Age speech. From holistic dentistry or joyful clam-digging, for example, one expects not so much a pain in the jaw or the hunting and eating of another creature, as to experience a certain sensibility, a cultural quality essentially independent of teeth, clams, etc.

If I seem scornful of such language-use, it's in part because it bewilders and frightens me -- for I have come increasingly to see it as a language system, foreign and powerful, which I do not truly understand and endanger myself by using. My feelings were not always this extreme. At first I thought I knew what the words themselves meant, or at least what they referred to; and my irritation and alienation came simply from the apparent familiarity of their misuse. For of course this way with modifiers is familiar -- it is so much the key habit of the advertising industry (which processes

*A gerund, in the original Latin use, is a noun form expressing the uncompleted action of the verb from which it is derived: thus, "Writing is a joy." Hence (quasi-)gerundial, to describe a word which functions rather like a noun to substantiate the (generally uncompleted or unaccomplished) quality from which it is derived.

perhaps most of the public communication which Americans encounter) that we are scarcely sensible of it as such. Perhaps it developed as more goods were produced than could be sold by notifying people of the direct benefits resulting from their possession -- leading competitive producers to compete also in producing language to convince consumers that they were buying, not so much artifacts, as superior states of being (sexiness, social status, etc.)

In this light the public language of human potential and the New Age is not mysterious at all. Though scarcely a term I cite is new, their present selection and meanings have developed recently as people wrote brochures, catalogues, invitations, mailings, talked on the radio, to church groups, on panels, at introductory workshops -- in contexts, in short, where they were trying to sell (in every sense) their goods of experience and perspective; and in which, moreover, both the variety of goods and the number of producers were multiplying perhaps more rapidly than in any other sector of the economy, necessitating the most vigorous* efforts to expand their market.

Yet the New Age language has a stranger nature, and perhaps a deeper effect, than such ^{an} analysis can indicate. The ordinary language of advertising ties us to the concrete, or at least to what we imagine is known. The qualities of the faster car, the cleaner wash, are, though relative, objective and even measurable; and the same is true, after a fashion, for

*And in a sense, by virtue of the qualities I note below, the most advanced.

social status and sexual attractiveness, which are invoked as well-defined and social states of being, complexly and concretely manifested in society.*

By contrast the key qualities of New Age ad jargon are almost entirely subjective and insubstantial. They cannot generally be measured nor can their existence be verified by any other person than s/he who experiences them directly. Nor, in general, can even the experiencer be sure of them in any usual way -- for there is no general or precise agreement even about what most of these terms mean, let alone any established concretion of social phenomena (other than the New Age conspiracy itself) to reinforce and verify their assumed meanings.

One might grant leave for such terms, evocative of transformation, to refer less to present society than to a new one forming. Even so, there is not generally enough precision of agreement to make them meaningful in a usual sense. Some are simply without ordinary meaning -- e.g., "authentic or meaningful experience". Others are habitually used in ways which contradict their possible meaning -- e.g., the holistic healer who diagnoses by acupuncture pulse instead of blood tests and prescribes herbs instead of pills, Others involve

* In this, normal advertising plays an overtly directive homeostatic function, rather than the covert one played by New Age advertising in the absence of content in its direction.

deeper contradiction, as "higher consciousness" uses a gravity-bound spatial metaphor to speak for what is presumably independent of matter and space. Others yet embody more agonizing contradictions, as in the use of natural and ecological to speak as if humans and their doings were not part of nature and elements of ecological systems.

This is not a language, but a muddle. Yet people do use such terms as if they held meaning. As their literal meanings are insubstantial and chaotic, their principal content must be of a different order. In general, I think they are heard to signify nothing more complex than a particular sort of approval. For they are all, without exception, advanced and taken as positive terms. Moreover, since they are used not only in concatenation but quite interchangeably with one another, each term invokes the others, and invokes the ur-term of approval which they together constitute.

In short, these are scarcely words at all, but rather emblems -- as if, on the page or in one's mind, the small yellow button of the Smile appeared each time one encountered one, like the Seal of Good _____ affixed to the thing or act in question. What "_____" refers to is not clear -- perhaps to the New Age, or to some general inner sense of well-being, of "Self-keeping", quite privately experienced and judged. Like any Good, the one invoked by the Smile, by these word--emblems, is an aspiration -- but one so vague, and so devoid of mutually-verifiable terms in which to judge its accomplishment, that almost anything might actually be happening beneath its benediction.

What is happening, I believe, is disasterous. The words of New Age jargon, the incessant, aching incantations of the Positive, are words less of thought than of attitude. They do not carry meaning, but substitute for it. Worse, they destroy meaning without replacing it, and so dissolve our connection to each other and the world. And it is from this ruin of language, meaning, connection and judgement that the Smiling figure of the Übermensch strides forth, throwing off such social bonds.

These are not simply abstract propositions. I experience them, or at least their consequence, in anger, fear and confusion. For it is my language which is being destroyed. Most of these words had meanings before the Smile swallowed them. Some were concrete, or if vague at least specific in intent, not promising a world. Others held precise and subtle meanings, among communities who agreed to treat them as such, at times (evolutionary, transcendental) embodying centuries of human effort.

But I can no longer speak of "joy" without remembering and being subject to the social consequence of that day in 1971 when William Schutz, Growth-movement mainstay and author of Joy^{*}, appeared at the California Institute of the Arts clad in solid black, like a CIA agent prepared to infiltrate the

*

Viet Cong, to lead half the student body in exercises designed to permit us to experience Joy, encouraging (i.e. ordering) us to try to make the noises which would reassure us all that Joy was what we were experiencing, rather than a sales-pitch, an indoctrination and an induction; and sure enough, we did. Hi, Will; thanks a lot for how you've helped to cheapen our mother tongue, and to make a world in which I can no longer confess this essay as an act of simple, radiant joy without evoking and bearing the conscious weights of irony and social redefinition involved in my use of the term.*

One can no longer use these words responsibly, without in each instance being an active agent of their redefinition, of the restoration of their meaning -- an act attempted against their continual and accelerating corrosion. Some are important to redeem: I have put much work # into making a concept of holistic sufficiently coherent to describe what an holistic system of health education might actually embody and how to judge it as such; and many people are at work on analogous "linguistic" endeavors. The scope of the social project involved in each restoration is suggested by the case of natural, where the meaning of one usage is being pinned down by legislation establishing agencies and laws to require food distributed as "natural" to contain no "unnatural" (i.e., "man-made") preservatives or enhanceants.

* Schutz's share in this is perhaps more than the average, but I don't mean to single him out for special blame -- only to say that the degradation of language and meaning doesn't just happen, but is accomplished (or resisted) through us as individuals in each specific time and place.

In a tedious essay which I trust will appear in a future education book.

But such tangible agencies and arenas of definition are rare, and without them it is uphill all the way, or rather a losing struggle. It was worst in ordinary conversation, where time and again I would use these words and then come to recognize that people had understood something quite different from my intent -- not simply a normal unique personal transposition, as concrete as what it transposed, but a meaning of another order, which I could not quite comprehend but which seemed consistently to undo the essence of the meaning I intended. In such instants, in small but significant ways, one's grasp on reality is undone, part of one's mind and one's capacity for meaningful (lit.) interaction is destroyed -- for all these are represented in our words and affirmed by word-sharing. As I gave these words mostly up rather than subscribe to their new sort of meaning, as I checked them each time they rose casually to my lips and stuttered as I searched in the empty place for some way to say what I meant, I felt less like a disgruntled literary craftsman than like a wounded animal, with part of my self destroyed. And so it is in general, I believe: though I am hyperconscious about words because I use and love them so, the same damage -- simultaneously private and collective -- is done within us each and every time we participate in the collapse of their meanings.

Movementspeak; or, You can't say
"Give me Liberty or give me Death" in Smilese

All species of jargon and their consequences are the same in certain ways, I suppose. Still it is useful to compare the dominant Movement jargon of the sixties, as it springs to mind from the collection of political posters under the guest bed at home -- in which current posters from some thirty movements

descended from that Movement demonstrate that this jargon and its psychology, not much changed, are as alive in society now as those of the New Age, if less fashionable:

... revolution, peace, war, power, anti-, rights, march, action, liberation, freedom, black (etc.), struggle, prisoner, trial, women, workers, bomb, justice, democratic, Fascism, organize, movement, benefit, clinic, commemorate, picket, sit-in, demonstrate, equal, resist, vote, oppression ...

This list, this language, is not simply independent of the New Age language above*, but of a radically different nature. Its terms are not derivative but primary. They refer to concrete actions, to (specific kinds of) real persons, to social events and entities. True, many evoke grandiloquent penumbras of meaning -- but in a way which colors rather than obliterates their primary meanings: for because these meanings are substantial, are nouns and verbs susceptible to social observation and verification, the words remain connected to their basic meanings, which in turn retain a basic content. Even the most abstract of them (justice, revolution, Fascism) come to us not as free-floating aspirations or dreads, but rather as collective dreams and nightmares with massive, explicit historical substance -- for the charge in all, as displayed by those who use them seriously, is to make explicit the heritage, the actual events and persons through which their meanings have developed.

* Ecological may go both ways now, and female also in a sense; there may be others.

Whatever its limitations, its lack perhaps of inward depth, this is a language of connection to the world, and more: of engagement with the world in history, to transform it.* It is a language of social transformation, even as the other is of personal transformation -- but oh, the difference in their character! One connects us to the world, to each other, to history; the other dissolves all connections. In this light, that the second has replaced the first in so many minds and places is not simply a matter of one fad replacing another (as if fashions had no content) but a defeat and a disaster -- involving nothing so parochial as the eclipse and confusion of Left politics, but rather our deep sources of connection and meaning, our grasp on social (human) reality itself.

*If its terms are not so crazy-making in their action as the New Age quasi-gerundials are, this may partly be because, though they too are meant to sell (proselytize), what they advertise has not yet become so fully a commodity to be profited from, as have the wares of the New Age. Granted, this difference grew vague at times, e.g. when lipservice civil-rightsniks hustled government agencies for jobs; but only when we are exhorted to "Join the Dodge Rebellion" do we experience the kind of violation that is routine with New Age lingo.

~~##~~ ~~##~~
[Lend]

Literature and the craft of meaning

The system of language which I hear through Peter is of quite a different order than even Movement jargon, let alone Smilese. I do not favor it because he is my friend; rather I love him in fair part because he speaks it, so utterly. And I confess, at times I quite lose touch with the content and am consumed simply by the language itself, much as I imagine people are by Smilese, yet with this difference: that afterwards I feel not eviscerated, but restored.

For Peter is a literary person -- a "man of letters", as we call (male) persons who choose the written word as a main tool to meddle in the affairs of the world, and choose it moreover in a certain way, to manifest an allegiance as deep as they bear to the social aims they promote.* What speaks

*I know no clearer or more knottily admirable an example in recent American letters than Paul Goodman (1910(?) -1973). For those unfamiliar with his "social criticism", which unfortunately remains as relevant or more today as when written, it may bless or damn him to mention that, though his mantle was self-woven and could not possibly be inherited, Peter and I would each feel uniquely honored were we seen as wearing a scrap of his in our own. My view of Paul's writings appears in "Paul Goodman: Mentor to a Generation" in the mini-festschrift issue of Inquiry (I:8, March 6, 1978); and a full view of his life and work in Taylor Stoehr's

The key entry-point to Paul's work is still Growing Up Absurd (Random House/Vintage, N.Y., 1960; still in print) -- which in this context stands, as does his work as a whole, as a signal example, more accessible than Seeley's, of what it means to pay conjoint and visionary attention to both the psychological and the social spheres. I don't think these men have the Answer, though they each have a true bite upon some piece of it. I invoke them to say again that with such examples of such qualities of vision so accessible, there is simply no excuse for what passes as vision in New Age eyes.

through him is our language itself, as a whole and living entity self-consciously engaged. Perhaps he is no more than another minor novelist and poet of our time; perhaps my estimate of his social essays is inflated. But one must observe that their grace and their purpose of speaking to the core of our condition have been forged in part by the deep immersion he sought in the like furnace of D.H. Lawrence; for in such traces is the key to the true Speaker.

Leafing, as I write, through draft pages of his book The Human Harvest* -- so different than this its coeval, yet so cognate, in which he bodies forth a vision of human nature -- other names catch my eye as emblems, vivid as the Smile but of a deeper character. Kant, Proudhon, Freud appear, to symbolize the readings he prescribed for Julian; but the main sign is given by Camus, Tolstoi, Hugo, Blake, Michaelangelo, Goethe. Though I state it as if it were independent of the particular visions these men bore, as a sign of a certain sort or quality of visionary activity, in ^a ~~the~~ deeper sense I believe the two are mutually dependent. Yet the sign is not narrowly partisan.

These are men who sought most largely and deeply to depict human reality, its nature and meaning; and in this gave their lives equally to the work of re-creating the very tools of meaning's creation and communication (which are inseparable). From the word to the metaphor, from the structure of prose and of what it encodes to the life of the encoder as a social and a singular being, they labored consciously to re-create the tool of literature, of language, of speech and its speaker conjoint --

for the sake of expression itself and to express the highest social purposes, which are perhaps the same.

We are what we eat, transformed. Anyone can quote great names to sanctify his thought; and likely Peter has not assimilated fully more than a limb or two of these giants, nor will stand ranked with them in time. Yet he has eaten of them truly, has savored them, and has become of their kind -- just as each in service of his passion sought to find the most that had been said of humanity and the richest ways of its saying, sought to consume the works and persons in whom these were incarnate and to recreate these, in precedent turn past Sophocles unto the dim antiquities of human mind. And it is this, this vast heritage continually conserving and renewing itself, this spirit of the Craft of meaning itself, which I receive through Peter, which floods and connects me, consumes and restores me, as he speaks, as it attends the shaping of his every phrase and choice.

To see Peter as a Pulitzer Prize nominee is to miss the point. He is just another serious literary craftsman on the road, bent on public purpose, with a modest knack of his own and having his own troubles getting it together. I have perhaps fifty friends, from computer engineer to carpenter to teacher, in each of whom I see so luminously some particular spirit incarnate -- each, as Peter, with their flaws and sheer humbling limitations, which reduce to human scale what is expressed. For this is how the spirit/s be among us here on Earth, mundane, manifest in our actual friends and chance strangers, in each

real occasion -- or not -- if we but recognize them so, and perhaps only then. Nor could we ask for more.

I don't think Literature is the only key vault of human meaning. Even the heritage I spotlight here is narrow and compromised. Provincially Western and white, it sprang from and preserves the sensibility only of the most educated in class societies; and to judge by the names we cite neither Peter nor I have done any more than they or than almost all the rest of our contemporary brothers to seek out what women say.* Nor are words the only medium of meaning's craft -- for Peter's nod to Michaelangelo symbolizes the recognition that in each carved stone, built house, extended service, the same spirit of meaning's making is at play, with its cognate spirit of Craft to possess us -- as it does, or fails to do, each time we do whatever we do -- in terms precisely analogous to those I have sketched for Peter above.

Yet words are, after all, so central to meaning; and what happens on the stage of Language is so explicit. All is revealed in this instant simply by the way these two men P. and J. choose

*We have each in our way tried to compensate for this, and perhaps managed to some degree; but this is a poor excuse. I know only enough of these issues and themes of feminism to recognize clearly that the interaction, during the past ten years, of the women's movement and the Growth movement provides perhaps a richer ground for analyzing the latter than any I have used here.

their words. Though of course the Choosers are less simple than I picture them, P. having perhaps his share of blind mystifying balderdash and J. of some truly compassionate self-reflection, still these are the dominant systems of language I hear through them. Though I hear them from a great and biased distance, and though this scene may have its peers, I am confident that nowhere else in America in 1977 can be found a clearer or more nearly perfect live public example of these two languages represented in attempted dialogue -- and the reasons for dialogue's difficulty are quite patent:

One language, one spirit, is that which maketh meaning; the other is that which undoeth meaning.

What more can one say, besides ditto for 'connection' and 'purpose' and 'history'? -- and that we are suspended in an instant of the Great Dialectic, where there is more positive purpose to meaning's undoing, even as Julian represents it, than can be dealt with simply by yelling "Fascist!" at the spectre arising from undoing's misuse. Still something is definitely out of balance, and I choose my side, even as I scale these titans P. and J. down to human size and place them *again within myself, as they reside within each person always* in this instant in which we choose our next word, in which the human heritage we have received speaks its seed through us, in whatever medium, in the dialectic.

For we are ever at it, each time we seek the words to express what we mean to say, and so form its meaning within ourselves and in the world. Each time there is the choice, We choose to fish in the ^{ordinary} private cupboard or the public

stupor market for the word, the metaphor, incident, judgement, way which will say what we mean; ^{we} choose to grab automatically for a familiar label without pausing to judge again how devitalizing or adulterated what once passed for meat may now have become or seem. ^{to be used as a label} Or we choose to try to mint our terms anew in the moment, transmuting the very stuff of all the human wealth we bear. Within these poles is a continuum, where what we repeat has meaning still, somewhat renourished by this repetition; and no doubt we are constrained to go on mostly in this realm. But though some meanings do grow fuller with each seeming repetition, for nigh all custom stales, usually quickly; and to realize ourselves fully we are better placed, so to speak, as close to the prow where Meaning freshly cleaves the sea of Chaos as we dare.

Thus it is, for each way we "word" reality. All that Literature does is to give us a clear stage, of the most intense order, on which to recognize a certain consciousness and spirit, as attentive to the nature, craft, heritage and tools of meaning's making as of the meaning made. However plebian our tongue, it is this spirit which inhabits us or fails, which we replenish or abandon, each time we choose a word -- it is the spirit of poetry, whose task in each breath is to conserve and remake all. And damn the lying culture which has trapped this spirit in dead categories, sapped it from public life by the roles demanded of all, repressed it to brood where it is restored in the well of each one's dreams, denying our potential indeed!

8.

On Some Limits of Positive Vision

In which the Author asks what is missing; submits his own work as example; reflects on our current muddled notions of Goodness; and suggests that more balanced visions are readily available.

Peter tells us to digest our heritage, connect thus to the self's deep springs, to inform our poet voice. Julian tells us to fine-tune the self, connect with its deep springs, to open our unique voice. Perhaps some fusion of these teachings is possible -- indeed, it glows in everything we say of substance. But anyone with an ear for what Pirsig calls "Quality", or with some idea of what goes on inside a writer, can hear that Peter has tuned himself no less finely than Julian, if in a different key; while Julian in turn, it seems to me too, has neglected his complementary homework, perhaps even in Psychology.

For not only voices but bodies of meaning speak through these men; and given the formal topic of their discourse it is proper to understand them as representing, in both respects, different psychologies. New Age jargon, the way of Smilese with words, represents one psychology of being and doing in the world; Movement jargon in some respects represents another, as the language using Peter does more fully. These are in effect psychologies of process which employ Peter and Julian here, and I have said enough about their differences of character; yet as they are distinct from (though allied to) the bodies of psychological study to which the speakers refer, the latter deserve comparison.

Whistling in the dark

Julian has a Ph.D., and is by no means quite the alphabetic stooze I have mocked here. In more reflective contexts I imagine he can do a decent job of speaking for the cluster of "humanistic" and "transpersonal" psychologies which are the key (and only) intellectual pride of his Growth movement; and for their riches, which are considerable and

promising of more. Yet this composite psychology of human potential unbound is curiously finite. It scarcely deals with our nature as full social beings, and even within the private domain is fragmentary and selective in its scope. Conceived and carried abroad in fair part as an explicit counterthrust to the "first force" psychology of Freud & Co. and the second wave of the mechanistic behaviorists, it has maintained its distinct character precisely in part by excluding their understandings -- or, less meanly, by picking what seemed nice from some domains of prior psychological study and ignoring others . In raising a child, for example, one can see quite clearly that B.F. Skinner is as relevant to the process as Abraham Maslow is; but the theorist who will integrate their insights has not yet appeared in print.

Yet what Growth psychology has rejected is more fundamental than any particular insight or domain. Take Transactional Analysis, for example, whose enthusiasts have popularized the state of OK. As Karen and I learned when Eric Berne's Games People Play appeared in the mid-sixties, T.A.'s ideas were direct, unmythified, and quite useful for self-and mutual help. Nor are they hostile to social extension: during the early seventies an attempt to imbue them with political character flourished in Berkeley and elsewhere under the name of "Radical Therapy." Its legacy still enriches the local therapeutic mix; and the ,000,000 copies of Berne's, Harris' and Steiner's*

*

works sold nationally have produced, in my town, a ^{text} ~~condition~~ in which participants in situations requiring psychological insight are nearly as likely as not to be familiar with T.A. language, which is often convenient.

But when T.A. translated Freud's terms of Id, Ego and Superego into the ego-states Child, Adult, Parent, it left behind a certain character of their interaction, of the self -- for Freud said that there was a knot in our constitution, or at least a fundamental, inescapable process of knotting, whose undoing was part of personal maturation and could perhaps be facilitated, but which remained essential in the nature of society as well.

↔ If there is any truth of kind to his assertion, then T.A. and even Radical Therapy are cheery whistlings in the dark, despite their situational utility.

And so it is with Positivist psychology in general, insofar at least as it informs popular understanding. What it has left behind, indeed deliberately rejected, is the idea that there is an intrinsic dark side -- a Fate, if you will -- to human character and nature. This abandonment is a cornerstone of this psychology, which in turn provides the intellectual underpinning of the current ^{the} simplistic idea that people are "naturally, basically Good", which now guides the Positivist thrust of social reform. But it is a true abandonment -- for what has been lost, besides the unpleasant idea that people might also in some way be naturally not-Good, i.e. Bad, is the idea that human character, human nature and meaning itself,

are formed, both privately and collectively, in a process of struggle in engagement with these poles of a dialectic.

To say that our glory lies in the quality of our struggle with the flaws and fates we cannot transcend may seem pitiable, beside the vision of glory unbounded, of person and society just "gettin' better, better all the time" with no intrinsic obstacle unto infinity. But if this is what small glory we do have, as I believe, it would be a shame to lose it for a grand illusion. And if the social factors which determine the very nature of Positivist vision represent in themselves essential contradictions of human nature which Positivist psychology has ignored -- as I think can be argued rigorously -- then efforts of social reform based in this vision and psychology shall be falsely founded, and extend the same contradictions ingloriously.

A short take on a moderately holistic therapy
(which doesn't do much better)

No one of humane sensibility these days likes to represent in public the notion that human beings and being are in some way fundamentally bad, warped, or fucked-up. I feel uncomfortable even in suggesting it; yet the present confusion about "positive/good" and "negative/bad" is so profound that one must say drastic things to pierce the haze.

I confess, I don't really know how to engage the idea in everyday life, it is so frightening. Like most people, I have shied away from it, and made as much progress as I could by

Handwritten notes:
Theater & social...
groups that...

rejecting and undoing such ideas. Working in the first full-scale campus sex therapy clinic*, I helped take up the useful teaching# that it was misleading to treat this vital disability as a deeply-rooted private knot, by lengthy psychoanalysis with a 20% cure rate. Sexual dysfunction instead could be dealt with as a social (interactional) disability in present time, by "superficial" short-term therapies based mainly in the premise that people had simply learned to do it wrong ^{and} could as simply learn to do it right, with 80% success rates@ -- which applied, somewhat reduced, even to ex-Catholics in whom, as a class, we saw most clearly how crippling a knot could be stamped ^{ties?} into people by a moral system which taught them that a part of their essential being was evil. In such ways our therapy was Positivistic, ignoring the depths of inner conflict and correcting negative self-image. To say that it carried this theme further by engaging clients in a discipline of consciousness, a sense-centered and self-focussed meditation whose learning was to let go of anxiety, fear and thought to experience pleasure directly without expectation or interpretation, in complete selfishness,\$ is to ^{portray} it in these regards as a model New Age therapy.

* Established in 1972 at Cowell Memorial Hospital, University of California at Berkeley. Our clinic developed the group therapies for women mentioned in Molly's story, and analogous ones for men. See L. Barbach, For Yourself: the Fulfillment of Feminine Sexuality,

Masters and Johnson, Human Sexual Dysfunction,

@ Overall, as measured by control or remission of the presenting symptom. The deeper learnings about self and relation can scarcely be quantified; their dimensions are suggested in Barbach's book.

\$ This is not an orthodox description of the quite orthodox

Yet it had another face altogether, complementing this self-centered Positivism fully enough to imply quite a different sort of guiding spirit, more nearly "holistic". Perhaps the details appeared so clearly ^(only) because we were dealing with the most elemental ^(shared pleasure) transaction in the most elemental social system (the dyad); yet I think they apply, in analogue, to many sorts of healing and many kinds of social transaction, and perhaps to most of the domain of the "human services".

We taught clients to recognize when the pain they blamed themselves for was not simply the subjective product of tension and fear, but an objective reality, involving at times actual physical damage; and what to do then. Simple positivism, though useful for the private sense of sensual self, was an interactional disaster; we taught clients not to make the appreciative noise to reassure the partner (ensnarling both further in mystifying webs of expectation), but instead to speak the hard truths -- simply to confess anxiety, fear and anger, simply to identify explicitly what was painful, too much or too little, boring, wrong, or just a little bit uncomfortable. Such social lessons are so difficult -- the charge of "negative" expression being so great -- that they must be learned on the safest ground.* Yet they are the very ground of trust itself -- for without trust ^{that} your partner will say what is wrong for him/herself and between you, you can never quite trust what seems to be right, nor feel free to keep asking for what you need or want. Given such learning, almost any two people can make a win/win sexual relation, provided they want to; but not all human interests are so readily reconcilable, and in practice we found ourselves sometimes leading clients to face

* Thus we bade our clients be virgin again, to practice the simplest non-sexual exchanges of pleasure until they had the lessons down enough to move to trickier ground.

conflicts of interest in relation which were in fact unreconcilable, and beside which the sexual sabotage was secondary. Yet within these bounds, the model of relationship we helped people learn was the very image of a small democratic polity, and a model for most fully-conscious relationships of mutual benefit between peers -- which many of our clients indeed extended more broadly in their lives.

In such ways our modest therapy configured the positive and negative, the private and the social, into some semblance of an integral healing -- a moderately "holistic" process of learning which is scarcely disguised here as a model for group educational transactions in general*, and thus has quite general applicability. our example Granted, ~~A~~ had its routine contradictions, as we were mostly young paraprofessionals on the make, preserving certain distances and economic relations with the clients we studied. Yet the sharing of our own experience as surer brothers and sisters was a primordial transaction of quite an independent character; and this therapy was also exemplary for the way it demystified its techniques and led clients to redeem themselves from clienthood by learning these for themselves. !!

Withal, despite these virtues, we were practicing a benign ~~al~~lie -- or, less unkindly, an illusion of the fundamental sort, patching together a partial scrap of coherence as ground to take some tangible next step that seemed useful for the next day: a step taken against, a ground established within, the fundamental chaos of our ignorance. The social face of our work led on coherently enough for a while: in the men's groups, with these young college students, we could

* Discussed more fully in On Learning and Social Change, Chapter III.

talk about the institutional conditions and priorities which enforced the ^{male-}characterological goal-orientation and performance-- anxiety that so troubled them in their sexual lives, and thus plant at least the seeds for them to conceive of changing these institutions as part of changing themselves; and some women's groups went further, attempting modest action projects. But beyond such molehill efforts the mountainous questions brooded. How could patriarchal culture, newly recognized as the generator of authoritarian systems, be truly undone? What could save the effort from succumbing, in its own distinctive way, to the contradictions and energies it sought to replace, as the usual track-record of revolutionary effort promised? Were the seeds of such betrayal already present, unrecognized, in the way we were teaching people to experience sex, themselves, relation, and such helping transactions as these?

Likewise the private face of our work led on coherently only so far. Freed singly and mutually to explore the energies involved in orgasm, our clients could go on to seek the transcendent serpent of Kundalini through tantric yoga, or pursue ordinary Reichian therapies to further open themselves -- proceeding as if the fear of pleasure itself, of full experience, could simply be dissolved, rather than being a repressive energy in itself which, as Reich argued, dwelt equally in the authoritarian character of the social order; and which through this source reinhabited persons even in the social operations of therapy and meditation.

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Thus the immediate integrity and coherence of our work faced both ways into a chaos of uncertainty, whose outer and inner aspects were not separate. And so it is quite generally, I imagine, as we play at spinning order in the Void. It would not bear mention here, save for the point illustrated by the last two paragraphs: that it is to this void, slightly beyond our ordered grasp, that we consign what we cannot deal with, our deepest contradictions, and the tragedy of such 'intrinsic flaw as person and society may bear.

With good intentions, then, I too have avoided engaging my work with the idea that there is a fundamental knot, a Bad as intrinsic as the Good to our condition. As an ordinary human services practitioner, I have chosen instead to locate this possibility, to hide this potential, in the mysterious depths of the self and society, where I seem not to need to name or to deal with it today.* In this way I have done my share to help create and sustain the general climate of un--self-questioning optimism in which the present spirit of Positivism thrives. And to do so has seemed so self-evidently Right that I would have no inkling it might also be Wrong -- did I not hear around me every day the dangerous simplistic nonsense about how fundamentally Good we all are, which grows as we avoid the unpleasant task of denying this.

*Indeed, these pages of stumbling around the subject are clear testament to how undeveloped my capacity to engage it has remained.

every version of the Good have constrained our ideas and practices of the Good, and that has been contradicted by some other. Given this, I hear the oft-repeated claim that all great spiritual leaders taught the same basic moral laws as a sweet but somewhat shallow and self-serving piece of P.R. from one camp; and judge the case to be more nearly that many people have found such precepts as do unto others etc. simply to be more useful -- in terms perhaps of comfort or survival, or of their ability to underwrite richer fields of experience and meaning -- so far.

In this pragmatism is something quite precious, which is lost by believing that some particular variety of human Goodness is dictated by Nature or God, or inherent in "human nature". What is lost is the full consciousness of our responsibility for the meaning we make; the sense of how precious and precarious it is; and likely our ability to make it fully. To say, for example, that humans are "naturally trusting and trustworthy" brutalizes the evidence accumulated, which says rather that people can, from infancy on, be conditioned and condition themselves to accept, extend, invite, respond to and depend on many kinds of trust in many ways, in varying degree, or not to; and shows how much depends on which choices we make and how we act to implement them.

Trust then is not "human nature", to be revealed by scrubbing off a few layers of "unnatural" repression; it is rather a fragile, peculiar construct, which we may labor to define and extend among ourselves. And we shall scarcely have a chance of doing so without understanding the institutional conditions

I love this story; this seems like bull-face truth-telling; and it is, especially so far as it goes. You don't get it is exposure, illumination which you're not used to, but the kind of truth of experience that is the essential simplification.

which sabotage trust among us as well as those which sabotage it within us, well enough to define complementary labors to recreate both. Nor without understanding when, how and why it is inappropriate to trust each other, can we make fully the leap which some call faith but I see as choice, to trust each other anyway.

This is to say, in short, that we must, in the most private and the most public reaches, know the nature of Evil if we are to realize the nature of Good. The particular Evil is our creation, no more inherent in us or the universe than the particular Good; we create them together always, whether we phrase them less painfully as the Right and the Not-Right, or the Nicer and Less Nice; and all that we can accomplish by forgetting this dual-handedness of our responsibility is to act less responsibly.

There are, of course, vantages from which human being may seem intrinsically "Good", in a certain sense. From the most extreme, every facet of our existence seems suffused with a quality which we fumble to express as Good, Light, Truth or whatever. From such vantages I am OK and you are OK with a vengeance; walking in front of a truck is the same OK and so is Auschwitz, one with one's tenderest moment. I say it so with no irony, not only because the recent literature on the experiences of dying agrees, but because writing on this night of Passover 1978, with the recent TV spectacular of The Holocaust fresh in mind, I imagine that some of those brutalized who walked into the gas chambers praying -- and

perhaps, though it seem abominable to suggest, even some of the brutalizers -- might indeed have walked in Light, so deep are the powers of the human spirit.

The moments of such vantage are in some ways the most precious in my own experience. Their pleasure is the deepest pleasure of experience and consciousness itself. Yet even to call them pleasant is a lie, and to call them Good is worse, as such qualities are not theirs but ours. These are our made terms and values which we project on such experiences and perspectives. The more specifically we strive to apply them by this reflection to guiding our mundane doings with each other, the more clearly they are revealed as arbitrary, i.e. chosen and particular, interpretations -- since human history shows that the Light has been interpreted by its initiates to illuminate quite a conflicting variety of human Goodnesses -- as, indeed, it is entitled to do, being their indiscriminate progenitor.

Thus are we left to make our meaning, to make all the duality which is our frame for choice and responsibility. True, we may proclaim it Good to experience the Good Light directly and often (and Not-So-Good not to); but if it is also Good to be more fully conscious all up and down the line, then it is Good to recognize that we ourselves have lent this Goodly quality to the Light, and even to this process of watching ourselves do so. As for the fervent proclamation that the Good Light guides us, which itself is a basic fixture in human history, I hear it as a cry of terror camouflaging precisely

the opposite condition. The Light (like "God", "Nature" and "Human Nature") is neither Good nor Guiding; it seems instead, in a fundamental sense, to be incommensurable with human meaning and cognition, which do not rest easy with their inability to grasp and color their basic substrate. So far as we grasp the Light, we ourselves are its guides. *Epilo to get something out of this.*

Given all this, I have come to hear the ideas that people are "naturally" good, trusting, etc., not simply as benign babble but as evil non-sense, destructive of the more complex meanings I perceive and prefer, and even of our ability to make meaning. To use them is to pretend that there is one sort only of goodness (etc.), rather than many potential sorts to be chosen among -- which would be poor style even were we agreed on which sort it was, and confuses us utterly as we are not. It is also to pretend that we are not "naturally" bad, untrustworthy, etc.; and that we can escape being so simply by acting in accord with our nature, by doing what comes "naturally" and feels good -- which in practice can be almost anything, and often enough contradicts whatever values we mean to manifest. Either way, our capacities for conscious choice and responsibility are fundamentally sabotaged.

Returning then to the psychological thought which the human potential movement interprets, I note that it is not all sweetness and light, innocent of knots. In Jung's work the Shadow broods, as concretely as one may care to encounter it; and thus gives the body of thought and practice which extends his teachings some inner basis for understanding its own contradictory social nature. But in various Eastern transpersonal

psychologies the knot, though essential, is displaced to the realm of metaphysics, and the interactive social selves that might construe its character as moral are denied as fundamental ground, becoming in effect an illusion of evil to be transcended. And by the time we get to Maslow and Rogers, to Re-evaluation (Co-) Counseling, T.A., Primal Therapy and what-all, the knot is so vestigial that the bodies of thought and practice contain no basis for recognizing the Shadow in their Light.

In a sense this is no loss. For Mathematics, besides being the Handmaiden of Science, an art, a spiritual practice, etc., is also a basic branch of human psychology, inasmuch as it deals not with the forms of the world, but with their reflection in our mind; and Gödel's Theorem, that pinnacle of modern meta-mathematics, suggests that no system of human understanding can fully grasp itself as consistent, or fully comprehend (describe) the nature of the contradiction and paradox it may harbor. Still it seems a shame to give up the effort, and the grounds for the effort, so readily as the Positivist psychologies on the whole have done; for, as the history and text of mathematics itself seem to demonstrate, it is this very effort which gives rise to the actual and progressive evolutions of our systems of meaning.

Where we chew the knot.

The system of thought evoked by Peter is of quite a different order than the one Julian quotes. It embraces both men as impartially as it does Maslow, Freud, and Marx; and its psychological aspect, though comprehensive, is no more predominant

than many others. It is not a system in a narrow sense, being instead the product of our version of the classic experiment in which a million monkeys are set at typewriters to type forever. Redundant, contradictory, mostly incomprehensible to any given reader, this vast output is still no random chaos. Each word has meaning; and any two ideas, howsoever distant, are related by some third within the whole -- which though open is thus integral, unified by systems of order more subtle and complex than we can record explicitly, though we are always trying.

There is no customary name for this body of transcribed thought, which expresses humanity's attempt to describe-and--understand the human condition it perceives-and-imagines.* As what we usually think of as literature seems to be its core, I will call it Literature. In the sense I intend it excludes research into quantum mechanics and the neurophysiology of rat-running. Yet it includes all speculation about how these apply to human behavior, cognition and meaning, from Einstein's philosophical reflections to B.F. Skinner's Walden Two; and all other observations on this integral subject, whether couched as fiction, testament or science.

Through the tribe's festival epic, the autobiography of the tribe's survivor written in a strange tongue, the anthropologist's report of both, the meta-anthropological study considering its cultural function, the Congressman's news release damning

*The verbs hyphenated here are scarcely distinct from each other.

appropriations for such silly research, the festival novel of electoral politics -- through these all, so apparently disparate, runs some inviolable continuity of focus and expression -- just as each human gesture is simultaneously a sociological phenomenon, a psychological consequence, an element of cultural syntax, a minute determinant of history, an act of dance, of the spirit, of every distinct name we apply to the integral appreciation of ourselves. Our All is One indeed, though we must pretend to divide it for the sake of speaking with each other; and time reveals the various terms and provinces of our Literature to have artificial boundaries, mutably legislated upon the one terrain we inhabit.

From this perspective on our Literature the present camps of Positivism occupy only the sun-lit tips of the mountain called Psychology, the greater body of which extends below the clouds to dark roots, and is in turn configured with so many other vital features (Economics, Political Theory, etc.) into the continents of "objective" understanding reared from our basic stuff and dissolved again in the sea of our imagination. Where its waters condense on land they perhaps form literature in the ordinary sense ("subjective"): an ephemeral dew tracing the outlines of even the driest topographies, a multi-bodied pool recording the detailed reflection of each feature it stands ever-so-briefly beside, a many-branched and solvent river bearing all the elements of our experience, so temporarily configured in these features, in an undifferentiated embrace toward their recompounding and reconfiguration.

highly, too - complex metaphysics?

Thus psychological investigators of all stripes have often found, when they have cared to look, not only the experiences they study but the ideas they derive to be already encoded, and subsequently re-encoded and re-illuminated, in our heritage of ordinary literature, from de Sade's writings to the Upanishads. And so it is for every other human science and service, to judge by the occasional evidence (remembering that only a small fraction of this heritage is accessible to any individual, and that we cannot know how much of substance has been lost to heritage through the ages).

In these terms then, such grasp as we have of human knottedness and contradiction, of Evil and how we (might) live with it, of all the dark matters some camp on the sunlit peaks to avoid, is embodied in our Literature. Our histories are rich with the miseries we have suffered from each other; and the veins of social and psychological theory puzzling at how and why we do so now run through every discipline of the human sciences. Freud and Marx will still do to symbolize their essential character -- for however limited or quaintly biased their formulations may come to seem, they were clear about paying attention to the knotting as a dynamic force in human life, rather than a condition to be escaped.*

*Each feature of our "objective" Literature, in particular, includes a place with a peculiar property, where some few people camp to experience its strange qualities. As sociologists study the sociology of their own employment, recognizing how the very science and selves they use for this have been shaped to manage institutional populations; as

anthropologists decipher their own myths and mythmaking functions as these transform the key culture they mean to comprehend; as neurophysiologists investigate quantum uncertainty in intersynaptic processes, seeking the doors of the intuitions which move them to describe such conjunctions; as metamathematicians reprocess Gödel's Proof and philosophers and linguistic theorists bite at the knot of self-reflective cognition -- so in each way we grasp our condition this special station occurs, where we turn our grasp upon itself, and thus confront our essential mystery from some explicit angle, courting the most pregnant dissolution.*

This self-solvent station awaits us equally in psychology -- for the therapist trying to grasp how and why she chooses and uses her tools of understanding and depends on her clients for her healing; the public health researcher pondering his part in the role of psychology's institutional applications in creating the "individual" problems they address; the theorist turning a psychological system upon itself to illuminate the mystery of its own provenance and nature. But the self-reflective spirit is spread thin anywhere, and thinner (at best) in the Positivist camps -- though it is perhaps the key to the reconnection of their bright peak insights with the dark reaches of human experience.

* such obliquity at the very crux of the argument, Michael? We depend upon our poets' explication of the hearts of matters!

A classical image

Yet our main grasp on the knot, our dark complexity, is more fluid. A fair part of our ordinary literature is occupied with it, from Plato to St. Augustine, Melville to Buber, Dostoievsky to Camus. Name your favorites; there is nourishment here for all views of our knotting and Evil, how essential they are and how to deal with them. For in this pool of literature are all our elements commingled, and in it we see ourselves most whole -- as no work of more narrow discipline has grasped the conjoint richness of our inner and outer selves so fully as imaginative fiction has in our present epoch, or as its precedent modes of expression did in theirs.

Thus what comes to mind -- as in this small modern theater contending spirits speak through P. and J., and I play my part in the chorus of citizens on the stage, keening in occasional dismay -- is the old Greek tragedy, in particular the final play (The Eumenides) of Aeschylus' trilogy the Oresteia. People are more familiar with Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, if only for the use Freud made of it; and the comparison is pertinent here, for as Sophocles succeeds Aeschylus Greek drama, and perhaps our culture, begins to develop its focus on individual ("private") character. Yet the disconnection subsequently made of this is not yet evident in either dramatist's work, where the actors and the meanings wrought through them stand as certainly for the polis as a whole as they do for each citizen within it.

These dramas spring from and illuminate a seminal time. Throughout Attica, democracy is forming as an idea,

a practice, a force in human affairs; and at the hot center, in Athens, where dramatic festival constitutes the polis' highest expression and self-instruction, the tragic stage represents not the day's immediate politics (forbidden by dramatic convention), but the underlying struggle of men and women to claim free will in the face of fate, and to harmonize these.

Thus in their grandest tragedy, the Oresteia, wrong avenges wrong, as Iphigenia, Agamemnon, Clytemnestra are sacrificed in turn for the sake of goods both private and public, until the matricide Orestes flees, pursued by the primordial Furies themselves, into the third play, where modern time (as the Athenians reckoned it, and perhaps as we should) begins. Here Athena herself establishes a democratic court of citizens to render judgement -- no longer the gods' (nor a godly king's), but humanity's -- on wrong-doing, not just for Orestes but for all time to come.* But the old spirits of blood and contradiction cannot simply be dismissed by legislation: the pursuing Furies demand honor or they will destroy the land. So Athena, bless her, deals with them; she offers them a home in humanity's affection, a cave within the very hill of judgement itself, the Areopagus. No household

*As this first jury deadlocks, she casts the deciding vote; but the precedent is clearly established.

shall prosper without their blessing; but given this honor, they promise not to divide the will of the polis* against itself in self-destruction. The Furies accept; and as they are enshrined beneath the courts of Reason a new age of humanity begins.

Nor have we managed a wholer or more powerful image since, of what to do with the knot. Beside this one the current New Age visions seem juvenile indeed for the way they scorn the Furies active in our age.

O, this is beautiful indeed.

9.

On Developing Consciousness: the Mandate
of Self-Determination

In which the Author derives from his own experience some primitive terms in which to begin to connect the languages and concerns of the sixties and the seventies, (of personal and social change.)

If I drift thus in literary reflections as Peter and Julian dialogue on, it's partly because I'm still somewhat spaced-out from my rave. But the question of what's missing here still nags, like a sharp jab recalling me to the actual transaction between these men. Something other than the righteousness that echoes in all our voices is wrong, as Peter rightfully advises Julian to read this and that and I nod in enchanted academic agreement.

For to say, "Read Marx," to someone who has chosen to not read Marx obscures the key issue -- which is not about whose advice is useful to one who has already chosen to be conscious of political economy, nor even about making this choice, but rather about how one chooses to be conscious. Granted, Marx bears on this question.)

But many a reader of Marx has as narrow, rigid and disconnected a consciousness of the world as Julian represents

*And, as I read it, the family, the person.

here -- and it is this, the choice to have a consciousness of this sort or of another, which is at stake.

On the shape and shaping of consciousness

Peter says to be conscious of the Other; Julian, of the Self. I seek a language to mediate between them, and to speak to the core issue, the health (wholeness) of our consciousness itself. I seek it in the parochial scraps of my own experience; and what I find is so naive as to embarrass me, so primitive I hardly know how to phrase it. For what I've learned from the consciousness-raising of the sixties and the consciousness--expansion of the seventies reduces mostly to this:

Our consciousness is what we make of it. Like a muscle, it grows as we use it and atrophies as we do not. We have choice in these matters.

What a miracle! I want to shout it from the rooftops, without pausing for tedious clarification.* For almost everything anyone has told me from their own experience about consciousness and how I (or we) might develop it has turned out to be so, in its own terms and so far as it went, at least so far as I chose to follow it out myself -- though always other factors entered into figuring out what it meant.

And what a glory of awareness opens, what a wilderness of choice! I focussed my attention in my hands, and came to feel the lines of ch'i-fire glow within them; I focussed it on a vacant lot and learned what lines of force ran through that ground as my neighborhood fought the transit authority clear to the state legislature to win the park we'd made.

→ [p. 133]

* [FOOTNOTE OCCUPIES P. 132]

*Yet some is necessary to make these ideas a little less vague. Consciousness is our primordial stuff and power. It develops in whatever domain, direction or way in which we choose (or happen or are forced) * to focus and exercise our attention. It fails to develop or degenerates in any domain, direction or way in which we reject this choice, "happen" not to make it, * or are kept unaware that the choice exists. *

Though inexpressibly private always, our consciousness is inescapably mutual: whether material, cultural or spiritual in aspect, each occasion or way we manifest it affects and is affected by other (perhaps all) persons, as is the way in which we are conscious of doing so. That is to say: we develop it together and alone always. Though both limited and extended by others' developments and by the tangible and mysterious world, in ways we cannot anticipate or control, within these constraints our consciousness develops roughly in proportion to the amount and quality of the attention we pay to its development; and some choice, as to how we develop it is always ours alone.

As for "attention" and "choice", and the "will" which exercises these, these are scarcely-separable words for the unnameable essence of consciousness itself, within (or "before" it assumes) the modes and forms we can describe, which enable us to describe them.

To pursue these ideas more precisely is to risk the complexity of Wittgenstein and his Eastern counterparts, and I trust unnecessary here.

* Often these are choices, in their fashions; often they are not; I pass over this intricate question here.

← As I wrote of this I realized that the trance-state I'd learned in my psychic reading classes was just a formal variant of the one I'd practiced at my typewriter for years; and grew conscious of myself no longer as a romantic figure in a genteel profession, but as an ill-paid and exploited piece-worker pitted against my fellow freelancers in yet another conglomerating industry -- and then joined the Media Alliance, our fledgling union.

And so it goes. The states and powers of consciousness open to us are so various that no description can represent them adequately;* and one does violence to the integral truth even in choosing examples to say that consciousness is of this sort (personal) and that (social).

*Though recent studies of "altered states of consciousness" have enlarged our taxonomy, they have reinforced the problem inherent in the traditional paradigm of Psychology itself -- which, by the way it defines personhood and "subjective" experience, has set arbitrary limits to the dimensions and varieties of states-of-consciousness which it can recognize as such. Yet given the complexity of interactions apparent between the "separate" neurophysiological systems of those who experience them, it seems that not even the material dimensions of conscious states can be fully analyzed as if people were isolable individuals. Indeed the old paradigm is falling apart: modern approaches to schizophrenia recognize it equally as a social state of consciousness, collectively generated and maintained; and T.A.'s focal state of "game-playing" is explicitly interactional. But Psychology has still no language to distinguish between one's trance in the supermarket and light hypnogogia in the lab; and to explain the difference between one's states of consciousness at a football game and at a political rally we must use other languages altogether.

Seeking an image as round and rich as a grape, I think of the states I associate with a grape. Crushing the green world with my tongue, I'm aware of my salivary glands spurting and a faint joyous rush of energy through my whole frame. As I savor the subtle bitters of its skin, I visualize the diagrams tracing the biochemical pathways of its sugars' syntheses and potential fermentations, and recall that in my wine-snob days I could recognize the way different skins influenced the taste of varietal wines. I remember the warmth of my family's jelly-making nights, and winter afternoons spent pruning the vines, blessing the plants to bear well as they blessed me; I think of my forebears who opened themselves to the Sacred in Dionysian ritual, and of my relatives among the 20,000,000 alcohol addicts in my land. Offering another grape to Karen, I feel the millenia of literature resonant in this gesture between lovers; and know what an act of cowardice and evasion it is, to substitute by charm for all I have left unspoken between us. I wonder whether I'm poisoning her because I didn't wash them with soap; and I thank my guru Cesar Chavez, who taught me to be aware, each time I touched a grape from the market, that there was a human being within it, some real person who picked it and lived with their family most probably in such-and-such a way -- and more than a person, a chapter in the book of union labor and in the history of a whole race -- whose fate rested in part upon what I did with the grape and with my awareness of the grape.

Each of these dozen states of grape consciousness is partially described by some branch of Psychology; each is far

more complex than we can grasp; none is secondary to the others. In particular: no state of consciousness is "natural". My experience of each state has been learned, and in general (like even my first acid experience) has been quite slowly developed under particular conditions and influences. Indeed not even our most simple sensory consciousness is "natural" (save in that it is potential within us), as I who learned to feel the ch'i-flow late learned while helping children learn it early, and as research in the neurophysiology of cognition now confirms for our less exotic senses.

As for such states of consciousness as Chavez taught through the grape, it is worth noting just how "unnatural" they are. Few still among the 20,000,000 who honored the Farmworker's boycott of non-union grapes have developed enough awareness of who and what is on the other end of a pineapple, banana or flounder to dignify by calling it "awareness", though the option to do more was clear and in each case some people have been begging us to develop it for years. The same state of consciousness-of-connection tugs at each seam of my clothing, is forged in the steel of my fork, though the sweatshops of Chinatown lack the voice of the old Garment Unions in New York and I skip over such garbled reports of the coal-miners' struggle as appear in the metropolitan dailies. And so it broods, potential, in each way we make use of each other's material or non-material production, if we but choose to develop it.

This example is parochial, but it illustrates sharply what is true of the other eleven states of grape consciousness

and in general. Our states of consciousness develop as individual choices to develop them interact with complex, idiosyncratic social systems, extensive and precarious in human space and time. And how then is the crucial consciousness formed which guides us in developing the overall state of our consciousness, which chooses our shaping of the whole and judges its health, but in this way again?

(The highest state of consciousness)

Peter and his social apparatus tout the particular state called conscience; guru Maharaj-ji and his say Bliss Consciousness is most important; Plato, Marx and Art advertise each a brand. But from where I sit the states they refer to seem to be no more than prominent veins in the integral flesh of the grape, co-related yet destructively competitive only when the grape is diseased. From this perspective the spiritual prophets of New Age and Old have misled us utterly. If there is a "highest state of consciousness", an orienting core to the grape, it is not simply transpersonal or metaphysical. It is the consciousness by which we choose whether to develop Bliss Consciousness, Class Consciousness, or both; and which in an essential way comprehends this choice as being no different in kind or import than the choice to savor the grape or to swallow it routinely while thinking of the history of viticulture.

This consciousness is core to our making of our selves. It may well have transpersonal dimensions; but in the main it is located and developed in us in quite material ways through mundane social interactions. It is, alas, impossible to analyze except reductively: for every system and sub-system

of human values informs our choice of how we develop and judge our consciousness, and our entire society is the apparatus of their enforcement; and the faculty which chooses cannot be distinguished from the raw mystery of human will itself.

The state of consciousness in which we choose our consciousness is unitary, yet we have no name for it. It is not in itself a state of moral consciousness, being more primordial than this. The states of moral, aesthetic, spiritual, etc. consciousness which we normally employ to guide our consciousness' development are themselves developed from it. Perhaps it is their integral compound; perhaps it is prior to this. Yet its mystery is not ultimate, for it has more human character than the elemental state of pure consciousness--of-consciousness which metaphysical traditions bid us seek. By comparison gross and material, it still "superior" to that pure state in the sense of being its human regulator -- for, in whatever way we conceive the matter, we are never fully conscious of our consciousness; and the choice to become more so or less so is always made in this unnamed state of awareness in which we integrate the influence of every system of human values upon us.*

* * * * *

*As I mention it as such only once more before turning to the social conversation which informs it, I note that in terms of the ideas developed before I conceive it to be a democratic state.

below
 12: the internal dialogue - the unknown state
 a seminar, a constitutional convention, Rational...
 She (Key): Man, our consciousness...
 ...of all independent...
 ...whose tradition...
 ...to out, our...
 ...the...
 ...8)

(On ^{cc} chasing our shapes)

From such wisps of thought at the edge of the unnameable, the conclusions that condense in me are curiously tranquil and concrete. Consciousness is ours to develop in an unbounded variety of ways and without achievable limit in any; yet as finite humans, to choose which ways we will means to forsake others, and often enough to influence others to forsake them too. Within this economy of limitation, the potential chaos of our consciousness' development is given coherence and order through our social nature, through the small and large collectivities of agreements about values (and necessities) which inform our individual choices of consciousness -- which together comprise the working body of human culture, and which, in the end, embody all that we can ever grasp or change of the unnamed state in which we choose to shape our consciousness as we do.

All then that we can say to one another about how to shape our consciousness is grounded in our agreements about values; and perhaps all that can usefully be said in this ballroom is that we can develop it more fully, alone and together, to embody the values we profess to share. For Peter, Julian and I do share certain systems of value, whose main characters may perhaps be called "moral", "spiritual" and "aesthetic" (no one being quite comprised in the others.) We all, I imagine, would agree to these minimal propositions: that we should develop our consciousness well to reflect the ways in which we are responsible for one another, and well to reflect and embody Spirit; and that we should develop it to embody our best senses of balance, proportion and integrity, applied to the fullest development not only of "moral" and

"spiritual" but of all the other varieties of awareness which we together recognize and value.

What this last implies is quite simple, and familiar as our loose ideal of the "well-rounded" person. The moral reformer out of touch with his body, the banker with no feel for art, the poet who cannot balance her checkbook, etc., are all, so to speak, flat versions of the human grape, crucially under-developed in ways which in turn constrain our collective development. All the past two decades' to-do about various sorts of conscious^{ness} has not added to, but has only emphasized and rephrased, the rich potentials of development open to us. The many exhortations to develop this or that sort of consciousness have each been well-grounded in particular shared or developing values. Yet together they have done, I think, very little to help us sort our potentials out and choose among them; and we have been left with no firmer or more shared image than comes with this old cultural ideal of "well-roundedness" to guide us in choosing among the competing urgencies of our potential development. Indeed, our agreements about what learning is proper are largely constituted around this ideal through our educational system; and it is noteworthy that when the modern exhortations to develop bodily, emotional, social, etc. consciousness* are refined to proposals for public schooling they are phrased not simply as essential in themselves, but as remedial, complementary curricula to develop this ideal more fully.

*Spiritual consciousness is an exception, by cultural tradition.

In this light, though Peter, as the spirit of conscience here, is duty-bound to criticize Julian for leaving undeveloped the moral consciousness we have pressed him to admit he values, a more neutral critique might be more powerful, or at least more hearable by Julian, for being couched in terms and values closer to those he more readily professes. "Julian, you claim to be for developing human potential in ways which will make us whole. Why then do you develop one variety of consciousness so and neglect another? What model of balance and wholeness is this? Either stop this flat-grape preachment and modeling, or get off the holy bandwagon and confess that you're pushing a narrow vision, no wholer in kind than any other such in the ring." And indeed it is neutral: a cabinet-maker or Byzantine scholar might make the same critique of Julian, or of Peter and me (though we speak for no such grand claims as he); for everyone is flat on one side or another.

This line of thought simplistically pursued leads straight to the silly notion that we should strive to develop every sort of consciousness we can -- which is silly not simply because there are so many possible that this would mean developing no single one very far at all, but also because the cultural values we share (and to some extent the animal needs of survival) favor intensive development of some few states and powers of consciousness as much, if not more, than they favor extensive development of many. The balance of these values has recently been shifting, as we have come to deplore specialization etc., towards extensive development;

and I lean this way myself, with certain costs and certain gains. But it is plain that we shall always each be striving to find some proper balance in this dialectic, as judged by all the values to which we subscribe; that we shall each pick our own limited set of states and powers to develop as we can; and that within this, howsoever self-cultural fashions change, we shall choose (and be constrained) to develop ourselves not as simple spheres but with the idiosyncratic lopsidedness that gives us our human character and makes the whole play interesting.

Toward democracy

I speak here of the abstract shape of each person's consciousness-as-a-whole,* as if the particular ways in which we fill and orient these shapes does not much matter. Though I believe that certain ways do matter vitally, I confess also to an awe-full relativism: for it is the sheer variety of ways of being conscious which seems to me the prime glory of the human condition (howsoever appalling or glorious some particular ways may seem), the mystery we devote ourselves to exploring; and which generates the complexity and richness of our systems of value and fields of meaning.

Despite this neutral stance, two thrusts of consciousness' intensive development do seem "natural" to me. One derives from our most "primitive" nature as animals. To survive is a choice which, made, somewhat dictates awareness, beginning with a sense of balance and of the body's response to foods or their

*For simplicity, dodging the ways in which we cannot think of it as so simply "private".

lack, and continuing through awareness of everything and anyone who might do one in and of how to avert this -- a justifiable paranoia approximately as complex as we can conceive, to judge by the many varieties of consciousness (ecological, bodily, moral, social, technological, spiritual, emotional) currently recommended as necessary even to our physical survival, private and collective (as, who knows, they all well may be).

The second derives from our most "civilized" nature as humans, and is, I think, much more specific. We can choose consciously to cultivate that condition beyond survival which best enables us to have values and make meanings, and to do so richly -- which is, as I imagine above, to explore and manifest our potential varieties of consciousness as fully and freely as we can (for it is the differentiation of consciousness which gives rise even to the values which direct us to its unitary character, and even to the meanings we assign that); and to do so in particular for the consciousnesses through which we make our shared agreements about value and meaning, through which in turn we govern our development.

The conclusion this leads me to is as tangible and American as cherry pie. For what the freedom to develop our consciousness involves, besides the raw power of the "private" will to choose, is what we ordinarily understand as social freedom (of all sorts, from dyadic to global); and our freedom to explore shared agreements about value and meaning is likewise a sub-species of social freedom. Granted, we develop

consciousness, values, meaning, etc. even through unfree social circumstances; and "authoritarian" contexts (within the self as without; see below) are noted for their propensity to nurture remarkably intensive and specialized developments of consciousness, of almost any sort. But they are equally noted for inhibiting the diversity of our consciousness and its manifestations, and the genuine mutuality and evolutionary character of our agreements about values and meaning.

Human history seems to say instead (as we interpret it here and now) that the fullest and richest developments at least of our "private" consciousnesses occur in and through democratic societies, organized to support maximal freedom for persons and groups and granting them share in governance as the prerequisite of freedom. The same conclusion holds precisely for our processes of developing agreements about value and meaning: we believe that they are most fully, richly and soundly developed in the democratic courts and playfields of free, collective Inquiry among peers, which have been, since the agora of Socrates' time, our cultural ideal, mediating even revelation. As I argue elsewhere, these models apply at every social level and in every domain of human interaction; and apply as well within the "private" self, where we may likewise understand the spirits within ourselves, the modes of our consciousness with their competing yet mutual demands, as constituting an interior commonweal to be governed by and for one faction, or more democratically for the richer harmony and fuller production of our selves.

In short, though the quest to develop human potential "fully" may involve commitments to many particular developments, it implies commitments to no other one than this: to develop the democratic consciousness(es), processes and conditions, within and among ourselves, which best enable us to pursue the quest. In this sense democracy is a "natural" consequence, as well as a primary condition, of our fuller development of consciousness. But it is so not because God says so, nor because it is otherwise mandated in "(human) nature", but rather because these fragile constructs of democracy, imperfectly explored and manifested, represent our best tries so far, so nearly as we can judge now and agree together, and seem to promise richer and more meaning-full potentials than any other sort we know.

In this light the "highest" shared consciousness, if we must have such, or in any case one no less precious than the most, is embodied in our most conscious, most collective, most far- and deeply-reaching agreements about how and by what values we shall govern ourselves -- which for us in America are manifest precisely in our formal and mutual commitment to democratic government, howsoever lamely we have managed to pursue it. Indeed the Capitol in Washington, D.C. hosts a holy spirit, which is reborn (or not) in every interaction between the citizens of this land.

As an ordinary native patriot, then, still in touch with the spirit to which I first pledged my allegiance and trying to

connect it to Julian's stance, I would say to him and many others in the human potential/New Age camps, "For shame, twice over! You owe this struggling system of democracy for the freedom to be the splendid strange individual you are; and owe it active allegiance yet again when you presume to advise other citizens even on their narrow fulfillment, let alone their grand, which is again enabled by this. To pay the debt fully is to seek as consistently to develop democratic consciousness as one does any consciousness within it; to not pay it is a betrayal even of yourself, for it is self-defeating to pluck the fruit yet starve the tree. The opportunity opens in every contact with your lover, every workshop and institution you participate in, each doing in society at large, each decision within yourself about your self: to be consciously developing democracy, or not to be, and thus, under the conditions of our age, to be abetting its undoing. Granted, everyone finds their own way, no two alike; one need not walk precincts to prove one is at the job. But the quality and consciousness of one's engagement with this social and inner task, howsoever phrased, cannot but be evident in how one talks about the world, the person, and what to do; and given what I hear from you, for shame, for shame!"

These terms and ideas, this argument, are as ecumenical as I can make them here. Though I develop them around the particular case of Julian and his movement and try to express them in this movement's vocabulary, they apply with only modest rephrasing to many varieties and domains of our joint activity -- to how we develop education, technology, the media, all forms

of social management, and much more. This critique of Julian and Co. is not different in kind than the one I apply to people working in such distant fields; and it is enough here to indicate the antipode, by remarking that people working consciously and full-heartedly to develop social democracy must pay coordinate heed to developing its inward analogue, or else risk as basic a betrayal of their intent as the one Julian courts.

(Self-determination)

In these terms I indicate an argument and vision to connect Peter and Julian, connect the concerns and languages of the sixties and the seventies. The connection is perhaps implicit already in Peter's own term of conscience, the pure sense of connection with and responsibility for each other, which is surely the raw stuff that we shape into social democratic consciousness. But it is hard to derive the necessity of conscience directly from Julian's terms of consciousness-development, so focussed are they on the "self" as apart from rather than a part of the "other"; and the path I take here through self-development towards democracy seems more immediate. It has moreover the virtue, unlike the prior call to conscience itself (which calls us more clearly to restructure our private behavior than to restructure society itself), of implying an explicit framework and specific social forms through which to develop our mutual responsibilities and our consciousness in general.

The idea which unites all this for me is self-determination. The word is nowadays defined equivalently to "self-governance";

but its root meaning has a more active sense, involving inquiry into as well as legislation of the character of the self. These literal nuances make it even more appropriate, as does the nuance of its current useage, which presents self-determination not only as a way of being, but as a right and a good to be achieved only through struggle. It is thus a rich word indeed, which no clique has yet appropriated or reduced to jargon (Vasconcellos' organization having got no farther than it has). And it is best, perhaps, in that one can use it quite meaningfully to speak as if nations, races and cities were selves as surely as are the productive groups, school classes and students, welfare recipients, women leaving marriages, mediators, therapie^s and so on who also now seek to develop self-determination, the autonomous yet interdependent control of their own beings and destinies. Indeed a fair part of the "human potential" movement is concerned now with developing people's powers of self-governance, in the private sense, and almost all of it can be described in terms of self-determination (though to call it the "self-determination" movement would adverti^se its deficiencies more directly than its present titles do.)

Given this, we can say compactly: Self-determination is the mandate of our age, if not the full human mandate itself. It is an integral mandate, for the forms and processes of self-determination within and for the individual are related to, and in the end continuous with, those within and for our collective selves; and to pursue it fully, wherever we begin, means to pursue it in full. And what we lack most crucially perhaps is an adequate body of thought and practice connecting these private and collective aspects.

10.

Notes toward a Socialist Critique and Synthesis

In which the Author mentions the Growth movement's economic character, and other matters pertinent to the formulation of integral vision.

I use "self-determination" here as if it were synonymous with "democracy", which it nearly is, as democracy is the social form and process through which we together achieve self-governance. But democracy-as-we-know-and-practice-it, formally and informally, is clearly an insufficient recipe for the Millenium. Perhaps its core formulations are faulty; perhaps it needs completion by more inducement to attend each other's needs as we do our own -- to judge by the state of this nation largely, and long before Julian, guided by otherwise privatized visions and privatizing values.

Human potential requires an economic program

To get at what's missing here, as well as from "human potential", I might equally have begun by arguing the case for Socialism (which is generally held not to be synonymous with "democracy"). Socialism involves collective ownership of the means of production, and collective control of production and its fruits by those who produce them (and, in fullness, those who benefit from, use and are affected by them), in the name of and for the common good. Applied to material production, the simplest socialist argument is that collective control, and the material distributive justice which presumably follows from this, are necessary to underwrite the functional freedom which will enable the most people to develop their potentials the most fully.

But how can one argue against the basic necessity of distributive justice, save by declaring the things of the world

to be irrelevant altogether? And who but a fanatic Capitalist will deny that Socialism, though perhaps not the only way, seems still a better bet to approach material equity than does Capitalism, to judge even by the present conditions of Marxist societies? That one hears scarcely a hint of such ideas from the Growth movement, as connected to its own concerns, might suggest that they are quite irrelevant; but I think the truth is rather that the concerns they involve are quite repressed, for the sake of preserving the movement from the painful self-examination of its own contradictions.

For how can one speak simply of realizing human potential, in a society and world in which so many people's lives are consumed, more than they need to be and with dominating force, with basic needs of survival?)

How can people be freed to engage even the familiar sorts of growth for which they yearn, let alone the more esoteric basic sorts advised by the Growth movement, without a more just re-distribution of our material wealth and the social powers that distribute it? Our material condition is the very ground of our being; it and our relations concerning it determine -- not entirely, but strongly -- all other aspects of our condition and selves. For even the values by which we choose our consciousness are in fair part taught us and enforced not only by our own material needs but by the needs of the concentrations of social power which govern our productive apparatus, and which depend on our choosing to shape ourselves in certain ways to preserve their dominance -- as is perhaps most

recognized currently in the way we have shaped our intimate characters as man and woman.

Given this, the freedom to develop our potential generally awaits both the material equity to support, and the restructuring of social-productive relations to permit, the range of choices we might make. Nor are even well-supported Growth partisans truly free in their choices, for their values are formed under the same systemic pressures, and they have their own stakes in the system as it is -- and they cannot but be somewhat blind to these influences, unless they choose consciously to inquire into them (which is, I imagine, to find them worth changing.)

To speak then for realizing human potential as such, one must speak to these social questions, and more, speak for some public program to address them -- one concrete enough so that whatever inner developments of the "self" one chooses are visible also as elements of tactic and strategy in this program, and can be assessed as such both by rational argument and in the actual course of history. Socialism is not the only candidate program, but one there must be;* for what depends on this is the freedom not only for all to choose, but for any to choose among all of our potentials.

*The boss New Age program yet is perhaps the one Marilyn cites, "Image of Man", compiled under Harman at SRI; but it is neo-capitalist (and a program) only in a weak sense, as it does not identify the question of productive relationships even enough to justify this allegiance, let alone to consider its importance.

To speak for less is to speak for only a few people and a few choices (more likely than not compatible with the unexamined pressures). Worse, in the circumstances of our age it is to speak in effect against these "alls", for they hinge on our each act and word -- just as our each transaction at work or in the store has, howsoever unconscious we keep ourselves of this, its larger meaning in this century in which, across the globe, Socialism emerges uncertainly from Capitalism, still bound by deeper fetters, and the two contend to determine which mode of governing productive relations will help determine the course and meanings of the next phase of human history.

This emergent Socialist consciousness is as "natural" as any other stage of any of our many ways of realizing God, in the sense that our human character has developmental logics which we cannot escape even in transcendental experience so long as we have bodies; and its full nature seems still nearly as shrouded from us as God's, though perhaps more accessible. To speak thus is to speak somewhat as an historical determinist as well as mystically, and to court contradiction, having spoken earlier for unfettered self-determination. Of this contradiction, I observe briefly that always we choose our next condition, and bear to the former more of the latter than we realize; yet always our choice is somewhat free;* and that we determine and are determined ourselves in this dialectic. But another contradiction is less mobile, and indeed cuts us now two ways.

* Likewise, always the next stage of the unknown which we choose to experience has its own inherent structure, which in time we understand-and-create as ours, to constrict our choices -- which remain, insofar as we are aware of this, somewhat free.

A material critique

For any Socialist critique of the human potential movement now, even one so naive as mine, is a materialist critique, and has thus both a virtue and a defect. The virtuous question Peter has introduced already, by reminding Julian that there is a tangible, mysterious world, of the earth, others, society and history, present beyond the "self" whose connection to it we are dissolving. Socialist critique asks more sharply why this movement, on the whole, persists in its ostrich attitude, ignoring both our productive relations in the material realm and the contradictions involved in and maintained by this ignorance; and whether in this it is not both a product of the present system of class dominance and essential to maintaining it through these relations.

As for the first, apart from the usual reasons which apply to almost every other movement of change conceived and centered in the white middle-class, Julian's movement has its special causes. Even in its partial opposition to, it springs from and extends our "psychological" stream of thought and practice, in which our culture has concentrated not only its privatizing perspectives but the basic "psychologization" (i.e. "de-materialization") of human reality, more intensely and with more social effect recently than in even the "religious" stream. Indeed the production* of psychological systems, theoretical and applied, has come to be a key industry in advanced industrial societies of whatever stripe, essential to maintaining the social apparat,

*In a sense to be noted below.

and controlled on the whole by the forces which dominate all other production. In this light the human potential movement, whatever else it represents -- as its relations with business, etc., have made clear from the first -- is also a ground of intense development of new psychological systems compatible with and useful to extend the dominant systems of social control -- that is to say, a key strategic industry in a conflict extending globally and through all human time, not to mention immediate American politics. In this context the movement acts to assimilate new resources, -- e.g., imported exotic knowledges, metaphysical, psychological, spiritual, some more virulently anti-material than any we have brewed for ourselves since some early, self-extinguishing extremes of Christianity's development -- and is moved neither to question nor to reformulate the connection between their genuinely wondrous essences and the implicit and explicit social lessons* which, I believe, are falsely taught us as inseparable from these, yet are quite conveniently compatible so far with our present social State.

Even so, the movement does have its fruitful contradiction here, or tension, with its head in the clouds and its feet on some ground. For equally it has embraced the human body, our basic tangible meat rich with real senses; and the consequent exploration of this embrace is spreading, so to speak, from the ground up, contending, influencing and being integrated with other salients into our potential in the body of the movement, with still a long way to go. But it is noteworthy that this bodily

* See "Pedagogy of the Guru", above.

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connection has so far, even in most of Reich's followers, led to no further exploration of or connection with the matter-based body of society by which we extend ourselves than is needed to ask what foods we eat might cause us privately to get cancer. The movement has not yet fully recognized the world in our body, nor is likely to while its development is governed as it is.

(Notes) on the movement's economic character

As to the question of its class character, the simplicity with which the human potential movement might be dismissed has been undercut by the recent evolution of the idea of the "(new) working class" to include most workers in the human services,* and thus in a sense much of the movement itself. Still its development as an actual industry -- from which I exclude here some spiritual and other non-economic fringes of the movement -- largely follows the forms of the larger economy which shaped and supports its operations. Aspiring elites of practitioners, still mainly confined to the psychologically-hip fringe of the white middle class, vie in entrepreneurial competition and strive for institutional connection. Their economic relations with clients, institutions and each other are governed as strongly by motives of profit as of survival, to judge by the scant opposition to the custom of charging what the traffic will bear; and their social relations with these are likewise bourgeoisie, and alienating in ways so familiar as to be scarcely recognizable. Outside such agencies as benefit by employing them, their practices

*And by related changes in our understanding of what their production entails; see below.

thus far benefit immediately mainly a small and privileged class -- for need and greed both lead them to focus on those who can most afford to pay both for entertainment and for vital needs -- namely, the pained and/or searching among the more affluent, who, having suffered less from the material limitations enforced by our present productive order (though perhaps no less from the others), are less inclined to connect the nature of what they pay for, and of how they pay for it, with that order's problems.

As for those who cannot privately pay the going prices to develop their potential, or who choose not to, perhaps through disinterest,* one gets at them through the institutions which acclient and control them. Dependent upon the freely-disposable

*Of these it must be observed that though the good old-fashioned working-class, busy with primary material production, has shown scant interest so far in intangible Growth, we cannot anticipate that interest in this commodity will long remain so sharply class-limited. In the early seventies, the Yankelovitch surveys revealed a pregnant phenomenon of cross-class-cultural development. They had documented the rapid spread of a certain cluster of values -- generated, borne and spread by disaffected middle-class youth -- among those youth in the sixties. Now they recorded the sudden spread of these values -- or at least the less-political ones of sensuality, affective expression, disaffection with boring and meaningless work, etc., - which we tried to embody in the Haight and which soon our elders (on the whole) were to engage in the human potential movement -- into the working class through its youngest, coeval stratum, as the beach-head of a development which will continue to influence working-class culture and politics significantly.

surplus of a certain class, the market for primitive free enterprise is limited; and fledgling New Age industry's expansion depends on its pacific integration into the more complex marketing operations of advanced society. Thus the burgeoning ranks of practitioners press for Medicare and insurance companies to recognize and fund new modes of therapy and bodily healing; for school systems to adopt the affective curricula and education-regulating agencies to validate the related trainings which will open their employment as teachers and teacher-trainers; and so on -- in each instance, on the whole, without questioning or pressing for alternatives to the dominant assumptions of these systems,* which will govern their own work too; nor challenging the class nature and function of these institutions, perhaps because their peaceful integration into them preserves their own class status.

All this happens "naturally", almost without our recognition, under the artificial laws of the present economic order. Granted, the motivation to spread New Age benefits throughout our institutions is benignly proselytic; but it is also, to judge by what I've seen, in each case as much economic. Were the Aquarian Conspiracy as conscious as Marilyn suggests, one might well detest it for its choice to integrate so into the present order;

*E.g., that the State has the right to determine, by its recognition and support, which modes of healing shall prevail in society; that the curricula for a captive studenthood should be programmed and administered from the top down; that bourgeoisie-professional roles and relations shall prevail; and so on.

but the choice is rather compounded of so many individual choices, shaped by and unconsciously accepting the economic pressures and forms of this order, that one can only sigh, and seek to reinform them.

Nonetheless, the effect is much as if the choice were indeed conspiratorial and conscious; for though New Age industry has not yet developed to the point of international corporate conglomeration, in the examples cited above and in the state legislators' presence at this very conference we can recognize already an early exploration of the basic principle, more fully developed by the aerospace and power industries, that industry must control major institutions and ultimately the government to continue its expansion and profitability.

In this context the broad re-indoctrination, not only of middle-class but of working-class people, in the privatization of their problems, conditions and remedies, which is now proceeding through the human potential movement's institutional-industrial integration, is indeed a response to the growing problems and contradictions of our class society, and works mainly to deepen them.

The limits of materialism

Withal, I am no proper materialist, let alone a Godless Communist -- though I still do believe that the material world is as "real" and determinate as anything we can conceive.*

*And believe so having studied the abstract uncertainties of quantum mechanics; and knowing that our only experience of physical reality seems to be indirect, encoded as neural-electrical pulses whose translation into consciousness is accomplished in ways which we cannot yet, nor are likely to, fully explain on a material basis. For me these ideas represent not a refusal of physical "reality," but the lines of its connection with the non-material.

There is something out there, beyond the self, marvelous equally in its solidity and spirituality, neither reducible to the other. I know through direct experience -- or more accurately, through the interpretations I have chosen to make of my experiences -- that there exists an integral consciousness, an intelligence vast beyond the self, though all we can ever grasp to speak of it be of and from the self, leaving it incomprehensible, of which I am a part and, in being so, all. There is a Light which we can^{ee} "prior" to Matter (though of course their relation is not so simply comprehensible!) which I experience shining through each least pebble; which we translate into provincial information as it shines through us, as I do now, faintly conscious of this shining; which is independent of even our "highest" concerns, yet is somehow (or so it selfishly seems) dependent upon its recognition by these fleshly I's, and conversely.

I value these purest of awarenesses, primary among yet in balance with the many others I have chosen to develop. I have chosen both to experience them as part of being human, whole; and to value and act upon my interpretations of these experiences, "accepting the Guidance of the Light", as mystics say. I'm aware that others do so too -- that the craving to do so seems as fundamental a phenomenon of human cultures as does the craving for sensual experience and to shape its forms. And I know that such choices as mine, by the very fact of their making, are a fundamental force in the making of human history -- which is to say, in short, that no account of us as matter relating through matter can ever fully account for what we do or guide us in this; and that Marxist dialecticians, so long as they limit themselves

to a strict materialism, shall never constitute a rigorous science of history, though they may make a quite useful one.

I have argued elsewhere that whether the determining forces of reality are material, of pure consciousness, or of both, is a formally undecidable question in any rational frame; the argument above that revelation is contaminated by interpretation is of a kind with this. Given this, we are free to choose which perspective we adopt. It seems to me that we permit ourselves a richer field and play of human being and meaning by striving not to grasp reality so narrowly as the traditional Matter/Consciousness dichotomy and the Law of the Excluded Middle urge us to; and by instead accepting, nay, welcoming, the "contradiction" that the domains of Matter and of Consciousness-Spirit each have primary, irreducible claims upon and to determine our experience of the other, and thus, so far as we can tell, each constitute our primary reality. Nothing is lost in this save some false peace of mind and an inadequate sense of coherence; and what opens is a human splendor, the full march upon our potential, in which we are informed by all the gathered wealths of human knowledge and condition, and may find moreover full employment in reconciling and connecting them through our lives, pledged to implement every program of primary good we can identify.

Re the reformulation of "production"

Of course nothing constrains a Socialist program to a materialist philosophical base; as a new generation of militant Latin American priests are making clear, a Socialist analysis of material-productive relations can be read also as the Will

of God. But one doesn't have to get metaphysical to see that the metaphor of human production has far too much potential to bear confinement to the topic of material production and the proletariat's control of its industrial processes. What we produce is human reality, in all its intimate and extended forms -- the most extended perhaps being the artifacts we make and use, which are us rather than things because through them we incarnate our meanings; and which thus are only our most material self-production, the most tangible part to grasp in shaping public policy, as our economic traditions have agreed.

Richer ideas of our production are developing now in the human services, not least in their "human-potentialized" wings, in part precisely because the simpler concepts of material economics cannot adequately describe what is produced and distributed when teacher and student (e.g.) interact. Therapy is not, after all, quite like auto repair, though we still organize its selling as if it were; it is rather, in fuller development, a different species of auto-repair in which both (all) parties are healed and society recreated. And so it goes for all other species of human service. In particular, each broods now within its visions and reformulations of its production and productive process which bid to undo the narrow terms of expertise and one-way action, of hierarchical-authoritarian relation, and the consequent economic relations, through which we have construed the present forms of human service; and to replace them by more "democratic" terms and relations more directly reflecting the existential democracy of our co-self-creation

through these services (as through all our other interactions.)

I have written of this transition, these ideas as applied through education, in more detail elsewhere, as have many others in that "phalanx of alternative educators" I mentioned while climbing the stairs. Similar tentative bodies of thought and practice exist now in the domains of therapy, social welfare, medicine/health, government, and other human services. In the "less-social" of these services, these transformative forces are entering in fair part precisely through Aquarian explorations -- for within the general authoritarianism of the movement's social face, the particular contents of its investigations often reveal (as in Laingian "therapy", certain frameworks of healing, parapsychological research, and indeed much mystical experience) vistas of radical democracy in the substance and process of our co-production.*

Still and all, we are a long way yet from the sort of "unified field theory" and vision which might encompass a full view of human production, recognizing the unbounded variety of

*The movement thus embodies a potent contradiction, which I have under-credited in my account throughout -- but not because I under-credit it myself. On the contrary, my sense of these "democratic vistas" inherent in the movement's various explorations is what fuels my own interest in them. This essay concerns itself with the prior task of motivating and suggesting a framework for their development as such. It is written moreover in the knowledge that many people have been struggling, against the drift of New Age culture, to express their own senses of this democratic potential, energized by the same contradiction; and in the faith that some may find it useful if only for the spirit of encouragement it brings to this task.

its forms, the scope and intimacy of our co-production of ourselves and human reality and -- most pertinent here -- the connectedness, the inviolable integrity of our many modes. We have rather a patchwork of intimations which we fumble to connect further -- here a link from Marx to Freud, there a strand of Buddhist economics -- as we govern our condition.

All this fancy-dance with the idea of "production" might seem, from a conservative Marxist standpoint, to be merely poet's play or at best cultural icing on the basic cake of the traditional proletariat's historical mission. But the contradictions of human society have indeed continued to develop in the century since Marx; and what once seemed so evident and natural to him -- that primary material production was, by virtue of the energy and dependence concentrated on it, so much the primary pivot of human life as to organize all else, First Cause -- is no longer so simply reflected in our society. Indeed what has marked advanced economies is the growth of the "services" sector, in our case, now to rival the (material) goods sector^{*}; and the "human services" are by far the most rapidly-diversifying and -expanding subsector of the services. Visions of their coming, through this trend, at least to co-dominate the economy have already been cogently

*As productivity is measured in that common index, the dollar (\$534 billion vs. \$755 billion, 1973 figures.) The recent efforts to fiscally quantify the productivity of housewife-mothers suggests one of many ways in which combined "services" may actually dominate gross production already. They suggest also, in the sharpest terms, that the effort to define the natures of our productivity is not dispassionate but a political struggle with social consequence, in which the reformulations of productivity now brooding chaotically within the human potential movement will play a significant role.

advanced -- e.g., with regularity, in the journal Social Policy -- and this development will be reinforced if the New Age visions of living more modestly upon the Earth with appropriate technology gain force among us.

Already, if I read the U.S. Almanac right, as human beings last longer than machines the amount of capital invested in us through our education, not to mention other services, exceeds the total sum invested in our material productive apparatus and all else of matter we have emplaced upon the earth -- which is as it should be, for since dim aeons humans have re-invested the surpluses of their productivity principally in themselves again and primarily through education (in all its forms), even to implement their material investments in survival, let alone the rest.*

In short, the idea that material production's dominance of our lives is unchallenged (save perhaps by spiritual, with its uncommensurable claims), is now undercut even in its own formulating terms. In fuller vision we must deal with ideas about productivity and ideals of productive relation which not only are

*In this light the entire human-potential-etc. movement must be understood as an educational enterprise, a channel for capital investment precisely to develop human potential resources (as always, and as always only certain ones). EST and Transcendental Meditation are only in the \$30-\$200 million class; not even the IRS knows Scientology's gross; but in general New Age industry is not in the Lockheed class. Still it is a pivotal sub-industry, as the ideas produced through it may have great leverage on the development of the entire services sector and the whole economy.

voiced in the terms of the (human) services, but which spring from them intrinsically, from the task of struggling with the human medium, which though influenced is not determined alone by material production, and teaches us ever new terms. Yet both intuition and my thoughts suggest that in the next phase, should we manage it, we may find, turning back to apply our richer vision of production to the material case, that the present Marxist paradigm will still largely hold when understood as a limiting case, (rather as Newtonian/classical physics still holds its own, its usefulness undiminished, within the enlarged paradigm of relativistic quantumdynamical physics;) and will moreover, thus illuminated, inform our primary practices.

Toward integral vision

From these general considerations again specific conclusions condense. At the least, the primacy of material production must recognize other primacies, not simply to be dismissed as "meta-physical". The question, "who controls the (means of) production of the social forms (and selves) through which control of material production is exercised; and how?" seems, even without its parenthetical phrases, not to be adequately answered by understanding "who controls (the means of) our material production; and how?" -- to judge at least from the problems with bureaucratization, elitism, anonymous irresponsible power, and so on which the major standing experiments in Workers' Control still share with our version of Capitalists' Control, and which may be rooted deeply in the State itself (yet even so be not irremediable.)

(Many theorists argue that the terms of Socialism adequately developed, shall undermine the tendency to reconstitute the forms I characterize as "authoritarian" here (abridging much discussion); and I agree. But this development is mainly now an intuition of a process spanning generations; and in the meantime it seems wiser to ask what other fundamental forces might be conceived to underwrite the social forms we know. The researches of Freud, Jung and Reich probe a well of psycho-physical force independent of classical economic formulations; Feminism probes another; the rich connections amongst these are being slowly explored. The challenge to Humanistic Psychology, even as it integrates such inputs with more exotic takes on our potential, is to produce not its present scanty, confused trickles, but full streams of social theory and practice more advanced and powerful than these current standards of exploration, to be integrated with the distinct, if not entirely independent, streams of economic and other understanding. The complementary challenge to economic theory of whatever stripe, and Socialist in particular, is to seek -- even or especially in such extremal territories of self-claimed independence as the human potential movement -- to recognize what other primary springs of the social stream are being explored; and to endure the transformation of assimilating them for the sake of creating a science and practice of the whole.)

Indeed the tendency of progressive social efforts to regenerate authoritarian social forms and psychologies is perhaps the key social dilemma of our century, which we shall not unwind

without more deeply understanding the ways we produce our social forms and selves. And what seems to me remarkable about the deepened visions of our production which brood in the human services, the Growth movement, and elsewhere is twofold. First, each new "wavelength" of vision further illuminates the cooperative ways in which we continue to regenerate our authoritarian (and other) realities. Second, each also illuminates an alternative way in which we might more organize our energies and consciousness, involving nothing more complex than an ideal of shared control and equitable mutual benefit -- which applies to every aspect of our co-production, from the most material to the most spiritual.

This is to say, in short, that our simple, basic ideas of Democracy and Socialism are perfectly general. Collective ("workers'") control of the collective means and processes of our production, exercised through democratic processes in the name of distributive justice by equal persons pledged to help each other grow into their mutual freedom, and grow fully through it -- why, what more could we ask for Heaven on Earth? It is an ideal which, although formed in gross material and political terms, can be translated into the intimate terms of each human service's transactions, as well as to reconfigure its large operations; which can be translated into the intimate terms of each salient of the human potential movement, provided we understand them broadly and deeply enough and have the will to do so* ; and which similarly can be translated into an interior

*I have sketched it only for certain general aspects of consciousness' development. I imagine first details of translation for the various salients of body-work, therapy, healing, etc. will be apparent to persons familiar with these salients.

vision of self-governance.

It is the mandate of self-determination, integral and luminous, with its forms and processes made somewhat more explicit by this sharper phrasing -- and it brings this long chain of argument, begun with my celebration of the wondrous grape and wine of consciousness, around to a compact conclusion. I have argued that the fuller freedom to develop our consciousness, our potential, implies and depends upon our development of both democratic and Socialist consciousness, relations and forms. My argument implies, as some political theorists argue more extensively, that the fuller developments of democracy and of Socialism are each dependent on the other. A few argue further that each implies the other, and I rather agree, for when generally-enough phrased, democracy and Socialism seem to me indistinguishable (though the reasonings above don't depend on this.) Finally, I have argued that the fuller development of Socialism depends on fuller understandings of production, themselves dependent on every further development of our consciousness; and analogous reasonings hold for democracy.

The argument runs full circle, the great universe-worm Oroborus swallowing itself. Its categories dissolve in me, leaving me aware only of our development as an integral process, as I struggle to phrase the essences of self-determination concretely enough -- through these emblems of Democracy, Socialism, the Tao throughout, evoked against the Smile -- to pose at least a challenge to other advocates of human potential (of whatever stripe) to do better, to phrase these essences yet more comprehensively, integrally and concretely, creating a common language and vision worthy of our guidance.

Q-167A

11.

On Being Touched by a Democratic Spirit

In which the Author makes an odd, but quite natural, connection.

When I say "its categories dissolve in me", I mean this literally. For of course what occupies me in the brief flash I experience after hearing Peter needle Julian to read Marx is nothing so differentiated and articulated as this chain of argument, weeks in the writing, in which I have tried to encircle its force and implications. It is rather a pulse of energy of a characteristic signature, which inhabits my whole being, vivifying the subtle coherence of all my present and remembered experiences and associations (and the rest of me besides, emotions, meat, astral body and all) until I shine internally for a moment with its light -- and fumble thus afterwards to transcribe its particular signature of coherence, as the flash fades.

I have no name for it; it enters and is formed and broods in the wells of our being, far "below" the levels of consciousness in which we word experience. Prior to such words as "democracy", I experience it as an image, a form, a symbolic mandala which I must digress to describe.

A Pythagorean diversion

The mandala was popularized, as history would have it, by the hippie artisans of the Haight and Berkeley when they first claimed public sidewalks to hawk their New Age handicrafts. But I was taught it earlier, during the height of the Cold War Red-hunts, when my high-school mathematics club met to practice what we knew as "curve-stitching" -- to interconnect, with colored threads, sets of points identified on two-or three--dimensional curves, forming decorative figures which were so patently meaningless, or so inarticulately meaningful, that I soon lost interest. Nor would I mention my own involvement

save to testify to the complexity of ways in which a democratic spirit is sustained: for though I did not see this mandala again for fifteen years, and only within the past two have come to take it so seriously, I can now retrace^{*} how it worked in me thereafter to focus and shape my social perceptions and actions.

The curve-stitching passtime and this particular figure descend to us perhaps from Pythagoras' time, and perhaps from his mystical circle as well -- for though it is surely "natural" and a child's delight to illuminate the lines of a strictly- and consciously-geometrical construction by coloring them in, the

^{*}An early point on this curve is indicated by chapter 11 of OLSC, which considers my first experience with a formally-decentralized communications network; a later point, by my actions in the FSM and the functional (rather than mystical, as in this book) view of it I have noted in too many places to cite; yet later, the mandala's imprint is awkwardly pervasive.

The former paper initiates a largely-unpublished chain of social-cybernetic speculation represented by "Implications for Community Memory" in ACM's SIG/Computers and Society, (V. 6, no. 4, Winter 1975), and by some present work with Loving Grace Cybernetics of Berkeley. I must add that an extensive technological argument, advancing uncertainly now through the call to "appropriate" technology but not yet well-developed even in its focus upon the key technologies of communication/information-processing, is an essential, "integral" complement to the ideas and practices discussed in this essay. One image of its scope appears as chapter 7, "Technology and Social Reconstruction", in OLSC; in Ecology: Crisis and New Vision, R. Sherrill, ed. (John Knox Press, Richmond, Va.; 1971); and excerpted as "Introduction to Domebuilding: A Geodesic Meditation" in New American Review #12 (1971).

Pythagoreans taught themselves also that the mysteries of the universe and ourselves are encoded in such forms and open to us through meditation upon them. Many mystic traditions bear similar teachings, though none with so free, pure and infinite a choice of meditative focii (in which sense "mathematical meditations" have perhaps the potential of enfolding all others, as root-practices generally claim). But unlike Tantra, the chain of transmission, of interpretation of the Geometrical mystery, has been broken since Pythagorean times; or rather has been compressed into a pure experiential teaching, primordial as the Kabbala yet interpreted only to illuminate the character of the physical world, and not also of the spiritual/social self.*

In any case, this legend of my mandala's derivation is as pleasant and fraught with significance as most such legends now. I embroider its mystery further by observing that the symbol which has come down to us from the Pythagoreans, by which they swore themselves -- the five-pointed star inscribed in a pentagram inscribed in a circle -- is the simplest form and representation possible of the mandala of democratic spirit (for so I name it here); and that moreover the human consciousness which could inscribe it deliberately as a consciously-geometrical figure,

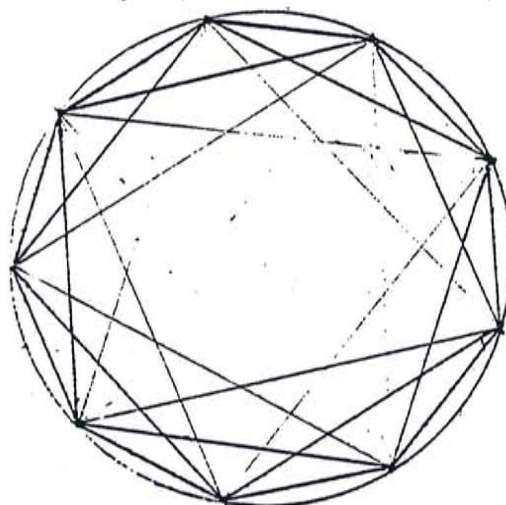
*Fittingly enough, the New Age intellectual orbit now includes such serious mathematico-physical scientists as John Archibald Wheeler, Charles Musé, Arthur Young, Jack Sarfatti, etc., whose works together have signaled a revival of interest in the "strictly-" geometrical character of the Intelligent Universe -- whether passing or serious remains to be seen.

an artifact of reasoned intuition, seems so far as we know to have developed quite suddenly, along with Geometry and self--consciously-rational thought, in ancient Greece, shortly before conscious Democracy was born in the same cradle, perhaps as its child.

(A democratic mandala)

Take ye then N points* spaced equidistant on the circumference of a circle, and connect them each to every other by a straight line, as in this figure:

($N = 9$)



Divide the integral rainbow into M colors equally spaced ($M \leq N/2$), and color then these connections, with colored threads if the points be marked by pins in wood, in this fashion: to the lines between actual neighbors, the bluest hue; between neighbors separated by one point, the next hue; between twice-separated

*For $N < 5$ the figure is degenerate, lacking varieties of relationship and/or a space of mystery at its center. Figures with even N can indicate the space of mystery, at the cost of being not fully interconnected. Euclid, heir to Pythagorean keys, taught that the figure's construction must be "natural", i.e. accomplished by the finite straightedge/compass methods of his circle, which limited N to 3, 5, 15 (and certain even multiples of these) for him, and for us to numbers of the form $2^k p_1 p_2 \dots$ with p_1 a prime of the form $(2^{2^a} + 1)$. Modern methods seem to permit any N ; still one may wonder.

neighbors the next; and so until the most red.*

This then is a simple democratic mandala. Its points represent persons, social entities or aspects of the self; the lines

*Finer colorings, representing also the individuality of the points, may be made by dividing the rainbow into N hues; assigning to each hue a scale of $M = (N-1)/2$ tints; assigning to each point one hue, in orderly progression round the color-wheel; assigning to the lines between nearest neighbors the darkest tints, between next-nearest the next-darkest, and so on; and (unless thread be used) integrating each doubled line of the resulting figure by blending its two colors, perhaps in proportion as one passes from one terminal point to the other. I note this less for "aesthetic" reasons than to observe that by making the basic intensities and tint-scales of different colors and points unequal, one also may represent quite a variety of non-democratic systems -- as may be seen most easily by coloring the Pythagorean symbol ($N = 5$) to represent the relations of a family or an authoritarian group.

One who follows this construction will be able to visualize analogous, richer constructions for points on the surface of a sphere, and constructions whose colorings are not static; and perhaps intuitively to appreciate these mathematical notes: (1) The construction can be generalized to higher spaces; (2) the points may be variably distributed on "surfaces" having no "inside" and "outside"; (3) the vectors of connection may have many dimensions; (4) such constructions, sufficiently generalized and properly "colored", can be specified to represent at least every functional space with a finite number of elements which we can conceive as a mathematical model; and (5) they thus can represent every functional model we can conceive of the human condition. In this light, I have been seized by a democratic variant of a Form (as Plato would say) of considerable power, whose genesis broods as deeply in the wells of self and universe, I imagine, as does that of any other archetypal form.

represent their relations; the rainbow symbolizes the continuous spectrum of our vision, which we divide to assign relations qualities; and mystery is at the core. Hocus-pocus or not, once one has absorbed it, it is a pleasant and quite powerful image to bring to mind while trying by thought and intuition to assess the character of actual systems in the world and self, especially if one has regard for the values of peership and reciprocal connection. Indeed, it might well be graven over the lintel of each schoolroom in our democracy, as not the State's sign but our own, of affirmative action.

For surely we need some more organized alternative to the relentless reimpression of the dominant mandala of authoritarian culture, which in its simplest form is the oriented triangle (pyramid) with a top and a bottom. Borne culturally first, perhaps, in childhood pictures of the king on his throne above the throng, this archetypal Form is presented to and invoked in us in a myriad of ways in our schooling; and resonates in our adult being each time we visualize the food pyramid, man's place in the universe, the organization of institutions or other structures of power, or "higher" consciousness; and try, thus informed, to make our place in them.

From many serious accounts, this is how such Signs work with us to evoke the deep particular forms of our energies; and New Age wisdom well advises us to be'ware of them. Granted, "ecological" consciousness is now reconstruing the core image of the "food pyramid", "survival (dominance) of the fittest", etc., in less hierarchical forms, and cyclic diagrams proliferate. Yet

we need some image richer than the undifferentiated circle and more specific than the Tao to help focus our perceptions; and some energy invested in this one might be multiplied invisibly.*

Pythagoreans of the old school would likely heave me overboard for spilling my version of the family beans, as legend has it of their practice. But this is indeed a new age, and as Tarthang Tulka and so many other leaders of various sects of the One have recently announced, it is time to bring the hidden teachings a stage further to light in the public mind of the West, for the sake of a humanity in crisis.

On invoking the Spirit

As I say, then, it is this mandala's charged image which glows within and reorganizes me, which I recognize as the signature of that pulse of energy which I call flash above, and which in turn is translated into wisps of idea and then to the crude argumentative lines constructed earlier. Thus I record my sense of having been touched by an identifiable Spirit, distinctly secular yet of deeper provenance, and by no stretch of the imagination mine alone. I have been touched by it before, often enough to grow conscious of its touch as distinctive and to recognize some circumstances in which it is conjured, often enough to be not simply touched but a bit tetched by it -- to

*I regret appearing, throughout this essay and book, as a monomaniacal democrat (or a simplistic anarchist), for there is a more delicate dialectic of hierarchical and non-hierarchical forms which we must ultimately honor -- to which I hope my work, unbalanced as it is, will contribute in this oppositely-unbalanced day.

imagine and seek its imprint in each particular, and so to struggle obsessively in the world, as men do when possessed with and by such Spirits, as my son did at three when he recognized the spirit of Arrow in each cloud, each scrap from the gutter.*

If so, then whether my account be taken metaphorically or literally, it is because I have, not consistently but persistently, sought that spirit's touch, opened myself to it, placed myself in and helped to make circumstances in which I might be made the vehicle of its energies and it of mine, tried (in that spirit again) to make my own sense of and words for it, and prepared myself consciously for it in a wide variety of ways, besides brooding on hippie art and on what happened to Anarchism in the First International.†

For what training was going on during those twenty-one years since high school, in which every fully-voluntary association I joined in or helped to create -- with my mate, in learning--

*From "Tyrannosaurus to Mandala", Learning, Jan. 1977, contains, besides this example and its context, some related notes on the early dimensions of such possession.

†Political readers more sophisticated than I (and most other readers) might care to check out my primitive grasp of this, in the short appendix on p. 000. Though placed there to save an already-overstrained narrative flow, if I am anywhere near the mark, this matter is proper to this essay; provides its contexts; and moreover indicates the connection of its concerns, images and spirit with those of the traditional revolutionary tradition.

groups, seminars, direct action, making music, community work, long practical-intellectual cooperation* -- was attempting to organize itself, by processes informed by ideology yet honoring a deeper root, as a collectivity of peers, in semblance of the democratic mandala? I sought this path less consciously than blindly, impelled by discomforts and needs, guided less by the lip-words of democracy (though grateful for those who took them seriously to engage) than by the raw grating feeling of something sensibly wrong in certain contexts and sensibly righter in others -- a sense of most precious energy and potential, deeper than any signature, opening within me and without. These feelings and senses emerged from obscurity in me: they grew an erratic iota more distinct, immediate and powerful each time I chose a circumstance to exercise them. And each time, as I struggled or relaxed to conceive what circumstance I was choosing (which was also to conceive what I was rejecting), or to express my grasp of it aloud or on a page, a certain guiding image grew clearer within me, like a lotus-- flower unfolding in the deep pool wherein perception and desire are re-formed. Each time I courted this reorganization I became -- as if I were engraving myself with an emblem or tuning myself to a vibration[#]-- a slightly more open and pre-programmed receiver of a certain energy or signature of energy, both

* See in particular Music Lessons, (American Review 18, Fall 1973); in print as Learning Without a Teacher (the Phi Delta Kappa "Fastback" #45); and chapters 2 and 4 of OLSC for related notes about the nurturance of democratic consciousness.

[#]And as might be illustrated richly in quite orthodox psychological, anthropological and sociological terms.

experienced and created by me (and others) in the course of its transduction to human terms; and often, at least, was prepared for the next time to be somewhat more efficient, precise and full in realizing its mystery.

These pages of spiritual presentation, sprung unannounced from the sour but rational critic who came to the conference, form here a literary conceit within a literary conceit. They form also a naked transcription, so far as it goes, of the process of the self consciously defining (re-mythologizing, re-creating) the self -- and thus again, as metaphysics would have it, of a conceit within a conceit. But their premise is stone sober. Point by point, and in more ways than chronicled here, my testament describes a process of consciousness' development, of Spirit's invocation, of a sort recorded in many other books, traditions and ways. I know from my experience no Earthly reason to consider it distinct in kind from those other processes recorded, nor my human stuff different from that involved in them; and think then that the results, so partial though mine be, may perhaps bear comparison in terms more fundamental and direct than we have yet evolved in any of our languages. (Heaven's message, so far as I grasp it or vice versa, is the same.)

Q-177A

12.

On Restoring Our Own Authority

If I'm visited by this democratic Spirit here, it's not only because I have sought to make myself its lightning-rod, grounding heavenly energies, but because it has been summoned collectively in a quite tangible and relatively "objective" social circumstance, of a common kind despite its exotic setting here -- whose description I postpone for one final thought about consciousness-in-general, or rather Growth.

Though Peter means it more deeply, having already conjured Julian to heed his own conscience, his advice that Julian read the social classics seems somehow too shallow here, or off the mark -- for it is no different in kind than Julian's advice to read the inner classics, and the Growth movement's generally to seek particular teachers and particular modes of learning from them. Yet we are all at deeper risk here, addressed by a prior advice.

Re free learning

For always, when we choose consciously to grow, to learn, we are back at the origin, the center of our uni-verse and responsible for our self. Before we can learn from Marx's advice or Peter's to seek it, from our postural imbalances or spiritual intimations, we must first choose to pay attention to them, direct our own awareness to determine our self. And in this we are our own head teacher, who determines and evaluates our curriculum and learning-process.

For always, insofar as our learning is conscious at all, we go through the basic cycle of choosing what we want to learn, how to learn it, and how to judge the result. It is so even when we do not know (cannot choose) what we would learn, and instead choose the prior ("meta-") tasks of learning what possibilities might exist for us and how to choose among or create them; and

so even when we seem to have no choice in the subject, method or judgement -- for we do choose each learning, if "only" for survival's sake, that ever-remade choice; we do choose even that method which seems the only one available (often enough because we choose to believe so, choose not to seek actively to recognize or invent other options); and we do, in the end, choose which judgement we make of our learning, whether we accept it as someone else's opinion, the "objective" balance-sheet of reality or history, or merely our own interpretation, integrating what we do.

We are always, in short, as learners irrevocably self-determining, inalienably free. True, everywhere we are in chains, forged by others, the world, and within ourselves, which we help to reforge each time we bear or resist them without seeking to undo or at least to re-form them. Our chains are the limits of our choices, and as such equally an irrevocable condition -- yet in particular form they are often enough palpably arbitrary and unnecessary (these alone to be spoken of as "cruel"), and always mutable. Their mutability is the positive limit of our freedom, and our chains are thus the very ground where our meta-freedom -- the "higher" freedom that determines our freedom, developing itself -- plays. For not one chain* is beyond our power to reform in weight and meaning; and however small the beginning possible for us to make at this, we face always the freedom and choice whether to make it.

The lesson is four-square, retold by the ancient dream of flight achieved with gravity unchanged, by the paraplegics now hot-rodding their wheelchairs down Berkeley's streets to pressure the City Council to ramp every curb and public building,

*Save perhaps the extinction of the "outer" self at death, and some others of the physically-damaged brain.

by the American and Russian Revolutions, by every client on the Freudian couch or in a bioenergetic crouch who learns one thing more about how she's doing it to herself. Every artist who chooses to explore the medium and push its limits tells us: we can grasp our condition, our limits, at their roots to change -- though every such learning leave us facing always the next and always a deeper and more demanding; and though the next possible be no more than to take some next action to mobilize will and support, within the self or without, for what might next or eventually be done.

We are thus always free in our chains as we direct our own awareness and learning, determining human reality. In this light our key learning and growth lie in our consciousness of this condition of freedom and how we do inhabit it;* and the key question would seem to be how we best develop this consciousness. My first answer is cheerfully ecumenical. For all conscious teachings of which I know -- and I have tried to phrase my chain

*They are sometimes understood more directly to consist in developing the ability to control/focus/discipline awareness itself, or more profoundly in developing the will itself which chooses (even to stop choosing), and perhaps my phrasings reduce to these; yet as it ^{implies} them and perhaps something prior or else, I put it so.

Below and elsewhere in these passages, "learning", "consciousness" "will" and "choice" may be read in place of "awareness", and often in place of each other -- either because the formulations are quite general, or because I am trying to speak of "levels" or "depths" of experience in which the distinctions among these terms quite dissolve.

of considerations above to embrace impartially each person and every kind of group "we", every sort of learning from Enlightenment to Revolution -- are alike in this: each teaches us (how) to direct our awareness in certain ways; and each leads us to be aware of some aspects of how we choose to be aware. In both ways, each leads us to claim some of our potential freedom.

But that is all they do. They aid us in particulars; but no particular teaching itself advises the general task of our learning, our self-creation through particulars. That advice is always our own, drawn from it. For ever, within even the person who has chosen to develop himself through some one teaching only with claim to comprehensive utility, stands he who chooses this, in a choice informed and limited, but not explained nor comprehended fully (even as "the Will of God"), through what he is learning. And so it is doubly for we realer persons, who assemble ourselves through the tools of a myriad teachings formal and informal, from "survive!" on out, choosing to choose as we do among them in a way informed by all, by our integration of every system of values we encounter through others in the world -- yet in a way, and by a process of integration, which are ultimately mysterious, with the mystery of the free self, the free will, at the core.

When I ask, then, how we grow more conscious of our freedom to realize even our freedom to change our freedom's limits, I find no answer which speaks to this reiterative core, but only many which seem useful -- and so many which seem independently basic as to quite undo the idea that one is prime -- to a person, a consciousness, so inclined. Though the world push, advise, entreat

us and offer example to or not to, we incline ourselves to seek our freedom -- and what more can be said about this, than that we are free to help each other in this quest, in so many ways that we do not know how to choose among them and judge as best we can?

Restoring our own authority (...)

Confronted with our own growth potentials, then (and still speaking of groups as well as individuals, all growth), we stand in a remarkable position, from which acts such as reading Marx or Pirsig assume their proper perspective. The human condition itself is our guru, or rather a total format outside us and within of potential gurus and lessons awaiting our recognition, none with more claim than we grant it.

I emphasize the last to connect the Growth Question back to the key perception which underlay all the progressive social unrest of the sixties, and most of the personal too: social authority derives its legitimacy, and its full capacity to enable our development, only through the free and conscious consent of the governed, those who in subscribing to it create it. The seventies have shown how general the principle is: for how are we to understand mid-life career changers, feminists, Moonies, meditators, my Tai Chi teacher and the lot, save by recognizing that we each can choose to no longer subscribe so fully to the intimate web of social authority, the visions and expectations of self and behavior internalized in the past and daily invoked in each intense encounter with a friend or casual one with a stranger (or institution, in which terms the sixties, and the present.)

Ordinarily we grant these authority to rule us, insofar as we choose to employ ourselves in being the particular selves they would see and take us as, and depend always in part on their

doing so to reaffirm that we are who we are; ordinarily we are not very conscious of this. But even before the choice to change becomes conscious as a possibility, we have already begun subtly to restructure the intimate webs of authority which command our given allegiance -- at least by becoming more conscious of the conflicts of interest we experience in our system as it is -- and often we do so more consciously, becoming more aware of whose rule we have granted (and perhaps of why) from which we would withdraw consent; of what it might cost and achieve to do so; and of whom and what we would recreate this authority in, and how.

In this light the legitimacy of social authority, intimate and grand, is no simple matter. Even our formal compact of Democracy, re-subscribed to not by automatic reflex but consciously anew, is not fully legitimate, as we are not fully conscious of what we subscribe to, with whom and why. It is merely our culture's best model of how to consciously constitute legitimate and useful authority; and in comparison what happens between lovers, in the classroom, the spiritual enclave, in "personal" change -- where the processes and consequences of granting authority are each at best semi-conscious -- is usually murky at best in its legitimacy.

Yet what concerns me is less the fuller, clearer development of our consciousness of how we grant authority (or, perhaps equivalently, of our freedom), than what may come with it: a restoration of the center of authority to ourselves and our direct experience. I'm sure that what I argue can be put more compactly and gracefully. But it is necessary to argue it, and over at least

as complex a field of factors. For the great chain of our age is its teaching, in ever-so-many ways, to place the source and seat of authority so far outside our self, in the expert, the textbook, the State, the empowered, the Other, the standing social condition, less to abet than in lieu of our own; and to place it likewise so far within, in the body, the unconscious, the archetypes, God and the Void, that our sense of its source in our more "superficial" selves (i.e. in the whole conscious self, balanced as it is through all its dimensions, which integrates the whole) is eroded in our search to connect and subscribe, to regain what is not lost.

Against this omni-uncentering teaching -- whose consequence is precisely the displacement of authority from every person and power from everyone, and their regathering in forms beyond our functional control -- there are counter-teachings leading us back to ourselves. The religious traditions which have explored "the death of God" have guided many; and the hot sixties questioned our displacements of authority outside our selves strongly and widely enough that the questioning persists, and has spread now from gross social authority to intimate (in the sense above), to inform our struggles to reconstitute these justly for the sake of the growth which our own resumption of authority enables us to choose.

But in this decade, the key voice for the broad restoration of authority to the self is perhaps -- despite its deep contradictions -- the many-named movement that I survey. Its voice becomes deeper and more potent as it moves into politics and the shaping of social policy, i.e. to guide the restoration of our "outer" authority as well. Yet the teachings it bears as

a whole -- which Peter has so sharply characterized in "The New Narcissism" -- about the self to whom authority is to be restored, the nature of that authority, and are their potentials so inadequate and self-contradictory that one must make explicit some wholer view of both, as I have tried, before one can say, so simply and again and adequately, that ourselves are at the center and have choice.

(... and the authority of our lives)

Of course the metaphor which places the choosing, learning self at the "center" is flawed, since the "total format of potential gurus and lessons" which we face and authorize lies as much "within" the self as "without". We are at the center of our selves and our worlds in the sense of Hermes Trismegistus' observation that God is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere (our boundaries too, though mostly finite, being mutable.) But given this, our position is truly remarkable; and the textures and balances of learning which open to us are quite different than we often, in our authority-centered moods, feel them to be.

For the next step of our learning is most often available and apparent, if we but choose to recognize it, without need to seek authoritative advice from experts or books.* Their advice in any case is generally incomprehensible save in terms of what we already know or have access to through our own experience;

*The argument which follows implies that many classes of specialized learnings which seem exceptions to this rule are in fact not so; and reconstrues the meaning of the true exceptions which remain.

and moreover is generally already implicit in these, since we make use of it to grasp and extend these in ways which we well might begin or continue without advice, having developed our awareness less than we might.

There is no important lesson of the body, spirit, emotions, of the mind's working or society's or the State's, whose next elements are not present already in our own experience in some form awaiting our recognition -- and the next step, as the examples of becoming aware of the flows of energy in our physical and social bodies suggest, is most often a matter of just choosing to pay attention, in ways well within our power already. And as for what informs this choice -- well, we all know already the next thing we could or should do or learn for our own good, private or public. Stop smoking, find God, get straight with our mate, Smash the State -- we know each so many urgent next steps to take, and some idea of how to begin each, that more advice (as such) is an overload to and distraction from our own.

And beyond our body and memory, our immediate surround is more pregnant with lesson than we can grasp. Each angle of grass-leaf on the stem, each scrap of torn truck-rubber by the highway, encodes God's Word, the laws of nature, and the human condition for us to read afresh without intermediary. Whatever the consciousness* we would choose to develop, there is almost always some person whom we know already, no recognized Expert but a friend or acquaintance, who has developed it in some way further than we, or at least could ² help us develop it further, were we only to recognize her and try actually to learn how to make this potential help real.

* Or equally, throughout this section, the power or the action.

Granted, a book, workshop or expert consultant might exhibit the consciousness in more-developed form, be seemingly more useful for our own development, more sure with less fuss. Often it is so. But something vast is lost as we opt for such nourishment in preference to taking a bite on our own immediate life and surround. For something mysterious happens each time we truly look at another, each time we truly engage with each other the conversation about what we have experienced, what we do and perceive, and how and why we have given these the meanings that we have. This is the intercourse of lovers, the eternal discovery and enlargement of the self through conjunction with the Mystery of the Other; and we are lovers together each time we speak seriously as friends or meet as strangers on the train, each time we ask the mechanic what that funny thing really does, or try together to figure out what's happening at the office. And indeed what we need is love; for the excitement of this intercourse whose forms are so varied is so scarce in our lives on the whole that we are fair wasted with its want, too numb to recognize or too weak to move on the textures of potential evident all around us, which thus remain only potential.

It is through this meaning-full intercourse -- which is equally of the self with itself, of the group within itself, and at times between groups -- it is through this intercourse that we reconstitute directly the intimate authorities of our own experience and each other, and of all else beside which rests on these. For even the cruelest and most distant actions of the

x 100

State are sustained, as history tells us most recently through the Ellsberg legend, in ways which risk undoing each time we ask ourselves and each other seriously, "Who are we? What are we doing? What does it mean?"

In this essential flux we restore our private and mutual authenticity, and the very wellsprings of meaning and action. For all else radiates from this everywhere-awaiting center of interplay in which our values form and shape each other. True love, perfect health, Socialist revolution loom on the horizon each time we come face-to-face at the workplace or take stock on the bus riding home, confronting the choice to ask these questions or not to. Nor are they likely to come nearer if we choose not to -- for if the workplace is a true report of our integral condition, no progressive movement arises or is sustained anywhere save primarily through ordinary people ("non-leaders"), yoked with each other in the everyday, asking continually "Who are we, what are we doing, what does it mean?";* and the present condition everywhere is sustained precisely by the general inhibition of this conversation, and moreover is designed and mutually enacted to inhibit it.

*Or equivalently the action-forms "What do we want to learn (do) to become who we would be? How can we learn it? How shall we judge?" Readers familiar with the self-directed learning paradigms currently developing in education will recognize this entire section as another such and a commentary upon them, which may be translated point-by-point into the more usual language describing the potential attitudes and actions of free learners loose in a universe of resources.

I am speaking, of course, of nothing more (nor less) complex than taking ourselves seriously. But what this entails! And how we shy from the opportunity, the task! The New Age in particular purports to take us seriously. We are each and other Perfect or at least OK, whole, authentic, trustworthy, valid, self-responsible; we are all very pretty. But this language was dead before I fell to kicking it, for it presents us to each other as gloriously mummified rather than as raw aches of potential; and it has no kinetic sense. Something should happen when we "take ourselves seriously", and does when we do. It is glorious and completely mundane, awkward and gritty, crippled and enriched by every contradiction of our incompleted stuff; and it moves, like life itself. Granted, even New Age jargon has helped people to take parts of their "private" selves more seriously, realizing certain considerable potentials. But the human potential movement's prototypical take on taking each other seriously remains the encounter group, with its artificial circumstance, institutionalized ("facilitated") form, and narrow ambit of concern; and this decade's extensions and evolutions of "sensitivity training" in institutional society have so far as I know (I may misjudge them) not widely broadened this ambit. Nowhere do I recognize the echelons and corridors in which we take ourselves in full seriousness, in our full potential, in which our engaged concerns with health, love, craft and justice lead each immediately to every other, as they do when we take

ourselves whole, without arbitrary constraint.*

Re pedagogic authority

As for Julian and his Esalen workshops, Karl Marx and his books, and all other such focii of at least semi-public authority, their place in this intercourse is natural. They are simply other persons in this room or some other, or sometimes corporate bodies, at some point of live engagement with the mystery of who we are, what we do, what it means, constrained and empowered by all the inner and outer voices they heed;# and their works are but specialized forms, incomplete phrases, of this conversation we carry on. To us as free learners, these are elements in the total state of resource reality presents us -- more distant, less accessible than what is common to our hand within and without; yet called to our attention by all others who have testified that by connecting with them this distance might vanish, and more, we

*The traditional term of democratic society for "taking people seriously" is to say that we have rights. The Person with Human Rights is perhaps no less idealized a figure than the Perfect (etc.) Person; but to visualize two or more of them coming together is -- given our associations -- to visualize quite a more kinetic, developmental situation than the meeting of the simply Authentic entails. I should not need to add, to connect this whole section explicitly to earlier ones, that the forms of democracy cannot be fully realized, nor perhaps even persist, without persons who have restored their own authorities through the processes of learning to take themselves and each other seriously; and conversely.

#And always, as in even Hitler's extremal case, when we strip the social forms and consequences away, or even when we reckon them, I believe, there is left something purely marvellous at the heart of each particular engagement.

might evoke with some unusual force a power neither ours nor theirs but shared, and precious in its particulars.

In this connection the character of our own authority is made manifest. We may open to them having made, having learned, as much or nearly as we might from taking seriously our own experience and the people nearby -- in which case such authorities extend us and ours (and conversely) integrally and truly, and the connection is solid and deep, made so by all the human stuff between -- or reach to them sooner, through prescience or eagerness, and with one hand in theirs double back to make solid in its own terms the territory between. But more often we do less: we reach to them across a kind of void, as if the immediate substance of our life were drained of meaning, a landscape of learning too meager in its potential yield to support its own cultivation -- and then the connection is of another kind indeed, which in some fashion serves to replace this substance, or the oursness of it, from the "outside in", preserving always, no matter how directly it organize our energies, some essential disconnection.

So it is at worst; and for us generally, more or less, to judge by how broadly and readily we reach for authority that is not ours and what we do with it. This is a state of evisceration: the substance of our lives has been gutted in some mysterious fashion, and we continue to re-gut ourselves as we try to compensate for this. It is this emptiness, this disconnection of the inside with itself, of which Peter speaks so eloquently in his book; and though my awkward phrasing of it here as if it were a problem of pedagogical theory and practice (and a quasi-rational one to

boot) evades the tragic dimension altogether, it is less a shadow of than a tribute to the grace and scope of his: for however easy his fluid words made the task seem, he taught me at least how hard it is to admit and to speak of this emptiness, and how essential.

When we look, then, from this condition to leaders, gurus, authoritative groups and texts to guide our learning, it is often perhaps less because their advice in itself is superior, clearer, more efficient to use, than in search of some subtle alchemy of the will which can enable us to mobilize our selves, to fill the emptiness with some version of what we might. In this we submit ourselves to direction, rather than extend ourselves by it as full persons -- but what we seek at heart, I do believe, is comradeship, that deepest form of active love, which springs from the self taken and taking seriously, and extends us to stand even with Marx, Gödel and Rogers, together as peers engaged with the Mystery with the full substance of our lives.*

Good books, good teachers, etc., still have their place: they open much to the curious and can indeed enable us to stride

*I believe it so, perhaps, because I refuse properly to credit the alternative: that we so long to give over, to give up, our choice, our will, our responsibility, our potential, finding them too much to bear. I recognize this longing in myself, and keep it at unsteady bay; and know no other explanation that fits the broad facts. But it terrifies me, I do not know how to address it usefully, save to acknowledge it and go on -- which is why I have couched all my words here in and to the opposite spirit.

with larger steps toward our desire. But when we so stand, possessed of our own authority, in touch with the full weight and potential of our own substance, experience and surround, what opens to us is more wondrous than any library or faculty can tell -- for there is not one life or situation among us whose potentials, to the inquiring spirit, are not richer than all that has yet been recorded and taught. Each time we recognize the distant eminences -- Aeschylus, Jefferson, Ida Rolf -- and strike out to find our own way toward their peaks of learning, making use of their hints but not following their tracks, cutting afresh through the human terrain from home base, we indeed make our own way, unique, and may well discover something new as we do. We may not get so far as they, but follow them more deeply in this: for this is the pure human stuff, more current but otherwise unchanged, through which they threaded sense -- and it is neither in Marx nor in God but in the unnamed integral substance of experience at hand that the Mystery is to be found and sought.

Re Revolutionary Tradition

The basic purge was accomplished by 1872, when Marx succeeded in having Bakunin expelled from the First International. From this point Anarchism, a co-equal force in the International's founding, becomes an outside influence at best; and the history of the Internationals is reduced to the rich history of Marxism, with its peculiar central contradiction.

Ideas and ideals of freedom brooded in Europe through the Renaissance translation of the ancient, premonitory Greek culture* had taken new form on the American continent; and as the eighteenth century closed the energy ping-ponged back across the Atlantic, seeking occasion to develop its spirit's signature. In the French Revolution deeper circumstances of radical democracy opened suddenly and as suddenly collapsed, somewhat destroying their bearers; and so again in 1848, and on through spot events in the Russian Revolution and Orwell's Spain into our time, in (as I surmise in "Looking Back at the FSM") an increasing frequency and complexity of ways.

Such events were perhaps the key sparks which vivified Anarchist vision to imagine certain essential dimensions of their steady-state maintenance; but most Socialist vision took a different emphasis from them. In Darwin's century the West's matter/spirit contradiction had advanced to new stages

* In conjunction with cognate ones nurtured in early Christianity and slowly developed through a millenium of social movements on the Continent and latterly in England.

of explicitness and purpose, and materialism was generally triumphant. It is not surprising that the leap of imagination which grasped the import and mutability of the material economy's productive relationships could not also encompass fully what happened in the "spiritual" productive economy during those brief historical instants in which the workers (etc.) took control of the entire productive apparatus without proper theory to guide them, creating existential communities of learning whose radical democratizing potentials were quickly obscured in the chaoses of their interactions with the dominant social forces of the time. From studying these chaoses, an incipient Marxism drew the lesson that centralized, intrinsically authoritarian forms were necessarily the prime transitional mechanisms between the Capitalist class order and a fully democratic "Stateless" Socialism -- though a quite more subtle and consistent lesson was even then indicated -- and bequeathed to our time the rich contradiction of Communism bearing the logos of material democracy in the arms of spiritual tyranny.

The ideas of Socialism, brooding an ultimate democracy, arose in a cultural context where authoritarian modalities prevailed; and have for centuries been maturing erratically from this influence toward their potential. When Marxism purged Anarchism in 1872, and with it a crucial pole of self-reflection and dialectic tension which could advise the forms in which its economic insights were made manifest, this maturation suffered. By the Second International, the principle of one central party controlling national parties, themselves insisting on a

monolithic line with no play of factions, was well-established; and the Marxist-Leninist lines and variously-attempted states of our own century were well prepared to teach the apparent lesson (somewhat false) that such workers' control as has been achieved does not modify the authoritarian social heritage, save in some ways for the worse.

Still that democratic spirit's signature seeks its fuller development; and the current events of Russian dissidence, "Eurocommunism", Socialist Feminism and Tom Hayden's "Campaign for Economic Democracy" suggest the many ways in which the Socialist tradition is seeking to extend itself through, so to speak, seeking a different, more contemporary balance between the authoritarian and democratic mandalas in the process of transition. Yet Mao's "Cultural Revolution" remains, in its context and contradictions, the most conscious experiment in re-opening the existential democratic springs to refresh and continually reform the "mechanism of transition"; and we shall see for Cuba when Castro dies.

As for Anarchism, I mention it above as if it bore a different aspect or dimension of the democratic spirit than mainstream Socialism focussed upon, more difficult at the time and since to grasp, as I think it did. Its potentials were confused and underdeveloped, in language and practice both; and the Anarchists of that time, sharing the social milieu, were in their ways as much the bearers-on of authoritarian traditions (and much less consciously so) than the Marxists. In our time Anarchism has passed from the public mind, and even from the political, as

an intelligible term, though much of the social and cultural experimentation of the sixties may be understood as a broad, renewed, salient of Anarchism, ahistorically naive and subject to the same contradictions as the old, yet also in certain respects significantly advanced. Few commentators have taken seriously the task of recreating Anarchist vision from the materials at hand now -- though Paul Goodman's works and Murray Bookshin's Post-Scarcity Anarchism (Ramparts Press, Berkeley; 1971) together suggest the seminal nature and radical promise of the task, which hinge on radical reconception of the nature of "transitional" forms and processes, as well as of productive.