

Touching Reason: Towards a Dialogic Sociology-Psychology

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Book I: Questioning Opening

Section I: Setting Out

Locating Myself (2019)

I

Now a month before my 80th birthday I am trying to fulfill my disciplinary promises and responsibly retire.

I've lived a complex, secret, loving creative/intellectual life...I made commitments I cannot "turn my back on".

I am not professionally certified. No Ph.D. No public reputation. If I left quietly no one would blame me. Yet I am literally working day and night for an honorable resolution. Honor to whom when no one cares (or cares only that I pass this milestone happy and at peace)...Honor to the path (the mission) that I love)...The good I hope to do.

II

Honorable retirement requires finishing four manuscripts.

Living Art asks "What is art?" from the perspective of an artist and art teacher. *A Visual dialogue* explores the art of my father and uncles through Socratic history.

There is a poem *A Shaman in Winter*... The scene is a long cold endless moment thousands of years after the onset of nuclear winter. Time is frozen. Yet a ritual of remembrance is born... Time is conjured into timelessness.

The present manuscript, *Touching Reason* (by far the longest) would reconstruct the disciplinary foundations of sociology. I believe it can be responsibly finished yet not completed.

III

I paint and will continue all my life...It is a personal joy as natural as breathing (not of course entirely untroubled even so)...I am retiring from a difficult loved duty not from life.

A Decisive Vision (1974)

I went to a tough junior high school... One recess in front of an old red tenement a big guy came at me with a knife. Said, "Give me a quarter." (I was a skinny kid. No chance against him in a fight.)

I felt in my pocket. Many coins. Stood still. Tried not to jingle. Said, "I don't have a quarter." A long silence. "Do you have a nickel?" "Sorry, no nickel either." I heard footsteps coming down the stairs. Said, "Someone is coming. Better go." He went.

I was angry...scared...in after-shock. Then saw it from another angle. I had won.

As a subway train speeding to another station I passed triumph hurtling towards a new location... I outsmarted him. Perhaps he, his ancestors and descendants, were and would be generation after generation routinely outsmarted.

I grasped intelligence like the handle of a knife.

Sped to a new position... A model in my head. Enclosed spaces (one person per space) hierarchically ordered. Best at top worst at bottom. Infinite gradations of descent. All appropriation seemed expropriation. All possession, dispossession. All human existence, exploitation. All action, aggression.

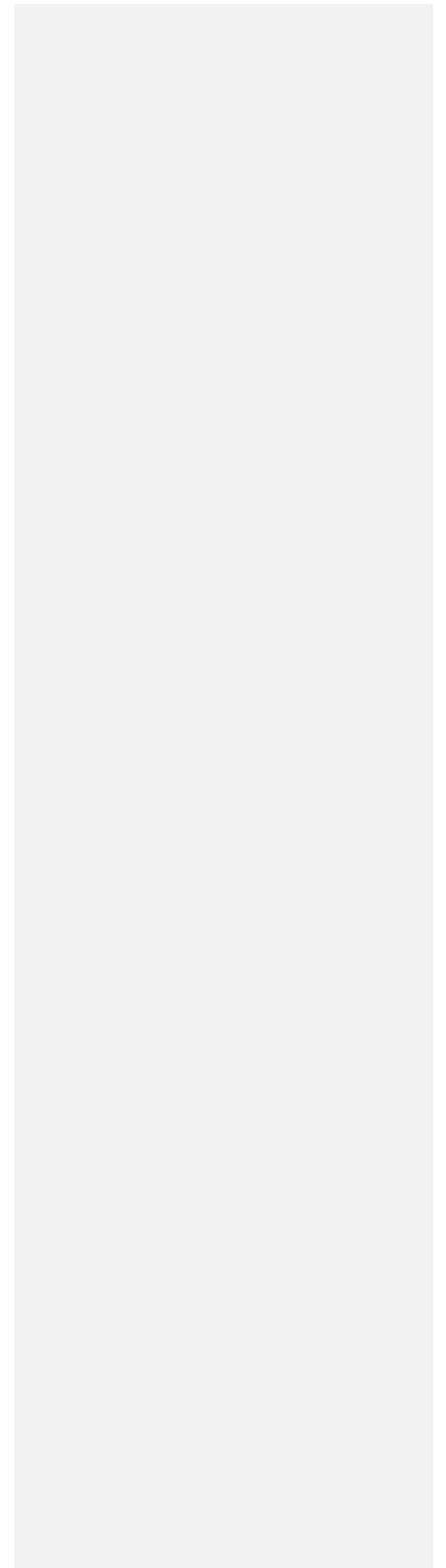
Refusal to compete would only delay inevitable cruelty (To live is to assert oneself.) Eventually I would take someone else's place... I envisioned bottom spaces as filthy paper boxes wet with urine and garbage. (Now, of course, in New York such boxes... and worse.) _ I saw myself push old feeble emaciated weeping men out of their stinking boxes... They fell outside the world.

I experienced myself as accidental. One among many. No special claim (not even to my own attention). _ I existed "as if" and "if then."

I took no steps to disappear. My disappearance would not solve the model. The model was "for all." It was my problem only because _ compulsively, even in a sense against my will _ I took it on.

Slowly, inch-by-inch, my vision opened... I recognized “bone deep and personal” that intelligence can think beyond “the way things are”, and reason, unlike violence, can conceive a world in which gifts are not weapons.

I pledged to serve compassion, dialogue and humanistic reason



Encountering Sociology as Social Science (2003)

I (2019)

Love of humanistic reason drew me to sociology yet kept me outside the profession.

II

1

In the 50s and 60s I studied sociology at Bard, Cornell and Brandeis.

2

At Bard, with Gerard DeGre and Werner Wolff, sociology and psychology were open and humanistic. I didn't realize this was an exception.

3

At Cornell, sociology and psychology were "social/behavioral science." I experienced "social/behavioral science" as hostile to "inwardness" (e.g., to "the color and texture" of lived existence). I was disturbed by its bias for manipulation (a.k.a., prediction and control) and against I-Thou understanding and compassion. I was hurt by its indifference to art, intimacy and "unique existence." I dreaded its influence on the complex, fertile "background" of our lives.

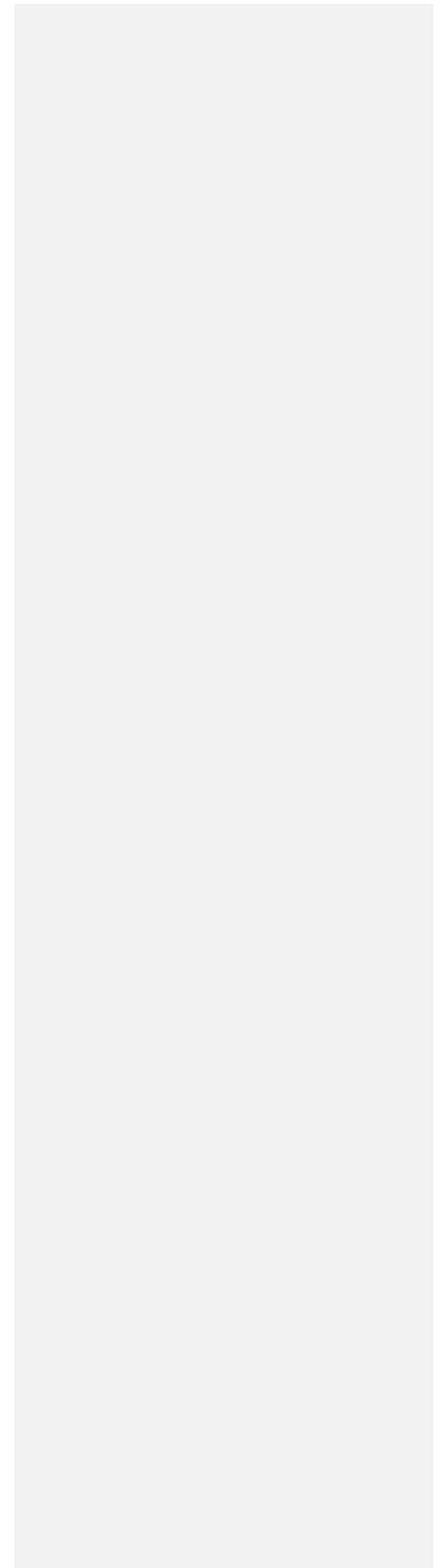
I write of love, hurt, disturbance, and dread, advisedly. I was intimately involved with sociology.

Most of my teachers and fellow students found this intimacy inappropriate. It was closer to heresy than to mere perversion that I did not seek an individual exemption. I asserted, as principle, the relevance of inwardness, compassion, unique existence and personal style to sociology, and to reason.

4(2019)

I found that obsession with control misidentified reason with the oppression I turned to reason to escape...I was back in the doorway mental knife in hand, now with a gang.

I was desperately anxious to fit in and succeed. Yet love compelled me: I asserted, as principle, the relevance of inwardness, compassion, unique existence and personal style to sociology, and to reason.



Seeking a Reasonable Humanistic Disciplinary Perspective (2003)

I

Humanity is endangered if our only theoretical concern with human existence is to predict and control one another anonymously en- mass... We require a theoretical reason that will not exile potentiality, inwardness and uniqueness.

II

1

I suggest that sociology and psychology can best fulfill their disciplinary potentiality as a co-constitutive aspect of a unified dialogic “sociology-psychology.”¹

Dialogic sociology-psychology is a distinct species of theoretical reason (not a type of science).

It will advance inquiry if an integrated discipline proves adequate to the interpretation of its “domain of inquiry,” or if there develops on either side a pure psychology and a pure sociology.

We assume disciplinary unity to explore its potentialities and limitations.

2

Dialogic sociology-psychology should translate a full rich sense of our life together and apart into the discourse of theoretical reason.

We commit dialogic sociology-psychology in the name of reason to the struggle for a just, compassionate, and creative human existence.

III

. If uniqueness and inwardness are to be dialogically included in sociology-psychology then the person and the author must appear within the work.

This manuscript is not trapped in representations of impersonality. It is open to image and narrative as well as to direct exposition.

¹ Social psychology on the other hand is a branch of psychology and/or an intersection between disciplines.

We recognize and embrace interplay between the richness of natural language and contextual specificities.

IV

We proceed within a movement of internal critique and reconstruction ... Yet to proceed from itself is not necessarily to move in a vacuum. We proceed in intimate dialogue with art.

V (2019)

I began a lifelong search for a benevolent dialogic theoretical language of reason to explore “the logos” of human existence, illuminate this present that we live, and pursue self- knowledge.

Seeking Disciplinary Identity (2004)

I

I seek a better answer than “social science” to the question “What are the disciplinary identities (i.e. evaluative definitions) of sociology and psychology?” (i.e. “What disciplines do we practice when we do sociology and psychology?”).

Many critics of social and behavioral “science” would subordinate sociology to some other preestablished identity: Hegelian, neoHegelian (e.g. Frankfurt School), Marxist, existentialist (Heidegarian or Sartrian), phenomenological, Wittgensteinian, deconstructionist, etc.

We would expose and resist all subordination... Authentic interdisciplinary dialogue requires autonomous disciplinary voices. It is useless to “sit at the table” as “a wholly owned subsidiary” or “an emptiness waiting to be possessed.”

II

My first sociology teacher was Gerard DeGre. His brilliant early work includes a pioneering synthesis in the sociology of knowledge and an analysis of the social conditions of freedom. Then he rejected social science and, while remaining a wonderful teacher (Prospero in retirement disguised as a tenured professor), rarely wrote.

I now read his silence as principled. Sociology requires an appropriate discipline. Social science is not that discipline. Undisciplined and/or inappropriate work that claims to engage the human condition “from the side of reason” betrays species, reason, and intellectual honor. Thus silence is an ethical imperative, silence rather than betrayal... To move honorably beyond silence requires disciplinary transformation.

Because I experienced social and behavioral science as a betrayal of reason and refused to abandon the Socratic problem of disciplinary identity I had to attempt discipline reconstruction ... This is a foundational project

III

1

“Post-modern” philosophy and sociology oppose “foundationalism.” Foundationalism is also criticized by synthesizing philosophers, including Richard J. Bernstein. Yet this is only relevant here in so far as they oppose what we assert. We do not, for example, seek “a neutral algorithm for theory choice” (Bernstein, 1983, 23) and/or “an Archimedean point...an a-historical permanent matrix or conceptual scheme for grounding knowledge” (16).

2

The central common language relevance of “foundation” is to construction. Construction is “rooted” in physical building.

To construct a dwelling is to build it, or at least to rebuild, it “top to bottom,” not to “improvise a patch.”

3

We normally refer to “reconstruction” rather than construction because nothing in history is entirely new.

4

We code “foundation” with “ground” into “the invention-discovery polarity.” Ground is closer to discovery. Foundation is closer to invention... A ground is closer to “a given.” A foundation is closer to an artifact... Ground is “raw.” Foundation is “processed.” Yet in our life together and apart (considered “for its own sake” and “in its own terms”) all that is given is also invented and no invention is entirely new out of nothing... There are always ancestors and descendants.

5

To participate in foundational reconstruction is not “to do it all oneself,” but to help develop an open transparent space where partial orientations reach beyond themselves towards an absent unattainable totality.

Internal foundational reconstruction generates the disciplines that contain it... It is both prologue to and practice of.

IV

Interminable Writing is a pathology of foundational projects

An extreme instance of interminable writing on the highest level is Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*. In old age in two wonderful fragments he achieved a desperate resolution by surrendering hope of completion.

A blown husk that is finished
 But the light sings eternal
 A pale flare over marshes
 Where the salt hay whispers to tide's change.
 (Canto CXV, p.814)

I have
 Brought the great ball of crystal
 Who can lift it?
 Can you enter the great acorn of light?
 But the beauty is not the madness...
 I cannot make it cohere...
 I cannot make it flow through.
 A little light, like a rushlight
 To lead back to splendour.
 (Canto CXVI, p.815-816)

Yet this triumph through renunciation proved temporary. Later he drew an arbitrary boundary.

These lines are for
 The ultimate canto
 Whatever I may write

The end was the failure of creative power "in the shadow of death."

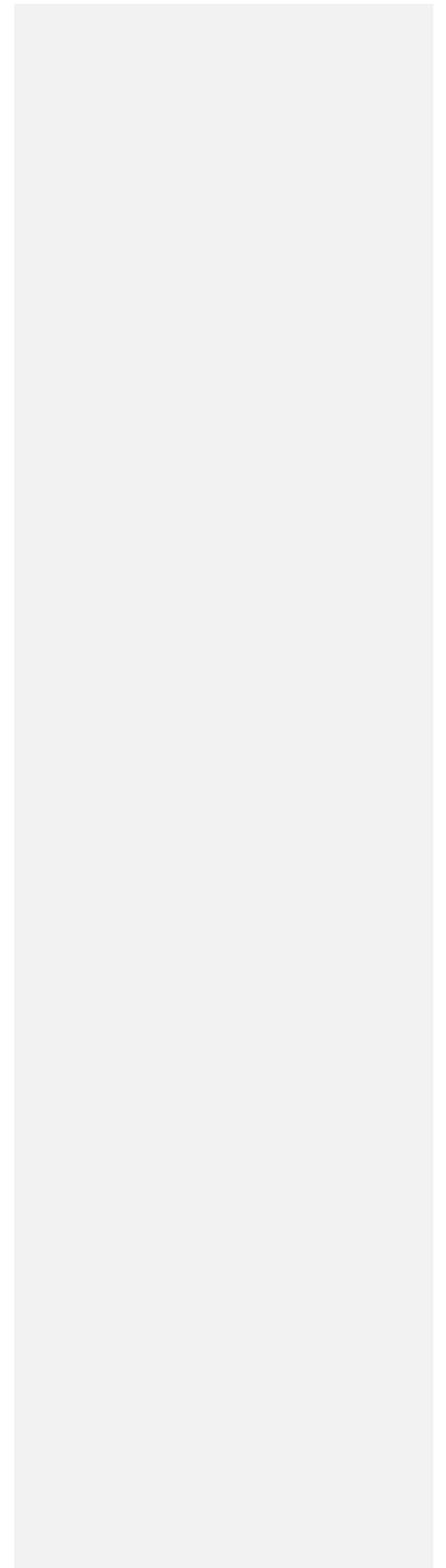
V (2019)

Foundational exploration does not require or permit final answers. The struggle is to open... Foundational exploration points beyond itself... Dialogue cures interminable writing.

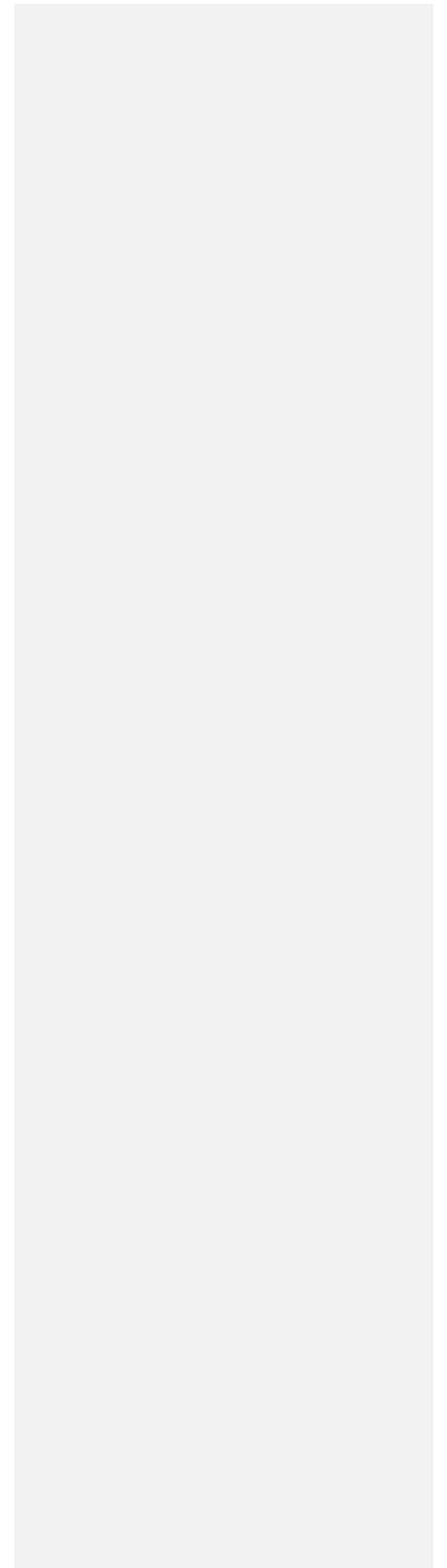
VI (2019)

Touching Reason _ a foundational work_ is not a culmination but a seed...I am ending my foundational work but would help others carry it beyond.

I write to share my journey and my work



Section 2: Exile Dawn



Reaching Out (2019)

I

Night after night I sat until sun rose and tried to learn to build...

II

1

It is hard to be an outsider...Yet isolation can help one freely see and hear...Even at Cornell, when I was most alone I reached out, and others reached to help me see.

2

I remember confessing my lostness to the anthropologist John Roberts. He spoke to me about a student so desperate he plagiarized a paper and the sadness of reporting him (turning him in to be let go). I said "I am as he is...Lost as he". He bellowed at me furiously from an angry face. "Don't say that! You are the opposite!"

3

I met James Baldwin twice.

As president of the student psychology club at Bard I invited him to speak.

Yes "The fifties" (which emotionally include the early 60s) were silent. Yet for many of us they were a silent scream (wordless passion).

There were elders whose words entered us and gave us hope...When Baldwin spoke to the assembled students some rose up from their seats and danced.

He was dark and angular. His face_ sculpted in sharp planes_ was statuesque yet constantly in movement. Body thin and taut: almost literally electric.

Later at Cornell I spoke to him again.

His recent novel *Giovanni's Room* was not reviewed well. But many of us loved it. It entered and deepened our young lives (more than I realized at the time).

He spoke of a poet whose work seemed clear when with him but fell apart in memory, and quoted a beautiful line, "The circus ticking night".

I said that I was studying sociology but did not “fit in... I haltingly confessed my intuition that novelists express lives they’ve lived and shared while most sociologists write about one thing after another superficially from outside. Haltingly_ a heretic confessing _ I added “I believe that one can only understand where one has risked oneself”. He said “You bet your ass”... Looking back from now I guess I have.

It helped that thoughts I was ashamed to think were affirmed right and natural by an elder whose authority was inherent in his work, and in himself.

Opening through Writing (1997)

I

I never imagined that this task _ and my isolation _ would continue into a new millennium.

I underestimated the inherent difficulty of the project, and the defenses protecting sociology's and psychology's dominant professional identities as a "sciences."

My uncle Moses told me the cautionary tale of Joe Gould.

He also wrote all his life and never showed anyone. He said his book was in a suitcase that he always carried. He seemed intelligent. We wondered. Was there maybe something to it? When he died the suitcase was opened. There were only a few scribbled pencil notes on dirty scraps of paper.

Something like that almost happened here... There was writing, too much for a suitcase. Yet it would not cohere.

I am shocked how hard I held to received forms, especially to models of "impersonal" exposition... Painfully I loosened my grip and opened to the task.

II.

I learned to listen to "awareness-in-the-act."

One examines and questions one's movement as one moves. One explores the requirements of one's action as it proceeds.

One maps problems, concepts and procedures as they arise within the work. One explores horizons these locations open.

Sources include "the Socratic method," the Stanislavskian actor's "exploration of process" and modern poets' articulation of thought in motion... Yet awareness-in-the-act is transparent to itself.

III

1

The struggle for disciplinary self-knowledge is crucial to reason. Procedural transparency is crucial to self-knowledge.

For reason to appear inquiry must proceed, at least in part, in dialogue with itself (i.e., “through awareness-in-the-act”).

2

Disciplinary processes should not rule us outside awareness as the wind moves trees.

Within theoretical reason, all tasks (e.g., discipline reconstruction) are methodological... Its processes should be worked through as procedures .”

In so far as these essays are transparent they can be replayed as they are and in their unrealized potentialities.

This project should appear as process transparently within its artifact... Every step should be explicitly defended and justified: Constant interreflection... mirror in mirror , internal dialogue... crucially shapes the architecture and construction of these foundational essays.

In theoretical reason methodology is omnipresent.

IV

1

Traditional “fine prose” is “smooth.” These essays are committed to transparency. All jointures are exposed.

Sections are surrounded by empty space in order to respect their autonomy and weaken the pull of mechanical linkage. _ They are dated to preserve authorial voices and developmental sequences. Discontinuous revisions are dated. (Revisions along original lines are not labeled.)

In order to trace movement along and between lines of constructive implication we number sections and place all footnotes below the text; sometimes we separate the basic statement and exploration of a theme from “sidelines.”

Here literary form is an explicit crucial methodological concern.

2

Because this manuscript is dialogic it begins again and again. Yet these beginnings interpenetrate and “remember one another.” Because it is transparent and proceeds through awareness-in-the-act it continually folds back into itself.

3

This manuscript is polyphonic... Every essay and numbered theme is both autonomous and interwoven.

Any essay can be an entrance.

Readers focused on “the crisis of our time” might enter through *Plague Notes* () or *Modernity and the Breakdown of this Order of Life* (). Neopositivists might select *On the Anatomy of Personal-Interpersonal Dynamics* (). Art theorists might choose *The Mediators* () *Entering from the Act of Writing and the Notion of Dialogue* () or *Borderline Notes: A Sociological-Psychological Fiction* (). Restless graduate students might prefer *Retrospective Field Notes on the Sociology of the Early Sixties*(). Poets might enjoy *Wild flowers* ().

Discipline and Profession (1997)

I

1

I slowly recognized that a discipline (e.g., art, science, sociology-psychology) is *not* whatever people with a license (i.e., recognized professionals) do in situations that the consensus of their time and place define as professionally relevant... It is an identity. It is a potentiality. It is a “position.” It is, whatever else it also is, the “constructive implications” of a “generative co-constitutively² human problematic.”

Disciplinary potentiality enables immanent critique of professional institutional relationships. It grounds judgments of inclusion and exclusion. It enables coherent mediation between included frameworks (e.g. theoretical paradigms, artistic styles).

2

2.1

A discipline is an answer to questions of identity: for example, “What am I doing when I practice sociology?” and “How do we know if we are practicing sociology?”

The question of disciplinary identity should not be avoided, or answered through tradition and/or power. It is a Socratic question.

2.2

I work in visual art where it is shameful to rely on labels to include or exclude. The test is one’s own disciplined judgment. For example, I recognize as an artist that a resident in a substance abuse program, who has never been to college or sold a painting, is a colleague...The only way for a contemporary artist to have recognized Vincent Van Gogh as a colleague was through sensitive looking. (Connoisseurs don’t need labels to know what wine they’re drinking.)

² As event, violence is a cross-cultural universal. As a potentiality it may be generically human. Yet I would not judge x nonhuman because x is incapable of violence, or immune to lowest common denominator simplifications...If x is not, for example, a mortal, desirous, mindful (e.g., “inward”), unique existent then x is not human...Should we reach towards an evaluative definition?

2.3

For sociologists to exclude work merely because its author lacks the imprimatur of institutionalized authority is to live uncritically subservient to “the realm of labels” that they should examine.

2.4

Philosophy was born in wonder outside officially sanctioned priestly “wisdom.” For its representatives to include or exclude through received labels would be a profound self-betrayal.

Entering through Tension and Resistance: Struggling in the Net (1996)

1. Opening

Here we glance at mechanisms through which sociology's dominant "social scientific" professional identity resists reasonable critique and reconstruction. They include forbidding internal foundational exploration, enforcing a taboo against literary innovation, excluding relevant concerns and talents, focusing obsessively on control, and routinely rejecting "the stranger."

2. Renouncing Self-knowledge

The struggle for foundational disciplinary self-knowledge is traditionally "ruled out" by professional "social scientific" sociology. This exclusion is so deeply ingrained that its explicit statement by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman in *The Social Construction of Reality* is a triumph of reason.

"To include epistemological questions concerning the validity of sociological knowledge in the sociology of knowledge is like trying to push a bus in which one is riding... Far be it for us to push aside such questions. All we would contend here is that these questions are not themselves part of the empirical discipline of sociology. They properly belong to the methodology of the "social sciences" which is an enterprise that belongs to philosophy and is by definition other than sociology, which is indeed an object of its inquiries. The sociology of knowledge, along with other epistemological troublemakers among the empirical sciences, will "feed" problems to this methodological inquiry.... It cannot solve these problems within its own proper frame of reference. (13-14) "

The assertions on which this crucial renunciation rests are not seriously examined.³

Renunciation of internal foundational exploration inhibits free dialogue between the profession and its disciplinary potentialities.... I do not prior to inquiry accept any limitation on the struggle for disciplinary self-knowledge in sociology. (If there are limitations, they will appear in the attempt.)

³ When authors are criticized by name in these essays I hold that their errors disclose a path that need never again be attempted and/or a profound professional pathology that must be addressed.... When competence is beyond dispute error opens potentialities for reconstruction.

3. Desensitizing Language

Sociological writing is rarely examined. Yet there are taken for granted institutionally enforced restrictions.

It must be limited to direct analytic exposition. It must be impersonal and linear. “Literary innovation” _ crucial to modernity (as in Joyce, Nietzsche, Proust, and Kierkegaard)_ is ruled out.

4. Excluding the Stranger (2002)

Professional sociology normally resists disciplinary contributions from outside its normal “geography” of professionally certified settings and experts... Sociology-psychology should exist in dialogue with all projects that would explore the underlying fabric of our life together and apart [e.g., an art criticism (of painting, performance, etc.) that aspires beyond narrow specificities and a journalism that conceives “the story” in its species relevance].

5. Conclusion in Process

5.1

I believe that Sigmund Koch’s 1964 remarks on psychology also apply to sociology and psychology in 2019:

Problems - psychological problems - of art and morality, of scientific creativity, of human sensibility in all manifestations of language, problem/solution... etc. do stand before us almost untouched. If psychology is to study the condition of the phenomena in anyone of these areas, it must premise its research on “discrimination pools” of all those widely ranged human areas. It is grotesque to suppose that someone totally devoid of the special discrimination and sensitivities of the artist could make contributions to the psychology of art. Just as grotesque as to expect, say, that an illiterate can contribute to the psychology of language. (28-29)

These problems and sensitivities should be crucial to sociology-psychology.

5.2 (2002)

In so far as psychology and sociology expropriated science as an identity they by-passed modernity.

To question received professional identity and seek disciplinary self-knowledge opens the author to the act of writing and the discipline to the adventures - the opportunities and dangers - of modernity.

Structural Notes (2019)

I. Opening

1

I title this manuscript *Touching Reason* and divide it into six repeating foci. *Questioning Opening*, *Opening Sociology-Psychology*, *The Music Between Us*, *This Challenged World*, *Walking Through* and, briefly *Notes to a Young Sociologist-Psychologist ...* The same story seen from different sides.

2

Touching Reason is a Socratic project. It is not an instance of professional philosophy.

Touching Reason does not subordinate sociology to any external position (e.g. philosophy) or model (e.g. natural science). We invite sociology to discover itself in dialogue with its own potentiality through “awareness in the act”

Crucial notions include theory, reason, discipline, potentiality, foundation and dialogue... They have long complex interdisciplinary histories. Yet if we focus on their relevance to the foundational reconstruction of sociology we might “see” something helpful... The clarification/evaluation of meaning constellations requires mediation between their full existential-historical resonance and contextual (e.g. problem/solution) requirements.

3

3.1

Questioning Opening and *Opening Dialogic Sociology-Psychology* directly engage foundational discipline reconstruction. They seek to find and actualize the evaluative definition of sociology (not what it factually is but what it should be).

3.2

The Music Between _ a work in transition between social-behaviorial “science” and dialogic sociology-psychology_ emphasizes dynamic constellations (e.g. problem/solution nexi, category creativity, improvisation, qualitative transformation, openness, pattern recognition and constructive implication).

It seeks to “explain” aspects of human existence to which outside our broader dialogue it would be blind.

Dynamic interpretations (e.g. of dialogue, openness and requiredness) should return to and enrich the dialogue that gave them birth.

4

This Challenged World focuses on “this moment on the edge” *Walking Through* focuses on my struggle for self -knowledge (to awake and stay awake) as an adjunct art instructor and a citizen

They also contribute to discipline reconstruction and to exploration of dynamics. Foundational notions explored and deepened include the disciplinary, humanism, dialogue and the political. Dynamics explored include shadow, machine/animal, and modernity.

Touching Reason _ a foundational work_ is not a culmination but a seed. *Notes to a young Sociologist-Psychologist* briefly suggests potentials opened by this work beyond those I’ve explored.

III. On the Organization of this Manuscript

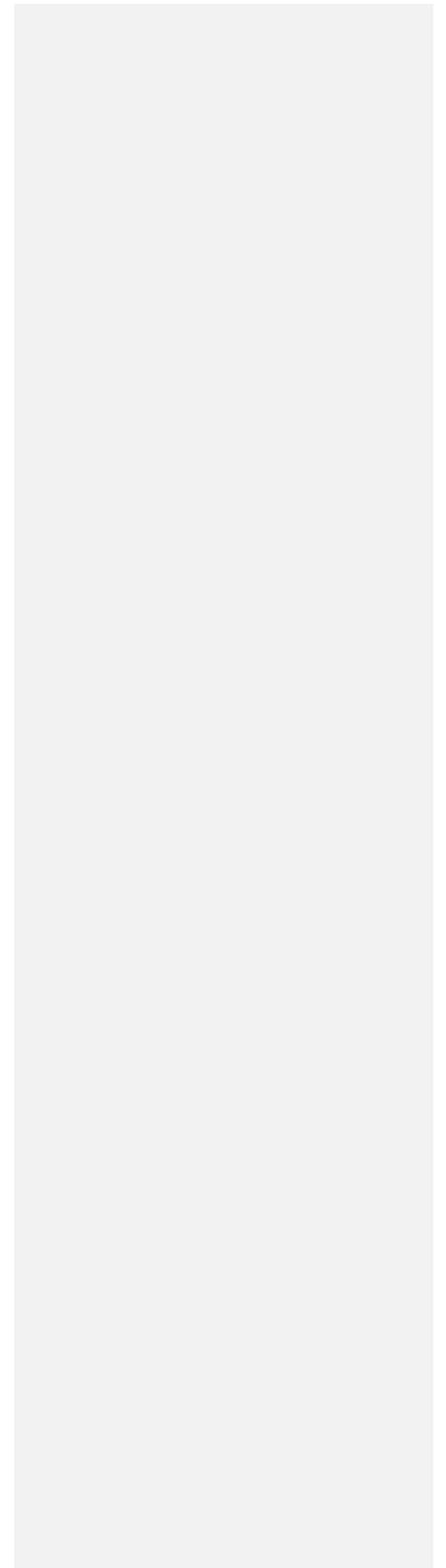
In this manuscript all these concerns should always be in play (not isolated but in and through dialogue, mutually shaping and shaped by each other together). Yet focus changes (not either/or but more or less).

If personal vision, and literary innovation are allowed at all in “social/behavioral science,” they are only temporary expedients. To use the metaphor of the state, they are only granted “temporary work visas,” to use the metaphor of construction they are scaffolding.

We offer full citizenship to all relevant “voices.”

Throughout these essays personal voice is invited and sociology-psychology is recognized as, whatever else it also is, an existential standpoint.

Section III: Explorations: Influences and Contexts



Retrospective Field Notes on the Sociology of the Early Sixties (1988)

I. Opening

1

Here are notes on professional sociology as it appeared to a young graduate student in the early sixties (1960 - 1965)⁴.

Thought _ as a caged animal _ sniffs and turns in a cage. Again and again it touches the barrier and turns back. The essay ends (I cannot say concludes) with a renewed commitment to escape.

I find the harsh tone disconcerting. Yet it articulates tension and entrapment... Internal critique of sociology and/or psychology is rarely entirely decorous (e.g., Sigmund Koch, C. Wright Mills, Pitirim Sorokin). There are basic difficulties, yet the profession does not listen. One is tempted to shout.

2

Koch's example influenced the decision to include this essay. He remarks:

I am not a historian. But I have lived through a forty-year swath of psychological history from the vantage of a participant observer whose arrogant construal of his calling has been to explore the prospects and conditions for a significant psychology. (Koch 1985, 76)

He was, strictly speaking, not a participant observer but an observant participant. Awareness-in-the-act is asserted as a legitimate source of disciplinary self-knowledge.

3

We focus on basic approaches and, in Koch's terms on "epistemopathologies." We cannot do justice here to the fine work done despite these limitations.

II. The Realm of "Fads and Foibles"

⁴ We focus on early sixties sociology primarily as a "climate of opinion." Thus this essay is not limited to work produced in that half decade. It includes older contemporaries and their earlier works (e.g., Talcott Parsons' *The Social System*, published in 1951).

1

In the realm of “fads and foibles” (a phrase we borrow from Sorokin) the profession is severed from the discipline. Thus it is unprotected from routine rejection of the outsider, the principle of the lowest common denominator, evasion of disciplinary self-knowledge, obsessive conformity, and intolerance of ambiguity.

2

There is, as Koch remarks of “scientific” psychology:

A remarkable and telling disproportion between the attention given to the foundational commitments of one's work and that given to superficial or pedantic details of implementational character (the latter is favored) and... a tendency to persist so rigidly, blindly... in the application of the rules... that the behavior would have to be characterized as schizophrenic in any other context. (1985, p.398)

Sociology and psychology in the realm of fads and foibles replicate _ even exaggerate _ industrial rule bound conformity.

3

Location in a sequence of citations is routinely confused with intellectual advance (the later the better).

There is a habit of persistence in the face of unrefuted critique: critique met only by the brute power to continue as one is (as in psychology's reaction to Koch's criticisms).

Theory and methodology operate primarily as legitimating rhetoric held in place by (in Erving Goffman's sense) “presentational” considerations.

4

In so far as sociology and psychology are dominated by obsessive unexamined commitments to control for the sake of control they cannot legitimately claim neutrality. They are distilled models and agents of the industrial-post- industrial orders of life in which they flourish. They gravitate to concentrated power.

5

5.1

Ritual quotations from Weber, Durkheim or Parsons cannot bestow theoretical, thus scientific, relevance.

It is traditional in sociology departments to offer courses in methodology and theory alongside “substantive courses.” Yet the substance of a science cannot be taught in isolation from its theories and methods. In so far as a discipline is a science it is its theories and methods.

5.2

In the realm of fads and foibles, “general theory” was not a “living option.” It was a waste of time or Parsons did the job.

Middle range theory offered a “memory bank” of isolated items to decorate and disguise a-theoretical investigation.

5.3

There was inquiry without “a theoretical fig leaf.” Some items on a questionnaire would, for example, be declared “political” and others “economic.” The answers would be coded, “englished” and published as relevant to the relationship between economic and political life.

This was assisted by a literal and simplistic version of the doctrine of “operational definition”, in which all meaning is through observation and a concept *is* the “instrument” (e.g., a questionnaire) that translates it into relevant observables.

Our reference to “translation” and “relevance” resists rather than explicate this doctrine. The following is more accurate:

- a. Only the observable is meaningful.
- b. Language enables formal connections yet is in itself meaningless.
- c. As language has no inherent meaning it cannot legitimately guide inclusion or exclusion of operations and observations.
- d. Units of meaning (i.e., observables) can be secured through questionnaires and other “instruments.”

- e. Resultant “meaning families” can be coded into received terminology.

Behind the wall of dogma clichéd unexamined language rules.

6. Comment

Lowest common denominator professional practice dragged “social and behavioral science” from its natural orbit to a position and motion closer to its own.

III. Middle Range Theory

1

Middle range theory, proposed by Robert Merton, abandons Florian Znaniecki’s, Sorokin’s and Parsons’ project of direct foundational disciplinary reflection. It would develop a coherent discipline by investigating relatively delimited substantive theoretical problems.⁵

Relevant assumptions (whether articulated or not) include:

- a. Middle range theory is an autonomous activity.
- b. General theory, the attempt to develop explanatory principles applicable to “the generic dynamic structure” of the relevant “empirical domain” (e.g., “the socio-cultural qua socio-cultural”), is logically and temporally dependent upon middle range theory.
- c. Except for stating the primacy of middle range theory, foundational discipline reflection is not an internal disciplinary problem.

⁵ (2006) The recently proposed “dialogical turn” resembles middle range sociology in abandoning the struggle for a unifying disciplinary foundation.

Middle range inquiry focused on theoretical propositions. “The dialogic turn” is “post Kuhnian”. It focuses on paradigmatic orientations.

Middle range theory assumes that sociology is a science. “The dialogic turn” declares itself “post disciplinary.ctg

Newton and Einstein are identified as general theorists. Middle range theory is identified with Kepler and Galileo.

2

Kepler and Galileo inherited from Greece a relevant minimally adequate foundation⁶ that they directly addressed and reconstructed (Burt).

In the absence of such a foundation (not final or entirely unified but relevant, basically coherent and phenomenally open) “middle range” sociology is fragments in search of a discipline that one is forbidden to imagine (and thus cannot conceive).

Middle range theory is not an autonomous activity. It is logically dependent on (past and/or present) foundational reconstructive inquiry.

3

Middle range theory cannot open a coherent cumulative sociology. Yet it resists lowest common denominator homogenization and preserves received diversity (including the foundational explorations of Durkheim, Pareto, Simmel, Weber, etc.).

Middle range theory provides prestigious employment and professional honors to sociologists of authentic scholarship and disciplinary sensitivity... It is a spore form of sociology in “the twilight winter world” of “scientism.”

4

Can a profession that found it difficult to retreat from Newton to Galileo accept that its basic problems are “pre-Socratic”?

IV. A Brief Note on “Neopositivist General Theory”

1

I was attracted to neo-positivist sociology, with its focus on model building, coherent disciplinary languages, universal patterns of explanation and explicit methodological analysis.

I was disappointed that it did not question the nature of science or its own scientific identity... For example, the representatives of neo-positivist sociology did not autonomously develop the consequences for the nature of science of its inclusion in our life together and apart. Proposals along these lines were confronted

⁶ Constitutional concepts in this disciplinary foundation include “reason”, “necessity”, “matter”, “motion”, “dynamics”, “theory”, “physical universe”, “causality”

as external discoveries through the work of Thomas Kuhn. Some sociologists then registered as “normal” Kuhnians. Foundational questioning of science went on “above their heads.”⁷

2

In sociology neopositivist claims include:

- a. Science directly provides and/or underlies all knowledge of human existence.
- b. Our sole theoretically generative concern with one another is prediction and control.⁸

These restrictions are reinforced by assumptions conventionally (not logically) associated with sociological neopositivism:

- c. “Sociological inquiry and “content” are distinct from and independent of literary form. Nonetheless, sociological discourse must be limited to direct analytic exposition. It must be impersonal and linear. Image and metaphor must be avoided. “Literary innovation” - crucial to modernity (as in Joyce, Nietzsche, Proust and Kierkegaard) - is ruled out. Sociological terminology is not responsible to the rich existential-historical resonance of “natural language.”
- d. Socio-cultural patterns cannot be grasped, interpreted and understood “from within”⁹: awareness-in-the-act is impossible. An external position is always required. Thus practice cannot, even with the help of a midwife, generate its own theory.

⁷ Now in the 1990's natural science as always goes its own way in dialogue with disciplinary experience, exploring the first seconds of the universe (a unique event), artificial intelligence, etc.; while “social and behavioral scientists” _ self-condemned to endless disciplinary immaturity and tutelage (to infinite condescension) _ wait to receive their “marching orders.”

⁸ Even where there is authentic curiosity about human existence “in its own terms”, sociological imagination often remains constricted by obsession with the technology of control, as in the wonderful work of Erving Goffman.

⁹ This “logic of inquiry” influences its products. There is a powerful tendency in Sorokin, Parsons, and derivative theorists, to interpret action as dominated by the contexts that contain it (which are in turn conceived as programmed by more inclusive patterns).

- e. Sociology is external to and can in principle interpret the underlying dynamics of society. It cannot, however, grasp its own nature. For that task philosophy is required. Philosophy is the third level position. (Why stop at three levels? If all foundational interpretation is external there should be a distinct profession to grasp and understand the nature of philosophy...and on and on to infinity.)

I find these inter-related claims distorting and unnecessarily restrictive.

3

If only science can reveal and interpret underlying patterns of human existence, what of Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Kafka, Shakespeare, Plato, Aristotle and Nietzsche?

Art is a complex historical constellation that Parsons in *The Social System* associates with a primary pattern. He conceives it as fundamentally cathectic: it is only cognitive in so far as it is technical.

The artist must accept severe disciplines, must spend much time in study and practicing his skills. But his goal is to produce appropriate patterns for the expression of affect, to “stir-up” his audience or public. (Parsons 1951 410)

The difference between James Joyce and the authors of soap opera scripts is disregarded. Aesthetic sensitivities built up over centuries in diverse cultures are brushed aside.

Socrates, Plato, Voltaire, Locke, Hegel are at best precursors.... Those born before the annunciation of the human sciences who most closely pre-figure Parsons and Merton may continue in “half-life” (as though on “The Island of the Good Pagans”).

4

The passion for neutral “objectivity” in social “science” wills a technical generation of ideas unsullied by personal desire vision and sensibility¹⁰

The decision to emulate machines is not neutral. It sides with “the machine principle”¹¹ It also summons a repressed, mutated, reason hating “subjectivity” that is the shadow double” of “scientism”.

5

Neopositivist “social and behavioral science” excludes the author. It is for “the other.”

There is powerful pressure_ so far only partially successful _ for people whose primary “system identity” is “those to be managed” to be exiled to “the permanent winter” of our social and behavioral scientific models.

V. A Conclusion in Process

I became convinced that sociology as “social science” is too rigidly scientific and narrowly based to transform itself entirely from its own resources.

One should work towards foundational reconstruction. One should reach out to reason, art and “immediate lived existence”. One should “listen to” awareness-in-the-act and open to the full resources of language.

Appendix An Abnormal Discipline (An E-Mail to Professor Gideon Rosen __ (2008)

I. Prologue

In... I wrote an E-mail to my cousin Gideon Rosen a philosophy professor at Princeton University

In writing *Touching Reason* I became puzzled by the relationship between “term” and “concept”.

¹⁰ *The Structure of Social Action*, the work that established Parsons’ reputation as the leading sociological theorist of his generation, was disguised as a commentary on received tradition.

¹¹ In Parsons’ second major work *The Social System* this tendency taken to an extreme became a style. Parsons’ writing _ despite its insensitivity to language _ is “experimental.” Unfortunately Parson’s disinterest in sociology as a literary form holds his writing qua writing outside explicit dialogue with inwardness, received traditions, and reason.

“In sociology it is normal to speak of clarifying "terms" and clarifying "concepts" as though they were equivalent statements. Yet "concept" cannot be another name for "term" (or visa versa), for one thing there are different "words" for what appears to be the same "concept". Beauty is not identical with any of the terms (e.g., "beauty") that represent it in various languages.

I have not resolved this question to my own satisfaction. Yet it suggested problems I find interesting. - What is translation(What is its dynamic?) - “Is all meaning linguistic? What is “the other” of language? ... Where are these questions in disciplinary space?

This opened a long correspondence in which I sent the following E-Mail

II. Opening

My statement that philosophy could mediate the foundational investigations of other disciplines is intended as a central task of philosophy not as a peripheral option.

I reached this conclusion in my struggle to understand the distinction between term and concept through both “awareness in the act” and sociological-psychological dynamics.

II. Through Awareness in the Act

My focus on word and concept moved “beyond normal disciplinary boundaries”. I became concerned with understanding these “transdisciplinary notions” “for their own sake and in their own terms”.

From a Socratic perspective all reasonable inquiry must be “disciplined” and it is a responsibility of reason to specify the relevant discipline(s).

All disciplines are capable of internal foundational reconstruction. Every discipline can engage “transdisciplinary notions”.

I recognize a discipline of theoretical reason that can engage foundational inquiry qua foundational inquiry and explore all transdisciplinary notions in their full intellectual resonance (i.e. their “pure usage”). I designate this discipline “philosophy”.

Consulting “pure usage” can supplement_ yet cannot replace or dominate_ non-philosophical foundational disciplinary “working through”.

Philosophy is relevant to but should not dominate autonomous foundational discipline reconstruction... Dialogue between non-philosophical disciplinary and pure (i.e. philosophical) foundational exploration sustains the Socratic project.

III. Through Sociological-Psychological Dynamics

1

Every discipline must have a unique co -constitutively human generative problematic.¹²

The autonomous development of other disciplines demonstrates that philosophy does not have a monopoly on foundational inquiry and reconstruction.

Philosophy is not the only discipline that is within its own domain of inquiry. (There can be nontrivial sociology-psychologies of sociology-psychology and histories of history).

2

Philosophy synthesized the religious problematic of orienting human existence through an articulated vision of totality with the project of theoretical reason. The generative problem of philosophy is to orient human existence through a reasonable, theoretical, transparent explicitly articulated, model of totality^[3].

The original disciplinary tension was between philosophy, art and religious/mythical narratives

Through “rationalization” (in Weber’s sense) philosophy generated distinct autonomous disciplines of theoretical reason.

3

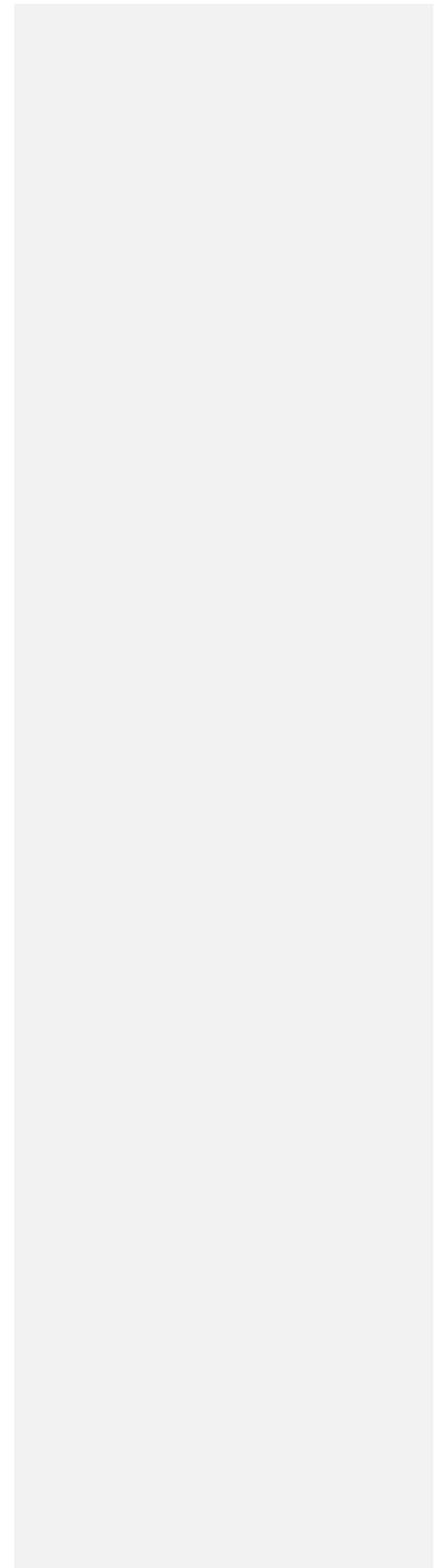
Philosophy cannot be a “Cronos” devouring its own children, or even imperial Zeus.

We suggest philosophy as a benevolent ancestral home where adult children can, if they wish, return to share and settle their disputes among “ancestral spirits”... It is a crucial task of philosophy to mediate the foundational investigations of other disciplines.

¹² What appears as generative problem “from the side” of context appears as “project” from the side of action (i.e. “project” is the “action translation” of “problem”).

IV

We are distinguishing positions *not* people.



Entering with Others: Methodological Notes on Autonomy and Influence (2003)

I. Opening

1

“The social/behavioral sciences” and the humanities often require that authors comment on all literature conventionally labelled relevant to professional problems.

We hold that required commentary tends to discourage and distort foundational projects. A foundational project, with its wide range of relevance, has a duty to sustain the integrity of its autonomous dynamic.

This is an autonomous inquiry. Unless otherwise specified, reference to the “beginning,” “initiation,” “opening,” “introduction” of its themes, “frameworks,” concepts, orientations, “lines of constructive implication,” etc. are internal. (For example, “an explicitly dialogic model developed from working through constructive implications of personal-interpersonal field theory” is an internal reference. It leaves open as a separate issue the relationship of both orientations to the work of others.)

Yet to proceed from itself is not necessarily to move in a vacuum. We proceed in voluntary dialogue with our “ancestors” ... There is also concern with historical justice, especially to such neglected and/or misunderstood ancestors as Sorokin.¹³

2

In “autonomous inquiry” the relevance of others work is primarily instrumental. Yet if orienting concerns and perspectives are clearly stated instrumental commentary can be respectful... Quotation helps resist distortion.

One speaks for oneself. No one speaks only for him/herself. Inwardness is haunted... In our life together and apart the borderline (i.e., the place of interplay and ambiguity) is central.

¹³ After the triumph of Parsonsian theory in the 1950s alternative formulations of comparable scope by his older contemporaries Sorokin and Florian Znaniecki were disregarded. This neglect is continued in many recent interpretations of sociological theory “in the age of Parsons.”

The work of, among others, Joseph B. Ford, Barry Johnson, Michel P. Richard, George Ritzer, Irwin Sperber, Palmer C. Talbutt and Edward A Tiryakian, suggest that Sorokin’s exile may be ending.

We all know where we are not. We all know who our sublime superiors are (Derek Walcott, Schmidt, 7).

To do justice to this essay, one has to suffer the fate of music as an open wound (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*).

Taken as a whole, the volume (*Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time*) aims at a liberation of sociology and the social sciences from voluntary servitude to the natural sciences. If this servitude were fertile and fruitful, no objection could be raised against it. Unfortunately, however, in spite of endless efforts of the past and of the present, it has invariably proved sterile in its scientific and cognitive results. Hence the advisability, even the necessity of terminating this servitude and declaring the independence of the social sciences and sociology. In order that such independence may rest upon a firm foundation, sociology and the social sciences must have their own set of referential principles and their own peculiar methods suited to the nature of the phenomena they deal with. (Sorokin, 1943vii)

If one is drawn by unassailable scientific argument to the conclusion that man is a cockroach, rat or dog, *that* makes a difference. It also makes a difference when one achieves ultimate certitude that man is a telephone exchange; a servo mechanism; a binary digital computer; a reward seeking vector; a hyphen between an S and R process; a stimulation maximizer; a food, sex or libido energy converter; a “utilities” maximizing game player a status seeker... or a hollow cocoon seeking ecstasy through the liquidation of its boundaries. (Koch1999, 120-121)

We need not summon all ancestors to gather here. They appear as guides at crucial Junctures... Yet brief introductions might be useful “as the curtain rises.”

II

These essays are constructed in dialogue with the work of, among others, James Baldwin “Chuangtzu”, R.G. Collingwood, Sigmund Koch, Kurt Koffka, Wolfgang Kohler, Karl Mannheim, Plato, Georg Simmel, Socrates, Pitirim Sorokin, Vincent Van Gogh and Max Weber.

III

1

Sorokin and Parsons questioned the dominance of natural science over sociology, yet neither unambiguously asserted sociology as a distinct species of theoretical reason. (Both referred to themselves as “scientists.”).

2

I am in the minority who consider Sorokin to be Parson’s equal and in the even smaller minority who consider Parsons as, in many important respects, a Sorokinist.

Among Sorokin’s admirers I am again in the minority. I find his distinction between “ideational,” “ideal” and “sensate” supersystems and its position at the core and center of his work “architecturally unsound.”

Sorokin remarks:

The vast supersystem is built on the major premise concerning the ultimate nature of true reality and value. Is the ultimate true reality and value sensory, or supersensory, or partly sensory and partly supersensory? Some ideological cultures answer that the *true reality and true value is sensory*, that beyond the reality and value perceived by our sense organs there is no other reality and no value... such ideological supersystems can be called *sensate*. Other highly integrated ideological cultures answer the problem by stating that *the true reality and true value is the super-sensory, super-rational God (“Tao,” “World Soul,” Brahman,” etc...)*. The vastest ideological supersystem built upon this premise can be called *ideational*. Still other highly

integrated cultures assume that the *true reality and value is partly sensory, partly rational, partly supersensory and superrational infinite manifold*. The ideological supersystem erected on this foundation can be called *idealistic* (1947,320).

He suggests that this distinction provides a master key to the comprehension of species “socio-cultural” existence.

If you don’t look closely, Sorokin’s distinction appears valid. Ancient Egypt appears in some sense “other worldly”. Yet an order of life that mummifies dead bodies, buries them with food to eat and envisions them as arising in the flesh to hunt is not self-evidently nonsense.

The official culture of the Middle Ages was also entranced by the supernatural. Yet its powerful iconic images of a tortured bleeding god, of mutilated martyrs, and of bread and wine consumed as blood and flesh, shone forth in a peasant world where people lived immersed in raw nature and in one another; they lived unprotected from the smell of each other’s sweat and feces, from the sight of each others sex and death, from heat and ice and mud and rain: a jungle of sensation beyond my wildest dreams.

In the intricate abstract mathematically articulated magnificent construct of contemporary physics the relationship between concepts and sensory existence (with their tendency to merge uncontrollably into one another despite elaborate rituals of attenuation, purification and separation) is so complex as to appear almost miraculous (almost a religious mystery). Neither contemporary physics, nor our estranged, reified, alienated order of life is unambiguously sense.

There are other difficulties. _ Sorokin applies these categories directly and immediately to universal history; one can’t know anything without knowing everything. _ Moreover there may be confusion between classification and explanation. Supersystems are not processes. They are content specific interpretative contexts. If the supersystems are the most abstract and inclusive “socio-cultural” contexts, then they exist at a great remove from actual existence. Thus it does not follow...it is unlikely...that they most strongly influence our life together and apart. [Logical containment does not imply causation (e.g., the comparative size of objects is not caused by largeness and smallness).]

These weaknesses are somewhat disguised as long as exploration moves freely through human history. They are foregrounded when in *The Crisis of Our Time* Sorokin confronts contemporary American society in its particularity

(compare, for example, Robin William Jr.'s *American Society* and Maurice Stein's *Eclipse of Community*).

Once the attempt to directly grasp universal history as an alteration of supersystems is decentered, the rich complexity of Sorokin's sociology is revealed. Relevant concepts include logico-meaningful integration, "socio-cultural space, time and causality" and "immanent causation." Problems discussed in his *Society, Culture and Personality* include "forms of solidarity and antagonism", "the concept of multibonded groups", "classification of the forms of stratification or inequalities", "pluralism of "selves" in the individual as a reflection of the pluralism of groups", "revolutionary change", "the conditions of lasting internal and international peace" (ix), "fluctuation of freedom of the groups and their members" (469). _ He was also a brilliant, profound and determined internal critic of the profession.

Sorokin's profound foundational commitment, focus on reconstruction, concern with cross-cultural methodology, and critical dialogue with the profession are crucial.

His citations are not limited to professionally certified "Western" authors. He was open to relevant disciplinary sources irrespective of cultural origin and professional coding.

Sorokin did not (as in many "hard headed" interpretations) understand science mystically as outside the human condition.

Art is understood as necessary and as, whatever else it also is, a way of knowing.

Even though Sorokin's search for order in and through historical diversity is flawed, it remains inspiring: foundational exploration points beyond itself.

IV

1

Unlike Florian Znaniecki, Sorokin and Parsons, my teachers Lewis Coser, Everret Hughes, John Roberts, Maurice Stein and Robin Williams Jr., focused on

relatively delimited questions. Unlike “normal” middle range theorists, they explored these questions in their human-universal and foundational relevance.

2

The profession, with its institutionalized disinterest in unique existence, over simplified the memory of these complex figures. Coser, for example, is usually classified as a theorist of conflict. He was also, and I think more crucially, a theorist of the historical vicissitudes of reason and of individual autonomy.

3

In Roberts “codes and models” orientation “culture stores” skills and styles. He focused on games and other transitional mediating spaces (e.g., “road side cultures”)... Games model the problem/solution style of the order of life in and through which they arise; participants rehearse survival and play connection.

4

Contemporary symbolic interactionist sociology arose at an intersection of Simmel, pragmatism and anthropological “field work”. Recent representatives include Willard Waller, and what I designate “the school of Everett C. Hughes” (e.g. Howard Becker, Erving Goffman, Blanche Greer and Anselm Strauss).

Improvisation and negotiation were recognized and emphasized.

They respected “definitions of the situation” while preserving critical distance... Hughes' *Good People and Dirty Work*, Goffman's *Asylums* and Waller's *The Sociology of Teaching* interpret bureaucratic processing from the perspective of participants and as patterns of oppression and dehumanization.

Generalization emerged in dialogue with lived existence. _ Presentation was rich with detailed observation. Writing was personal, clear, flexible and natural

Their careful, humanistic, imaginative explorations did not directly challenge sociologies received social scientific identity. Their fine writing did not directly challenge received literary tradition

I find their work helpful in its direct “phenomenal” relevance

5

The journalist Lincoln Steffens, exposed tensions between “moral stance” and political agenda. He traced predictable interpenetration of labeled opposites (e.g., business enterprise and criminal syndicate...police and outlaw, priest and “sinner”).

Frank Tannenbaum was a wonderful sociologist in this tradition.

V

As an outsider, I dream of philosophy as “an exile home” for all endangered projects of reason, “an eternal America of the human spirit.”

I briefly crossed the border once... When I was a graduate student in sociology at Cornell, I audited Norman Malcolm’s seminar on Spinoza. I was surprised to find middle-aged men among the students, even more surprised to learn they were philosophy professors. Only Malcolm was apart from us, as a mediator

A short selection of Spinoza was assigned each class and discussed the following week.

In that room external status was irrelevant. No assumptions were drawn from differences of body, clothing, gesture or accent... Disregard of received distinctions can lead to lowest common denominator leveling and thus to rudeness. Here the highest level of nonservile respect was extended to all. “A questioning openness” appeared within the room.

One’s role emerged as though by natural law through dialogue of speech and silence. When one spoke, any comment however undercutting was acceptance. Only silence discouraged further speech. (There were remarks by professors that sank without a ripple.)

Unless one was Thrasymachus on speed, three successive silences, even if distributed over two weeks, would transform one from potential speaker to observer. One who voluntarily chose silence and returned was a crucial participant. His/her sacrifice of ego to reason deepened the silence in which the speech of others could be born.

I never read another word by Spinoza. I took only one other course in philosophy. Yet perhaps “seeds were planted”. Perhaps Spinoza’s distinction between substance and attribute influenced my later focus on “unity in diversity”

and “co-constitutive aspects”. Perhaps I was influenced by his intimate relationship between literary form and content.

Certainly, the seminar, which I now understand is not entirely representative of the profession, influenced my notions of reason and dialogue.

I would be delighted if there is in this limited halting work any trace of Spinoza, as though a remembered glance at the Parthenon survived in the design of a New England rural theater.

VI

One task is to construct a literary style that comments on itself as it proceeds (i.e., that embodies awareness-in-the-act).

Among authors committed to theory and in explicit dialogue with reason, I found Collingwood, Sigmund Freud, William James, Karl Jung, Nietzsche, Plato and Bertrand Russell directly relevant.

I also turned to Djuna Barnes, Jorge Luis Borges, T.S. Elliot, James Baldwin, Michel de Montaigne and, despite everything, Ezra Pound...I often thought of this manuscript, considered entirely in its literary aspect, as *The Prose Cantos*.

VII

1

I am influenced by my work as artist and art teacher.

One paints in moment-by-moment dialogue as in intimate conversation. _ In the strange and wonderful realm of art the intellect is not a “calculating machine”. Thought is passionate. Emotions are thought saturated... The universal is transformed in personal voice as Monet’s cathedrals melt in light.

VIII

Ovid, the Japanese image “bubble world”, Lady Murasaki, Proust, the lily ponds of Claude Monet, suggest interpenetrations, metamorphoses and inter-translations.

At Bard, influenced by Irma Brandeis and Theodore Weiss, I came to see each work of art as both “a world onto itself” and a moment in a conversation.

IX

At Cornell I was friendly with graduate students working for the cyberneticist Frank Rosenblatt. They were developing a computer, The Perceptron, that could understand spoken English. I understood them to say that it did not require task specific programming and was modeled on the human brain. I envisioned endlessly inter-translateable patterns: analytically distinct yet flowing through each other within dynamic media: sound waves into neural patterns into stream of consciousness into human interaction into institutional constellations.¹⁴

X

In the 1950s after two world wars the crucial relevance of “cultural” diversity to human nature broke into common awareness in the United States. Sociology-psychology should recognize uniqueness and complexity without abandoning the search for a common humanity: it should abstract without lowest common denominator banality... Influences include anthropological “cross cultural” research,¹⁵ Collingwood’s question and answer analysis, Simmel’s concept of form, and Gestalt psychology.

XI

I experience Nietzsche’s *Ecco Homo* and Primo Levi’s *The Drowned and The Saved* _ all texts that struggle to sustain reason in madness and horror _ as sacred.

XII

1

The Socratic-Platonic achievement is an extreme instance, almost ideal-typical, of foundational reconstructive inquiry... Platonism is a delimited “philosophical” position that is distinct from and in at least partial disagreement with other (e.g., Aristotelian, Hegelian, neopositivist) positions. Yet in so far as all

¹⁴ I was surprised how different these people were humanly from the image of “hard scientists” held by many admiring sociologists .

¹⁵ I am especially grateful to Roberts for hiring me to construct “an instrument” for the universal description of rituals.

explicitly theoretical and reasonable inquiries are (in Whitehead's phrase) "footnotes to Plato" the positions that oppose Plato are Platonic.

2

2.1

It is traditional in sociology to designate a group of late 19th and early 20th century scholars "classical theorists." We would, as in most other disciplines, reserve the term "classical" for our Greek ancestors.

2.2

From the (admittedly partial) sociological-psychological disciplinary perspective we interpret Socrates as having engaged in a life - long participant observation field study of Athens. This study combined emersion in a unique "order of life" with universally relevant concerns. It raised to explicit formulation and critique the assumptions of participants, which were also guiding presuppositions of the city's life and variations on co-constitutive human themes. It questioned and articulated its own processes. It contributed to the clarification, evaluation and reconstruction of varied disciplinary and transdisciplinary problems and concepts. It opened endlessly fruitful lines of "constructive implication."¹⁶

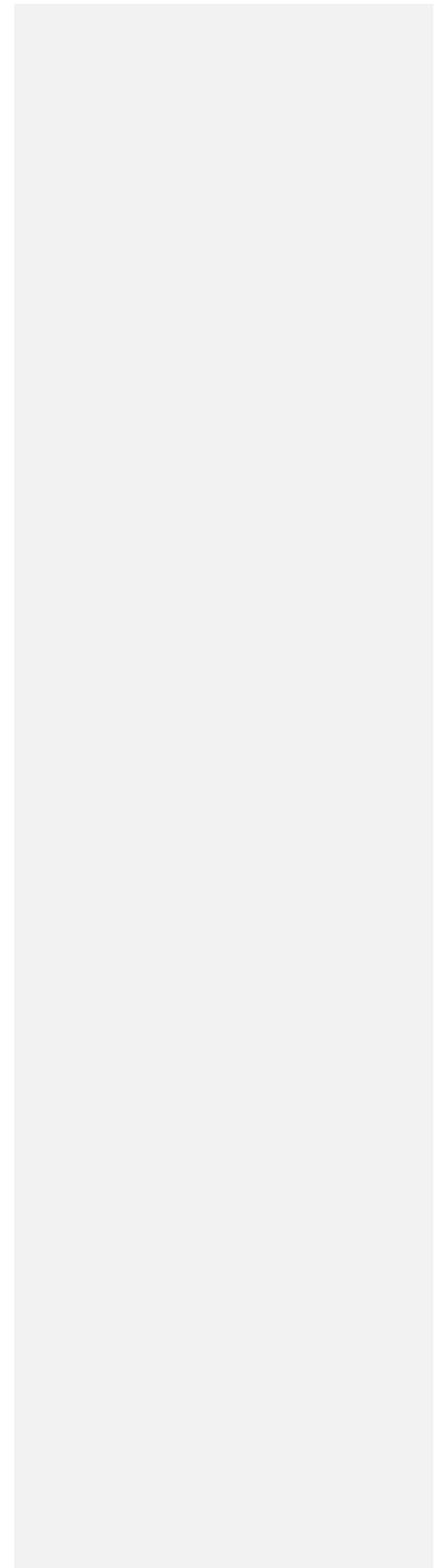
2.3

For Socrates a primary problem was to disclose and "work through" universal concepts against the background of "immediate lived existence."

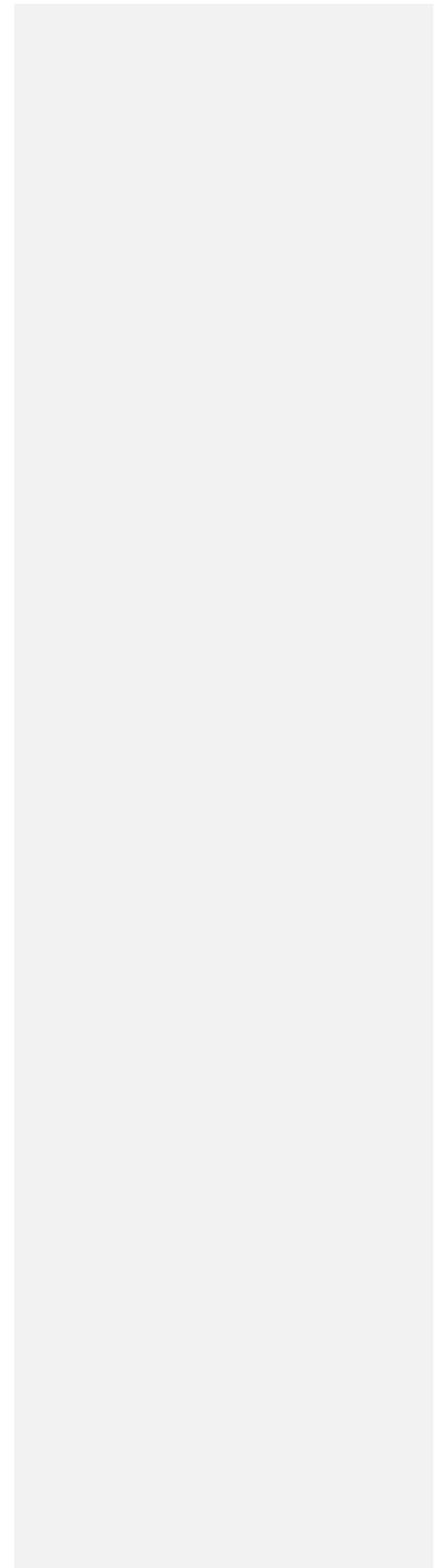
Now abstraction so dominates that everything not represented in theory is endangered (modeled worlds sailing at midnight towards rebirth of light... It is crucial to reopen the dialogue of reason with potentiality, inwardness, uniqueness, autonomy and I-Thou connection.

¹⁶ If I had not been a student of DeGre and Hughes, I would not have recognized Socrates as, whoever else he also was, a sociologist-psychologist.

Book II: Opening Dialogic Sociology-Psychology



Section 1: Openings and Entrances



Prologue

Disciplines are “lenses” ... Not glass. Sapient... Personal-interpersonal.

There is a sense in which lenses not only discover but also invent “the world” they explore (without eyes no visual world).

A crucial concern of these essays is to summon a theoretical reason that will not exile potentiality, inwardness, uniqueness, autonomy and I-Thou connection.

Entering through Projects (1996)

1

This inquiry developed from the theoretically guided interpretation of artifacts (e.g., Plato's *Republic*) to sociology as a distinct "social science" to an open foundational struggle for disciplinary self-knowledge.

2

2.1

We began in 1960 with *On Plato's Republic: A Substantive Study in the Sociology of Knowledge*.

Karl Popper and Richard Crossman separately interpreted Plato's *Republic* as a tribal, aristocratic, proto-fascist reaction to emerging potentialities for humanistic reconstruction. (Popper's version is complicated by his attempt to ground a critique of world historical models on a world historical model.)

Our stated thesis was that *The Republic* engaged bourgeois themes including:

- a. Refusal to accept unexamined traditional continuity as a criteria for legitimation.
- b. Focus on craft as a model of reasonable activity.
- c. Analysis of "the system consequences" of personal-interpersonal patterns (e.g., art).
- d. Approval of specialized knowledge based division of labor.
- e. Approval of knowledge based hierarchy.

Our implicit thesis was that, whatever else it also does, *The Republic* articulates the emerging position of the intelligentsia within the birth of theoretical reason, and thus mediates bourgeois, aristocratic and other "perspectives."

To demonstrate the relevance of one position (e.g., the bourgeois) to a historical object does not exclude alternatives. Sociology-psychology is not fated to commit _ but can help correct _ simplistic textual interpretations.¹⁷

2.2

In that essay I used concepts (e.g., "position" and "crisis") and performed tasks (e.g., establishing dialogue between theory, historical process and a text) that I did not examine. Moreover, I juxtaposed Plato and Mannheim without noticing that Mannheimian sociology of knowledge is a dialogue of social structural positions and "the unattached intellectual" is a dialogic mediator.

¹⁷ We abstracted along generically human lines from Karl Mannheim's typology of political positions (104-130).

Passage from acceptance of sociology's received identity as a "social science" to a foundational struggle for disciplinary self-knowledge includes the following movements:

- a. From identification of disciplines with professions towards direct exploration of disciplinary potentialities,
- b. From restriction to professionally "certified" authors towards openness to all discipline relevant sources,
- c. From exclusive focus on the established and repetitious towards equal concern with openness, reconstruction and unique existence,
- d. From obsession with prediction and control to openness to all concerns through which humanity desires and pursues self-knowledge.
- e. Towards openness and sensitivity to the full resources of "common language,"
- f. Towards relevance to the human passion for a just, compassionate and creative personal-interpersonal existence,
- g. Towards openness to personal voice and style
- h. Towards "interplay" between transdisciplinary notions (e.g. reason, dialogue, objectivity) and disciplinary requirements
- i. Towards an explicit methodology of reconstruction (relevant problems include literary form, movement into and in openness, discontinuous reason, and clarification/evaluation of meaning constellations),
- j. Towards participation in the struggle of modernity to preserve permanence in change, unity in diversity _ a recognizable vital humanity _ within the extended breakdown of this order of life.

Sociology-Psychology as an Autonomous Discipline (2000)

I

It is not the project of sociology-psychology to actualize itself as a social and/or behavioral science. If unique existence, inwardness and I-Thou concern are exiled from science they are not necessarily exiled from sociology-psychology.

Mechanical (e.g., cybernetic) and biological metaphors, while useful, need not dominate discourse.

Interpretation of face-to-face interaction need not focus obsessively on organizational “accountability” and/or freelance manipulation (e.g., con games and hustles) and/or rule bound conformity.

Models of human existence need not onesidedly reproduce the drama of technical rationality.

II

I-Thou concern and inwardness are exiled from social-behavioral “science” by obsession with prediction and control.

One path out of exile is the question, “What is one’s (your or my) unique existence in relation to species potentialities (e.g., for love, courage, justice and beauty)?”

This Socratically inspired sociological-psychological question directly engages inwardness. It is “cognitive,” relatively abstract and phenomenally relevant.

It is not tied to prediction and control... It is not about dynamics. _ Yet it opens dynamically relevant explorations into the inhibiting and enabling conditions for love, courage, justice, beauty, etc.

Species potentialities can be explored through their compromised distorted institutionalizations, their ephemeral ambiguous appearances in our most intimate relationships, and their relatively precise and permanent embodiment in art.

It is no more (and no less) problematic to take the position of “humanity” than that of “the social system,” or of any other theoretical construct.

That which is “collapse” for “the system” can be breakdown or liberation for the person and renaissance or regression for humanity.

III

Autonomy from science is not opposition to science. Both science and sociology-psychology participate in theoretical reason... Exploration of dynamics, dominant in science, is relevant to sociology-psychology.

Sociology-psychology should learn from scientific commitment to disciplinary autonomy and self -knowledge.

On Dialogue: Preliminary Notes

I

1

I propose “dialogue” as the organizing principle of this manuscript, and of sociology-psychology.... Dialogue recognizes, articulates and develops unity in diversity. It struggles for non-repressive order

I designate the proposed orientation “dialogical sociology-psychology.”

1

All disciplines arise from, embody and address co-constitutive human problems: a preliminary statement, sociology-psychology engages the passion of human existence for reasonable theoretical self- knowledge (a dream increasingly desperate and haunted within the breakdown of this order of life).

II

The Dialogical Turn is an important recent contribution to sociological theory. Because “the dialogical turn” and “dialogical sociology-psychology” use some of the same terms one might incorrectly assume that they are the same orientation.

Here is a definition of discipline by Johan Heilbron from *The Dialogical Turn*

The term *discipline* commonly designates a domain of knowledge with a certain degree of specialization and definite forms of control over the production and diffusion of knowledge.

Control- as in the word *discipline* itself- refers to external control as well as to self control ... Traditionally, disciplines have been associated mainly with cognitive aspects, with specific skills and knowledge claims... When considering disciplines from the perspective of control they become a kind of political institution as well, guarding the external boundaries and policing the internal... (Camic.26).

The distinctive characteristic of modern disciplines is precisely to organize teaching, research and professional organization within the same kind of organizational unit. Every discipline is marked by the coordination of previously separated functions. (30)

In *the dialogical turn*, discipline is a species of professional integration.

In *dialogical sociology – psychology* discipline is a species of potentiality. A discipline enables immanent critique of its relevant profession (s).

In “dialogic sociology-psychology”, dialogue recognizes, accepts, and struggles to mediate the tension between unity and diversity. This tension is “weakened in “the dialogical turn” by a prior decision against disciplinary unity.

Despite terminological overlap “the dialogical turn” and “dialogical sociology- psychology” are distinct orientations.

Entering through Direct Preliminary Examination of Foundational Notions

I. On the Clarification/Evaluation of “Meaning Constellations” in its Relevance to Sociology-Psychology

1

Meaning is “the substance” of our life together and apart, not an area within it. The clarification/evaluation of meaning constellations requires mediation between their full existential-historical resonance and relevant contextual (e.g., disciplinary) requirements.

2 (1986)

The clarification/evaluation of meaning constellations includes a problem J.N. Findlay designates “the problem of generic and specific essences” (1966, 47) and we term “the problem of primary generative meaning constellations.”

The basic problem of generic and specific essences is...how we distinguish a genuine eidos (a unique, indispensable, fundamental type) from thought contents which are merely factitious or complex or derivative, or which represent a merely deviant or imperfect case. In dealing with the structure of our experience we shall again and again have to say that this or that is not part of the “idea” of something, or that the “idea” of something requires or excludes or favors or is unfavorable to the instantiation of some other “idea.” (1966, 19)

The possible combinations permitted or favored by a notion, and the extensions it rules out or frowns upon, often affect us with the same shock of surprise as do the shades and contours of an observed object, even though the latter is revealed by ordinary sight and the former by what we may call a “seeing” use of language. (1967, 19)

I was, for example, surprised that sociology desires dialogic integration in a unified sociology-psychology, and that sociology-psychology insists on recognition as a distinct species of theoretical reason.

3

In social and behavioral science there is an institutionalized pride in toughness towards language (an aggressive willed blindness and deafness)... We would approach the precision of poetry. Yet in the winter air of theoretical reason language closes in upon itself.

II. The Author

1

In order to avoid hubris, which is always a betrayal of reason, one must insist on the relevance of person and author to reflection on our life together and apart. This requirement cannot be met by juxtaposing autobiographical facts to neopositivist designs... We must learn from art (as Plato near the beginning learned from Greek explorations of dramatic form).

The author _ as constellation of inwardness, pattern of sensitivity, autonomous dynamic, style of experience and action, etc. _ must be woven into texts, and into the discipline.

It is important not to build a taken for granted split between active creator and passive "object" into the foundations of sociology-psychology. I -Thou recognition must be extended to "the other".

2

2.1

The author is not exactly the person... Every weeping madman is not as such Nietzschean.

2.2

What is the relationship between author and authored? We proceed from the Socratic-Platonic interpretation of the authored as the author's "progeny" [*Phaedrus* Bk IV: 277e-278c]. Progeny suggests potential continuities (e.g., blood passage, nerve linkage, replication, reproduction, projection, transference), and discontinuities (e.g., estrangement, abandonment, rebellion, mutation).

III.Mapping

Mapping requires the construction of relevant interpretative/explanatory schemas.

Maps are influenced by the problems they address and the dimensions they select (e.g., if one desires to understand our life together and apart for its own sake and in its own terms, or only as an arena for manipulation).

One can map an exploration as well as the territory it traverses... One can explore, thus map, map making.

IV. Methodological Tact (2005)

In “methodological tact” methodology is directly guided by awareness-in-the-act. Methodological tact is neither incoherent nor rule bound.

Balance is crucial... A crucial movement is to step back from over specification without sacrificing precision.

V. Sensitivity to Reasonable Limitations

Reasonable exploration of potentialities requires sensitivity to limitations.

The phrase “whatever else it also is” should serve sociology-psychology against hubris... It should help locate interpretations within horizons of dialogue in relationship to an always-absent “totality”. It should help “mark” self-knowledge (e.g., personal, group, disciplinary, species) as an infinite project, an open endless dialogue of dialogues.

VI. Required Beginning

1

In committing myself to theoretical reason, I found that “an arbitrary” development and organization would be inappropriate, and that uncritically following convention would be arbitrary.

The first version of this manuscript (1962) attempted an axiomatic system (a la Hans Zetterberg). I slowly recognized that “constructive” as well as deductive implication is required.

I sought a required beginning in which the main lines of development are available “in potential.”

I opened through my personal existence, the act of writing, the crisis of modernity, art, and the concept of reason. I approached through the exploration of species dynamics (e.g. problem /solution connection, and contextual creativity). I entered through various traditionally “regional” concerns (e.g., deviance, education, pathology).

None of these attempts was entirely irrelevant or provided an adequate foundation.

2

I slowly recognized that I was trapped in “paths” and “destinations.” A path is external to its destinations. One can only follow one path at a time.

Conversations can move in many directions at once. A conversation includes its beginning and end.

I synthesized spatial and conversational metaphors to conceive our life together and apart as an open dialogical interplay of diverse “voices” and orientations, as “the ocean of voices.”

3

I was surprised to find problem/solution dynamically crucial to “the ocean of voices”.

A required beginning should communicate autonomously within common language. The problem/solution connection does not require another type of schema (i.e., one not based on the problem/solution relationship) for its comprehension.

Entering from the Act of Writing and the Notion of Dialogue (2000)

I. Opening

1

Dialogue, with its openness and equality, is a species of human connection. It is not limited to persons and literary texts. Personal-interpersonal patterns in all realms (e.g., intrapsychic, intergroup) can participate in dialogue.

Dialogue recognizes, accepts, and struggles to mediate, the tension between unity and diversity.

2

2.1

Dialogue operates in these essays as a “pure communicative form,” a ground of foundational reconstruction, an organizing metaphor, a generically human determinate processing potentiality, a strategy of inquiry, an explanatory principle, a disciplinary model, an ethical imperative, and a principle of institutional organization.

Dialogue can be relevantly contrasted to, among other patterns, monological discourse, “context bound existence,” lowest common denominator simplifications, “the machine principle,” and assertions of absolute species universalism

2.2

William Desmond:

The metaxological relation has to do with a discourse concerning the middle, of the middle and in the middle. Thus it has a close affinity with the dialectical relation in as much as this may involve dialogue.... For, like the dialectical relation, the metaxological relation affirms that the self and the other are neither absolutely the same nor absolutely different. But, unlike the dialectical, it does not confine the mediation of external difference on the side of the self. The other, as much as the self, may be internally differentiated.... hence it to can enter the middle space between itself and the self and from there mediate, after its own manner, their external difference. The intermediation of the metaxological relation grounds an open community of self and other.... Beyond mere unity, beyond sheer many ness, beyond many ness within a single unity, it entails a community of full unities, each of which is inexhaustibly manifold within itself. (p.7)

2.3

We posit for purposes of inquiry that our life together and apart is “naturally” dialogical and that dialogue is, whatever else it also is, borderline discourse and multicentered cocreation.

2.4

As a principle of institutional organization, dialogue can be contrasted to mass patterns, tyranny and bureaucracy. Dialogue and bureaucracy avoid the direct explicit rule of violence. They resist unexamined tradition and lowest common denominator simplifications. Bureaucracy would identify “rank” with knowledge. Dialogue would “bracket” differences in class, status and power.

2.3

As I am in the act of writing I focus on communicative form. I agree with Alan Blum and Peter McHugh that if the decision “to renounce monological form for dialogue...is to be something other than an abstracted critique of the failures of the others, it must occur and show itself within the work” (91).

Everything depends upon the question of what constitutes excellent discourse as a question that cannot be settled without raising (it)... in the discourse itself...renunciation is only exegetical and abstract when it is not embodied in the narrative practice. (Idem.)

The primary “literary form” of these essays is dialogue.

II. Recognizing Dialogue qua Dialogue

1

X is dialogic in so far as:

- a. “Participants” are not entirely shaped by their contextual (e.g., “system”) requirements.
- b. Participants unique existence, autonomy and “existential/historical resonance” are respected.
- c. Influence is reciprocal.

- d. Order is not dominated by hierarchies of abstraction and inclusion (e.g., class and subclass, theme and subtheme, plot and subplot).
- e. “Earned incompleteness” (i.e., incompleteness that survives an authentic attempt at resolution) is welcome as potentially fruitful “openness.”
- f. Action is invited to develop new contexts for itself.
- g. Relevant tensions (e.g., between unity and diversity, between uniqueness and universality) are engaged.

2

Dialogue struggles to recognize and deal justly with all relevant claims and voices. It struggles to recognize, articulate and respect unity in diversity. It struggles for non-repressive order.

Dialogues are complex ecologies.... Openness and balance are crucial. Dancing, swimming and the flight of birds are relevant metaphors.

III. Dialogue as a Pure Communicative Form

1

Writing on Plato, Rosemary Desjardans:

Given the problem of the ambiguity of language, and the need to move from surface to deep-level meaning, it is hardly surprising that the first step in a dialogue’s development usually requires that one be shaken from a complacent kind of satisfaction with the surface of language and forced to recognize that language does not transparently and unequivocally mean. (116)

The easy flow of unexamined traditional connection is challenged in struggle for the necessary word.

Dialogue is open to spontaneous gestures, to surprises and to the full resources of language (e.g., to image, narrative and explicit fiction as well as direct exposition).

2

Platonic patterns relevant to dialogue as a pure communicative form include:

- a. Themes are not only presented. They are also textually “enacted.”
- b. Fruitful digression with its interplay of “hidden harmony [and] unresolved discord and deviation” (Brombough, p.85) is welcome.
- c. The whole person is addressed.
- d. Discourse is reflexive.... “Awareness-in-the-act” is crucial.
- e. Unique existence, personal and historical, asserts itself in “the pale skeletal kingdom of the universal.”
- f. Every incorporated shaping pattern (e.g., “voice,” “perspective,” “position,” “identity”) is open to examination and critique. (They are at risk.)

III. On the Suppression in Sociology of Dialogue as a Pure Communicative Form

Sociology and psychology, unlike art, attack creativity at its roots by enforcing unexamined lowest common denominator, hierarchically ordered, directly expository, prosaic, writing. This rules out dialogue.... George Axelrod explores the effect of this bias on the reception of Georg Simml’s sociology.

All the topics that Simmel concerns himself with are related in some manner to the dialogical tension between the individual and the group...it should not surprise us then that his writing becomes the medium through which he experiences the tension between himself and his community, and the medium through which he struggles for his individuality. (p.46)

Simmel’s critics feel no obligation to formulate the standard by which they criticize his work. They experience fragmentation or disunity as such negative characteristics...that no further explanation is required. (p.37)

Neither sociology-psychology nor politics should be limited to an either/or choice between rigid subordination of “the part” to “the whole” or chaos.

IV. Towards a Generative problematic (2001)

1

The struggle for intimate knowledge of self and other (i.e., in Buber's terms, "I-Thou" communication) is a generative problematic of dialogue: one would understand participants for their own sake and "in their own terms" not only as means towards external goals (e.g. not only as material to embody a social order and/or actualize an absolute).¹⁸

2

Dialogue shapes and is shaped by co-constitutive problems of reason including:

- a. Mediation between opposed positions through persuasion, without recourse to violence and without ceding ultimate authority to tradition.
- b. Struggle for self- knowledge (e.g., for transparency).
- c. Discovery -invention and actualization of disciplinary potentialities.
- d. Recognition and preservation of unity in and through diversity.

3

In "sociability," as interpreted by Simmel, interaction is for its own sake and themes appear in play form. All interests and passions are present yet distanced: in this enchanted realm one does not flirt in order to seduce.

Dialogue is sociability at its closest conjunction with "disciplinary" life.

4. (1998)

As positions and situations differentiate, the order of life that contains them no longer operates as the unquestioningly taken for granted ground of existence. An abstracted ideal of totality competes with other ideals. Totality becomes a partial vision and "a special interest."

¹⁸ In direct inquiry, tension between the instrumental use of other authors and the I-Thou openness of dialogue can be fruitfully mediated but not entirely eliminated.

Dialogue is within the tension between unique existence and the passion for totality.

The struggle to regain the personal-interpersonal balance of tribal communal existence on level after level of increasing complexity is a crucial historical dynamic.

V. The Dialogue of Harmonious Discontinuity (1996)

1

The Socratic dialogue with its coherent characters, narrative fluency and dramatically appropriate historically accurate settings is the literary form through which our life together and apart first explicitly sought to comprehend itself through the mediation of theoretical reason.

The Socratic dialogue is not available to me as a useable literary form. (Perhaps it is only at its first emergence from immediate lived existence and “all mothering myth” that theory can exist so gracefully within the spoken language of everyday life.)¹⁹

2

The Socratic dialogue emerged within the Greek discovery-invention of dramatic form. Is there now a relevant communicative form? I suggest “the modern poetic sequence” as formulated by M.L. Rosenthal and Sally Gall. Modern poetic sequences are “fragmented, self-analytic, open” (16). There is “intimate reciprocity” (95) within and between units.

We designate our proposed extended form “the modern dialogue of harmonious discontinuity.”

3

Many disciplines contribute to the modern dialogue of harmonious discontinuity.

Poets cited by Rosenthal and Gall include Poe, Dickinson, Whitman, Yeats, Pound, Elliot, Stevens, and Williams.

¹⁹ In the sociological tradition the distinction between “cultural patterns” available and unavailable for use is made by, among others, Pitirim Sorokin, Talcott Parsons and Alfred Schutz.

Prose fiction, with its interplay of “characters,” is naturally dialogic... Exploration of streams of consciousness in flow (e.g., Joyce) and stagnation (e.g., Beckett) deepens dialogical potentialities.

Because anthropology focuses on “the other” its texture is naturally discontinuous. Yet this potentiality is opposed by “scientism.”²⁰

Dialogically relevant non-anthropological explicitly theoretical authors include Hannah Arendt, Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, _ The only professional sociologists who come to mind is Georg Simmel and Max Weber.... In psychology, perhaps William James, Kurt Koffka, Wolfgang Kohler, William James, Karl Jung, Sigmund Freud, and, as a critical methodologist, Sigmund Koch.

Relevant projects in the art of painting include:

- a. Construction of alternative anatomies and spatial orders (e.g., Picasso, Braque, Gris, Severini, Matta).
- b. Cross-cultural intertranslation (e.g., the influence of Japanese prints on Manet, Vuillard, Bonnard, Lautrec and Van Gogh).
- c. Multi-level interplay between personal creativity and the mass-produced “ready made” (e.g., Marcel Duchamp: collage in Max Ernst, Picasso, Bearden).
- d. Liberation of traditionally silenced voices (e.g., Morisot, Kollowitz, O’Keefe, Kahlo, Neel - Tanner, Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, - Orozco, Rivera, Tamayo, _ Gauguin, Picasso,).
- e. Insertion of dreams and of madness into “the common world” (e.g., Redon, Carrington, Dubuffet, Ensor, Max Ernst, Picasso,).

²⁰ We borrow the term “scientism” from F.A. Hayek. He remarks:

It need scarcely be emphasized that nothing we shall have to say is aimed against the methods of science in their proper sphere or is intended to throw the slightest doubt on their value. But to preclude any misunderstanding on this point we shall, wherever we are concerned not with the general spirit of disinterested inquiry but with slavish imitation of the method and language of science, speak of “scientism” or the “scientistic” prejudice. (15)

The modern dialogue of complementary discontinuity welcomes interreflecting fragments and personas. It invites diverse styles. (A dialogic sociology-psychology would end the repression of personal voice in contemporary sociology and psychology.) _ It is “multicultural”: relevant voices, male and female, past and present, from “east” and “west,” from post-industrial and industrial orders of life, from agriculturally based kingdoms, from farming and from hunting and gathering tribes are invited to appear.

As the dialogue of complementary discontinuity engages reason it “works through” new requirements, processes, procedures, and self-understandings (e.g., it strives for the formal intimacy of “transparency”).

We designate the modern dialogue of complementary discontinuity in its direct relevance to theoretical reason “the dialogue of integrated fragments.”

We interpret the modern poetic sequence with its “radiant centers” (Rosenthal, p.11) of “emotionally and sensually charged awareness” (Ibid, 8), and the dialogue of integrated fragments as autonomous forms and as two species of the dialogue of complementary discontinuity.

This manuscript is a dialogue of integrated fragments.

Section 2: Some Human Universal Constellation

Immediate Lived Existence (2000)

“In the same river, we both step and do not step, we are and we are not”
(Heraclitus 49a).

1

“Concrete existence” and “immediate lived existence” are related transdisciplinary terms. I find “immediate lived existence” more suggestive for sociological-psychological inquiry.

2

The following excerpts directly address immediate lived existence.

2.1

“Dream Walk”

I am walking down the street. My head moves up and down and left and right. Scenes appear ahead and then are left behind.

I see discontinuous fragments yet am “located.” Even deep in reverie I do not “lose my place”... A swimmer only requires a short gasp of air to live: an almost instantaneous glance restores me immediately to the world (and this connection can survive the loss of sight).

I am haunted by an appointment I missed. Walking, I rehearse for the hundredth time an apology I might remain too shy to give. My lips begin to move. I gesture. Suddenly memory: a homeless man, saturated with himself through loneliness as his clothes are saturated with his secretions and excretions, waving his arms, talking to someone or something no one else can see.

I make a “poker face” and walk on quickly, staring straight ahead.

I soon slip back into a waking dream.

2.2

Looking Out the Window Preparing to Write About Looking Out the Window”

Clear day: bright sky, sweet smell, brisk wind... Leaves dance among dark branches. [Cézanne captures this (improves it?)... Yet this sky is more in Raphael’s style..wash on wash (completely there and yet in no way solid).]

I wish I were painting. Escape? No! Write! Now! Nervous. Do the job. A wall outside. Enough? Why not?

Now!

A wall as an instance of experience: rough brick, orange surface - I'm thirsty. Coke? Look! Nervous! Write! A field of "acid rock" sharp orange, with gray, black, purple, passages: "field" suggests yellow flowers in "waves of grass": "wave" suggest all that is green-blue and flows.²¹

2.3

From Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, here is Mrs. Ramsay presiding over her dinner table and planning a match between Lily Briscoe and William Bankes²²:

Foolishly she had set them opposite each other. That could be remedied tomorrow. If it were fine, they should go for a picnic. Everything seemed possible. Everything seemed right. Just now (but this cannot last, she thought disassociating herself from the moment while they were all talking about boots) just now she had reached security; she hovered like a hawk suspended; like a flag floated in an element of joy which filled every nerve of her body fully and sweetly, not noisily, solemnly rather, for it arose, she thought looking at them all eating there, from husband and children and friends; all of which rising in this profound stillness (she was helping William Bankes to one very small piece more and peered into the depths of the earthenware pot) seemed now for no special reason to stay there like a smoke, like a fume rising upwards holding them safe together. Nothing need be said, nothing could be said. There it was all around them. It partook, she felt, carefully helping Mr. Bankes to an especially tender piece of eternity; as she had already felt about something different once before that afternoon; there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out (she glanced at the window with its ripple of reflected lights) in the face of the flowing, the fleeting the spectral, like a

²¹ These notes suggest both that the human mind does not always and everywhere focus on a definite object of attention and that there is an almost irresistible compulsion to answer the question "What are you seeing?" by specifying something

²² Here we carry to an extreme the technique of extensive quotation, suggested by Pound and Elliot.

ruby; so that again tonight she had the feeling she had had once today already, of peace, of rest. Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that remains forever after. This would remain. (178-179)

2.4

In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus walking in the street sees the midwife, Mrs. Florence MacCabe:

Mrs. Florence MacCabe, relict of the late Patk MacCabe, deeply lamented of Bride Street. One of her sisterhood lugged me squealing into life. Creation from nothing. What has she in the bag? A misbirth with a trailing navelcord, hushed in ruddy wool. The cords of all link back, strandent wining cable of all flesh. That is why mystic monks. Will you be as gods? Gaze in your omphalos. Hello. Kinch here. Put me on to Edenville Aleph: alpha: nought, nought, one. Spouse and helpmate of Admon Kadmon: Heva, naked Eve. She had no navel. Gaze. Belly without blemish, bulging big, a buckler of taut, vellum, no, whiteheaped corn, orient and immortal, standing from everlasting to everlasting. Womb of sin. (140-141)

2.5

Charles Baudelaire's *Correspondences* directly addresses the underlying fabric of our life together and apart.

Nature is a temple whose living
pillars
Man wends his way through
forests of symbols
Which look at him with their
familiar glances.
As long-resounding echoes
from afar

Are mingling in a deep dark
 unity,
 Vast as the night or as the orb
 of day,
 Perfumes, colors and sounds
 commingle. (182)

3

Each person's experienced world is inexhaustible. Nuances of light and shadow are infinite, and are along one of infinitely many lines of variation... Images stand out sharply or merge into their backgrounds. Love and anxiety mute or sharpen colors.

The potential complexities of experience co-present in groups (a multiplicity of infinities) are beyond analysis... Imagine a painting _ a landscape with figures _ in which Van Gogh's brush strokes mingle with Rembrandt's, meteor showers in resonant darkness.

4

Michael Polanyi remarks, "We know more than we can say" (23), and continues:

It appears...that to know that a statement is true is to know more than we can tell and that hence when a discovery solves a problem it is itself fraught with further intimations of an indeterminate range, and that furthermore, when we accept the discovery as true, we commit ourselves to a belief in all those as yet undisclosed, perhaps as yet unthinkable, consequences. (Ibid.)

The advance of theory should never overwhelm immediate lived existence: no final triumph of facticity over potentiality...no final actualization beyond all surprises.

5

Immediate lived existence influences life directly. It also grounds all other constellations of our life together and apart.

All other constellations of our life together and apart naturally flow back into and influence immediate existence.

Immediate lived existence is a “cross roads”. It is the complex, fertile “background” of our lives. Immediate lived existence is “the ocean of voices.”

. **Unique Existence (2005)**

The sentence “Consideration of unique is crucial to sociology-psychology” is outside English usage... One can substitute “the unique” or “uniqueness.” Yet both distort “unique” by presenting it as a general property... I select “unique existence” and “unique existent” to represent “unique” in sentences where it is relevant but cannot go.²³

²³ These formulations are clumsy. Yet for present purposes “they work”: They hold in language a crucial aspect of our life together and apart.... Resolving “unique” in its full resonance is an interdisciplinary task outside the scope of this manuscript.

“Unique existence” is a co-constitutive aspect of immediate lived existence. It abstracts and emphasizes the discontinuous and new.

Unique existence and repetition interpenetrate [e.g., the routinization of charisma (explored by Weber) finds repetition on openness to a unique presence].

Openness and its Immediate Family (2000)

I

1

Collingwood distinguishes between craft and art. In “craft” means and ends are mutually distinct and are specified in detail prior to action. In “art” goal and path, context and action, emerge in interplay together.

Art is a discipline. Collingwood’s distinction is analytic to all disciplines... to all positions and situations. We rephrase it as a distinction between “closed” and “open.”

2

The generically human concerns of sociology-psychology do not require the possibility of human completion.

Humanity is an open “work in progress.” Art and sociology-psychology directly mediate the dialogue of dialogues that is “our life together and apart”: they code our life together and apart back into itself.

As human history is naturally incomplete it is at each moment relatively open (whether this is recognized or not).

II. Openness

In so far as x is open it exists in “openness.”

Openness is opposed to routine, to hierarchical order...and to break down...Openness is ambiguous, equalitarian and co-creative, as jazz musicians jamming.

III. Opening/Opens

1

We will refer to x as “opening” in so far as it becomes more open. An alternative formulation is “x opens.”

2

Opening is a species of beginning.

A “standard” chess opening (e.g., the Guico Piano, the Roy Lopez) selects a range of alternatives from the universe of all possible chess games ... The choice of an opening in chess enters the game from outside the order with reference to which conditioning is charted: it is in that sense freely chosen.

The opening of a play is a unique event that potentially, not necessarily in outcome, is the first of a series. (An opening may also be a closing.)

3

One can open so completely to a unique complexity as to cut off all routes to return (e.g., in Nabakov’s fictions obsession is often a repetitive ritual reenactment of a unique open childhood moment).

Opening is shadowed by breakdown... Yet the immanent/natural completion of opening is openness, and the immanent/natural outcome of openness is reconstruction.

On Reason as Seen Through “the Lens” of Sociology-Psychology

I

Sociology-psychology is a discipline of reason.

Reason, in its relevance to sociology-psychology, is intuited as dialogic, as “the compassionate friend and just judge who listens to all voices” and as “measure of measures”... “The Socratic moment” is founding and exemplary yet subject to critique.

From the admittedly partial perspective of sociology-psychology, the constitutive problematic of reason includes:

- a. Mediation between opposed positions through persuasion, without recourse to violence and without ceding ultimate authority to tradition.
- b. Discovery-invention and actualization of disciplinary potentialities.
- c. Recognition and preservation of the dialogue between unity and diversity (e.g., contributing to the search for a vital recognizable humanity in and through historical discontinuities).

II

The struggle for disciplinary self-knowledge is crucial to reason. Procedural transparency is crucial to self-knowledge.

For reason to appear inquiry must proceed, at least in part, in dialogue with itself (i.e., “through awareness-in-the-act”).

III

Against some Socratic-Platonic tendencies, we resist interpreting reason as world creating, world sustaining... The mythological resonance of this resistance is Buddhist. Buddha did not create a world in which “involvement is suffering”. He is a compassionate healing intervention.

Reason as “court of final appeal” can assign totalitarian powers to itself or even, as in some positivist and neopositivist formulations, to a species of itself... If reason worships itself, it endangers its potentiality for mediation: it denies itself as reason.

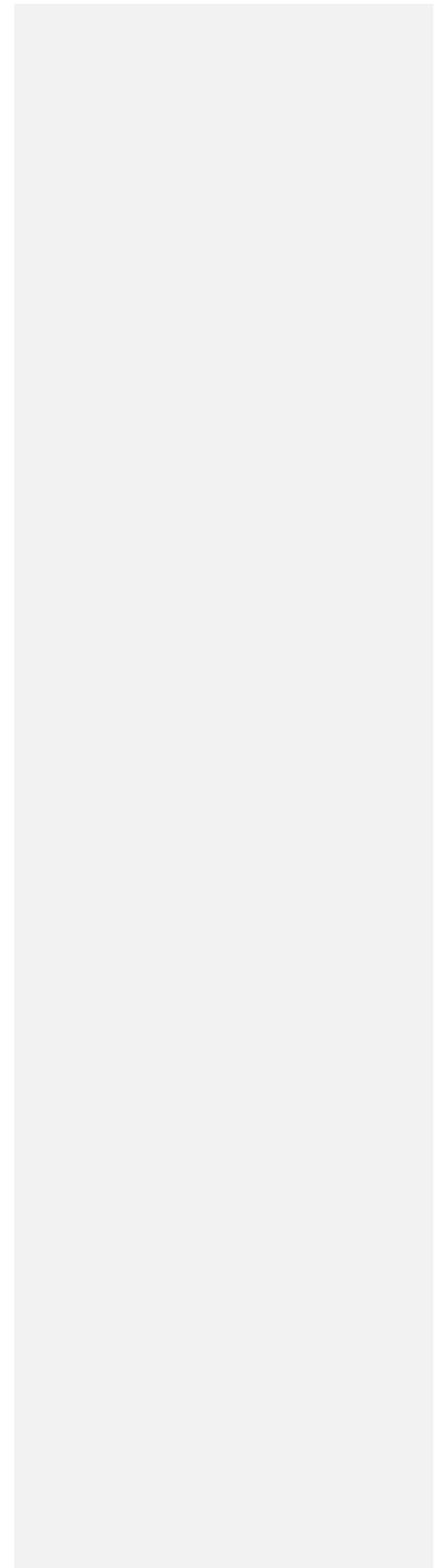
It is reasonable for reason to open dialogue beyond itself. _ One cannot follow reason as its slave... The struggle for self-knowledge seeks potentialities and limitations.

5

The statement “sociology-psychology is a reasonable discipline” does not assert that professional sociology and psychology are in fact reasonable, only that they should and could be.

\

Section 4 :Wild flowers



Wild flowers Opening (2005)

This manuscript as writing may at first glance appear wild and free. Yet images and narratives are continuously pushed towards explicitly conceptual directly constructive disciplinary relevance .

Relatively pure autonomous images and narratives can contribute indirectly to foundational reconstruction (e.g., they open lines of “constructive implication” and articulate the unities that abstraction and analysis require)... This farm requires a small area of forest, even a touch of jungle, to renew the earth.

Even reason can become a prison... “Wild flowers” are their “own excuse for being.”

The Unnatural Bird Song of Our Kind (1979)

1

I passionately desire to write directly: as a bird sings, a cat meows...as rain falls and sheep bleat. No artifact. Simple natural movement.

Recently the writing of Christopher Nolan brought me to question my desire... Locked silent. Now utterance. Word by laborious word. Typing stick on forehead. Head held and steadied. Here if anywhere _ speech blocked _ the natural bird song of our kind in writing:

He saw his life recoil before him and using the third person he received poor sad boyhood and casting himself inside the frame of Joseph Meehan he pranked himself a storyteller. Laugh he pleaded, for lovely laughter vanquishes raw wounded pride.
(28)

Author, persona, artifact.

2

Oscar Wilde:

The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible.
What the second duty is no one has yet discovered.
(Janik113)

Our nature is artifice, is also _ more profoundly _ self-contradiction. We are and are not artificial... "The Wildian complex": free play lusts for necessity, necessity lusts to lose itself in play.

Borderline Notes: A Sociological-Psychological Fiction (1990)

I. Opening

Let us imagine several French painters contemporaneous with but uninfluenced by the post-impressionism of Van Gogh, Cézanne, Gauguin and Seurat... We invite Van Gogh.

II. Henri Verdet

1. Statement

Henri Verdet, student of a student of Ingres, respected academician, spared the pain of innovation, approached pure repetition (i.e., the actualization of rules in paint).

Verdet, giving nothing of himself, was not an artist: silk “flower” among flowers.

2. Exploration

The post-modern, committed to “the death of the author” and the equality of all texts, cannot accurately register embodied inwardness (or its absence). Verdet (the academy defeated) has “an exile home” in the post-modern establishment, silk flower among plastic flowers.

3. Reflections

3.1

Because every authentic work of art is personal it is unique. Yet this unique existence does not register as silence. It is “coded” along disciplinary lines as alteration or reconstruction.

The post-impressionism of Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin and Seurat is closer to a dialogue than to a single “style.” There were other wonderful “personal voices” outside this constellation (e.g., Lautrec, Degas' freely rendered richly textured late pastels).

Post-impressionism required and built on, yet did not overcome, exhaust_ terminate_ impressionism....Monet's water lily series_ the most wonderful impressionist creation _ was painted long after Van Gogh and Gauguin died (after Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*).

3.2

Within social and behavioral “science” self repression has become automatic, almost subconscious.

III. Edward Lemaire

1. Statement

Edward Lemaire disregarded the dominant “academic” orientation of his time. He was content to be labeled “a genre painter.” There is a freshness of

vision and “approach”: moments uniquely seen and directly registered...passages no one else could paint.

Among academic “machines” his unpretentious paintings are “a breath of fresh air”. Among impressionist works they are timid and unrealized.

2. Exploration

Disregarding academic theory cleared Lumaire's vision. Yet because he identified academic theory with art theory per se he did not attempt disciplinary reconstruction. Thus his work remained within “the gravity” of the orientation he would abandon.

IV. Paul Floret

Paul Floret achieved dependable academic competence. He experienced his own paintings as alien and empty.

He painted obsessively, adhered more and more rigidly to academic rules. Paintings died under his hands. Although his colleagues praised he knew.

V. Robert Digni: The Self-Devourer

1. Statement

Robert Digni painted then destroyed original distinctive post-impressionist works...The post-impressionist painting would be slowly decomposed/recomposed towards banal academic idealization. Once attained he registers its banality. The journey is reversed. The cycle repeats again and again. Only he will ever see his work.

2. Exploration

Digni is in worldly terms a failure. Failure is commonly explained by lack of talent and/or craft and/or determination. Exceptional talent and craft would be required for the autonomous 19th century creation, however ephemerally, of authentically post-impressionist paintings. Extreme determination is required to paint on and on “with nothing to show for it”.

Then why? One reason, an internal split between critic and creator, an inability to leap the difference between “the way to do it” as it emerges within the

struggle to construct, and as given in received professional models... There is openness, but it is openness denied: a refusal to open to openness.

VI. Van Gogh

We hypothesize that directly reconstructive (a.k.a. foundational) creativity²⁴ directly engages foundational, disciplinary problems. Van Gogh, for example, reconceived color, figuration and expression:

A man's head or a woman's head, well observed and at leisure, is divinely beautiful, isn't it? Well, one loses that general harmony of tones in nature by painfully exact imitation; one keeps it by recreating in a parallel color scale which may not be exactly, or even far from exactly, like the model.

Always intelligently making use of the beautiful tones which the colors form of their own accord when one breaks them on the palette, I repeat - starting from one's palette, from one's knowledge of the harmony of colors is quite different from following nature mechanically and servilely. (1989, Letter 429, p. 253-254)

I have tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green.

The room is blood red and dark yellow with a green billiard table in the middle; there are four citron yellow lamps with a glow of orange and green. Everywhere there is a clash and contrast of the most disparate reds and greens in the figures of little sleeping hooligans, in the empty, dreary room, in violet and blue. The blood-red and the yellow-green of the billiard table, for instance, contrast with the soft tender Louis XV green of the counter, on which there is a pink nose gay. The white coat of the landlord, awake in a corner of that furnace, turns citron-yellow, or pale luminous green. (1989, Letter 533, p. 320)

²⁴ We specify "directly reconstructive" because improvisatory drift can also contribute to positionally relevant (e.g., disciplinary) reconstruction.

I should like to paint the portrait of an artist friend, a man who dreams great dreams, who works as the nightingale sings...to finish it I am now going to be the arbitrary colorist. I exaggerate the fairness of the hair, I even get to orange tones, chromes and pale citron-yellow.

Behind the head, instead of painting the ordinary wall of the mean room, I paint infinity, a plain background of the richest, intensest blue I can contrive, and by this simple combination of the bright head against the rich blue background, I get a mysterious effect, like a star in the depth of an azure sky. (1989, Letter 520, p. 313)

It is in life as in drawing, one must sometimes act quickly and with decision, attack a thing with energy, trace the outlines as quickly as lightening... This is not the moment for hesitation or doubt, the hand may not tremble, nor may the eye wander but must remain fixed on what is before one. And one must be so absorbed in it that in a short time something is produced on the paper or the canvas that was not there before, so that afterwards one hardly knows how it got knocked into being. The time of discussion and thinking must precede the desired action. In the action itself there is little space for reflection or argument... To act quickly is the function of a man, and one has to go through a great deal before one is able to do so. The pilot sometimes succeeds in making use of a storm to make headway instead of being wrecked in it... Who is the master, the logic or I, is the logic there for me or I there for the logic, and is there no reason and no sense in my unreasonableness and lack of sense. (1991, Letter 197)

In direct discipline reconstruction the person is not a mere observer, catalyst, or enabling field. S/he enters as an equal the dialogue of forms.

VII. Epilogue: Homage to Van Gogh

We use Van Gogh to explore the methodology of reconstruction. Tribal reason suggests that to use without I-Thou recognition is unjust.

Van Gogh's work is a borderline interflow of patterns, including stillness and motion, representation and enactment, necessary form and metamorphosis. There is an interplay of types: trees and mountains flow and gesture, houses almost dance.²⁵

Every image shapes and is shaped by an incalculably complex dialogue of dialogues. Dialogue between content and form interpenetrates dialogue with (and within) artistic tradition,²⁶ interpenetrates dialogue between conventional labels and unique experience, between technique and spontaneity, between theory, autonomous practice and obsession... The cypress tree is cypress tree, is also inseparably flame... It is a profound discovery and a psychotic vision and a skillful construct... It is solitary desire expending itself in the indifferent night and interplay of love fulfilled.

A Fertile Open Space: A Sociological-Psychological Fiction (1980)

I

There is a nation. It is bounded on three sides by the ocean and on the fourth by a fertile open space.

Perhaps everyone in the nation enters this open space at once.

²⁵ The issue is not the existence or non-existence of "subliminal" particular images (e.g., faces in clouds or in trees) but elemental formal interplay, with dancing clouds and flowing trees.

²⁶ With Rembrandt, Millet, Daumier, Delacroix, Monet and on and on.

Perhaps no one enters. (They cannot imagine its existence and/or already inhabit it in imagination and/or worship it.)

Historical outcomes are not either/or, always residues and shadows...always ambiguities. Fact is haunted by repressed potentialities.

II

Explorers enter. They represent their people. They are “an advance guard.”
_ They would impose their old world on their new. Yet to survive they must engage the new.

III

1

Explorers are invited into a village. A man and a woman love one another in a way they create between them. They love within a space that is abolishing itself. A half stifled birth moan is also a death cry.

2

There are alternatives.

2.1

One can will mastery so obsessively that experience of the other, however close and detailed, remains impersonal.

Love is precluded. The explorer is a craftsman of manipulation...
Knowledge is merely instrumental (only for prediction and control).

The conquistadors appear again and again in different costumes with different cover stories (e.g., “Christianity triumphant,” “the white man’s burden,” “Aryan superiority,” “the dictatorship of the proletariat,” “Pax Americana,” “the new world order”).

Their first victims could not imagine them. Now all are infected. The kill is less certain

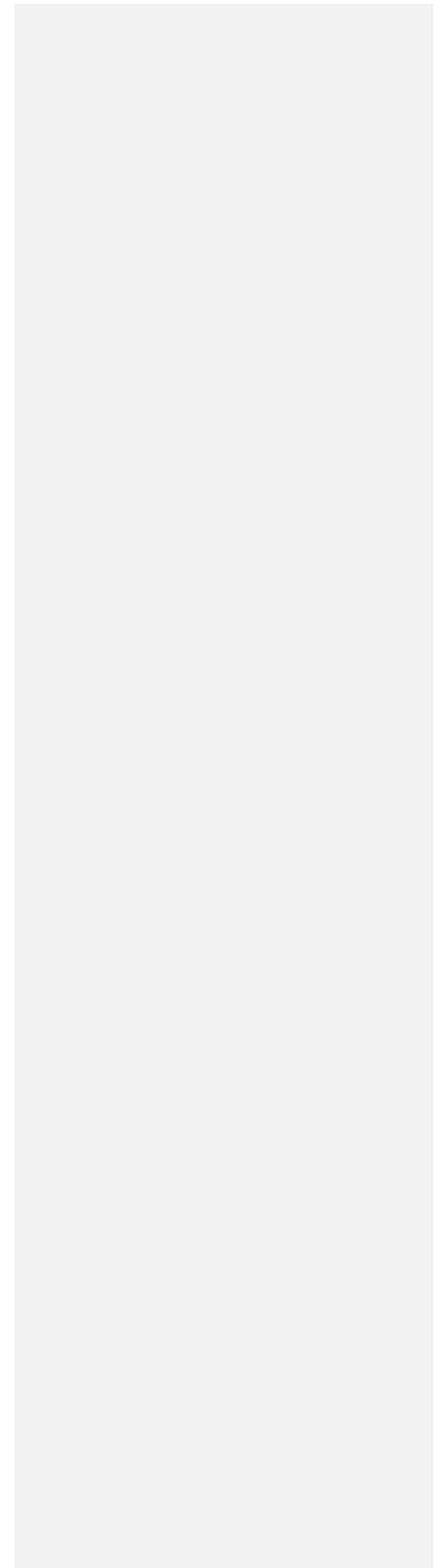
2.2.

The explorers are named “The Tribe That Walks.” Some explorers join villages. Some natives join The Tribe That Walks...Descendants of natives and explorers enter together another fertile open space.

Interreflecting Socratic Reason (2017)

A

Voice 2.Let's approach the path to dialogic reason through a scene...Two characters, one acting and one questioning.



Voice 1. A dramatic and illustrative extreme?

Voice 2. Accuser and accused.

Voice 1 perpetrator and victim?

Voice 2. A confrontation

Voice 1 Life and death.

Voice 2. We are Turing. The perpetrator wants to imprison us because we're gay

We are a woman in Iran. The perpetrator shouts "Put on the Head scarf!"

B

Voice 2 The confrontation can but need not lead us to the room. There is a sequence: there are doors. The victim must ask why. The perpetrator must answer. The answer cannot be "it's just a matter of taste"

The Perpetrator's answer must include a human universal notion (e.g. because your sex life is **perverse** because your choice of clothing is **impious**).

The victim questions the notion and seeks an evaluative definition. What is piety, What is perversion? What is impious?

Voice 1 Evaluative definition?

Voice 2 Evaluative definitions explore immanent potentiality [what, for example, are the defining projects (i.e. "the spirits") of love, justice, capitalism and education?].

Voice 1 As opposed to?

Voice 2 A descriptive definition entirely enclosed in local facts

Voice 1 How a term is normally used at a particular place and time?

Voice 2. Thus isolated from critique.

Voices 1. How do you connect definition and critique?

Voice 2 Homosexuality was often defined as a mental illness and/or a sin.

In Nazi Germany “Jew” designated a subhuman parasite: a germ, a rat.
Questioning such definitions is critique

Voice 1. I have passionately fought to redefine “woman” all my life: a life beyond my mother’s dreams, on which my daughter builds.

Voice 2 Most of us, in most situations, mechanically follow cultural directions... Many 19th Century racist American or Australian settlers who saw and treated natives as nonhuman were following their culture and were hallucinating past the point of madness. The struggle is to retain/regain as much as possible, the full potentiality of our human vision.

C

Voice 1. I see that to answer “What is piety?” in obedience to one’s cultural norms deepens entrapment... But why is it a problem to say “It’s a matter of taste?” Wouldn’t this lead to tolerance?

Voice 2. It might ease fanaticism, as a lobotomy might ease depression. The windowless room is locked and bolted. Nothing to appeal to. Nothing to grow into.

If you say, “It is wrong to throw acid in my face” the answer is it’s only your opinion. If you say “I prefer Gandhi to Hitler “that’s only your opinion”.. If it profits him he’ll follow the script (e.g. throw the acid yelling slogans)...Even without profit he’ll do it through inertia...Why not?

If Socratic questioning abdicates then direct and sublimated violence will govern unopposed.

Voting will not cure it.

D

Voice 2.Let’s designate the project “dialogic reason”, Just to hold the place
And accept I have a debt to pay

Voice1. Let me guess. What are the evaluative definitions of dialogue and reason?

Voice 2.And humanity

Voice 1. I'll accept a long term payment plan .If we don't walk past it now we'll be here forever.

Voice2. One more door to open. To enter dialogic reason one must assume that questions about human universal notions (e.g. art, love, dialogue, education) can have a correct answer.

Voice 1. Correct, as in political correctness?

Voice 2. No, *independent of convention and*, in some sense, true. Not that we know but that such knowledge is possible. Not all at once. Not completely ...Cumulative approximations

A Thread in the Labyrinth (1985)

I. Opening

Our theoretical focus is pursuit of “the negative absolute.”

Our substantive focus is alcoholism and “the explicit culture” of Alcoholics Anonymous... By the explicit culture of A.A. we intend “the twelve steps” (59-60) and “the serenity prayer.” We will refer to tacit traditions and intermediary patterns (e.g., common aphorisms and slogans) only in so far as required to interpret explicit culture.

II. Pursuit of the Absolute

“Absolute meanings” (a.k.a., “pure ideals”) are natural and necessary to language. They are beyond experience. Yet the gradations within our compass encourage us to “complete the figure”²⁷. We are drawn to experience... to embody... all absolute meanings: absolute love, courage, justice and _ whether we admit it or not _ their opposites (e.g., absolute hatred, cowardice and cruelty).

Absolute meanings open interpenetrating inexhaustible dimensions (tight rope walking).

III. On Shadow

What are the basic dynamics of “shadow”?²⁸ Shadow is not limited to any specific “content” (e.g., sexuality). Shadow arises between autonomous language and immediate lived existence through the struggle to embody absolutes, including absolute coherence.²⁹

The passion for coherence can modify and reinterpret but not eliminate the pull of diverse experiences... To experience what one's identity “rules out” threatens “normal daylight” with conversion into “shadowland.”

Two relevant variables are diversity of experience and openness of “legitimate identity.” We suggest that the greater the variety of potential experience and the narrower the range and scope of relevant “legitimate identity” the greater, everything else being equal, the prevalence and intensity of shadow.

IV. Night Side

1. Opening

²⁷ In a gestalt psychological sense

²⁸ Our understanding of “shadow” is influenced by Nietzsche, Freud, Jung, and Karen Horney.

²⁹ We specify “autonomous language” because all experience is language saturated.

Above we enter from “the side of light”: darkness is only shadow. Here we enter from “the night side,” through “the negative absolute.”³⁰

2. Absolute Midnight

To be caught in a deepening loop reliving again and again a single scene that defines one to oneself as absolutely evil and damned and/or absolutely lost and abandoned approaches the existential extreme.

There is often a feverish search for a way out of the closed sequence: the past substituting itself for the present exists at once as potentiality and as completed fate.

V. On Alcoholism and “The Twelve Steps”

1. Methodological Note

1.1

Our strategy is to assume that the explicit culture of Alcoholics Anonymous is effective against alcoholism and to explore implications of this proposition for the interpretation of alcoholism and of A.A... We intend to move only along lines opening from the negative absolute. (Sociological-psychological methodology seeks to discern and respect not evade or transgress limitations of relevance and range.)

1.2

We quote the twelve steps as they appear in *Alcoholics Anonymous* (3rd ed.) with one important exception. We write “the higher power as we understand it” rather than “God as we understand Him.”

Belief in “God-as-Him” is not required for participation in A.A. twelve step exercises. In principle and practice A.A. and all its derivations are open to agnostics and atheists...and to those of all faiths including believers in The Great Mother.

For many “secular” people the focus on “the higher power” in A.A. is shocking. Yet against the background of history it is A.A.'s freedom from sectarianism that surprises [especially when one recalls that there are secular as well as religious traditionally warring candidates for higher power (not only Christianity,

³⁰ Our focus is on self-destruction (which of course wounds others indirectly). Yet “the shadow” can also operate directly through private and/or political violence.

Judaism, Islam, etc., but also France and Germany, China and Japan, Bosnia and Serbia, capitalism and socialism...and on and on ad infinitum)].

To the best of my knowledge the limitations on the notion of higher power in A.A. are that it should be imagined as benevolent to oneself and to the world, and should not be a living mortal person. (One would be discouraged from Satanism, from a self-image as damned by a righteous God and from “sponsor” worship.)

2. Alcoholic Pride and the Ahab Complex

The conviction that one could at any moment “by a single gesture” put aside years of addiction expresses “alcoholic pride.”

Entrapment dreams freedom. As pursuit of “absolute light” generates its shadow so pursuit of absolute self-loss and degradation is haunted by “a helpless angel”...“a shadow of light”.

Freedom from addiction is imagined as unqualified absolute freedom.

Pursuit of the negative absolute and its luminous shadow leads to progressive estrangement from the natural human ebb and flow of experience. We designate this pattern “the Ahab complex.”

Were the negative absolute attained one might be “let go.” Thus the alcoholic is most open to change when in despair (“bottoming out”). Yet the absolute qua absolute is outside experience. The natural triumph of absolute self-destruction is death.

VI. On The Twelve Steps and the Ahab Complex

The first and most important step:

1. “We admitted we are powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable”,

performs an absolute surrender that need never again be tested. One is always an alcoholic, even when sober.

The second and third steps,

2. “We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity”,

3. “We made a decision to turn ourselves over to the care of a power greater than ourselves as we understood it”,

introduce the balancing power of the positive absolute as an ego transcendent ideal personally chosen and embraced as benevolent. They initiate a qualitative shift of focus.

The fourth and fifth steps:

4. “We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”,

5. “We admitted to a higher power, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs”,

return the alcoholic to the ethical life with its inescapable incompleteness and ambiguity... The alcoholic now connected to an ego transcendent positive ideal is not abandoned to dissolve in light.

The sixth and seventh steps,

6. “We were entirely ready to have the higher power remove all these defects of character”,

7. “We humbly asked the higher power to remove our shortcomings”,

reinforce the permanence of defeat and the presence of the positive absolute.

The eighth and ninth steps,

8. “We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all”,

9. “We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others”,

move beyond reconstructions of personal consciousness into direct action. Past relationships are not only reinterpreted, they are also re-engaged on a transformed basis... The qualification “except when to do so would injure them (i.e., those the alcoholic had harmed) or others” guards against escape into “the dream of light.” It insists on sensitivity to people's actual needs, desires and vulnerabilities.

The tenth and eleventh steps,

10. “We continued to take personal inventory and when wrong promptly admitted it”,

11. “We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with the higher power as we understand it, praying only for knowledge of its will for us and the power to carry that out”,

initiates an ongoing commitment to self-knowledge, ethical sensitivity. avoidance of hubris and continuing dialogue with the positive absolute.

The final step:

12. “Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs”,

returns to yet transforms the original pattern. _ Alcoholism remains an absolute negative to be opposed absolutely. Yet this struggle is no longer locked inside the person. Nor is it projected out into the world as entirely external... The struggle against alcoholism is no longer exiled from the nourishing complexities of immediate lived existence.

VII exercise of will

1

Recognition of missteps (i.e., of “wrongs”) is crucial against the isolated ego's fantasy of omniscience. Yet it must be carefully negotiated. Andras Angyal:

While the healthy person displays the constructive sequence (“I did it. I regret it. How can I do better next time?”) the neurotic behaves as if merely having guilt feelings settled the issue. He can use them in fact as an argument against settling anything: “I have spoiled everything. What is the use of trying; I can never live it down.” (235-236)³¹

There is beyond neurosis the trap of a terminal guilt loop.

2

Normally one is aware of one's own “failures” and “trespasses” and of others' carefully crafted self-presentations. For many, drunkenness offers the only respite from “the mask.”

³¹ Angyal's approach to therapy is presented as integrating psychoanalytic and gestalt themes. Perhaps it also synthesizes professional and A.A. insights.

Psychotherapists are professionals, their role is as experts not as fellow sufferers... In A.A. meetings all participants are self-admittedly flawed.

Normally “name and rank” (i.e., place in the scheme of things) are disclosed yet self-exposure is potentially stigmatizing³² and thus inhibited. The anonymity of A.A. “brackets” placement to enable I-Thou openness (an injection of anonymity to counter anonymity).

3

The ego caught in an addictive loop becomes, everything else being equal, less and less able to escape unaided. Even when the isolated ego can through pure exercise of will break all addiction to that which it opposes, it becomes its own loop addicted to itself (willing to will). Its relationship to (internal and external) non-self is victory or defeat (i.e., self-loss, annihilation). It resists beauty and compassion (which are coded as temptations).

Even if that will which only wills itself is never forced or tempted from self-penetration it is frightened and proceeds in ever deepening shadow.

4

The “serenity prayer”:

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I
cannot change

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference

summons a personal autonomy that is in the act of liberating itself from isolation and hubris. One cannot surrender oneself to the higher power and wait to be recovered. Serenity, courage and wisdom are required. Work is required: a constant injunction is “work the program,” a constant assurance is “it works if you work it.”

The choice is not between absolute omnipotence and absolute passivity, or between perfect virtue and absolute corruption. Recovery requires movement beyond false dichotomies.

VIII Epilogue: On the Requiredness of the Positive Absolute

³² It might be illuminating to pursue the relationship between Goffmanian and Christian usages of “stigma” and “stigmatization” in the context of guilty knowledge, confession, healing, guilt, forgiveness and “the marked man/woman.”... There may be persons and personas (e.g., shadows of darkness and/or of light) who ambivalently yet passionately desire stigmatization.

1

The passion to experience and embody the positive absolute is a co-constitutive aspect of human existence.

In the natural course of events co-constitutive aspects under pressure are not destroyed but (as aspects of sexuality in the Victorian period) metamorphized. Thus if the passion for transcendence is denied it can return mutated: less flexible, more dangerous.

2

The positive absolute can neither be abandoned nor achieved. Concern with small changes if isolated from visions of the absolute is cut off from profound imaginative engagement with fundamental human problems (including the struggle for self-knowledge).

We need not choose between fanatical pursuit of the ideal or, in Popper's terms, "piece-meal social engineering."

There is a yearning for the absolute that _ rescued from hubris by reason, in dialogue with mortal finitude_ - recognizes and desires surprises.

A Trip to Shadowland (2003)

When I was a sociology graduate student, in the early 1960s, a professor told me about his research project. His task was to determine how the governing politicians could reassert control when they emerged after a nuclear war. (My doubt that this would be advisable was dismissed as "merely subjective.")

I was to interview undergraduates.

I asked, "What are your plans in life?" They were willing to sacrifice interesting work and the possibility of large financial rewards for steady employment, good benefits, predictable advancement, and decent pensions... Gratification was so deferred as to be almost ghostly: life was instrumental.(e.g. one reads Keats in order to pass the English course in order to keep up one's average in order to graduate with honors in order to get a good job, etc)... Nothing for its own sake.

I asked, "Will there be an atomic war in your life time." They answered "yes." "Will you survive?" "No."

I glimpsed a strange troubled shared consciousness, as though for a moment it became transparent: two incompatible unmediated worlds at once: absolute control, and absolute terminal chaos.

If we are led into our nightmare fantasies we can be lethal to ourselves and others.

[(2012)_ We were.We are.]

Fading(2016)

I am haunted by a story. An old hermit leaves his isolation. In Nietzsche's version he is spared. In mine he hears the terrible news, not that God is dead (old news now) but that the passions that created gods are dying.

On Violence as a Species of Unreasonable Objectivity (1985)

I

Reason and objectivity are commonly interpreted as necessarily interdependent.

We follow a line of traditional usage that identifies objectivity with the capacity to impose on all sane sapient consciousness. Sapient consciousness is inherently “cultural.” Thus to impose on all sapient consciousness is to impose on all cultural constellations (i.e., to transcend cultural differences).

Violence can impose itself on all sapient consciousness sane or insane. Violence occurs within_-yet cuts below_- the interplay of subjects.

II

Torture is grounded in (actual or threatened) physical violence. It typically operates through the body on states of mind. The fist is recognized cross culturally. The pain is recognized. The fist as it approaches to bring pain is recognized.

Not all violence is directly physical... When life unfolds within the recognition of one's helplessness and the other's power (that the other can do anything s/he wishes and one can do nothing to prevent it) any sudden gesture, verbal or physical, can be felt as violence and can torture.

Violence is most effective as a means of conversion when _ as in The Inquisition _ it occurs within a long enduring structure of domination.

Conquest often forces "re-definitions" on the vanquished... The grandchildren of those converted "at sword's point" may defend their conquerors' religion to the death (For example, the destruction of Inca and Aztec orders of life was a self-betrayal of Christianity. Yet because the destruction was brutal and complete, because the cup of their life was broken, most Peruvians and Mexicans are now Catholic.)

III

There is unreasonable objectivity. Does reason depend on the compulsion of objectivity?

The prevalence of (verbal) struggle in *The Socratic Dialogues* may be misleading. The better argument does not compel as torture compels. One can refuse to enter "the dialogic circle." One can walk away. One can kill the questioner. (One is not tied down.)

To be persuaded by the arguments of others is only apparently to be defeated. It is only possible if one is committed (beyond one's particular opinions) to reason.

Reason (as love) neither requires nor permits compulsion.

Embattled Reason (1985)

I. Opening

Reason attacked “from the right” for questioning tradition is now attacked “from the left” as ground and support of hierarchy. Some enemies on the left attempt to attack reason from within.

II. Methodological Interlude

Foundational exploration and secondary commentary are distinct tasks. Yet there can be fruitful dialogue between them.

We proceed through the work of two commentators, Lazlo Versenyi and Victor Descombs. Versenyi interprets the sophist Gorgias. Descombs interprets Jacques Derrida... We will, for purposes of discussion, assume that these commentaries adequately “represent” their “originals.”

III. Versenyi, Gorgias, Sophism

Versenyi writes of the sophist Gorgias:

From Hesiod to Protagoras, we can observe the development of logos into the opposite of physical violence, as the humane alternative to brute force... Now Gorgias partly reverses this state of affairs and reveals the word itself as having its own kind of violence. Logos becomes merely a superior form of violence ... The word itself... may dwell in a somber realm of its own. (Versenyi p 44-45)

He quotes Gorgias:

The power of Logos is great, but it is a power only to sway, move, and influence, not to enlighten and give knowledge. (Ibid, p 47-48)

If Gorgias (as interpreted by Versenyi) did not exist in the space opened by reason, a space in which the logos was inch by inch worked free from its embeddedness in common life, his insights would be unsayable (although as shaman or politician he might enact them).

2.2. Descombs, Derrida: Neosophism

Descombs quotes Derrida as remarking that it is only to reason

That an appeal against it can be brought, only to itself that a protest against it can be made; on its own terrain, it leaves us no other recourse than to stratagem and strategy... Only able, as soon as it appears, to operate at the interior of reason, the revolution against reason has only ever the limited sense of what is called precisely in the language of the Ministry of the Interior: unrest. (138)

He continues in his own words:

Derrida begins in a very close contest against a formidable master, whom he might think certain to win at a game with rules he himself has fixed. Derrida opts to play a double game (in the sense that a “double agent”

serves two sides)...feigning obedience to the tyrannical system of rules while simultaneously laying traps for it, in the form of a problem, which it is at a loss to settle. (138-139)

James Kirk versus the super computer... This is not the stratagem of a double agent but of an annihilator from within, "a fifth columnist."

Descombs quotes Derrida:

Between the moment at which the dilemma obliges the "speaking subject" to speak for reason and order, and the moment when, trapped, The Master is put in check and can only garble his arbitrary essence –between these two moments, then, a silent *arriere pensee* must have guided the strategist. In silence the strategist has thought what he could and could not say, namely that the true is not truly true (but often false) that the lawful and the arbitrary are indistinguishable, etc. (139)

The dissemblance required by this strategy is

the dissemblance of the dissemblance (to pretend I actually do the things: I have therefore only feigned pretence). In the second place, the question here is to pretend to speak the Master's language in order to kill him... If a traitor pretends to assassinate the tyrant then the crime has not taken place; but if he feigns the pretence, then he kills in earnest, and the actor was concealing an assassin all along. (139)

Derrida's dissemblance of dissemblance recalls a standard science fiction plot dilemma, "how to destroy a telepath."

I hear that often through long pursuit the stalker becomes so sensitive to the victim... especially, near conquest, to its weakening struggles to stay alive as its most secret strategies are searched out and thwarted that, despite all defenses, behind commitment to destroy, the killer comes, impotently, to love.

Othello never listened to Desdemona outside the machinery of clue and interrogation structured by Iago.

The assassin of reason need not dissemble and dissemble his dissembling to evade the agents of reason. They are not telepathic. He is telepathic to himself.

It is not reason as technique_ or even as language_ that its murderer must avoid. What must be avoided is “the beautiful face of reason,” reason as “Thou.”

To be held powerless in inarticulate defiance, the fate that Derrida reserves for the master, is not the worst fear of the committed assassin. It is to surrender oneself to the enemy through love.

3. Conclusion in Process

We have, with Versenyi and Deschamp, abstracted from Gorgias and Derrida the project of annihilating reason through its own natural processes (tricking it to feed upon itself).

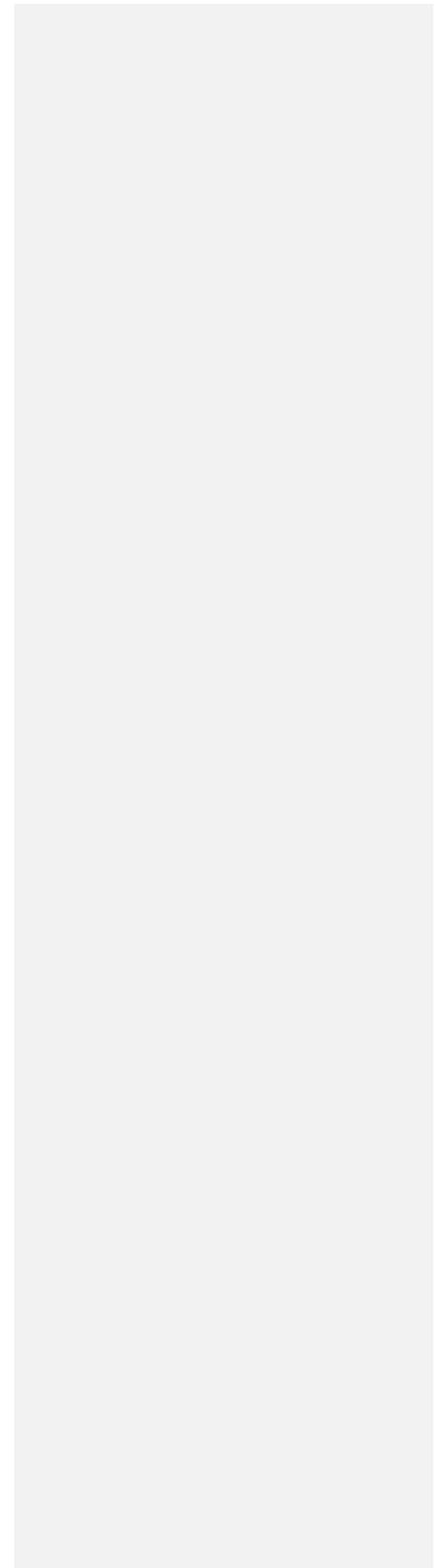
According to Versenyi, Gorgias recognized poetry as permitting passage beyond conventional assumptions. He quotes:

...The power of incantations uniting the soul's opinion to others persuades and transports by means of enchantment. Tragedy creates a deception in which the deceiver is more just than the nondeceiver, the deceived wiser than the undeceived. (p. 49)

In Gorgias, recognition of the wildness and self-will of logos _ its power to twist us unconsenting to its service ... its roots in dark underground currents _ generated a value neutral technology of control. In Socrates and Plato this recognition deepened reason.

Reason reaches for dialogue beyond itself.

Section5: Glimpsing Disciplinary Reason?



A Room of our Own (1984)

1

The explicitly dialogical orientation opens when sociology-psychology breaks subordination to science, seeks self-knowledge and recognizes itself as an autonomous discipline and a distinct modality of theoretical reason (open to learn from art, history, science, etc., yet belonging to itself).

The generative project of dialogic sociology-psychology is the struggle of our life together and apart to comprehend itself for its own sake and in its own terms through the mediation of theoretical reason.

Sociology-psychology engages the passion of human existence for reasonable theoretical self-knowledge (a dream increasingly desperate and haunted within the breakdown of this order of life).

2

Why specify “for its own sake” and “in its own terms”?

Reality-in-itself is not directly accessible. All disciplines engage human experience.

Human experience is always, whatever else it also is, unique. It is always someone’s, always personal. Yet it is not generated anew from nothing by each person. It is a shared creation.

To engage human experience is to engage our life together and apart. All disciplines engage our life together and apart.

In natural science our life together and apart is engaged as “a way into” an autonomous order that would proceed without it ... Sociology-psychology not only addresses our life together and apart (as all disciplines necessarily must), it engages our life together and apart “for its own sake” and “in its own terms,” not as a sign of something else.

From this point the phrase “our life together and apart” unless otherwise specified stands for “our life together and apart considered for its own sake and in its own terms.”

3

Dialogic sociology-psychology is explicitly humanistic, yet does not support the deification of the human species and/or society and/or reason.

Dialogic sociology-psychology is committed to the struggle for disciplinary self-knowledge.

Dialogic sociology- psychology is open to all problems through which humanity desires and pursues self-knowledge. It is open to the search for general explanations and methodological principles. It is open to the explanatory/ interpretative relevance of unique existence. It is open to the full resources of “common language” and to personal voice and style. It is open to exploration of generic human dynamics and to comparison of existential constellations.... It is open to the richness, ambiguity and complexity of our life together and apart.

We commit dialogic sociology- psychology in the name of reason to the struggle for a creative, just, vital, compassionate human existence³³

Book III: Hearing the Music Between: 1 Exploring The Personal-Interpersonal Field.

³³ Anthropology is an alternative name for the discipline we designate “sociology-psychology.” Why didn't we choose it? First and foremost:

- a. As anthropology includes physical anthropology it carries fragments of various natural sciences. Thus, its disciplinary domain of inquiry is not unambiguously “our life together and apart for its own sake and in its own terms.”

Moreover,

- b. My background is more in sociology and psychology than in anthropology. In early discipline reconstruction it is helpful to preserve distinct starting points.

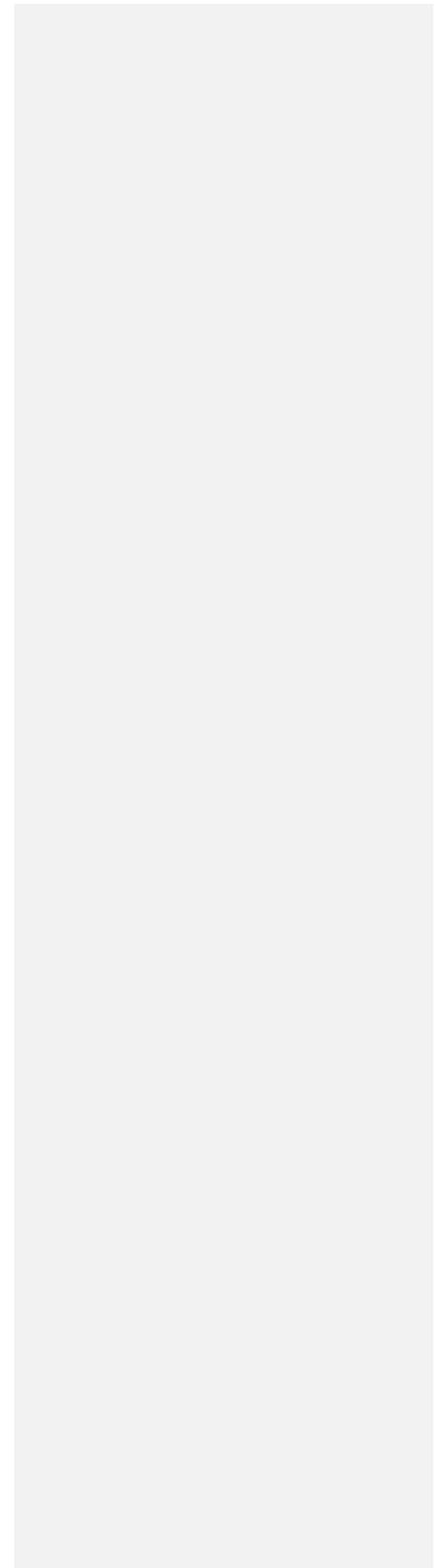
and

- c. “Sociology-psychology,” though clumsy, suggests the range of disciplinary concerns.

Perhaps anthropology will divest itself of its holdings in physical inquiry. Perhaps history will balance its traditional focus on particular events with exploration of human universal patterns.

Perhaps anthropology, theoretical history, or some new term, will be adapted.

Section 1: Some Basic Notions and Orientations



On the Relationship between Dialogic Sociology-Psychology and Science

I

Autonomy from science is not opposition to science. Science and sociology-psychology both participate in theoretical reason.

II

Sociology-psychology should emulate scientific commitment to disciplinary autonomy and self-knowledge.

III

It is a crucial task of dialogic sociology-psychology to reframe the legitimate concerns of social/behavioral science in a more humane more reasonable context.

Concern with dynamics, and thus with prediction and control, distorting if alternatives are silenced, appears in explicitly dialogical sociology-psychology as one among many co-constitutive disciplinary problem constellations.³⁴

IV

1

Our mutual desire to move and change one another and ourselves is not limited to control.

We explore each other to enjoy, or with no end in view... We seek to dance together as plants seek sunlight.

In love, we would predict in order to guard the other from control, in order to protect.

We would understand one another in order to persuade (i.e., to secure the other's unforced unmanipulated free assent).

2

To disregard the dynamics of our life together and apart in dealing with other human beings (or with oneself) would be brutal (like treating animals as though they could not feel) and dangerous (like putting metal in a microwave)... Benevolent action requires knowledge of and sensitivity to "human nature". Purely manipulative action is not benevolent.

3

We explore dynamics primarily from the perspective of people seeking autonomy, I-Thou connection, dialogue and disciplinary creativity rather than from the perspective of a controlling managerial elite

In dialogic sociology-psychology dynamics is potentiality

V

I am watching a long line of people in motion. There are universal patterns.

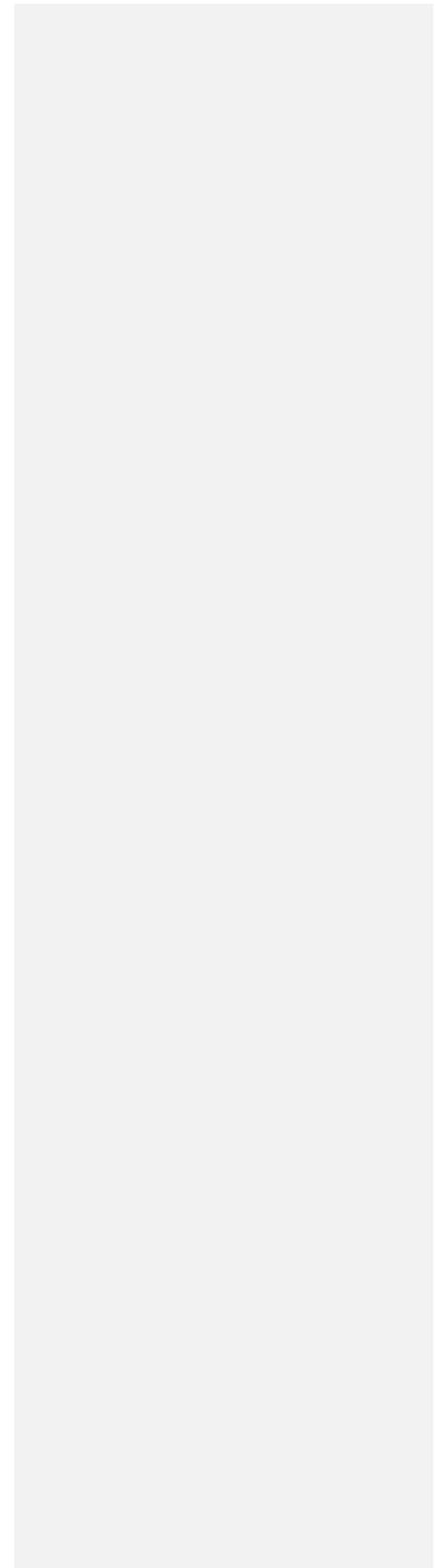
³⁴ This inclusion is addressed in section IV, "Entering Through Personal-Interpersonal Dynamics."

There are variations.

I hear nothing, yet hypothesize that they are dancing... I seek the music in the dance.

Section 2: Opening the Personal-Interpersonal Field

\



Sociology-Psychology and The Personal-Interpersonal field

Our life together and apart is sociology-psychology's disciplinary domain of inquiry (a.k.a., "phenomenal domain"). "The personal-interpersonal field" abstracts and foregrounds dynamics:.

The interpersonal (intra-group, inter-group and macro) and the personal are conceived as a unified dynamic constellation.³⁵

³⁵ Social psychology on the other hand is a branch of psychology and/or an intersection between disciplines.

Opening Dynamics (19890

1

We distinguish between that which occurs and that through which it occurs. We designate these categories “events” and “dynamics”.

2

Path” is a crucial opening image. A path is “a way to.” “Here is the path” answers the question “How could one get there?”

The relevant species of path is process. Processes carry one along like a river: one is always, whether one chooses or not, whether one knows it or not, in motion .

Processes can interplay (e.g., the “dynamic constellation” around the problem/solution connection).

Immanent Dynamics (1989)

I

Aristotle:

Of things that exist...by nature...each...has within itself a principle of motion and of stationariness (in respect of place, or of growth and decrease, or by way of alteration). [McKeon, 122; (*Physics*: Bk II: 192, 1-17)]

Sorokin adapts this to the personal-interpersonal field

A pile of sand, bricks or fallen leaves is a passive conglomeration without its own (causal) force controlling

its functions, change and development. It is at the mercy of external forces. A wind can blow off a part of the leaves; dogs or children walloping in the pile rearrange it... Different is the situation with the causal-meaningful system. It has its own self-directing force that keeps its unified integrity in different conditions, that controls its functions, that determines (from within) the direction and character of its change, and gives to it a margin of autonomy from all external forces that try to disrupt its units, influence its functions, and condition its changes. (1947, 154-155)

Within our life together and apart as a phenomenal domain, that is immanent to a unit x which co-constitutes it (e.g., as process or “substance”) and/or directly occurs from it (e.g., as event and/or artifact).

An infant will naturally develop into an adult, yet if entirely deprived of external support s/he will die... “To occur from itself” is not necessarily to occur in total isolation (as a plant up rooted and relocated in a vacuum). X may occur from itself in its normal enabling flow of relationships.

II

In sociology-psychology, propositions of immanent dynamics explain directly yet rarely explain completely.

Expectations based on hypotheses of immanent/natural dynamics strategically influence the specification and exploration of “external” dynamics. (e.g. If improvisation is a normally dominant immanent species potentiality, then extreme conformity suggests an opposed dynamic. If “category creativity” is a rarely actualized yet crucial species potentiality, one seeks inhibiting and triggering constellations.).

III

Inquiry into immanent dynamics should reveal potentialities, including those historically blocked and/or distorted by power. It should note and challenge theoretical misrepresentations (e.g. one-sided emphasize on conformity).

These foundational essays will focus on immanent processes yet be open to external surprises.

Stasis, Alteration and Reconstruction (1989)

I

In our life together and apart stasis is through continual renewal (as in animals and plants) rather than mere endurance (as in rocks). It is the stillness of the tightrope walker, sustained by constant small movements. Personal-interpersonal stasis is a species of “motion.”

One might say that the central problem of sociological-psychological dynamics is order. Yet the relevant concept of order in no way privileges stasis. It is order in the sense of “potentially comprehensible pattern.”

II

1

Marx:

The bourgeois cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production and with them, the whole relations of society. (10)

Marx hypothesized that continued change is a precondition for a society maintaining its existent bourgeois organization. Yet a bourgeois can be replaced by a proletarian order of life. We will refer to change within a pattern as “alteration” and to change of pattern as “reconstruction.” A reconstruction is “a qualitative change.”

Theoretical reason should not favor stasis and/or alteration over reconstruction.

2

Some processes of reconstruction are historically specific. Others apply to transformation of units of one type “A” into units of another type “B” (e.g., with the mechanisms through which, to use Sorokin’s categories, idealistic are transformed into sensate configurations). There are also mechanisms applicable to all reconstructions... In this foundational inquiry we focus on species potentials, yet are also curious about emergent constellations.

3

We term the articulation of a qualitatively distinct disciplinary perspective “orientational reconstruction” and its acceptance “institutional reconstruction.” (Our direct explicit project in this manuscript is orientational.)

Opening the Personal-Interpersonal Field (1995)

I

Sorokin argues that to actualize sociology requires openness to its autonomous requirements:

Many sociological empiricists still regard sociology as an alter ego of the natural sciences, particularly of the physico-chemical sciences, in its structure, method and referential principles. If the claims advanced by this school of sociological thinkers were realizable, they would mean the complete absorption of sociology and the social sciences into the physico-chemical sciences. If socio-cultural phenomena could be adequately explained

in terms of the physico-chemical sciences, this would mean that they were simply physico-chemical phenomena and nothing more. In that case, no sociology or social science would be needed; for physico-chemical sociology would be merely another way of designating the physico-chemical sciences. No basis exists for a duplication of the same science under two different names. (1943, 3, 4)

He then specifies “the generic structure of the socio-cultural phenomena”:

Any empirical sociological phenomenon consists of three components: (1) immaterial, spaceless and timeless meanings; (2) material (physico-chemical and biological) vehicles that “materialize, externalize or objectify” the meanings; and (3) human agents that bear, use and operate these meanings through the instrumentality of the material vehicles. (4)

Yet of these three only “meanings” are unique to “the socio cultural”. Conceived outside explicit focus on meanings, material and humans are physico-chemical and biological phenomena.³⁶

II

Wolfgang Kohler remarks:

Phenomenally, the bodily “self” is not a physical entity outside immediate experience as is the physical organism; it is, rather, a percept of which we are aware, enriched by changing moods, attitudes, efforts and activities. Similarly “objects” are phenomenal things.... (69)

Their place is not in the “self.” Why should these percepts be localized inside another particular percept?...but in other parts of phenomenal “space,” near or far as the case may be. (69)

³⁶ Sorokin's other discussions of sociology's domain of inquiry are more useful, for example, his discussion of socio-cultural causality, space and time.

Does the self always play the dominant role in our phenomenal field? Undoubtedly it does not.... (86)

Often it is not the self from which vectors reach out towards other people. (87)

That which Kohler explores above is variously designated in Gestalt psychology “phenomenal field,” “behavioral field” and “behavioral environment.” We will refer to the “person-group field.”³⁷

2

The central tendency of Gestalt psychology is to recognize, carefully reconnoiter and then refuse commitment to the person-group field as disciplinary domain of inquiry. Further exploration is subordinated to the project of the unity of science. Kurt Koffka:

We cannot accept the behavioral environment as that psychological field which is to be our fundamental explanatory category. (46)

In our ultimate explanations, we can have but one universe of discourse and...it must be the one about which physics has taught us so much. (48)

Subject to further inquiry, we suggest that Kurt Lewin was the first in this tradition to explicitly and decisively assert the person-group field as psychology's domain of inquiry.

III

“The personal-interpersonal field” incorporates the “person-group field” with inter-group and macro patterns.

Simmel explores this interplay through the hidden ambiguities (“the inner life”) of blue:

When...we represent the color blue, it is perhaps an element of the sensibly real world, which is the seat of our practical life. The picture in our imagination where we have only detached the color from the accompanying circumstances with which the world of reality has

³⁷ Although the original Gestalt psychologists focus on the intra-psychic, their concerns extend to the group. This is carried further by, among many others, Solomon Asch and Fritz Heider.

interwoven it, probably belongs to this significance of the color. Within the abstractness of the pure world of knowledge, however, blue is meaningful in quite another sense: there it is a particular oscillation of ether waves or a particular position in the spectrum or a particular physiological or psychological reaction. It signifies something else again as an element of the subjective world of feeling - in the lyrical feelings we might have in the face of a blue sky or the blue eyes of our beloved. It is the same blue, and yet, by its contextual meaning, it is oriented in a completely different way, when it belongs to the religious sphere, perhaps as the color of the Madonna's cloak or more generally, as a symbol of a mystical world. (Weingartner 301)

Writing now in New York City in 1995, blue for me is open to this place and time: “the blues,” (i.e. the flowing speaking line of Mississippi John Hurt's guitar)... blue Mondays, Picasso's blue period,...the brilliant surreal blue of neon lights.

Person, Context, Action (1984)

1. Conformity, Improvisation and Contextual Creativity

1.1

Persons together with interpretative interpersonal contexts generate action through our immanent species potentialities for conformity,” “improvisation” and “contextual” (a.k.a. “directly reconstructive”) creativity.”

1.2

In conformity interpretative contexts program action...Conformity rigidly follows and obeys. It enacts the given. People have “nothing of their own to say”: “spoken not speaking, danced not dancing.”

Improvisation is open to personal style and responsive to the unique moment. . . It enables nuanced sensitive gestures that neither mechanically follow nor directly challenge received interpretative contexts.³⁸ Improvisation (not conformity) is our usual relationship to institutionalized contexts of experience, discourse and action.n

We can directly address and reconstruct the categories and situations that contain us. Without the immanent potentiality for transformative (foundational) creativity humanity could never have constructed our first order of life: or if by miracle constructed, it would have held us entrapped forever (as bees in instinct).

We (the human species) compose the music to which we dance and write the scripts we enact.

Transformative creativity and improvisation are as natural as conformity. They are co-constitutive generically human potentialities

Section 2: Some Field Dynamic Models

³⁸ In an earlier draft we model improvisation on the performing artist.... There is a connection. Yet,

- a. There are performances (e.g., in jazz) not bound to texts or (musical) scores.
- b. There is direct reconstruction of performance traditions.

The concept of performance is of inherent intellectual interest. (A “free standing” academic specialty, “performance theory” is now in the process of institutionalization.)

Contained Centripetal

I

The centripetal model, traditionally dominant in United States sociology, ___ privileges conformity. The person is naturally drawn towards the center of the group. Acceptance is naturally rewarding.

A central assumption is that “the contained” is naturally patterned (programmed) by that which contains it. The containing configuration is usually termed “system.” The modifier “sub” reoccurs (e.g., subsystem, subculture, subgroup).

Towards the bottom of the container-contained hierarchy, the primary group programs the person. In sociology the person is the most subordinate part shaped

by all that contains it. In psychology it is a system that programs (and tames) its components.

II

1

If we are entirely programmed by our socio-cultural contexts, the flexibility of action depends upon the structure of these contexts.

In one professionally popular variation action is controlled by values, norms and roles. Values are general imperatives. Norms translate values situationally. "Respect your elders" is a value. "Stand up when an older person enters the room" is a derived norm. Roles are "normative ganglia." Action is directly oriented to and programmed by roles. There is little flexibility of response... Personal integration depends upon "socio-cultural" integration.

Cybernetics demonstrates that conformity need not always produce inflexible responses... One example, chess an enterprise traditionally thought to be inherently "open" and beyond final resolution through calculation "a city" on the border between art, craft and play is about to be conquered and, in principle, closed forever as a field of human species aspiration, through computer programs capable of triumphing over all human players._ Programming is conformist.

One can imagine humanity as both conforming and (through triggers, layered codes, meta rules, etc.) coping flexibly with diverse situations.

2

It is biased (distorting), insensitive and unimaginative to routinely, unquestioningly, interpret human processes through machine (including cybernetic) metaphors.

Sociology-psychology can contribute to the study of "artificial intelligence" by exploring our life together and apart in its own terms.

Centripetal-Centrifugal

I

We posit, along symbolic interactionist lines, that both autonomy and integration are natural to human existence. (The dominance of either extreme requires a search for “external” explanatory patterns.)

Erving Goffman explores personal-autonomy-as-field-process within “open areas” as “presentation of self in everyday life” and in institutionally rigidly controlled spaces as “secondary adjustment” (1962, 188-320).

Native American vision quests and Proust writing *Remembrance of Things Past* are (whatever else they also are) extreme manifestations of a normal and natural rhythm of withdrawal and return.

II

“Breaking,” the attempt of assembly line workers to control the amount and pace of work through direct action without the intervention, often without the existence, of “unions,” demonstrates the persistence of desire for personal autonomy at the heart of the machine principle (Kakar, 75-100).

III

1

Now in the United States the taken-for-granted and for the most part unconscious effort required to maintain individuality is enormous. Yet it is especially when long accepted limits are transgressed by the powerful (as in the struggle of workers against Taylor’s “scientific management”) that autonomy becomes a matter of explicit desperate concern.

2

Alvin Gouldner (1954) argues that workers in labor disputes often employ a rhetoric of narrow economic “rationality” to articulate and disguise _ to address without addressing _ issues of autonomy and power (54).

We suggest that this displacement is an instance of a generically human dynamic. If the rules governing interaction are so completely controlled by one participant as to be held outside debate, then issues of autonomy and control will be displaced into other contexts and manifestations [e.g., mental and psychosomatic illness and (as often in prisons) violence]... In the United States the basic “precontractual agreement” between “labor” and “management” is that labor accept exclusion from active participation in planning and organizing production and distribution in return for a (not necessarily decisive) influence on the (narrowly conceived) costs and conditions of employment.

IV

1

Autonomy and identity are linked. When identity weakens then others’ definitions, interpretations and assumptions might press against and pierce the wounded self... One might be exiled from one’s mind, inhabit oneself as an occupied country and/or become one’s own mortal enemy.

2

Ralph Ellison:

One of the most insidious crimes occurring in this democracy is that of designating another, politically weaker, less socially acceptable, people as the receptacle for one's own self-disgust, for one's own infantile rebellion, for one's own fears of, and retreats from, reality. It is the crime of reducing the humanity of others to that of a mere convenience, a counter in a banal game, which involves no apparent risk to ourselves. (124)

One manifestation of passion for autonomy in an area controlled by others is struggle for "a breathing space." A breathing space may (but need not) be a specific area (e.g., a teacher's lounge, a church, a garden...a room of one's own). It may be affectionate contact with a friend or lover.³⁹ It may, as in Judaism, be a sustaining pattern of ritual (e.g., Sabbath, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur).

For Albert Camus "drawing limits" is crucial to "rebellion," and rebellion is crucial to the human condition; to be human is, whatever else it also is, to rebel against mortal limitations and interpersonal oppression.

Rebellion need not manifest itself in overt political struggle... Those who fought back in the Warsaw ghetto, those who went to their death singing love of God (aloud or silently in their minds), parents who comforted their children until the final separation, Jews who kept Passover, those who risked their lives to give witness on scraps of paper, those who aided one another in the shadow of torture and death, all rebelled against Nazi projections.

3

The passion for autonomy desires to shape as well as be shaped by and to freely inhabit our life together and apart. It does not naturally seek to propel itself beyond the gravity of the human condition out past the borders of language. (Such movement would deviate from expectations based on natural-immanent dynamics and thus encourage a search for new explanatory patterns.)

³⁹ Recognition that "a breathing space" need not be a specific geographical area helps avoid confusion with biologically determined "territoriality."

Group-Person

Following Simmel we posit person and group as autonomous dynamic foci... The one-sided triumph of either side would deviate from expectations based on species immanent dynamics and thus encourage a search for new explanatory patterns.

The group would reduce the person to his/her role as group member... The person would transform the group into the means of his/her development.

The involvement of every gesture with both dynamics inhibits all absolute outcomes. It opposes the nightmare of eternal tyranny (e.g., as in Orwell's *1984*) and all dreams of earthly paradise.

The Multi-Centered Model

I

1

Sociological and psychological discussions usually occur where free flow of language (language not only “working routinely,” but inventing itself: playing and dancing ...rejoicing and mourning) is carefully excluded. (It is as though one would attempt to comprehend the full potentialities of humanity entirely through analysis of “office work.”)

In order to avoid this distortion we proceed in dialogue with art. Here we take our experiments in direct quotation (influenced by Pound and Eliot) to an

extreme.... We need just enough of the right selections to “open” received tradition without breaking connection.

2

New York 1989

Buildings,

Corroded

Stinking

Ancient

Bodies:

Halting

In the cellar

Exhalation of heat,

Weary

Passage of heat

Through pipes...

Dwellers here

Turn

Blue

Or cruel

Or fade

Or lost

Or gray

Or self ignite

Or starry night

Or moon cool ice.

William Carlos Williams:

The Great Figure

Among the rain
and lights
I saw the figure 5
In gold
On a red
fire truck
moving
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city. (Ellman 290)

Robert Lowell:

From **Skunk Hour**

A car radio blasts,
Love, O careless Love...I hear
My ill spirit sob in each blood cell,
As if my hand were at its throat...
I myself am hell;

Nobody's here. (939)

From **To Speak of Woe That is in Marriage**

Our magnolia blossoms. Life begins to happen.
My hopped up husband drops his home disputes,
And hits the streets to cruise for prostitutes,
Free lancing out among the razors edge. (937)

Jon Silkin:

From **Death of a Son**

And then slowly the eye stopped looking
Inward. The silence rose and became still.
The look turned to the outer place and stopped,
With the birds still shrilling around him.
And as if he could speak.

He turned over on his side with his one year
Red as a wound...
And out of his eyes two red tears rolled, like stones,
And he died (1279)

Wallace Stevens:

From **The Idea of Order at Key West**

She sang beyond the genius of the sea
The water never formed in mind or voice,
Like a body wholly body, fluttering

Its empty sleeves; and yet its mimic motion
 Made constant cry, caused constantly a cry,
 That was not ours: although we understood,
 Inhuman, of the veritable ocean. (251)

2.3

James Joyce's *Ulysses* opens:

Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the
 stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a
 mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressing
 gown ungirdled was sustained gently behind him
 by the mild morning air. He held the bowl aloft
 and intoned in introit ad altare Dei. (2-3)

Cross is cross, large or small, composed of rough unfinished slabs of wood or
 intersection of mirror and razor: saturated with metaphoric and creative
 resonance.... Ritual as play. Play reborn in art.

II

I experience (or should I say I am?) a complex interplay of
 interpenetrating sounds, colors, scents, symbols, shaped by and shaping
 innumerable projects in and through infinite situations.

All historical individuals (e.g., persons, relationships, moments, orders of
 life) are complex constellations of interpenetrating gestalten that in pull and
 counter-pull, permit - at times compel - openness, interplay, improvisation and
 contextual creativity.

We interpret "pragnanz" as asserting the natural autonomy of all personal-
 interpersonal patterns (not only shaped by but shaping). Pragnanz interpenetrates
 potentialities for interplay and metamorphosis.

III

The multi-centered model posits pattern autonomy as a co-constitutive
 dynamic of the personal-interpersonal field [applicable at all points on all levels
 (e.g., intra-psychic and intergroup)].

The group-person model appears as a special case.⁴⁰

This orientation might at first glance suggest the unchallenged dominance of conflict. Yet conflict and solidarity (strife and love⁴¹) are interdependent. Without solidarity all points would remain disconnected: there would be no patterns to conflict.

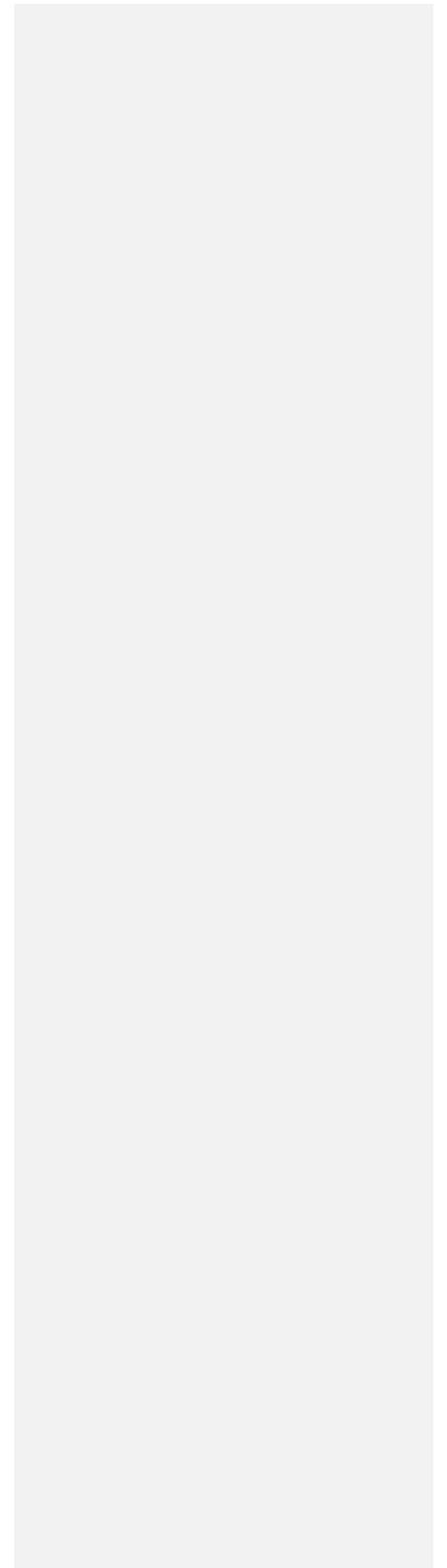
Species capacities for mediation (including but not limited to synthesis, improvisation and contextual creativity) enable resolutions that are not either/or, conquest or annihilation. There can be dialogue, negotiation and re-construction.

Book IV: The Music Between Us 2: The Problem/solution Connection

⁴⁰ Influences include the tribal notion of mana, Jung's vision of an image haunted world, conflict theory, Gouldner's concern with "reciprocity and autonomy"(1959) and Zigarnick's gestalt psychological experiments on the persistence of unfinished tasks in memory.

⁴¹ We are indebted for this image to Empedocles.

Section I: Opening



Introduction (2019)

1

Our first sociological-psychological schema, initiated in 1962, explores generically human natural immanent dynamics and species realms through the problem/solution connection.

2

In this manuscript the term “problem” does not designate a single homogeneous isolated unit. Problems are relational. The terms “problematic”, “problem constellation” and “problem configuration” emphasizes interconnection.

Because the problem/solution connection is omnipresent and usually taken for granted it is hard to abstract and articulate. We struggle towards a relevant “language”.

A Crucial Influence: R.G. Collingwood (2019)

I

The main influence on my formulation of problem/solution theory was the logic of question and answer developed by the philosopher/historian R.G. Collingwood.

This influence was so powerful that it distorted my reception. In the 1960s without awareness of misreading I unconsciously substituted problem/solution for question and answer...I also failed to carefully examine the tension between methodology and explanation in both formulations

It is only now in 2019_ a month from my 80th birthday and my retirement_ that I reconsider this crucial dialogue.

II

Reading Collingwood helped me grasp that “What does x mean? is a version of “What is x?” that is crucial for sociology-psychology (and history)...As this is an essay in sociology-psychology to understand x is to understand its meaning (to interpret it as a meaning constellation).

It also suggested (perhaps a misreading...or at least a leap) that understanding meaning and understanding genesis interpenetrate.

Perhaps the English language would support the sentence “Artifact x (e.g. The Mona Lisa) was shaped by the questions it answers”.

I “sense” that “Artifact x” was shaped by the problems it solves” is clearer and more fruitful (i.e. opens richer more coherent lines of constructive implication)...One can move directly to a general proposition, ‘The meaning of every human artifact is shaped by the problems it solves, and changes as these problems alter”

2

Collingwood’s questions as a historian/ archeologist/ philosopher normally interrogated the meaning of artifacts. Not all questions (e.g. “Where is the cookie?”) are of this type. It is not the question and answer form but a particular question “What is the meaning of x” and the path to an answer “The meaning of every human artifact is shaped by the problems it solves, and changes as these problems alter” that I find crucial to historical and sociological methodology...and perhaps beyond.

III

If, as I suggest, “The meaning of every human artifact is shaped by the problems it solves, and changes as these problems alter is a reasonable methodologically useful assumption would this be enough to justify the label logic?

The question “What is required for y to pass from methodology to logic?” falls outside this limited project...Yet I cannot entirely stifle my curiosity...I am surprised that the constructive implications of the problem/solution nexus led me to

a notion “constructive implication” on the border between theory, methodology and...something else.

IV

Collingwood, as I loved and partially misunderstood his work, helped move problem/solution theory beyond a common-sense vision of localized problems in a “taken for granted world” to a sense of our life together and apart as inherently problematic.⁴²

Influenced by Taoism I envisioned problem/solution nexi as opening lines of cumulative inquiry at “the natural jointures” of our life together and apart.

On the Tension between “Methodology and Explanation in Problem/Solution Exploration(2019)

I

1

One can map an exploration as well as the territory it traverses... One can explore, thus map, map making.

2

⁴² (1996) Until the 1980s I was unaware of the pioneering explorations of the problem/solution connection in philosophy by Hans Gadamer and Karl Popper (although I was acquainted with other aspects of Popper’s work) and in the theory of literature by Hans Robert Jauss. By then my sociological-psychological path was opened and I decided to continue following it. I still agree with this decision. This is not a secondary commentary. It is a report on a foundational discipline reconstruction in process. (Popper, Gadamer and Jauss do not to the best of my knowledge write extensive commentaries on one another, or on Collingwood.) _ In early exploration of transdisciplinary approaches it is useful to preserve and develop a variety of relevant openings.

In *Touching Reason* we invite sociology to discover itself in dialogue with its own potentiality through “awareness in the act” Thus it’s crucial notions reappear on level after level of reflection... We designate the first level “explanatory” and the second “methodological” (Is logic the third level?).

3

Problem/solution inquiry is naturally problematic to itself.

II (1979)

A bathysphere descends. - Not steel and glass. Sensitive and sapient... A sapient bathysphere is shaped by and shapes that through which it falls and that which it contains.

The sociological-psychological bathysphere descends through the rhythms and currents of the ocean of voices.

A bathysphere descends to the depth of bathysphere construction...descent into descent.

Relevant Research Problems (2006)

I

1

Concern with “functionalism” and with creativity in visual art encouraged exploration of the problem/solution connection.

2

In the 50s and early 60s most professional sociologists supported “functionalism” as a theoretical orientation.

My analysis of functionalism was, in brief, as follows:

- a. The functional, as the causal, is analytic to theories. It is an “explanatory form”.
- b. As functionalism is not “substantive” it cannot explain personal-interpersonal patterns... Neither functionalism nor causalism can work as theoretical orientations.
- c. The misconception that functionalism is a theoretical orientation is rooted in “unrecognized” reference to problem/solution nexi.

3

Exploring artistic creativity, I asked:

- a. What personal-interpersonal patterns favor creativity in the art of painting?

Most studies of creativity focus on science. Thus:

- b. How can research on creativity in one “area” be applied to creativity in another?

Which leads to

- c. How can diverse personal-interpersonal areas be rendered dynamically comparable?

Which leads to

- d. Can diverse personal- interpersonal areas be “articulated” in the same theoretical “language”?

Problem/solution connection is relevant to both art and science.

II. Some Root Problematics (2006)

Explanatory and methodological concerns⁴³ include:

- a. Integration of timeless “if then” connection and “historical becoming”,
- b. Integration of generically human, type specific, and “unique individual” dynamics,
- c. “Articulation” of diverse personal-interpersonal “areas” in one theoretical “language”,
- d. Exploration of discipline reconstruction,
- e. Exploration of the clarification/evaluation of meaning constellations,
- f. Development of a sociology-psychology of “disciplinary positions” (e.g., art, science, religion, sociology-psychology) that recognizes both their emersion in our life together and apart and their autonomy,
- g. Incorporation of research into openness, creativity and intimacy in the central design of sociology-psychology.

Section: 2 Some Problem/Solution Processes

⁴³ In this manuscript the term “problem” does not designate a single homogeneous isolated unit. Problems are relational. The terms “problematic”, “problem constellation” and “problem configuration” emphasizes interconnection.

Interplay(1989)

1

Problem and solution interpenetrate.

We select chess as a relatively simple illustration. A move in a chess game is a response to problems emerging from previous moves that are solutions to previous problems. The new move as solution will change the “problem situation” for both players. One may look at the structure of a game now as a constellation of problems to be solved, now as a constellation of solutions through which problems emerge.

In problem/solution constellations, abstractions mediate between particular situations, and between situations and action. . . . In chess,⁴⁴ for example, problems posed in a particular game are normally interpreted through relevant traditional abstracted problem/solution formulations [e.g., effective development, superior mobility, occupation of the center, avoidance of weak squares (Euwe 40-43), securing open files and passed pawns (Nimzovich 21-36, 50-84)]. This tradition develops in and through particular games (tournament games are transcribed and routinely consulted).⁴⁵

Constructive Implication (1975)

I

1

We suggest that problem/solution nexi generate a type of natural connection we designate “constructive implication.”

A painter develops stroke by stroke a pattern inherent in the work. Skilled chess players activate potentialities unimagined by those less advanced (who, once the moves are made, recognize their brilliance). Perhaps the painting is by Monet and reveals previously unimagined potentialities inherent in impressionism. Perhaps the chess game is between Nimzovich and Tarrash and discloses fresh

⁴⁴ Chess is unusual in the extent to which its problem/solution structure has been autonomously disclosed and articulated.

⁴⁵ The cultural tradition of chess includes but is not limited to:

- a. General strategies (e.g., for effective development of pieces in the opening, and for working through “open,” “closed” and “intermediate” middle game constellations).
- b. Prespecified problem/solution relevant move sequences: different “openings” (e.g., Giuco Piano, Roy Lopez, Sicilian Defense) and within these patterns, “variations” and “lines” (e.g., the Rubenstein Variation of “The Four Knights Game,” and the Rossolimo Variation of “The Sicilian”).

possibilities in the opening and line they play (or even initiate a new “sound” line previously “dormant” in the opening). Our painters and chess players follow the constructive implications of the patterns they address.

2

Constructive implication includes yet transcends the concept (central to Gestalt psychology and Kurt Lewin) of directional vectors structuring “face-to-face” interaction. Constructive implication links “the face-to-face” to more inclusive (e.g. institutional) contexts. It links the present to the past and the imagined future.

II. (1976)

1

The actualization of lines of constructive implication “in the world” can be blocked by opposed forces. There are no “iron laws of history.”

2

Even logical connections can be blocked from completion. Two plus two necessarily equals four. Yet if a person who begins to add two plus two is killed before reaching the sum then the necessary connection, while remaining necessary, will not in that instance be attained... If humanity eliminates itself then, at least on earth, no logical connections will be made.

There are necessary connections but no necessary historical outcomes.

On Problem/ Solution Interflow(2000)

I. Practicing Clarification

Meaning is “the substance” of our life together and apart, not an area within it.

We suggest that “The clarification of meaning constellations requires mediation between their full existential-historical resonance and relevant contextual requirements”. (p.28) Here we interpret synthesis, existential- historical relevance, resonance and pattern sensitivity in problem/solution “terms”.

II.Synthesis

Synthesis is the species capacity to construct from apparently incompatible positions A and B a new distinct position C in which the constructive implications of A and B are retained and at least partially actualized.

III. Coding/Relevance (1965-2001)

A. Normal

“Coding/relevance”⁴⁶ refers to the relationship between problem/solution nexi (with their lines of constructive implication) and the flow of on-going human existence.

Constellations of coding/relevance organize the circulation of actions, experiences, terms, etc., through problem/solution nexi, and of problem/solution nexi through one another.

Coding/relevance is omnipresent in human existence. On every level, from relationships between orders of life to interactions within families, it connects and distances, differentiates and binds... In a department store, “toys” and “lingerie” are normally quite different areas for a small boy and for his mother. Such patterns are so clearly marked that variations can reveal (are often intended to reveal) uniqueness and individuation. Yet many alternative usages (e.g., long hair for males) standardize in a new conformity. Others are dream-like in layered conformity and deviance (e.g., the young Quentin Crisp and his mother in a department store).

What to a “native” is a place to socialize to wander through, to say “hello,” to greet one's friends may be for a stranger a place to hurry through and be afraid... The language of the street, the street as language (Whyte).

Is the beloved's kiss a sign of love returned? Or of lust only? Or not even lust (perhaps a sign of pity?) _ Are they laughing at me or with me? _ Is psychoanalysis a science, an art, or (as Frederick Crews and others suggest) a con game? _ Are mass produced toy plastic submarines art when they are hung from the ceiling of the Whitney Museum?

B. Hypercentrality and Atomization as Pathologies of Coding/Relevance (1995)

“Hypercentrality” is a pathology of coding/relevance in which all events move directly to the center (dynamically there is all center no periphery).

⁴⁶ This discussion of coding/relevance is influenced by the work of Znaniecki, Sorokin, Parsons and Roberts. Relevance is central to the sociology of Alfred Schutz.

E. A. Hoebel remarks that in the Ashanti archaic kingdom all indebtedness brought to the attention of the central authority was coded as an absolute attack on human and cosmic order:

The creditor could “flee to the chief” with a petition for intervention. The chief, for a fee and as a public service, sent his treasurer as a collector. Refusal to pay over to the royal treasurer brought from his lips the dread oath on the forbidden name of a tribal god that the debtor “hated the king.” To the Ashanti this was a declaration that it was the intention of the debtor to assassinate the king. The charge was one of treason and the penalty death. To prove his innocence of the dread charge, the recalcitrant debtor paid up immediately - or lost his head. The slightest case of indebtedness in Ashanti could thus become a capital crime. Indeed a minor tort - any minor tort - could instantaneously be converted into a heinous criminal offense. (231)

Hugh Dalziel Duncan remarks that in Nazi rhetoric

The Jew and the communist must become the embodiment of Germany’s ills...heroes and villains...locked in battles which, like the battles of the gods, decide the fate of the world. (247)

It is a strategy of tyranny to induce hypercentrality of coding/relevance.

In “atomization” all points are isolated: dynamically there is all periphery no center.

IV. Resonance (1995)

We designate the constructive implications of a personal-interpersonal individual its “resonance”⁴⁷... A great work of art sends ripples out into the world forever, always new and yet always itself. The most common objects have a complex secret life of subterranean influences and interconnections... Everything is resonant.

We posit that resonance is influenced by past and present coding/relevance... We hypothesize that recency, duration and centrality are relevant variables: the more recently, the longer and the more centrally personal-

⁴⁷ Sources include Freud, Jung and the tribal concept of mana.

interpersonal individual x has been coded into problem/solution nexus y, the greater, everything else being equal, the influence of y on x.

Explorations of resonance and relevance naturally interpenetrate.

V Pattern Sensitivity

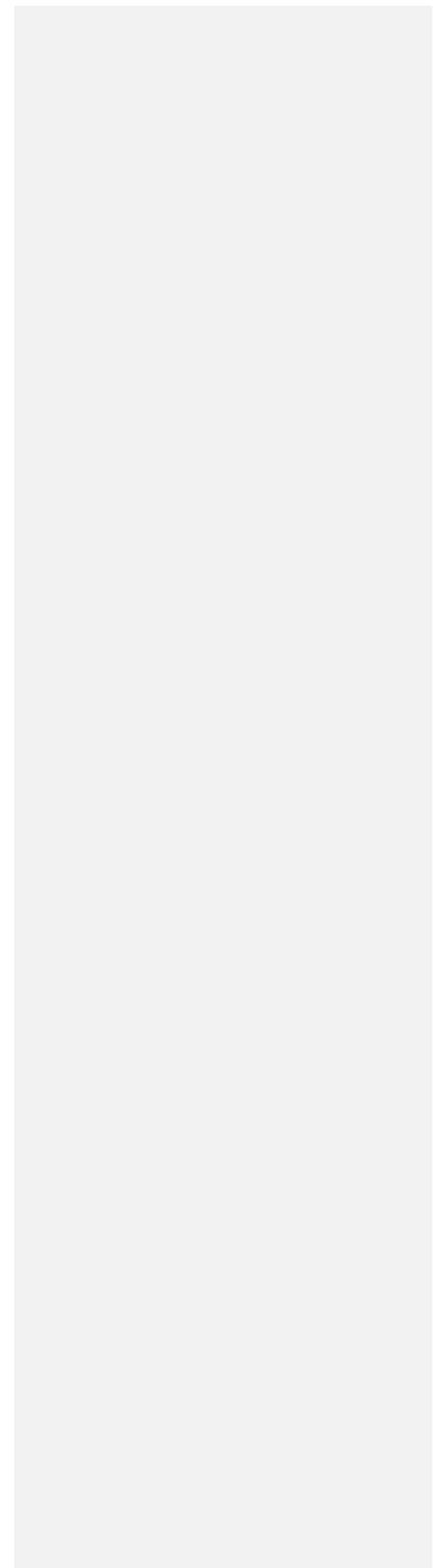
“Pattern sensitivity” is the generically human processing potentiality to isolate, grasp and follow problem/solution constellations (thus lines of constructive implication) within the tangled fertile complexities of the realm of open ambiguity.

Pattern sensitivity enables coherent movement and effective action outside institutionalized contexts of interpretation. It opens potentialities for improvisation and category creativity.

Section 3: On Species Realms

Opening

We attempt to render diverse areas of our life together and apart comparable in problem/solution terms



Games (2002)

I

1

Games usefully exhibit basic problem/solution properties and dynamics. However it would bias inquiry to view all problem/solution constellations as games.

Games are defined by rules. One can make choices, develop a distinct style of play, etc. However, one must remain within the rules to play the game.

“Positions” (e.g., art, science, sociology-psychology) remain themselves although rules change. Thus positional boundary issues require direct problem/solution and dialogic exploration.

2

Individual games, game events and outcomes are relatively “free standing” (i.e., a game is a high-bounded world onto itself). In chess a homeless person and a millionaire are equal opponents. They are not equal competitors for medical care or their children’s education.

In chess in the natural course of events the best moves win. In nongame life, force, money, status etc. can overwhelm even the most profound, brilliant and effective action. King Joseph of the Nez Perce and his people did all that their situation permitted: far more than one would have thought possible. Nonetheless they were defeated... On second thought, Nez Perce warriors could have successfully escaped to Canada had they abandoned their families. Perhaps, after all, they won... Outside the tight high-bounded world of games it is often unclear what victory would be.

3

In this essay the term “game” is limited to constellations that arose, are identified and played primarily as autonomous games (e.g., even if the economy is somewhat “game like” we will not assume that it is entirely or even primarily a game).

II

If we destroy our order of life, and perhaps with it all life on earth, this outcome will be influenced by our tendency to conceive human existence in game terms.

This pattern represses sensitivity to the ambiguities of historical existence... Human existence is conceived as a series of closed situations with prespecified favored outcomes. A “crisis” is over if one “wins”. To win is to attain the preset outcome (e.g., eliminate regime x or secure a government contract for product y).

The long-term effects of “winning” decisions are outside the game and thus irrelevant... Threads of responsibility and accountability are cut. Those who produced the unintended destructive consequences of the last “victory” remain as experts, often with unblemished reputations, to manage the new crises they helped create... Often the more the situation worsens the more desperately these experts

are followed. _ If the sequence is terminal they will probably be the last survivors, carefully preserved in underground shelters as our final hope.

Positions(1965-2003)

I. Opening

A “position” is a problem/solution constellation that abstracts relatively coherent lines of constructive implication from the realm of open ambiguity.

A problem is “generative” for a position if that position can reasonably be understood as an attempt to solve it. A problem is “required” for a position if all positional action must address it.

II. On Disciplinary Positions

1. Opening

A discipline (e.g., art, science, sociology-psychology) is not whatever people with a license (i.e., recognized professionals) do in situations that the going social

consensus of their time and place define as professionally relevant. It is the “constructive implications” of a “generative co-constitutively human problematic.”

Max Weber holds that “We are placed into various life spheres each of which is governed by different laws” (Weber, a 125). He refers to the “internal and lawful autonomy of these different spheres” (b.328), and notes that changes in religion are usually influenced primarily by “religious needs” (c.270).

He asserts that the progressive rationalization of life spheres lets them “drift into those tensions which remain hidden to the original naive relations to the external world” (b.328).

We translate Weber's concept of “life sphere” into problem/solution terms as “disciplinary position.”⁴⁸ Disciplinary positions are human universals. They undercut the differences between orders of life. All orders of life must, for example, struggle for self-knowledge, predict and control “external nature,” distribute scarce resources, orient human existence through an articulated vision of totality, coordinate productive labor, mediate intergenerational identities, communicate inwardness in the moment and through relatively permanent artifacts, etc. They must engage the requirements associated with these endeavors.

2. Unity/Diversity, Continuity/Discontinuity

2.1

No disciplinary position is completely unitary and entirely historically continuous. There are distinct “provincial positions” (e.g., in art: literature, music, painting, sculpture, dance, etc. _ in science: physics, chemistry, biology, etc.).⁴⁹

2.2

Problem/solution frameworks along the lines of a provincial position cannot be regarded as a continuous unmodified development of that position. There are emergent areas and styles.

⁴⁸ “Disciplinary position” here includes the transdisciplinary (e.g. reason).

⁴⁹ We focus on art for its own sake and in order to illuminate the disciplinary qua disciplinary.

In painting, for example, “historical painting,” landscape, still life and portraiture are traditionally recognized relatively autonomous areas.^{50 51}

Eugene Delacroix is classified as a romantic. He is contrasted to Jacques Louis David who was a neoclassicist. Thus their historical paintings are classified as belonging, respectively, to romantic and neoclassical stylistic positions.

2.3

X cannot be correctly coded as a work of art unless one or both of the following conditions apply:

a.X is a personal statement along established lines [e.g., in the late 19th and early 20th centuries diverse American artists including John Singer Sargent, William Merritt Chase and Robert Henri worked in a direct painterly (“bravura”) tradition developed by Diego Velasquez and Frans Hals, and revitalized by impressionism].

b.X (e.g., James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Pablo Picassos *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*) falls outside established lines but initiates a new constellation of constructive implication such that art through its most daring representatives recognizes new potentialities in itself.

To code a work x into art always invites discontinuity. In principle, and sometimes in practice, it calls the discipline as well as the artifact and the producer into question. _ Art is a unity in diversity.

Sigmund Koch explores the interpenetration of “present”⁵² diversity and historical discontinuity in science.

Language is at best a feeble instrument, even among members of a highly trained language community having quite limited problematic interests. None of the currently

⁵⁰ In its direct art relevance the term “historical” commonly refers to visual interpretations of mythological themes, literary works (e.g., Eugene Delacroix on *The Divine Comedy*) as well as actual historical events (e.g., Jacques Louis David on “The Death of Socrates”).

⁵¹ These provinces are traditionally designated “genres.” Yet we would reserve “genre” for a species of “high-bounded” hierarchical structuring of disciplinary provinces...Modernity involved a rebellion against the genre organization of art. John Constable’s insistence that landscapes be considered on the same level as historical paintings was an important early challenge.

⁵² That is, an “arbitrarily” defined present.

institutionalized sciences form single homogeneous language communities. Physicists in one empirical area do not necessarily fully understand physicists in another; pathologists do not necessarily understand electro physiologists, etc. And within each scientific area, even when cut very finely, there may be distinguished disorderly hierarchies of language communities. In the extreme case, there may be quite definite and unique observable properties and relations, which only two men, perhaps working in the same laboratory, may be able to perceive and denote by the same linguistic expression. Moreover, it should be stressed that the stratification of language communities within a science may reflect variations in the sensitivity of observers just as much as different levels or foci of training. There was a time when Einstein was apprised of certain invariant properties of the universe, yet could communicate these “discriminations” to few men. (1964, 27)

Unless in a specific case there is evidence to the contrary we shall assume that each discipline, province, “region” and style (e.g., art, painting, landscape, neoclassicism) includes diverse positions.

III. Social Structural Positions

There are problems that are not posed by disciplinary positions but by present and past location in a network of intergroup relationships. One can refer both to historically specific intergroup locations [e.g., a worker in the surface operation of a specific gypsum plant in a middle sized American city in 1951 (Gouldner)], and to abstracted social structural positions (e.g., industrial worker).

We do not posit that all structural positions are generically human.

Shifting Connections, Open Ambiguity and the Mundane (1979)

I

Znaniaki:

The concrete object...cannot as object ever rationally be exhausted by any system. However completely the latter seems to determine it, it will always be incorporated into many other, old or new, actually reconstructed complexes, and will be thus concretely an irrational historical object...Being composed of such objects, concrete reality cannot be fully rational, however perfectly rational and unified its systems may be. (149)

The coding/relevance of personal-interpersonal individual x at time y is not limited to its original positional location... A chess game can be a flirtation or an economic transaction. “Religious patterns” can be recoded and used politically (as in the Crusades and our contemporary “religious right”) and/or artistically (as in *Tales of Genji* and *The Divine Comedy*).

II

Within the personal-interpersonal field immediate lived existence appears as “the realm of open ambiguity.”

The realm of open ambiguity arises at the intersection of all problem/solution nexi. It is an open ambiguous constellation of coherent patterns (as though a radio received infinite programs at the same time on the same station).

The realm of open ambiguity influences life directly, and indirectly through positions.

III

The realm of “the mundane” is a rigid, simplistic, institutionalized context of interpretation that arises at the intersection of all problem/solution nexi when the natural-immanent capacity for openness is repressed.

Interpenetrations

I. Some Area Interconnections (1975)

Disciplinary and social structural positions arise from the realm of open ambiguity through abstraction of relatively coherent problem/solution constellations. The realm of open ambiguity remains in dialogue with flows through, enriches and is enriched by_ the positions it generates. Mundanity arises from yet resists dialogue with the realm of open ambiguity.

II. An order of Life as a Continuity in Discontinuity (1995)

An organism can either maintain its “species structure” [including routine sustaining alterations (e.g., digestion) and “preprogrammed” restructuring (e.g.,

processes of maturation)] or die. Orders of life can change species and survive (e.g., France, England and Japan remained “themselves” as they industrially transformed).

A Conclusion in Process (2001)

I

The problem/solution sociological-psychological orientation is open to surprises. We do not know in advance all of a group’s or an individual’s problems, or the abstracted constellations in which particular problems participate.

In problem/solution inquiry uniqueness and discontinuity do not register as silence. They are “coded” as alteration or reconstruction.

II

Exploration of generically human and emergent problem/solution dynamics naturally inspire and support one another.

Problem/solution inquiry exposes personal-interpersonal and micro-macro interplay... It links “the face-to-face” to more inclusive (e.g. institutional) contexts. It links the present to the past and the imagined future.

III

Problem/solution inquiry “in its own terms,” freed from neopositivist limitations, is not restricted to prediction and control. It is open to persuasion and compassionate dialogue (even in “common language” one speaks of “sharing problems”).

Section 4: A Disciplinary Study

John Constable's Orientational Reconstruction of the Art of Landscape Painting: A Working Paper in the Sociology-Psychology of Disciplinary Positions (1965)

I. Opening

We recognize three distinct formal levels of disciplinary discontinuity , the universal(i.e. the disciplinary qua disciplinary) the stylistic and the individual... We have focused on the universal. Now, discussing Constable ,we examine stylistic transformation...We explore foundational transformative reconstruction through John Constable's contribution to the art of landscape painting⁵³.

⁵³ Our discussion of Constable is along lines opened by Ernest Gombrich

II Framework: A Methodological Construct

1

In order to avoid “having to know everything before we can know anything” we would free Sorokin's concern with reconstruction from his strategy of directly engaging universal history⁵⁴ ... We would proceed in dialogue between theoretical abstraction and immediate lived existence

We require a theoretically relevant historically open descriptive schema that sensitively registers interplay between problem/solution constellations and their relevant artifacts. We propose such an instrument and designate it “framework”. The concept of framework is abstracted from Otto Demus' essay *The Methods of the Byzantine Artist*. We interpret his implicit categories as “generative problematic,” “required problematic” and “criteria of solution”.

2.

According to Demus, the iconoclastic controversy led to a change in the Byzantine conception of the image:

According to this conception the image, if painted in the “right manner,” was a magic counterpart of its Prototype, the Holy Person or Event it represented; a magic identity existed between the image and its Prototype. (103)

This conception of the image was the central idea, which

with its compelling force...made possible the Fusion of the two chief component elements of mid-Byzantine art, the optical refinements of Greece and the magic realism of the orient. (115)

The generative problematic is to so construct mosaic images that the Eastern Orthodox Christian version of a supernatural world appears actually present.

3

Demus:

⁵⁴ Sorokin attempts to understand the central dynamics of human history as an alteration of “supersystems”.

The centers of iconographic interest and the centers of formal composition, which in classical Byzantine art are identical, are stressed by the strongest light. It surrounds the main figures as with a halo of sanctity. (109)

We translate into explicit problem/solution terms. A required problem is to emphasize iconographically crucial figures and relationships. The solution is to place them at the compositional center in the strongest light.

This is not an ad hoc solution to the unique concerns of a particular mosaic. The problem of emphasizing iconographically crucial patterns occurs in many periods in all media of visual art. Similar problems exist in literature and dance...in all art, and beyond,...in all communication.

4

We include within framework, criteria for adequate resolution of required problems and thus for defining relevant products (e.g., poems, paintings, critical interpretations, theoretical explanations) as “well constructed artifacts.” We designate this component “criteria of solution.”

5

In order to be classified as an orientational reconstruction a framework must be, and be presented as, a qualitatively distinct alternative to the relevant dominant contemporary tradition.

Whether, for example, Giotto's opening of the picture plane to represent three dimensional figures within a space deep enough to contain them was a reconstruction in the art of painting depends on its relationship to the contemporaneous dominant Byzantine tradition. The relationship of Giotto's “geometric naturalism” to classical Greco-Roman art is not relevant to this judgment.

III. Substantive Presentation

1. Generative problematic

1.1

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723 - 1792), first president of the British Royal Academy remarks that

“The beginning, the middle, and the end of everything that is valuable in taste is comprised in the knowledge of what is truly nature.” (1961, 111)

He notes that some young students consider Rembrandt's art with its close observation of particulars and insight into individual character more natural and, hence, better than that of Raphael.

“But a very little reflection will serve to show us that these particulars cannot be nature; for how can that be the nature of man in which no two individuals are the same.” (111)

Art requires thematically oriented abstraction:

Perfect form is produced by leaving out particulars and retaining only general ideas...this principle...extends itself to every part of the Art;...it gives what is called the grand style to Invention, to Composition, to Expression, and even to Colour and Drapery. (55)

“The grand style's” generative problematic is to articulate universal human themes (i.e., in Reynolds' sense “human nature”) through a received tradition of noble “poetic” images in the media of visual art.

A “pictorial language” of landscape symbols developed along side that of human expression. In the art of Claude Gelle, called Lorrain, (1600 - 1682) themes are primarily articulated through landscape.

1.2

For Reynolds as a representative of the grand style, the true artist grounds his painting in noble general ideas and in the loftiest creations of the past. The painter who grounds his work in appearance can never aspire beyond imitation.

Constable (1776 - 1837) reverses the distinction. He contrasts the true artist who forms his work on close observation to those who merely imitate others' work and style:

The one forms his style upon the study of pictures and produces imitative or eclectic art, as it is termed; the other by a close observation of nature, discovers qualities existing in her which have never been portrayed before,

and thus forms a style, which is original. (Gombrich 1960, 175)

For an artist within the grand style, general themes are distinct from and inform particular observations. For Constable nature is composed of particulars and given through observation... He was particularly concerned to accurately represent the observed nuances of tone and color which, varying from scene to scene and from moment to moment, are categorized as accidental and neglected within the grand style.

Constable states that everything in his art is “subordinate to the one object in view, the embodying of a pure apprehension of a natural effect” (Gowing 1960, 3).

2. The Problem of Abstraction

2.1

Within the grand style the task of abstraction is successfully completed when all is included that clearly, succinctly and gracefully articulates a personal variation on a general theme.

This solution is inappropriate to Constable's final purpose. His solution to the problem of abstraction must include those unique ephemeral constellations of light, shadow and color in and through which we experience particular scenes.

2.2

2.21

Constable abstracts through physical, meteorological and “dynamic” location.

2.22

What is perceivable from a given spot is abstracted from all that is potentially visible in a scene.

2.23

Constable does not attempt to capture in one painting all tones and colors that are under different atmospheric conditions perceivable from a given spot.

Between 1821 and 1822 he painted a series of cloud studies (Leslie 1949, 112; Badt 1950, 41). Each was accompanied by a notation of the time at which and the atmospheric conditions under which it was painted, for example:

5th of September, 1822. Ten o'clock, morning, looking south-east, brisk wind at west. Very bright and fresh clouds running fast over a yellow bed, about half way in the sky. Very appropriate to the coast of Osmington. (Leslie 112)

2.24

Constable remarks, “we see nothing truly until we understand it” (Leslie 337). He comments on a landscape by Jacob Von Ruisdael (1629 - 1682):

This picture...represents an approaching thaw. The ground is covered with snow, and the trees are still white; but there are two windmills near the center; the one has the sails furled, and is turned in the position from which the wind blew when the mill left off work; the other has the canvas on the poles, and is turned another way, which indicates a change in the wind; the clouds are opening in that direction which appears by the glow in the sky to be the south (the sun's winter habitation in our hemisphere), and this change will produce a thaw before the morning. The concurrence of these circumstances shows that Ruisdael *understood* what he was painting. (Leslie 337-38)

He comments along these lines on one of his own paintings:

It may perhaps give some idea of one of those bright and silvery days in the spring, when at noon large garish clouds surcharged with hail or sleet sweep with their broad shadows the fields, woods and hills and by their depths enhance the value of the vivid greens and yellows so peculiar to this season. (Leslie 24)

An image in painting is inherently static. Yet Constable envisions static images historically/dynamically (Badt 63).

3. The Problem of Total Coloristic Integration

Benjamin West (1738 - 1820), President of The Royal Academy when Constable attended as a student, describes Claude's general technique of coloristic integration:

Claude began his pictures by laying in simple gradations of flat colours from the Horizon to the top of the Sky - and from the Horizon to the Foreground, without putting clouds into the sky or specific forms into the landscape till he had fully settled these gradations. When he had fully satisfied himself in this respect, he painted in his forms, by that means securing a due gradation - from the Horizontal line to the top of his sky - and from the Horizontal line to the Foreground...all 'positive' color was avoided, even to the draperies of the figures.” (Gombrich 44-46)

Constable remarks:

It will be difficult to name a class of landscape in which the sky is not the keynote, the standard of scale.... (Gowing 1)

He did not establish coloristic integration through pre-established formula.

The constellation of tone and color through which a particular scene is perceptually integrated was first established through a series of oil studies painted “directly from nature” (Badt 91-2).

These “notes” were then integrated twice. Constable first painted a full-scale study and then the final large painting (Badt 43-5, 91-2).⁵⁵ Constable's dynamic understanding of the scene enabled him to increase the scale of his composition with minimum sacrifice of freshness and nuance (Clark 1961, 80).

Constable's application of juxtaposed areas of unmixed colors, “the broken touches and flecks of pure white with a palette knife” (76), exercised “a decisive influence on French painting” (idem).

5. A Dream of Science

Constable:

Painting is a science.... Why, then, may not landscape be considered as a branch of natural philosophy of which pictures are but the experiments. (Gombrich 33)

⁵⁵ It is a finished work by Constable, *The Haywain*, which, upon its exhibition in Paris, led Delacroix to re-paint the background of his *Massacre of Scio* in brighter more vibrant colors.

The natural history, if the expression may be used, of the skies...is this; the clouds accumulate in very large masses and from their loftiness seem to move but slowly; immediately upon these large clouds appear numerous opaque patches, which are only small clouds passing rapidly before them.... These float midway in what may be termed the lanes of clouds; and from being so situated are almost uniformly in shadow, receiving a reflected light only, from the clear blue sky immediately above them.... (Leslie 24)

He copied out a quotation from Gilbert White:

System can by no means be thrown aside. Without system the field of nature would be a pathless wilderness; but system should be subservient to, not the main object of, our pursuit. (Leslie 290)

Constable's conception of science differs from that of Copernicus, Galileo and Newton (Burt 1932)...Its sources include Greek medicine and the writings of Francis Bacon. As a continuous tradition it is designated "natural history."

6. A Conclusion in Process

Constable's framework is not a development of ideal landscape. It is a reconstruction. This reconstruction was influenced by the scientific tradition of natural history.

Appendix I: On Neoclassicism, Personal Expression and Modernity (1996)

1

1.1

Constable directly confronted "the grand style." His framework also challenges thematic art qua thematic art.

The grand style is a species of thematic art. It proceeds within historical interpretations of "classical decorum." The grand style is neoclassicism.

1.2

The emphasis on universal themes and intergenerational continuity in neoclassicism does not preclude individuality, originality and historical sensitivity... No work of art is entirely unique. (Thus, one refers not only to neoclassicism but also to impressionism, cubism, etc.)

Even if we leave out the role of the classical revival in the Renaissance [e.g., in Botticelli (1444 - 1510) and Raphael (1483 - 1520)], the recognized masters of neoclassicism from Annibale Carracci (1560 - 1604), Nicholas Poussin (1594 - 1665) and Claude Lorrain to Jacques Louis David (1745 - 1825) and Jean Dominique Ingres (1786 - 1867), were original wonderful artists.

2

It appears at first glance that neoclassicist and modernist art were simply and unambiguously opposed. There is a revisionist tendency to deny contradictions. We suggest that though the contradiction between neoclassicism and the successive waves of modernism (e.g., Courbet's "common sense" naturalism, impressionism, post-impressionism) was real, their interpenetration was also real.

David and the anti-classicist Goya (1746 - 1828) were arguably the (mutually independent) co-founders of modern politically engaged painting. - David exerted an immediate influence on Baron Gros (1771 - 1835) and thus, despite himself, on romanticism. Cezanne desired "to do Poussin over after nature" (Clark, 1949, p. 219). Ingres' sensitivity to harmony and subtle discords of design (his lyrical grace of line and purity of contour) were crucial to Degas, Seurat (Clark 134- 36), and beyond [e.g., through Seurat to Juan Gris (Clark 215)]. Puvis de Chavannes (1824 - 1898), a minor artist, produced an authentic yet impersonal "generic" neoclassicism (as though purposely designed for incorporation into other styles) that influenced Gauguin... Picasso's relationship to neoclassicism was both crucial and ambivalent. He would at once complete, transcend and annihilate it.

There is a resonance of neoclassicism in all "western" thematic art that claims generically human resonance.

Appendix II: Jean Dominique Ingres and the Final Crisis of Neoclassicism (1996)

1

1.1

Classical art outlived its Greek generative order of life. It even outlived belief in the myths and gods it celebrated.

Neoclassicism _ surviving on and on without a “local habitation” asserted species relevance... It lives within the species or is homeless.

1.2

Romanticism's orientalism challenged the neoclassical claim to universality by “exposing” neoclassicism as Eurocentric, a merely local constellation inadequate to human diversity.

1.3

We suggest that neoclassicism (despite its struggle to integrate beauty with truth and goodness, and its commitment to “received themes and shapes”) prefigured “art for art's sake” and “pure abstraction.”

2

2.1

The tensions of a neoclassicism wounded to the point of dissolution through extended conflict with romanticism, “common sense realism” “particularistic naturalism”(e.g. Constable) and “the phenomenological exploration of visual space (e.g. Turner) were (without being explicitly confronted) held in fruitful balance by Jean Dominique Ingres. Ingres' art (categorized in his own time as reactionary) has exerted an enduring influence on modernity (again and again revealing new facets as new artistic possibilities open).

The smooth surface of Ingres' work disguised and sustained an equal passion for pure design and received structures. [Ingres could not as Picasso later did permit lust for expressive form to “melt” arms and legs into boneless tentacles. He respected the “functional” rigidities of human anatomy (also of artifacts).]

2.2

In *Le Bain Turc* neoclassicism through Ingres asserts relevance to oriental themes and to Eros. Kenneth Clark's comment on this work suggests Ingres' surprising elusiveness:

The decade in which *Le Bain Turc* was painted may be reckoned the high-water mark of the nineteenth century prudery, and perhaps only M. Ingres, the “petit elephant bourgeois,” with his seat in the academy, his frock coat, and his absurdly orthodox opinions could have persuaded public opinion to accept so open an evocation of eroticism. (1956, 161)

The abstract play of forms does not lose itself within this play of bodies. It triumphs.

Ingres represented neoclassicism within nineteenth century discontinuities (almost as an ideal aristocrat would represent his people and their order of life). Hilaire Edgar Degas (1834 - 1917), Ingres natural successor, abdicated to become an explicit modernist.

Appendix III: On Nature, Autonomy and Subordination in Modern Visual Art (1965- 1996)

The final purposes of neoclassicism and Constable's particularistic naturalism share a commitment to “translate” nature into visual images. The concept of nature has not traditionally been controlled by art.

Through its normal one-sided dependence on the concept “nature” art is vulnerable to external domination and self-loss.

The grand style reworks Plato's critique of art. In this version the artist is not condemned to trace shadows and copy surfaces. S/he stands beside _ or replaces _ the philosopher. Through intuition (talent and genius) cultivated by humanistic education artists can enter direct dialogue with beauty and truth.

Constable conceives landscape painting as a “science” of particular constellations that proceeds through careful observation and articulates itself through visual images. He interprets science for the sake of art.

Art, always endangered, works upon all external influences to comprehend and fulfill its autonomous desires.

We hypothesize that a central dynamic of modern art proceeds through vulnerability to external influence and the struggle against this vulnerability.⁵⁶ Art asserts autonomy by attempts to re-interpret external traditions and/or “capture” the concept of nature in its disciplinary relevance and/or disassociate from “nature.”

Hopefully the sociology-psychology of art_ and more generally of disciplinary positions _ can be integrated along these lines with the sociology-psychology of unequal power relationships and of “identity.”

Appendix IV: On Sociology, Psychology, Science and Subordination (1996)

The sociology-psychology of disciplinary positions naturally opens dialogue with itself.

The concept of science is controlled by natural science (directly and through the mediation of neo-positivist philosophy). If you doubt this, propose sociology as the ideal science on which physics should model itself and note the response... Also note constant reference to sociology and psychology as “immature” and/or “developing” sciences.

⁵⁶ Another dynamically relevant problem constellation is the struggle to preserve permanence in change, unity in diversity - a recognizable vital humanity - within the breakdown of this order of life.

What physicists, chemists and biologists do “in role” publically exemplifies science (in that sense “defines it”). Sociologists and psychologists are recognized as scientists in so far as their procedures and outcomes resemble those of natural science.

We suggest that in so far as sociologists and psychologists proceed from an unexamined commitment to a scientific identity they choose a voluntary servitude, an unforced colonization. They evade the most crucial task of any learned profession, the discovery/ invention and actualization of its autonomous disciplinary potentialities.

Section 5 : On Social Structural Positions

Variations On a Theme by Karl Mannheim (1995)

I. Prologue

1

A discussion of problem/solution that does not explore the concept of social structural position would be fundamentally unbalanced.

2

This section is incomplete... Relevant unresolved issues include the bourgeois position, the nature and limitations of “craft rationality,” and the special situation of the “intelligentsia” as a position that exists in, through and for the sake of mediation.

II. Opening

2.1

Common patterns of intergroup relationship naturally generate common problem/solution nexi and thus, everything else being equal, common characteristics. One may refer both to particular intergroup locations and to ideal typical social structural positions.

We do not posit that all structural positions are co-constitutively human. We assert that “the excluded other” and “the tyrant” are not inherent in the human condition. They are pathological.

2.2

Writing in 1960 on Plato's *Republic* I came across a brief section of *Ideology and Utopia* in which Karl Mannheim outlines five patterns of “political historical thinking” (117):

- a. Bureaucratic conservatism.
- b. Conservative historicism.
- c. Liberal-democratic bourgeois thought.
- d. The socialistic-communist conception.
- e. Fascism (Ibid. 118).

He also considers separately

- f. The intelligentsia.

He presents these brief brilliant sketches as based on “a survey of political and social currents of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (117-118). I suggest that “transcultural” ideal typical social structural positions are caught by these explicitly local sketches.

3. Some General Divergences From Mannheim's Typology

We abstract in the direction of generically human resonance (e.g., Mannheim's "bureaucratic conservative" position appears here as a species of "context bound existence").

In these sketches Mannheim does not distinguish positions from regimes... A position is, whatever else it also is, an orientation and a potential identity. A regime is a system of governance (e.g., of roles and statuses, of rights and duties). The bourgeois is a social-structural position. Liberal democracy, fascism, socialism and communism suggest regimes. We remove "liberal democracy" from Mannheim's bourgeois liberal democratic orientation. We substitute "estranged authoritarianism" for fascism. We exclude socialism and communism.

Democracy and socialism are, whatever else they also are, exile dreams of the silenced and oppressed. We consider "the excluded resident."

We refer to x as "conservative" in so far as it tends towards stasis. We do not assume prior to investigation that any position is in all variations and under all circumstances conservative. Thus we substitute "rule bound" for "bureaucratic conservative" and "communal historicism" for conservative historicism.

Our types are:

- a. Context bound existence (including "rule," "communal" and "mass" bound).
- b. The aristocrat/communal historicism.
- c. The bourgeois.
- d. The excluded resident.
- e. The tyrant/estranged authoritarianism.
- f. The dialogical intellectual.

In this preliminary report on a work in progress we will discuss only (a), (b), (d) and (e).

4. On Context Bound Existence (2004)

4.1. Opening

Ideal typically to be "bound" to interpretative context x is to exist entirely within it. X is a nondialogical ground that would consume its "figures", a horizon that does not expand as one advances (as though one lived in a locked room)... Relevant received disciplinary terms include "alienation," "a-meaningful thought" (Koch 1985),

“conformity,” ethnocentrism,” “reification,” “repetition-compulsion” and “ritualization.”

One can proceed by distinguishing contexts. Here we consider rule, style, and, in passing, “mass culture.”

Rule awareness and style awareness are co-constitutive species potentialities. Mass culture emerges through the generic determinate processing potentiality of lowest common denominator simplification.

4.2. Rule Bound

4.21

In industrial orders of life, rules, often explicit, usually tightly and systematically integrated, are typically omnipresent and dominant.

We suggest that in an industrial order of life, a Socratic conversation with someone in the process of practical action would normally “hit cultural bedrock” with “because it is the rule,” “because it is my job” and (especially in the military) “because I am following orders.”

In the military, insubordination is not tolerated: the primary rule is “obey one’s superiors.” Thus, “I was only following orders” is a variation on “because it is the rule.”

I suggest that, at least relevant to justification, “because it is my job” is usually “a short hand” for “because it is my job to follow and/or represent (e.g., enforce) this rule.”⁵⁷

4.2 (1997)

In bureaucratic⁵⁸ and proto-bureaucratic⁵⁹ orders of life, rule following is normally conservative.

⁵⁷ *The Euthyphro* presents the primacy of rule as the eccentric destructive foolishness of a grotesque comic figure. Here, as often, Plato miraculously grasps and critiques a pattern from its “embryonic” prefigurings.

⁵⁸ For example, modern industrial and, probably, ancient Chinese orders of life.

Mannheim:

The fundamental tendency of all bureaucratic thought is to turn all problems of politics into problems of administration...the sphere of activity of the official exists only within the limits of laws already formulated. Hence the genesis or the development of law falls outside the scope of his activity. (118)

Rule bound thought can survive awareness of alternatives. There are theoretical constructs, some quite elaborate, bounded by concepts of rule, system and organizational accountability.

4.23

In tribes a proliferation of situationally specific rules can help freeze life in narrow channels. Yet increased abstraction, logical integration and explicit formulation of rules accompanies and can promote integration of tribal communities in more inclusive patterns.

4.3. Style/Communal Bound

4.31

4.311

People together in “face-to-face” activity spontaneously generate “mutual stylistic harmony” (in the sense of “dancing together”). Even conflict can become stylistically harmonious, two boxers pounding each other in a rhythm neither separately intends.

4.312

The distinction between rule and style is central to Chinese theory. A.C. Graham remarks:

Confucius prefers the aesthetic order sustained by ritual, music and performative naming to the order sustained by laws and punishments. (30)

⁵⁹ For example, ancient Egyptian and Roman orders of life.

and more abstractly

In responding with the immediacy of echo to sound or shadow to shape the sage hits any particular situation on that single course which is uniquely appropriate yet fit no rules. This course, which meanders shifting direction with varying conditions like water finding its own channel, is the Tao. (188)

4.32

Cooperative and antagonistic interaction persisting year after year, generation after generation, shapes relatively permanent “communal” constellations.

In ideal-typical style/communal bound existence, ritual reenactment of mythological themes shapes and is shaped by face-to-face many sided and “multi-bonded” (Sorokin, 1947p.171) interactions; contemporaries, remembered ancestors and imagined descendants are experienced as “co-present in mutual concern.”

4.33

4.331

We define “tribe” as follows: x is a tribe in so far as it is a self-contained “free standing” face-to-face order of life.

We hypothesize that, everything else being equal, explicit rules predominate in industrial orders of life and style predominates in tribes.

One must be careful not to build previously nonexistent rules into tribal discourse within the act of inquiry ... It is difficult for those who control conversation to avoid imposing their categories on the speech of others and then claiming that speech as neutral evidence.

We suggest that in a tribe a Socratic conversation with someone in process of practical action would normally hit cultural bedrock with “because it has always been done” or “because it is our way.”⁶⁰

4.332

⁶⁰ Stated directly or through mythical narrative.

In industrial orders of life, communal patterns appear as “informal relationships” and as semi-autonomous constellations.

There is a tendency for every division to generate a distinct “community”: the communal is omnipresent, yet (subject to lowest common denominator simplification) rarely appears “in pure form.” “A community” may also, even predominately, be a political constituency and pressure group (e.g., “the gay and lesbian communities”, “the disabled community”, etc.).

Communities arise spontaneously even in uncongenial settings (e.g., on assembly lines, in prisons, in asylums). All bureaucratic configurations are interwoven with informal relationships.

There are also older forms (e.g., religious and/or peasant and/or ethnic communities) that have maintained relative autonomy.

Influenced by Simmel, we suggest that communal diversity can contribute to personal-interpersonal openness, autonomy and complexity. Yet this influence cannot be exerted by communities entirely closed within themselves. Communal bound existence can preserve yet cannot actualize dialogic potentiality.

4.333

In tribal orders of life communal bound existence is normally conservative. Yet as early as classical Greece, abstracted, idealized_ half remembered half invented_ “visions” of an ideal community haunt all successors as a golden dream. The struggle to regain the personal-interpersonal balance of tribal communal existence on level after level of increasing complexity is a crucial historical dynamic.

4.4. Mass

Simmel argues that “the sociological tragedy as such” is through the operation of “the principle of the lowest common denominator.”

The more refined, highly developed, (and) articulated the qualities of an individual are, the more unlikely are they to make him similar to other individuals and to form a unit with the corresponding qualities in others. Rather, they tend to become incomparable and the elements in terms of which the individual can count on adapting himself to others and on forming a homogeneous mass with them, are increasingly reduced to lower levels. (c, 32)

Groups naturally abstract the lowest common denominator understandings and sensitivities of their members. Thus the greater the heterogeneity of a group the simpler, everything else being equal, its frame of reference.⁶¹

4.3

In industrial orders of life with their mechanical repetition and extreme inter-generational discontinuity there is a tendency for community to be replaced by “prefabricated” politically and commercially manipulated lowest common denominator routines. We shall refer to “mass patterns.”

4.5. Outside the Walls

4.51

We suggest that in all orders of life a Socratic inquirer will find something other than surface and cultural bedrock. S/he will sometimes be told (with a resonance not entirely reducible to received cultural patterns), “I do this because it is just” and/or “because it is compassionate” and/or “because it is naturally harmonious and fitting.”

In so far as such answers are given, the order of life (however isolated) is not entirely closed within itself.

4.52

Dialogue, whatever else it also does, preserves and mediates distinct voices. It enables communication outside lowest common denominator simplifications.

5. The Aristocrat/Communal Historicism

5.1

Mannheim:

The *je ne sais quoi* element in politics, which can be acquired only through long experience, and which

⁶¹ Here we follow that line in Simmel which focuses on heterogeneity rather than size; the crux is how many properties are shared, not how many individuals these properties are abstracted from.

reveals itself as a rule only to those who for many generations have shared in political leadership is intended to justify government by an aristocratic class (120).

Aristocracy is aware of that irrational realm in the life of the mind that cannot be managed by administration. It recognizes that there is an unorganized and incalculable realm which is the proper sphere of politics. Indeed it focuses its attention almost exclusively on the impulsive irrational factors which furnish the real basis for the further development of state and society. (120)

Each generation of aristocrats is believed to incarnate the vital essence of “their people.” The ideal-typical identity of an aristocrat is as the highest realization and historical champion of his/her order of life. The particular order of life championed is not justified by universal standards. It is itself source and measure of all good.

5.2

Leadership selection through precisely specified biological connections (e.g., the eldest son of the ruling couple rules) is not required. There are aristocracies where representative champions are selected _ usually from favored gender and age categories (e.g., elder males)_ by spontaneous recognition and/or informal negotiation (Hoebel). There are also mixed forms in which the pool of eligibles is through “blood lines” but final selection is open to communal influence.

5.3

Liberal democracy should not be defined prior to inquiry as pure necessary articulation of the bourgeois position. We should not move to the other extreme and identify the elected office holder with aristocratic representation... The concept of “the abstract individual” with rights and duties distinct from a particular order of life_ and thus the principle “one person one vote” _ is central to liberal democracy and foreign to aristocracy.

5.4

In conflict with bourgeois patterns within relatively complex orders of life aristocracy can generate a borderline pattern we term “communal codification”. The particular order championed is no longer entrusted to the organic growth of custom. Local patterns are explored in their generically human implications and supported by conscious “social engineering”.

Confucianism is a crucial instance. The ideal typical Confucian civil servant fulfilled a function but was not only _ or primarily_ a functionary. He was to embody the culture (and conscience) of the group.

5.5

Under extreme pressure the normal aristocratic commitment to its order of life as a-unity-to-be-preserved-intact can generate a distinction between core and peripheral patterns. Instances range from the attempts of Pontiac and Tecumseh to unite Native American tribes against invasion, to aristocrats who supported Japanese and German industrialization.

5.6

The aristocratic project of representing an order of life can lead to patronage of group identified artists and intellectuals.

In periods of struggle to articulate and codify group essence, conservative patronage and connoisseurship can blossom into tolerance of _ and even enthusiasm for _ formal innovation (might even accept “experimental” re-interpretation of received symbols).

5.7

When tyranny _ even under cover of banal nationalistic rhetoric (as in Nazi Germany) _ abrogates tacit “precontractual covenants” (Durkheim 1964), traditional communities united under their customary leaders often emerge as “islands” of relatively nuanced shared sensitivity... Yet if they resist it is often only when directly endangered and thus too late.

5.8

Cross group aristocratic commitment can lead to betrayal (as when traditional aristocrats betrayed democratic cities to Sparta). It can also ease the brutality of intergroup conflict (e.g., through codes of chivalry).

5.9

The aristocrat’s claim to embody group essence is in tension with his/her claim to qualitative superiority over the other group members. Representation can mutate into domination and the representative champion into “the master,” and at the extreme into the predator (aristocrat as vampire).

6. The Excluded Resident

6.1

The ideal typical excluded resident belongs to an order of life in which s/he is a “non-person.”⁶² The excluded resident has duties but no rights, not even a right to survival. _ The master is not bound, not even by rationality (usefulness does not guarantee permission to live on).... Ideal-typically the excluded resident is property and thus bound absolutely.

6.2

A crucial tension immanent/natural in the position of the excluded resident is between the humanity of those oppressed and “the master's” denial of this humanity. We suggest some ideal typical responses:

- a. The excluded resident appears to him/herself as incompletely human, not merely lacking but opposed to freedom. Repressed passion for liberty is expended in short term “hustles.” Publicly one conforms, [i.e., keeps one's (subordinate) place]. Privately one “operates.”
- b. The excluded resident accepts his/her status but interprets it as paradigmatically human (as an emblem of mortal powerlessness). Passion for freedom and dignity is expressed through self-control. One seeks moderation and holds fast to duty.⁶³
- c. The excluded resident would triumph by literally mastering the master (would directly enact the master's fantasies of domination upon the master).
- d. The excluded resident asserts “spiritual” equality with the master by assuming his/her style (e.g., as family tyrant and/or chivalrous peasant).
- e. The excluded resident attempts to “rise above” all local circumstances as a pure will grounded in itself. One may or may not perform one's duties but (unlike alternative “b”) one is not in one's own mind a slave.
- f. The excluded resident would “master the master” not directly (as in alternative “c”) but “in patience and cunning” through, in Nietzsche's terms, “the transvaluation of values.” The struggle is to remove

⁶² Thus visitors with diminished rights where they voluntarily reside but a home elsewhere are outside the category.

⁶³ See, for example, the nurse in Euripides' *Medea*.

the interrelated terms and concepts of freedom, humanity, the good, the true and the beautiful, etc., from the grasp of the dominating elite into the control of the excluded and oppressed. "The world" in practical fact still belongs to the master. Yet the master speaks against him/herself. S/he is imprisoned in the language of the slave.

Nietzsche interprets the slave's transvaluation of values as turning with repressed and disguised envy against the vital healthy direct untroubled life affirmation of the master. Yet because (as we noted) "the world of the master" is grounded in and depends upon unjust repression held outside of dialogue, it is neither untroubled nor unambiguously life affirming. _ The world of the master is founded in the unacknowledged lie that master and slave are two distinct species, and thus that their inequality is just. They belong to one species. It is unjust.

Another positional potentiality is the purification and expansion of reason in more inclusive dialogue.

- g. The excluded resident struggles to transform his/her position in "practical fact" and "in theory," not in order to reverse roles with the master (i.e., to master the master) but to abolish the oppressor/victim relationship and move towards a just, compassionate, merciful, humane world.

6.3

Mannheim identifies Chiliasm as an orientation of the oppressed in late medieval Europe.

Chiliastic experience is absolute presentness. We always occupy some here and now on the spatial and temporal stage but, from the point of view of Chiliastic experience, the position that we occupy is only incidental. For the real Chiliast, the present becomes the breach through which what was previously inward bursts out suddenly, takes hold of the outer world and transforms it. (215)

This potentiality for sudden transformative outpouring of long repressed inwardness in speech and action transcends the radical Christian traditions (Anabaptist and Hussite) in which Mannheim discovers it. It is explored by Euripides in *The Medea*.

Absolute repression dreams absolute freedom. As the excluded resident is restricted and repressed by the entire order of life in which s/he is enclosed, direct assertion (especially “along lines” c and g) is naturally abrupt and total.

6.4

6.41

Slavery is often modified by the organizing principle of the order of life in which it appears: by shared communal identity, by openness to personal uniqueness, by recognition of common humanity and/or by state limitations on property destruction. Yet the central principle remains ownership of one person by another.

6.42

Normally the slave is valued property. In Nazi Germany, Jews were defined by the majority as “pestilential subhumans to be destroyed.” The slave is “the paradigm case,” but the victim of genocide is the most extreme instance of excluded resident.

6.43

In almost all times and places most women born or adopted into the dominant group are *not* unambiguously and routinely defined and treated as mere property. Yet often they are incorporated more as markers and emblems through which lines of descent are traced and traditions rigidly embodied than as autonomous actors.

Women's participation is often on condition that “they keep their place,” avoiding even the appearance of self-willed _ thus potentially deviant _ motion. When the sustaining web of relationships is torn (as in conquest) women are uniquely vulnerable. This vulnerability is articulated in a dialogue across millennia between Martha C. Nussbaum and Euripides. Nussbaum remarks:

Women, in this play (*Hecuba*) and in other plays of Euripides, are the creatures who, by their social position stand most vulnerable to chance. Euripides' famous interest in women is an interest in this condition of

exposure, this powerlessness before the affronts of war, death, betrayal. It is women who are raped and enslaved in wartime, while their men at least have the chance to die bravely. It is women whose bodies, as Euripides repeatedly and graphically stresses, are regarded as part of the spoils of war, to be possessed as one might possess an ox or a tripod. If we are looking for a situation in which good character is corrupted by extreme circumstances, then we do well to look at human beings who, on the one hand, can grow up as good as any- and this Euripides really seems to think and often stresses - but who, on the other hand, are exposed more clearly than others to the extreme in fortune. Through the not uncommon social reality of a woman's life (for when women are not queens such adversity does not even require extremity) we come to see a possibility for all human life. (413)

6.5

Each time and place has its excluded residents.

In the United States millions of African-Americans are routinely, parent and child, generation after generation, (with one or another “cover story”) excluded from full citizenship.

Our legal system guarantees rights and carefully specifies conditions and procedures for their temporary punitive abridgement. Yet this “nation of immigrants” now contains rightless “illegals.”

Homelessness is often a progressive descent into an irredeemably rightless shadow world... All this before the triumph of automation.

Parsons suggests that the general movement of history is from ascribed to achieved status.

In this schema the United States of the 1950s figures as predominantly achievement oriented. Yet ascribed common humanity and human rights were traditionally and legally institutionalized.

Continued movement towards achievement predominance interpenetrating increasing automation is potentially pathological... Current debates on “health care” and “welfare” suggest that commitment to “a safety net” of human

entitlements (e.g., to food, shelter and up-to-date medical care) might be abandoned in this country (except as the haunting memory of a past golden age).

If the concept of species entitlement is undercut then all of its applications (including freedom of speech and assembly) are weakened... Only the rich will be entitled.

There is a potential future in which hopeless excluded residents are ruled by an elite that conceives itself as a separate, superior species and is desperately serviced by the still employed... This is not an image of what must be, but of what might be. "The ball is still in spin." There are no "iron laws of history." We have not reached the point of no return.

7. The Tyrant/Estranged Authoritarianism

7.1

Viewed in long historical perspective the fascist appears as a species of tyrant. Tyranny is in and through breakdown. To the ideal-typical aristocrat, breakdown is a threat to continuity. To the tyrant it is an opportunity.

The tyrant, unlike the aristocrat, does not represent a traditional order. Beneath the public mask he represents only himself, and he is empty. Those he rules, their hopes and traditions, their lives, are of only instrumental value. Nothing is sacred.

7.2

Lust for power fills the vacuum. Mannheim:

At the very heart of its (fascism's) theory and its practice lies the apotheosis of direct action, the belief in the decisive deed, and in the significance attributed to the initiative of a leading elite. The essence of politics is to recognize and to grapple with the demands of the hour. Not programmes are important, but unconditional subordination to a leader. History is made neither by the masses, nor by ideas, nor by "silently working" forces, but by the elites who from time to time assert themselves. This is a complete irrationalism but characteristically enough not the kind of irrationalism known to the conservatives; not the irrational which is at the same time the super-rational, not the folk spirit (Volksgeist), not silently working forces, not the mystical belief in the

creativity of long stretches of time, but the irrationalism of the deed. (134-135)

The tyrant lusts for control: power for the sake of power and to preserve “a mask of sanity”. The tyrant isolated in the discontinuous moment turns against the past. “The tyrannical moment” is not the concrete moment in its fertile complexity. Tyrannical action is not the sudden liberation into speech of the long silenced and oppressed. Tyrannical moment and action are pure nexus and gesture of control. Tyranny betrays all dreams of liberation.

7.3

Tyranny actualizes and intensifies the potential pathologies of all positions. Rule following conformity hardens into conscienceless rigid obedience. The communal tendency to disregard or reject “the outsider” rigidifies into a passion for annihilation. The aristocratic tendency to identify the elite as qualitatively distinct from and superior to the many mutates into a distinction between superman and disposable subhuman. The bourgeois split between active constructive maker and inert material (with its tendency to dissolve the individual into the universal and potentially into facticity) distorts into a vision of dominating people anonymously and en masse through conscienceless technical manipulation.

Fascism and communism can be interpreted as, whatever else they also are, the tyrannical forms of capitalism and socialism.

Tyranny is inherently pathological... There are no natural masters and slave

Appendix I

This section is incomplete.... Unresolved issues include the bourgeois position, the nature and limitations of “craft rationality,” and the special situation of the “intelligentsia” as a position that exists in, through and for the sake of mediation.⁶⁴

It might be helpful to suggest relevant lines of inquiry we intend to develop.

2

2.1

We suggest that the bourgeois position is intimately related to the crafts... How is “craft” worked free from subordination to all foreign purposes to comprehend itself as a distinct autonomous “way of seeing”? _ How does “a craft consciousness” committed to perfecting and routinely enacting traditional skills in the service of fundamental human needs become an open ended dynamic transformative project? _ How does the crafts person move from “servant/slave” to “independent artisan,” to a crucial transformative champion of “instrumental rationality”?

Autonomous static craft consciousness was a Greek discovery-invention. Collingwood remarks:

It was the Greek philosophers who worked out the idea of craft. The philosophy of craft, in fact, was one of the greatest and most solid achievements of the Greek mind. (Collingwood 1938, 17)

He cites the line from Socrates to Aristotle. (Idem.) I would begin with Protagoras and include the sophists.

Following Collingwood, we suggest that only the intervention of explicit theory enabled craft to comprehend itself. Yet explicit theory is distinct from craft and can question and oppose craft consciousness. What, then, is the relationship between craft consciousness and reason?

2.2

2.21

Perhaps the problem constellation through which craft consciousness mutated into an open ended theoretically driven project of mastery included the Renaissance reassertion of Greek disciplinary purification and self- knowledge in a complex multicentered constellation with a rich practical technology and a relatively abstract theology. (I think it is historically crucial that Confucius was more successful than Plato in stabilizing his received order of life by imposing an ideal “template” on the ambiguous openness of existence...Perhaps the division between Confucianism and Taoism helped to separate the free play of creativity in art and science from “practical existence.”)...What, if any, is the relevance of this interpretation of the origins of institutionalized hegemonic instrumental rationality to Weber’s thesis that a species of inner worldly asceticism (the Protestant ethic) was the decisive influence on the origin of Capitalism in Europe rather than in China?(2019)

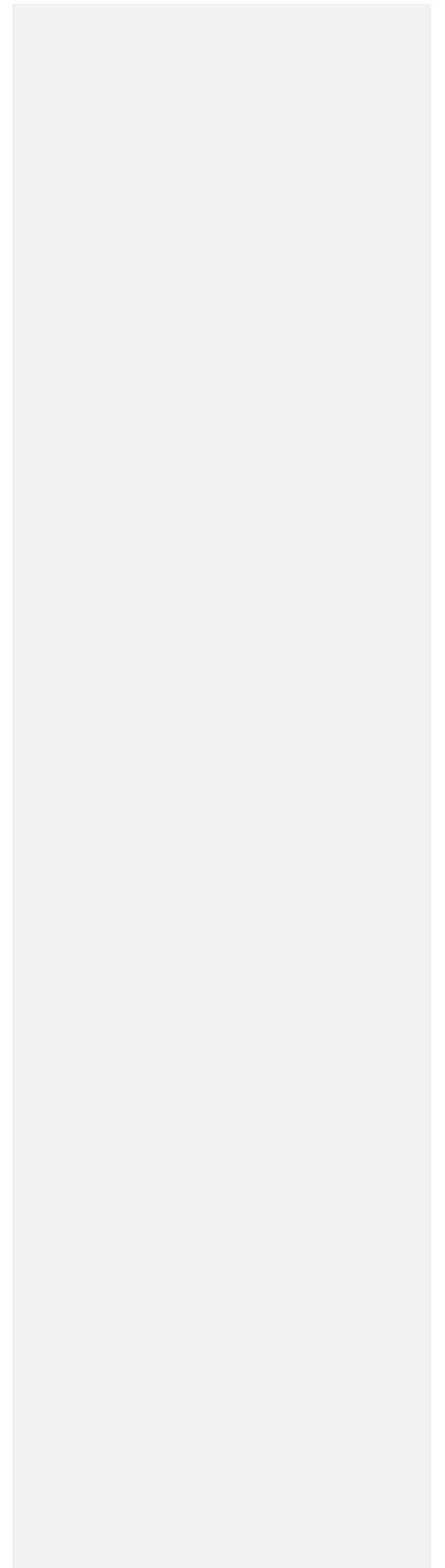
3

Inquiry into “the intelligentsia” requires exploration (from the, admittedly partial, position of sociology-psychology) of the direct interplay between social structural, disciplinary, and transdisciplinary, positions (Reason is, whatever else it also is, a transdisciplinary position).

Book V: This Challenged World

Prologue (1987)

I



This Challenged World focuses on “the crisis of our time”

I write against a resisted yet increasingly powerful tendency for pattern and abstraction to overwhelm unique existence, inwardness and presence... Action, experience and discourse are progressively twisted from personal and dialogical moorings and captured by increasingly complex hierarchical systems.

Now at the edge of the overwhelming breakthrough of the cybernetic revolution into everyday life, the individual as person, moment and event has been imagined as a mechanically determined resultant of social forces, a wave upon the ocean of history, a “sentence” spoken by - and wholly resolved in - language and/or technics.

II

This moment is radically unique. Universal planetary interconnection foregrounds the species. The planet’s fate is in our hands ... Until now the species perspective (e.g., that all human beings have “an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”) appeared naturally attractive and beautiful, yet unrealistic. Now the struggle to actualize this potentiality against extreme resistance is life or death.

The Mediators (1964)

I. Opening

These notes, written in 1964 and revised along their original lines in 1993, are based on interviews with painters Isabel Bishop, Philip Reisman, Isaac, Moses and Raphael Soyer. Isaac is my father. Moses and Raphael are my uncles.

Their art matured in the 1930's. They are usually classified as “regionalists” (New York artists), “social realists” and painters of “The American scene.” They are now deceased.

Theoretical terms and concepts include “deviance,” “career” and “role.”

Methodologically we seek a middle way between pursuing the phantom of complete a-theoretical description and reducing the object of inquiry to a mere instance of general principles.

II. Deviance

1. Section Opening

During the triumph of abstraction our subjects were “figurative.” During the reign of “Pop” with its commercial standards, techniques and themes they maintained personal vision and painterly values. (They remained unrepentant “fine artists.”)

2. The Establishment Model

In sociology it is generally accepted that the greater the deviance of constructs (i.e., the further they depart from the dominant institutional models of their time) the greater, everything else being equal, their “shallowness” and disorganization. (This recalls the fate of rebellion in *Paradise Lost*; one might refer with some justice to the “Miltonian Model.”)

3. The Avant-Garde Model

The dominant art culture envisioned itself as a triumphant avant-garde. “Avant-garde” assumes progress in an objectively required direction, not merely “I want to go there” but “you should go there whether you want to or not,” and “you will go there or spend all your energy resisting.” (Now more than in our subjects’ lifetimes, we are sensitively attuned to voices from the various “dust bins” of history.⁶⁵)

⁶⁵ It is also relevant to the sociology-psychology of reason, of personal-interpersonal pathology and of motivation, and to methodology.

4. Section Conclusion

After the 1940's our subjects' paintings and disciplinary self-understandings are deviant vis-à-vis dominant art cultures. Yet they are not shallow or disorganized.

These artists confront dominant frameworks with a viable alternative. They neither surrender to nor deny the new. Their work is relevant to but does not fit establishment and avant-garde models/critiques of deviance.

III. Artistic Identity and the Great Tradition

Our subjects are committed to “the great tradition” (i.e., in Isabel Bishop's terms “the main line”) in the art of painting. “Guides” from the great tradition “appear” and dialogues open as new needs and potentialities emerge within an artist's work. Rembrandt and Monet, for example, are relevant to Moses Soyer's movement towards richer color and freer “handling”:

My colors have become brighter: red, deep blue. My colors have become richer through all the years of practice, study and work. Rembrandt moved in his later years from a brown monochrome to *The Prodigal Son* and the *Brunswick Family*. The *Brunswick* is a symphony of colors. His colors have become brighter and deeper. Monet's last works were a series of landscapes. At the end it didn't matter what time of day it was. He was almost part of nature. He almost painted an overall landscape. This development of richer and deeper colors and of a broader approach seems to be true for many artists in their old age. It comes with work.

IV. The Contemporary Scene

1. The Realm of Shifting Alliances

Who “we” are depends on who “they” are. From Moses Soyer's perspective, for example, “we,” the Soyers, focus on people in their interrelationships. “They,” Charles Burchfield and Edward Hopper, focus on the scenes in which these

relationships unfold (on the appearance and mood of houses, railway stations, factories, deserted streets). “We” are painters of unexaggerated everyday life. “They,” Philip Evergood and Ben Shahn, focus on dramatic moments and events. “We,” including Burchfield, Evergood, Hopper, and Shahn, are humanists and contributors to the great tradition as opposed to abstractionists, pop painters and academicians.

2. The Realm of the Other

Our subjects interpret abstract and pop painters as of the present moment only, and academicians as having nothing of their own to say. They can never be accepted as allies (not even against each other), always “they.”

V. Becoming an Artist

Influenced by Hughes' (1971, 124-131, 136-140) and Becker's (1960) focus on “career,” I asked, “When did you become an artist? When does one become an artist?”

Reisman: When you get through being a student and begin to work on your own you have to retrain yourself. That is the time when those who have nothing or little to say get out. Others take refuge in making products. You learn a safe way of working in art school; it leads to platitudes.

R. Soyer: You become an artist when your production strives to incorporate your own vision.

I. Soyer: One becomes an artist when one has an individual point of view to express in one's medium.

One must have something of one's own to say... The academician continues painting but never becomes an artist:

M. Soyer: Good painters never copy nature. Those who do are the most dreadful. Good artists interpret. *Arnolfini* by Jan Van Eyck is not a copy of nature. It is really an anti-copy. Could I copy you? I could paint you and express you but not copy you. Academicians copy.

R. Soyer: There can be banal representational art. No matter how awful these other things are, most representative work is worse...absolute platitudes.

No one said that one becomes an artist when professionally recognized (e.g., by a one-person show at an established gallery) or first “make a living” from art.

For our respondents, social recognition does not distinguish among painters between artist and non-artist... An academic painter (e.g., Cabanel, Bouguereau) can receive high honors and grow rich from sales yet never be an artist. An artist (e.g., Van Gogh and Cezanne in their life times) is no less an artist if unrecognized ...Or would you assert that Van Gogh (who sold almost nothing in his life) was not an artist while alive but only after death? _ The posthumous honors accorded Cézanne and Van Gogh are literally recognitions (i.e., they recognize that which _ recognized or not _ exists).

To be an artist is to make a personal contribution to the great tradition.

IV. Existence as Mediation

Our respondents conceive human history, art and their interplay as continuity in discontinuity and unity in diversity.

Bishop: I'm interested in persons with definite class markings. I am interested in Bronx girls, mostly they are from the Bronx. They work in the neighborhood (the West Village, Manhattan). I want to express their character and also that they are not stuck in it: that they can become the Beacon Hill duchess of what-have-you. The limits, and also that they can get out of them. I feel their reality in this open-ended way.

I. Soyer: So much has happened in the last thirty years in art that to express a thought - and it should have immediate impact - it has to be expressed in a more contemporary technique.... It is not necessary to develop a new language but to use the old language in a new context.

R. Soyer: Tradition like nature has to be renewed. You can't return to Michelangelo and Rembrandt. You have to inject something new.

M. Soyer: Man is the noblest creature in the world, therefore the noblest theme in art. To that theme I bent all my energy and talent. In this I followed Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Degas.

Humanity endures in and through its differences...recognizable in 16th century Italy, 18th century Japan, 17th century Benin, 13th century Mexico, and on and on.

In sociology roles are traditionally understood statically. Yet roles are in plays, and plays unfold in time. - Art participates in the play of humanity's self-creation.

If there ever is a death of art it will be murder.

On Instruction (1973)

I. Instruction and Education

This essay belongs to the sociology-psychology of education.⁶⁶ Yet the term “education” rarely appears in it. Why?

Sociology-psychology is a species of theoretical reason. Theoretical reason cannot take consensus qua consensus as its measure and standard.

It would assault sociological-psychological reason to follow normal professional practice and identify education as that which occurs in schools and schools as places in which education occurs.

We cannot begin by identifying that which is conventionally labeled “education” as education. We shall refer to it as “instruction”. Hopefully, this distinction is dialogically sensitive to but not dominated by “common language”. The sentences “There are things in which an educated person would not wish to be instructed” and “There are modes of instruction that do not educate” are along the natural grain of English usage.

Education is, whatever else it also is, a species of instruction.

Schools are officially given over to instruction. Yet, as Howard Becker emphasizes, instruction also occurs in other contexts (e.g., master-apprentice relationships “on the job”).

II. Opening Instruction

1

Institutionalized patterns influence yet do not completely control contemporary American instruction. Some people mechanically live out these patterns. Others struggle against them. Still others hear_ however faintly_ “a different drummer”.... Every reconstruction bears the mark of that from which it proceeds and against which it struggles.

2

This essay focuses on “undergraduate” instruction, yet moves up and down. Elementary instruction is common property.

III. The Machine/Animal Dichotomy⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Our notion of “the machine/animal dichotomy” is influenced by the work of Lewis Mumford and Herbert Marcuse.

1. Opening

In orders of life with a complex division of labor, especially in industrial orders, the drive for impersonal rationality is shadowed by repressed, therefore unexamined and unreasonable, subjectivity. We designate this dynamic constellation “the machine/animal dichotomy.”

One contemporary manifestation of this dichotomy is the tendency to treat “law and order” and violent breakdown as the only political alternatives: “law and order” (i.e., oppressive hierarchical control misinterpreted as mature adult interaction) confronts spontaneous co-creation misinterpreted as infinite ferocity.

The process through which the machine/animal dichotomy operates in instruction includes “instruction as rejection,” “the mass production of stereotyped awareness” and “the triumph of estranged subjectivity.”

2. Instruction as Rejection⁶⁸

A basic organizing American instructional pattern is of functions, interchangeable replaceable parts and mass production: the machine aspect of the machine/animal dichotomy.

It is an aspect of “the machine” that the young are treated “in terms of” their families' rank in class, status and power hierarchies. Our instructional system is a terribly intimate “language.”⁶⁹ Each crack in the wall, each broken window is a rejecting word.

Rejection programmed by institutionalized framing contexts is modified by egalitarian public rhetoric and the ambiguous openness of the “one-on-one” (yet the one-on-one is degraded by unequal power, as in the welfare system's dreaded “face-to-face”).

Systems of unequal power endlessly replicate victimizer and victim. Yet love of the powerless for the powerless endures.

⁶⁷ These notes are influenced by the work of James Baldwin.

⁶⁸ The notion of a language of “gesture” and “scene” enters this essay through the work of the anthropologist John Roberts and through the symbolic interactionist tradition of Howard Becker, Erving Goffman and Everett C. Hughes.

Any perspective that does not side with the desire of the poor and oppressed for security is cruel. Yet an existence limited to competitive struggle for scarce unquestionably accepted, manipulated “goods” cruelly excludes creativity, dialogue and reconstruction.

3. The Mass Production of Stereotyped Awareness

3.1. Opening

The core problem of the machine is to organize external forces to shape raw material efficiently into conformity with pre-established models... In instruction for the machine students are the raw material.

Most raw material is passive: it does not contain immanent/natural patterns. The problem of motivation arises in instruction when students are conceived as possessing “minds of their own.”

3.2 In Orders of Life with a Continuous Mediating Intergenerational Identity

3.21

In so far as discontinuities exist the issue of motivation will arise. In so far as discontinuities are within an overriding continuity of intergenerational identity, motivation is addressed through rhetoric grounded in adult society. Instruction assists a passionately desired transition between two roles in a basically stable world: it is, whatever else it also is, initiation.

3.22

Often (aside from being an adult) the instructor is not who the child will become. Let us assume that the instructor and the instructed are from different social strata.

An instructor of higher status than the normal adult rank of those s/he instructs may appear as emblem and representative of sacred forces, with the power to open or close paths to social _ even cosmic _ mobility: so a Medieval, Mayan or Egyptian priest might have appeared to a peasant's child.

An instructor of lower status than those instructed may be conceived as an agent of parents and/or other high status individuals, thus as borrowing their authority. Moreover, if what is taught appears inherently valuable and/or useful (e.g., military skills in a warrior society) lower status might be helpful: a novice might be more willing to show clumsiness and ignorance to a skilled “inferior” than to one of equal or higher rank.

3.3. In Orders of Life Without a Continuous Intergenerational Identity

When continuity of identity breaks, motivation appears as an institutionalized dilemma requiring specialized professional expertise. [“The fifties” obsession with motivation was an (unrecognized) sign that “the end of ideology” was actually “the calm before the storm.”]. Extreme discontinuity opens potentialities for terminal dissolution, for rigidity, and for fertile openness. First through the sophists and then again and again alternative patterns of instruction arise.

4. Some Contemporary Patterns of Alternative (a.k.a. “counter- cultural”)

Instruction: The Triumph of Estranged Subjectivity

4.1

The personal, in its inwardness, unique existence, autonomous activity and potentiality for critical reflection threatens all “mechanical” order. Totalitarianism overtly struggles to eliminate the personal. American society, more subtly, would restrict personality to an estranged subjectivity that is cut off from ethical principle, I-Thou connection, co-creation and self-knowledge (i.e., it would identify personality with subjectivity and subjectivity with the animal aspect of the machine/ animal dichotomy).

Most experiments in alternative instruction attempt to actualize this distorted version of the personal.

4.2

4.21

Estranged subjectivity thrust upon its own resources becomes progressively isolated. Reintegration is desperately desired. Yet in extreme discontinuity the old identities are no longer there to receive one.

There is tremendous pressure in undergraduate instruction to substitute the engineering of consent for the struggle towards progressively reasonable grounds for assent or dissent.

Instructors who are viewed as strong and whole can powerfully influence the worldview of their students. Their implicit and explicit statements that the world is essentially coherent and stable can “paper over” intimations of the fragility of the given, thus block potentialities for change.

A cadre of such instructors, of various colors, of both sexes, from diverse fields, can through force of personality maintain surface normalcy. They cannot, however, halt the changes outside the school which are the ultimate source of tension within the school.

The young live in the self-protective fantasies of their instructors.

4.22

In so far as students can choose their own courses popularity can effect enrollment.... Everything else being equal, the greater the course enrollment the more secure the jobs of instructors and the greater the potentiality for departmental growth.

4.23

None of this is intended to impugn the integrity of such counter-cultural instructors. They are, after all, members of the same society as their students and (often quite young themselves) subject to many of the same influences.

4.3

There is a further stage in the working out of "counter-cultural instruction" in which instructors authentically strive to speak for, from and within "youth culture."

The explicit organizing principle alters: a distorted conception of "relevance" replaces the engineering of consent_ The interests of those to be instructed prior to an instructional experience are accepted as the appropriate criteria for evaluating the potentiality of that experience.

One is unlikely to reach out if unaware that there is anything to reach towards.

Conformity to the status quo is disguised by a rhetoric of freedom and liberation.

IV. Dialogical Relevance

We live within the breakdown of this order of life. Breakdown opens potentialities for exploration beyond given institutionalized themes. The patterns of counter-cultural instruction outlined above appear in situations rich with authentically humanistic potentialities.

An appropriate organizing notion would help liberate potentialities for humanistic instruction inherent in the present scene: we propose “dialogic relevance.”

Dialogic relevance opens translation of personal and group problems into disciplines and disciplines into inwardness. In the natural course of events the more profoundly one enters such syntheses (always keeping in mind human limitations) the greater the scope of one's humane sensitivity, the more developed one's potentialities for creativity, and the more complex and accurate one's vision of the present.

Appendice (1996)

The orientation outlined in this essay does not side with required courses against electives, (extreme standardization does not adequately respect and engage the dialogue of unique, group and species themes). Moreover it resists incorporation in the ongoing debate centered on the anti-intellectual banal slogan “political correctness”

The slogan “political correctness” raises the important problem of the appropriate relationship between politics and education. Yet it poses this issue one sidedly...as though there is no political pressure on education from the government, from administration, from conservative and reactionary faculty and students, but only from feminists and their allies.

From the perspective of sociology-psychology this important issue should be considered fairly in its full implications. The following questions are relevant: What is education? What are the personal-interpersonal processes of and preconditions for education? What is intended by “academic freedom”? To whom, under what conditions, and in what settings is academic freedom intended to apply? Were the “original intentions” reasonable? Do they require translation into present discourse? What are the potentialities, responsibilities and limitations of “the disciplinary”? What is the relationship of education and of politics to human potentialities for freedom, reason, creativity, I-Thou sensitivity and self-knowledge?

Plague Notes (1987)

I. Opening (1995)

This essay _ a product of the age of A.I.D.S._ addresses the developing planetary crisis. We focus on global plague as a pathology on the border between our life together and apart and biological nature.⁷⁰

II. A Brief Note on Relevant Purely Sociological-Psychological Pathologies. (1995)

As the developing planetary crisis tightens it will be tempting but dangerous to deny our complicity and declare war on nature.

In this century millions were tortured, maimed, killed, in battles, massacres, bombings, concentration camps, gulags, ghettos.

Now in The United States we commonly interpret our more complex nuanced tolerances, insights and sensitivities as “veneer” easily removable in hard times.

Faced with unprecedented complexity, political leaders are praised for “toughness” not sensitivity, creativity or imagination. _ An increasingly emphasized aspect of “toughness” is ability to reject the helpless. From this “tough” perspective to be human is to be capable of retaliation (“to have clout,” “to be a player”). The victim qua victim is the rejected other⁷¹.

Foreshadows of coming “borderline” disruptions trigger political repression.

It is not yet resolved whether the easing of oppression in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and South Africa is a species triumph or a breakdown of regional enclaves preparatory to global totalitarianism.

If we are to survive what is coming we must explore personal-interpersonal ecologies “in their own terms,” and in relationship to biological ecologies.

III. Common Public Discourse on A.I.D.S.

1

⁷⁰ The focus of this manuscript is on the foundational reconstruction of a unified sociology-psychology as an autonomous discipline and a distinct modality of theoretical reason. Here we are drawn by “the gravity of the situation” to prematurely address interdisciplinary problems.

⁷¹ The refusal of the Allies towards the end of World War II to speed liberation of the concentration camps is an instance of such “toughness.”

“Exclusionism,” the central pattern of common public discourse on A.I.D.S., seeks out and blames “the stranger” (e.g., gay men, Africans, Haitians, users of illegal drugs).^{72 73}

2.

In common public discourse “exclusionism” is opposed by a “language” of behavioral abstractions and statistical categories which _ appropriate vis-à-vis its generating epidemiological problematic _ is distorted when isolated in political debate.

The sick compromise the right to interpret their own experience and “run their own lives” in hope of cure... Legitimation through isolated technical rationality is extremely vulnerable to failures of control.

There is no cure for A.I.D.S.

3

In the heat of conflict with exclusionism “statistical category” melts into “community” to suggest different species each with its own blood stream. Technically this can lead to under estimation of movement between categories (e.g., between homosexual and heterosexual).⁷⁴ Mythologically, it can suggest sacrifice of all subsidiary streams to keep “the mainstream” pure. (What mainstream? The mainstream _ all Africa excluded _ is “the blood stream” of white middle class heterosexual Americans and Europeans.)

“Scientistic” rhetoric asserts itself as reasonable. Yet it disregards the inherent complexity, ambiguity and autonomy of human existence (including the sexual intimacy that is attacked by A.I.D.S). Thus it generates a powerful counter pull to misinterpret violence and other deadly modalities of unreason (including unsafe sex) as life affirming “existential rebellion.”

4

⁷² The primary issue is not presence or absence of prior knowledge. Infected gay men are considered guilty perpetrators even if they were infected and infected others before the disease was identified.

⁷³ Many variants assert against both expert testimony and common sense that A.I.D.S. is transmitted through casual contact. Expert testimony is available but not required to disconfirm that hypothesis. The two patterns are qualitatively distinct. If A.I.D.S. were transmitted through casual contact, we would almost all be ill. The streets would be littered with corpses. Disconfirmation is available to “common reason.” Common reason is not consulted.

⁷⁴ Here common discourse apparently distorted technical analysis.

A public morality of exclusion, blood purity, defilement and scientism can be opposed by an ethic of compassionate I-Thou connection.

IV. Pathogen Immune Ecology

1

The entire planet is an ecology. Yet the core sense of ecology is a delimited location (a swamp, a forest) with potentialities for dialogical interplay beyond itself (global ecology is a unity in diversity).

We abstract from total ecology the relationship of host animals and the internal organisms⁷⁵ that prey on them: we will refer to “pathogen immune ecology.”⁷⁶

2 (1993)

2.1

Humanity intervenes scientifically against pathogens. We refer metaphorically to “treatments” competing for survival within the ecology.

It seemed that science would soon “decode” the dynamics of pathogen immune ecology. All possible pathogenic variations would be comprehended prior to occurrence. (Even potentialities never actualized could be comprehended.) Only technical puzzles of application _ almost routine _ would remain to be resolved “in the event.”

A.I.D.S. suggests that the advance of scientific mastery over pathogens has been _ temporarily or permanently _ halted (and in part reversed).

2.2

Science _ as in preparation for biological warfare _ can purposely strengthen pathogens. Such products are normally held outside the ecology. Yet they would not have been created if their intentional use was unthinkable.

⁷⁵ Including, but not limited to, microorganisms.

⁷⁶ (1995) I am not a biologist. I wrote and now retain those sections to meet “architectural requirements” central to a sociological-psychological consideration of personal-interpersonal pathologies on the border between “our life together and apart” and “external nature.” Reading Laurie Garrett suggests that relevant personal-interpersonal patterns are often interpreted by natural scientists and journalists outside dialogue with explicit anthropological, psychological and sociological theory... Hopefully disciplines will reach out towards one another.

Even if initial controlling commitment, technology and social organization are adequate there may be regression. (The decaying remnants of the former Soviet Union retain lethal, biological, chemical and nuclear residues.)

V. On the Relationship Between the Sociological-Psychological Tendency Towards Increased Interdependence and Pathogen immune Ecology

1

“Pathogen immune ecology” normally reaches “a stand off”. Or one side triumphs.

If pathogen immune ecologies are mutually isolated, defeat of a host population by pathogens is localized⁷⁷.

Since Neolithic times there has been a tendency towards increased personal-interpersonal interdependence. Increased interdependence connects and unbalances previously isolated pathogen immune ecologies. Now all plagues are potentially global.

2

All out struggle against pathogens is required even if the technologically advanced are not endangered (even against a disease affecting a hundred people in the Brazilian rain forest). It is a species passion that all should be respected equally in their humanity.

Now, with reference to some diseases and other dangers (e.g. contamination through chemical and nuclear waste) elite exemption is partially withdrawn. “What goes 'round comes 'round” becomes our law of life.

3

We are at an early stage of the universal interdependence inherent in late-industrial constellations. It is commonly recognized that A.I.D.S. will probably be

⁷⁷ (1995) I am not a biologist. I wrote and now retain those sections to meet “architectural requirements” central to a sociological-psychological consideration of personal-interpersonal pathologies on the border between “our life together and apart” and “external nature.” Reading Laurie Garrett suggests that relevant personal-interpersonal patterns are often interpreted by natural scientists and journalists outside dialogue with explicit anthropological, psychological and sociological theory.... Disciplines are reaching out towards one another.

followed by other universal plagues, and that some (unlike A.I.D.S.) will be passed through casual contact.⁷⁸

VI. The Local and the Universal (1995)

A. Section Opening

1

The strength of exclusionist discourse suggests that incorporation of previously autonomous patterns into a more inclusive unity is powerfully resisted. (Resistance is predictable theoretically. All patterns within our life together and apart naturally seek to survive and to assert themselves.⁷⁹)

2

The present leap in interdependence far exceeds all but the two earliest leaps: from hunting and gathering to settled agriculture, and from tribe to proto-state.... Now there is less scope for survivable disaster. (Imagine the Assyrian Empire with hydrogen bombs.)

This leap is unique. Universal planetary interconnection foregrounds the species.

3. (2000)

3.1

Until now the species perspective (e.g., that all human beings have “an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”) appeared naturally attractive and beautiful, yet unrealistic. Now the struggle to actualize this potentiality against extreme resistance is life or death.

3.2

⁷⁸ (1995). See Laurie Garrett's *The Coming Plague*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, N.Y., 1994, and, more generally, William Mc Neill's *Plagues and Peoples*, Doubleday, New York, 1976.

⁷⁹ One complication is that the person as a sociological-psychological constellation does not necessarily make primary identification with him/herself as a biological individual. Thus pattern continuance does not preclude “altruistic suicide” (in Durkheim's sense): does not, more generally, preclude the judgment that the pattern of one's existence requires for completion its premature termination.

The emergence of “civil society” did not entirely replace face-to-face “primary group” connectedness. The emergence of “the national state” did not entirely replace civil society... “A species world” that does not respect personal and group unique existence would be an endless nightmare (Dostievski’s “iron cage”).

3.3

The local or the universal could establish exclusive dominion. Neither extreme would permit us to humanely and effectively cope with worldwide plague and other potential species threats.

B. The Local

1. In Dialogic Interdependence

The local in dialogical relationship to the universal foregrounds unique existence as a species trait (to be human is, whatever else it also is, to be unique) and asserts the human right to home.

2. Fragmentation: the Tyranny of the Local

The local in one-sided triumph is fragmentation. A common fate cannot be humanely⁸⁰ and coherently engaged by unmediated “group wills” pursuing their narrowly conceived self-interest in a context of unequal class, power and status.

A fragment of the decaying Soviet Empire might solve some immediate local problems by running a black market in advanced weaponry and/or by computer sabotage. It might seem “progressive” for a so-called “developing nation” (actually devolving through tribal conflict, indebtedness and corruption) to sweep aside residues of mythical linkage to nature (including “human residues”) and “harvest” the rain forests. It might seem in the “national interest” of industrial nations to trap the “hungry world”⁸¹ in debt. The long-term effect of these decisions would be destructive, potentially terminal.

⁸⁰ It is no more (and no less) problematic to take the position of “humanity” than that of “the social system”...or of any other theoretical notion.

⁸¹ In referring to the poorer nations of the world I prefer the “hungry world” and “external reservations of neglect” to the anachronism of “the third world” or the overly optimistic ideologically mystifying “developing world.”

Fragmentation can become an autonomous pattern.⁸² Each level asserts itself against the level above and below. Often those who begin by resisting an empire in the name of a historical “national individual” end by resisting a region and/or tribe on behalf of the nation. Such destruction and reassertion of political integration is almost always brutally violent.⁸³

C. The Species Universal⁸⁴

1. In Dialogical Interpenetration

Humanity is such that to lose the individual in the species would destroy the species⁸⁵.

The universal in dialogical relationship to the local is unity in diversity and permanence in and through change

2. The Tyranny of the Universal

The universal in one-sided triumph is the rule of one or more “great powers” disguised as embodied reason and species actualization. Opposition to the regime is interpreted as opposition to humanity and reason. Opponents are interpreted as species exiles...as “non-persons.”

Oppression can become a “pure form,” a principle of organization.⁸⁶

Information in an interconnected world cannot be retained without “leakage.” It will pass from great powers to their agents and collaborators in the hungry world. “Cutting edge” technology is no longer required for dangerous

⁸² In Simmel’s sense “a pure form.”

⁸³ (1996) The relatively peaceful dissolution of the former Soviet Union is exceptional. One contributing dynamic might be that all regions - including the Russian core - participated together at the moment of dissolution in the overthrow of a state regime almost entirely estranged from society yet identified with empire. It remains to be seen whether the normal terror and cruelty of dissolution has been permanently avoided or merely deferred.

⁸⁴ This planet is less in its interstellar context than is one woman in the terrestrial scale. Yet to an embryo mother is universe entire. - The global (still) includes all members of the species and represents the universal.

⁸⁵ Inwardness, unique existence and autonomous personal activity are extremely difficult to destroy. Were they destroyed we would no longer be recognizably human.

⁸⁶ It strengthens pathological tendencies that universal interdependence will probably be first systematically addressed by multinational corporations. Personal rights and freedoms laboriously worked through in the explicitly political realm have been traditionally neglected in “corporate culture.”

striking power. Soon terrorists with atomic and/or biological weapons will be serious “world class” threats.

D. Pathological Interpenetration

Pathologies of the local and of the universal potentially interpenetrate. It is a classical sociological-psychological insight that extreme fragmentation by “refusing” all subtle dialogical order moves naturally to rigid, hierarchical, tyrannical control. Tyranny by repressing patterns that struggle ceaselessly for autonomy leads naturally to violent breakdown.

VII. On Ecological Consciousness as an Intermediate Construct⁽¹⁹⁸⁰⁾

1

A reasonable dialogic species universal cannot be a translation of the notion of God. It must be open to external as well as to internal diversity.

Ecological consciousness seeks an I-Thou relationship to nature. Yet this I-Thou connection is also instrumental. One respects “in order to”: not only for the sake of nature “as an end in itself” but also _ perhaps primarily _ to survive and flourish (e.g., in order to avoid entrapment in the unforeseen consequences of our actions).

2

We briefly explore a constellation in which unintended consequences have arisen. Antibiotics defeat many bacterial infections and contribute to the evolution of resistant, more virulent, strains.

We may move the struggle to another level by attempting to inhibit bacterial adaptability and/or increase our speed of biological adjustment. Yet to attempt biological self-reconstruction would place ourselves fundamentally at risk, as would less directly any mistake in the reconstruction of bacteria.

In general, the more profoundly our interventions engage nature the greater the potential for disaster. Disaster may be immediate or long term. Nuclear fission did not as some feared erase the planet in instantaneous explosion. Yet our use of atomic energy might eventually destroy us.

3

Increased understanding of (physical, chemical, biological, personal-interpersonal) universal dynamics _ while invaluable _ should be complemented by increased sensitivity to local dynamics, to universal/local interplay and to our suffering, imperfect, mortal beauty.⁸⁷

VIII. Conclusion in Process

1

An interdependent world is not the only possible future. Industry might “drown” in its own waste. Humanity might return to “primitive” kingdoms, to isolated villages, to hunting and gathering bands. _ Wide spread atomic mishaps, global plague, contamination carried through wind and water through the world, “the green house effect,” might abolish the personal-interpersonal universe.

2

There are neurological pathologies in which body parts are experienced as “not self” (Sacks 1987). Yet if the exiled hand is severed, the blood of the entire body will spurt from the stump. If the abandoned arm contracts gangrene it will infect the whole.

Not only plague and “drugs.” The waters of the world once polluted will in ebb and flow as ocean and as rain infect the whole.

IX. Epilogue (1995)

Planetary ecology _ personal-interpersonal and biological _ remains complex and diverse. There are lions, tigers, whales and elephants... Skies are “bird enchanted,” oceans full of life. Immediate lived existence, the unique moment, personal style, authentic dialogue remain.

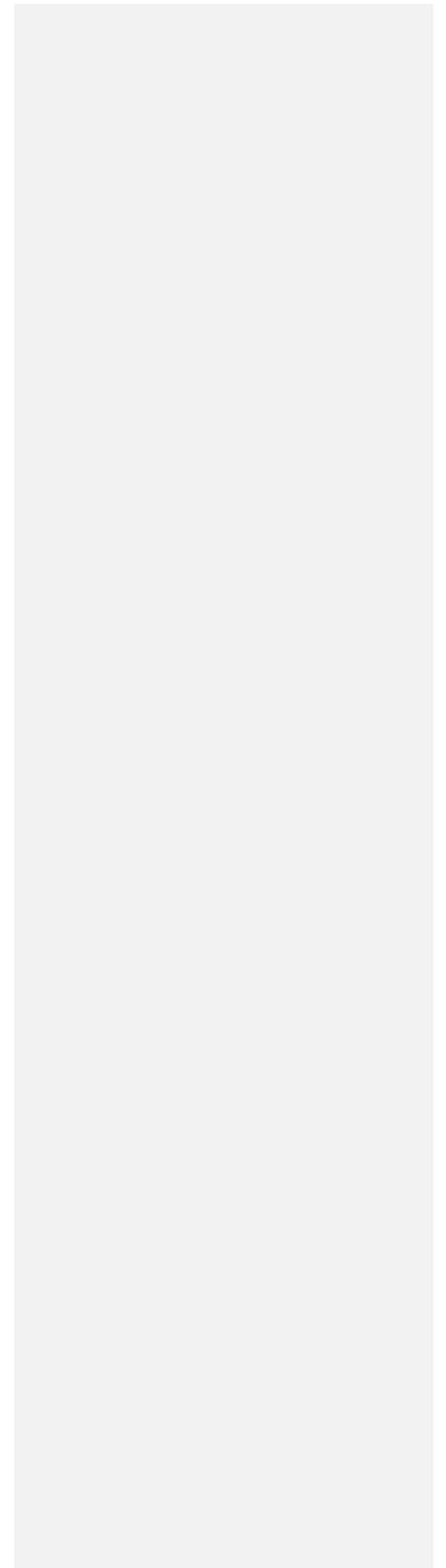
The foundations, however undermined, still hold. We are not entirely “system components,” not entirely abstracted from each other and ourselves.

Public discourse on A.I.D.S. is not entirely overwhelmed by pathological abstractions. There is compassion.

⁸⁷ These notes are within sociology-psychology. We are not direct concerned with how (natural) science is or should be constructed.

We remain within the gravity of historical experience. Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Socrates, Chuang-Tzu, Homer, still touch us.

There are no “iron laws of history.” We have not reached the point of no return.



On Modernity and the Breakdown of this Order of Life (1990-2008)

I. On the Breakdown of this Order of Life

1

Picasso's *Guernica* models timelessness: not continuity unchanged in the flow of time (as when one speaks of a person's or statue's timeless beauty) but after time died (absolute discontinuity). It models violence (not the act of bombing but its consequences).

Statues, bodies (more precisely statue/bodies) are fragmented. ___ The youthful mother and the mother of lamentation merge at the border of recognizable humanity... The horse's spear tongue asserts sexuality and violence at death scream moment.

The death agony of civilization and of that which civilization's death lets loose is the murder of a Spanish city timelessly now forever. (Since *Guernica*, so many unspeakable events...Hiroshima... Auschwitz.)

2

An order of life is a realization and a betrayal. Its breakdown opens potentialities for destruction and for rebirth.

This breakdown is an advanced moment in a series.

Sensibility_ increasingly assaulted by progressively severe and rapid discontinuities of technology, values, interpersonal relations, imagery, population density (which are also changes in the texture of experience)_ becomes less and less able to register the increasingly uncanny quality of our life together and apart.

We live within "embodied" ultimate species hopes and fears: the theory of relativity, the fictions of James Joyce, Nazism, the paintings of Van Gogh, people on the moon, manufacture of plagues, artificial intelligence, antibiotics, potentialities for planetary annihilation, and on and on.

3

Minute by minute our common world is worn away. Banal slogans, fragments of routine, and improvised connections (increasingly far- fetched), remain to paper over and to cover up.

Periods of surface normalcy are less and less believable. Even "the fifties" felt...unsteady...as though something was stirring underneath. "The eighties" minute by minute undercut itself.

We awake from one dream to enter another (mirror in mirror). Afloat in the body of our species no space is particularly ours.

II. Modernity and its Alternatives

1. Modernity

“Modernity” as we use the term does not designate a historical period in its full complexity, or even all that is new about this period. (It is not a synonym for “contemporaneity.”). Modernity designates the struggle to preserve permanence in change, unity in diversity _ a recognizable vital humanity _ within the breakdown of this order of life.⁸⁸

2. The Machine/Animal Dichotomy

It is a pathology of industrial orders of life (foregrounded in breakdown) that inwardness appears as “animal” and that the interpersonal, drained of inwardness, appears as a hierarchical system of impersonal control: “the machine/animal dichotomy.”

3. The Post-modern

The tendency commonly labeled “post-modern” does not actualize the modern and move beyond in triumph. It is more accurately “anti-modern.”

The post-modern mocks the heritage it feeds on. The present as active possibility turns against the past. The past is at its mercy. Yet the present that turns against the past devours its own roots and withers⁸⁹.

. An age that mimics all voices would “deprivilege” voice and deny the author... A central project of post-modernity is to annihilate reason through its own natural process (as though one turned it to feed upon itself).

We will designate the post-modern abandonment of modernity to present banalities “opportunism” and its consumption of the past “exploitation”. We designate its submission to the animal “subjectivist” and to the machine

⁸⁸ What some contemporary authors designate “ modern” I term industrial and post- industrial. I find the traditional association of “modernity’ with an artistic and philosophical movement (Spender) too resonant to disregard.

⁸⁹(1994) Normally in “the West,” authors' names and original artifacts are not physically eliminated but abandoned to dissolve in reinterpretation ... There are exceptions. Many argue and I agree that Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel murals and some of the Rembrandts owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art were carefully, professionally, and without conscious hostility diminished in the name of restoration. (It is symptomatic that the warnings of artists were disregarded as “merely subjective.”)

“objectivist.” The post-modern, now “brut,” now decorative, now “conceptual,” now eclectic, plays itself out within a narrowing repetitive circle.⁹⁰

4. The Demonized Machine

The machine/animal is periodically overwhelmed by a compulsion towards unity. Animal and machine cannot enter mutual dialogue. Synthesis is beyond them. The animal enters and “impassions” the machine. The machine enters, empowers, and “electrifies” the animal. The machine/animal _ passionate to devour yet freed from natural rhythms of desire _ is never exhausted, never sated.

We will term the machine/animal as a pseudo unity “the demonized machine.” (Nazism was, whatever else it also was, the apotheosis of the demonized machine.)

III. Modernity and the Demonized Machine

1. Opening

Modernity is capable and desirous of dialogical unity yet delicate and vulnerable. Modernity is not only opposed by stasis, by the tensions of breakdown and by the betrayals of the post-modern, but also by the superhuman powers of the demonized machine.

The demonized machine is the “shadow double” of modernity. All moderns are touched by the demonized machine. (It is an “occupational hazard.”)

2. Demarcation Notes

The demonized machine (a.k.a., “the machine/demon dichotomy”) cannot be automatically isolated from modernity by a “wall” of explicit criteria. Distinctions are case-by-ambiguous-case through disciplined sensitivity.

Yet the following questions might be helpful:

- a. Is there empathy and compassion for the individual person (in his/her unique existence, inwardness and autonomous activity) whether functional or dysfunctional for this or that “social system,” and in isolation from all posited “historical missions” and “species tasks,” just this mortal creature as s/he is?

⁹⁰ (1994) Late modernity and the post-modern are contemporaneous. Artists often classified as post-modern whom we interpret as late modern include Samuel Beckett, Alberto Giacometti and Francis Bacon.

- b. Are frameworks and interpretations recognized as in principle partial, incomplete and subject to critique and revision (no final solutions)?

IV. Borderline Notes

1

The traditional artistic task of creating a vital resonant artifact is more and more difficult. On the highest level, it was almost impossible (on and on at utmost intensity to the edge of endurance) for Giacometti to construct a portrait that is, after all, no greater than a fine Raphael or Titian (Lord).

2

In paintings by Soutine, against overwhelming paint thrust rhythms, miraculously the tree, the face, somehow without break in energy emerges: paint as paint and as image interpenetrating at utmost tension ... All that is now dried and twisted yet remembers fluid motion is respected in the herring, and the tomato is a burning helpless frustrated desire.

3

Original. Unique. Alone. Absolute midnight. Wave on wave of darkness. Words one by one as an advance of candles... Far beyond what could have been expected. Images of pure light in order not to weep. Images of pure health against despair.

4

Cruel successors cut off from authentic dialogue with illness and pain scorn "pity" (not self-pity but compassion for the wounded other), "rise above good and evil" (not defending life against self-damning conscience but licensing themselves to kill).

5

A dream, absolute fulfillment completing and redeeming all past action.

Straining for the ultimate paroxysm, thought and being in the act of once and without end now and forever coming.

Always one more load of victims to fuel the fire.

6

The generically human concerns of sociology-psychology do not require the possibility of human completion. Humanity is an open “work in progress.” Art, history and sociology-psychology directly mediate the dialogue of dialogues that is “our life together and apart”: they code our life together and apart back into itself.

As human history is naturally incomplete it is at each moment relatively open (whether this is recognized or not).

7

To identify as original and/or completed being that which advances to claim one within the breakdown of this order of life, increases vulnerability to machine/demon banalities: to the high voltage hyper-energized banal (in the sense that Frankenstein's monster is a hyper-energized corpse) and to the homey sentimental banal. (Shout “Heil Hitler!” and praise grave silent peasants.⁹¹)

To such consciousness, the sensuous light and joyous _ as in a Monet painting of water _ all free play of personality, all graceful sociability , all charm... appears trivial, tainted.

There is hostility to the halting ambivalent questioning through which tender youth discovers itself in reconstruction. (Male adolescent rebellion if adequately arrogant, harsh and humorless may be encouraged as “grist for the mill.”)

As nuanced sensitivity with its openness and embrace of ambiguity is merely shallow (inadequately grounded in “the folk” and/or “in the face of death” and/or in the “class struggle” and/or whatever) military service and abandonment to a fanatical political movement might mature the intelligent inauthentic student.

8

We hypothesize that, everything else being equal, the greater the industrial development of a fascist order of life, the more virulent and efficient its genocidal cruelty and brutality. Nazi Germany was by far the most industrially advanced fascist order of life. Compared to the United States of the 1990's Nazi Germany was industrially primitive.

9

⁹¹ There is of course no anthropological curiosity about these peasants' actual existence. They are only required as emblematic preprogrammed quest guides. (Not Van Gogh or Millet peasants...not even Breton,...Kitsch.)

To be “fit” one must adapt. If, for example, one is locked in a building with five people and no food then the one who eats the others is fit and will survive. To eat the others requires both that one could win and that one tries.

Perfect function is pathetic

The incomplete ... the open,
Angels of annunciation.

The modern as the struggle to articulate continuity in discontinuity and unity in diversity cannot routinely surrender to the present.

10

There is news one does not grasp at first hearing... At the first sign of estrangement the lover might say, “You no longer love me” as a charm to call forth, “I truly love you!” Later, in the new world of the beloved's absence, the lover realizes _ even then not all at once but slowly _ what it actually is to be abandoned.

That which merely imagined burnt the mind like breathing acid now _ beyond all hope of denial (even denial masquerading as acceptance) _ is the medium one lives in.

As breakdown continues despite all attempts at resolution modernity changes. We no longer expect breakdown to disclose and/or give birth to and/or abolish itself in an absolute, transparent, final, triumphant, revelation of totality.

11

All postures have been exhausted. Recognition struggles past “acceptance as denial” . Peace is the peace of exhaustion _ a lull between spasms... In lucid moments when the fever eases one “sees” one’s actions will not bear examination. One keeps on keeping on.

V. To be Mourned Forever

1

The struggle of the modern to preserve a recognizable humanity is inconceivably more difficult after Auschwitz.

The holocaust is not on the periphery of history. It is central.

The holocaust is unique. It is also the full working out of the implications Picasso "saw" in *Guernica*.... Or is there _ unimaginable now as Auschwitz was even after *Guernica* unimaginable _ a further point along these lines?

There can be no greater cruelty. Existence _ against the natural rhythms of desire, against the natural ambiguities of mind _ attained absolute failure of empathy, absolute brutality and cruelty.

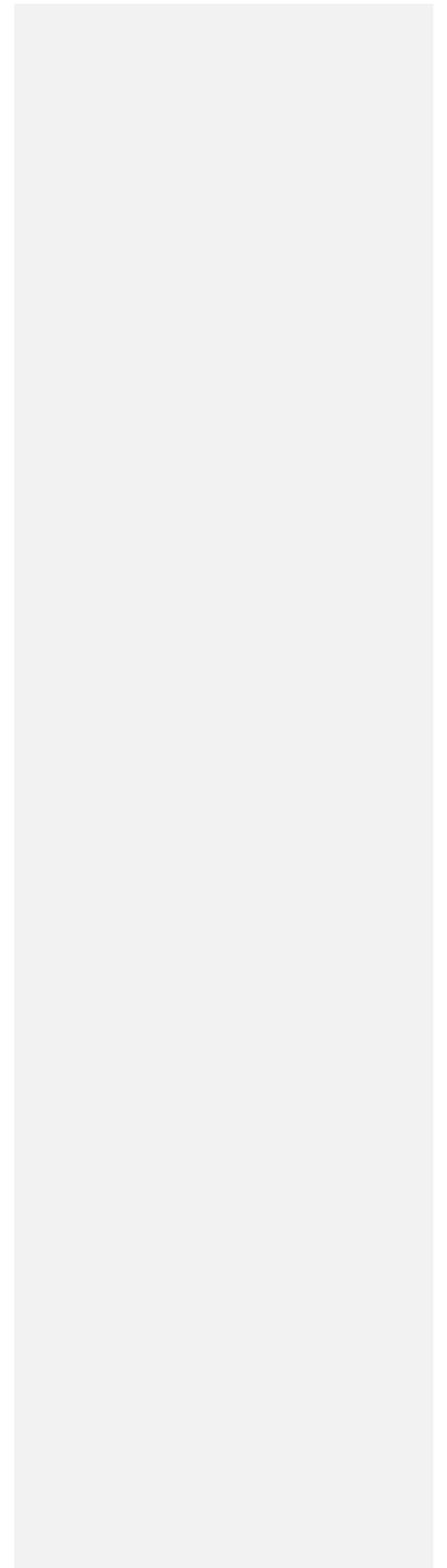
The earth may die. No blade of grass. Demented calculation devoid of sensitivity and self-awareness _ unmoved by tears or pleading, by hope or beauty_ may transmute all to nothing.

2

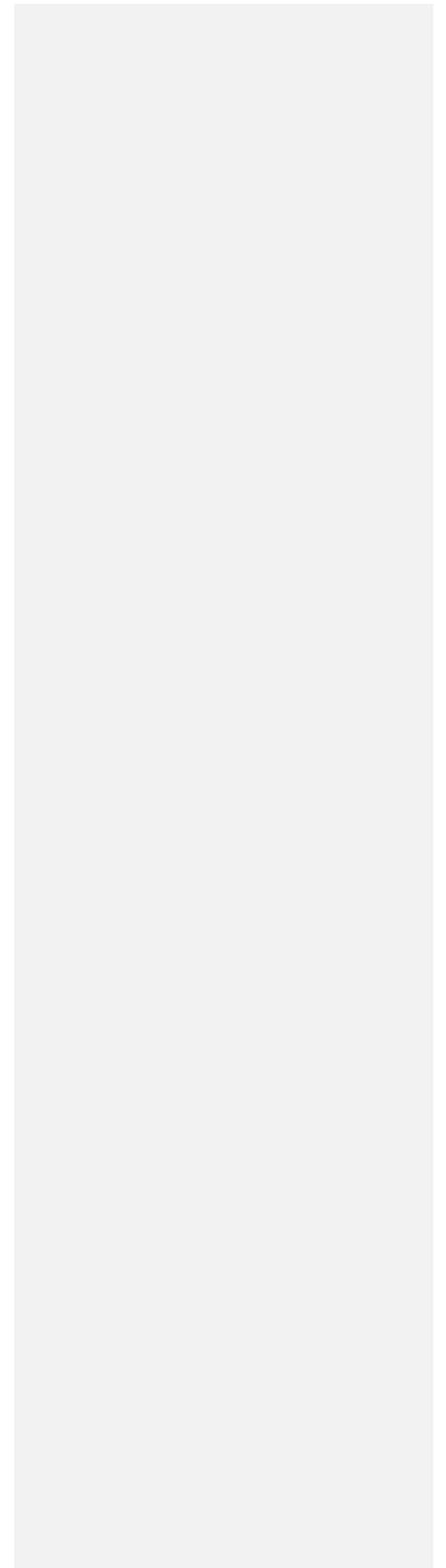
We trace the path to terminal winter in words so that we need not walk it in the flesh, so that spring, again, again, forever new.

This is a song of reason and rebirth.

Book VI Walking Through 1: Speaking for Art “in my own room”



Section 1: E -Mailing my Students (2005-2009)



Opening(2019)

1

Walking Through focuses on my struggle for self -knowledge (to awake and stay awake) as an adjunct art instructor and a citizen

2

I taught sociology for a few years. Without a Ph.d opportunities to teach sociology soon ceased.

I was unemployed then I found a C.E.T.A. job as a first level clerical supervisor in The New York City Health Department.

. I taught *Introduction to drawing and painting* as an adjunct art instructor at The New School University

I initiated and taught the course *Paint your Dreams* at The Educational Alliance.

3

Socratic questioning increasingly included visual art: I wrote *Living Art* and *A Visual Dialogue* ...As a teacher dialogue became a practical, as well as theoretical, concern.

(To L...)

1

I wish we had gotten further with your painting, although we made a good start,

I think you need to balance your wonderful natural energy and feeling for paint with an equally intense openness to “external” patterns (e.g. the structure of a figure or a song)... Perhaps now self portraits: perhaps through archetypical lenses, L_ as Mary Magdalene, as Vampire, as Amazon, as Aphrodite...

2

You ask for exercises aimed directly at “the underlying structure “of “visual language”?”

Language is for expressing/communicating. Everything visual is also emotional...Children learn verbal language through passion (drinking milk and love) not memorizing grammar.

Look at you looking at the world .What visual patterns move you most?

I am, for example, moved by flow and music: water...
Taoism...Heraclites “You never step into the same river twice.” ... A young woman dancing ...A young tree in the wind. –

Flow in and through your images: move close to paint and back to look

Only as far as you feel safe. After all, no rush...I rarely rush although an autumn leaf. And you have years and years.

(to P...)

"To have a real talent technically, while also having an extremely urban street edginess" sounds like a goal for you. Sounds good...My father "came of age" in the 30s in economic depression and world war. He had deep conviction that art must be of its own time and universal...Both require "how to" (i.e. "technique").

My father warned against anatomy early in an artist's development because it can distance from the direct experience of the model (painting what you know is there not what you see and feel). Yet your colleague A... has profited from such books. He also works to synthesize edginess and technical excellence. You might enjoy talking together.

Art distribution now is so corrupt that it is good not to rely on it financially... It is hard to paint while reaching out from quicksand for a branch.

(To C...)

I

I wasn't able to check my E-mail until this very moment...I couldn't bear you thinking that I read this important moving letter and did not immediately answer.

So sorry you are ill (fever and difficulty breathing sounds difficult) . R... told me that your husband was also sick. How are you both now?

Yes, I care about all my students, yet one by one, each as themselves. I care very particularly about you.

Are your doubts of this moment "fever speaking through you", or are they deep and long standing...I am not sure I understand you clearly. I want to.

I read your words. *We all only can work, unfortunately, with what we have as our biological and shaped core and condition... So I'm thinking that it's counterproductive for me to attempt to believe "I am a painter" when I do not have the stuff that's required for that, and I remain someone who paints.*

I am not sure that your general premise "*We all only can work, unfortunately, with what we have as our biological and shaped core and condition*" is correct. We all can change and grow. Unless there are extreme and specific brain impairments there is a rich and wonderful common human potentiality that opens for each extreme possibilities of achievement. I believe that accepted "normalcy" is a limited and crippled compromised condition.

Why "*unfortunately*" in your case. You are obviously an unusually sensitive, cultured and, in your fine, quite, gentle, way, passionate person...One doesn't have to be Aretha Franklin to be a fine singer. I also love Ricky Lee Jones, and Chris Conner ... Francis Bacon and Bonnard are equally wonderful painters.

You are emerging as an artist ... You can be more than a painter. It is my firm conviction that you can be (and often right now are) a visual artist.

You also say, "*Behaving with a certain amount of confidence as a painter... agitates some people who have devoted more of life and time to art*". Living with any character at all, filling any space at all, can agitate people. But that must be

irrelevant to us. We all have a right to do and be the best we can... It is each person's decision whether they will flourish through or (as is apparently the case with those you describe) feel diminished by the liveliness and beauty of others.

Please let's talk more ... When you are better let's make plans to see Moses' show together.

(To M...)

1

It has been a pleasure to share ideas with you.

I don't understand how "pretentious" and "despise" get into this sort of discussion. They are not words I would use about intellectual positions I oppose. Yet, in part because it is new to me, this way of thinking is interesting...Perhaps it is connected to existentialism, where intellectual positions are related to ways of "being in the world" and some are understood as "inauthentic".

I remain convinced that if art is to be taught it must be an activity in which better work (i.e., more artistic) can be distinguished from worse (i.e., less artistic). I believe that responsible teaching ends where there is no coherent way of distinguishing progress from regression. Yet the ability to make this distinction does not in itself enable teaching.

One should, for example, never forget that people should always be approached as ends in themselves.

My friend Ken and I are struggling with this tension working with resident poets at Phoenix House. So are the poets we work with.

We all share a desire to create good art together. We almost always all agree about improvements and regressions. There is powerful shared joy at improvements. This shared commitment overrides tremendous differences. It does not do this automatically but fights through against great obstacles.

Yet recently a workshop temporarily exploded over experienced disrespect between residents. We are discussing and trying to work through the distinction between respectful criticism-for-improvement and "put down".

In order to progress together in art we must all feel safe. Yet in an atmosphere in which "recovery is the first priority" emotional safety is not a means to an end. It is life or death.

Art is always life or death. Whether or not we can define it we feel its presence. We know that it exists with the same directness that we know we exist.

2

We have both been clear about our positions...The natural conclusion of our dialogue is to agree to disagree.

I assure you again of my continued respect and my conviction that you have great artistic potential. If you feel that one of my fundamental life projects is inherently pretentious O.K... It is fine that you shared this evaluation (I was at first a bit taken aback but that was my problem. I apologize).

You are welcome to remain my student or to leave with my good will. My class, wherever I "set up my banner" (Yes, this image is pretentious: maybe you are onto something), is always focused on the distinction between art and non-art, and on artistic progress... I am convinced that I can make this distinction accurately. I am convinced that others (e.g. Ken in poetry) can also do this. Most art teachers do not hold this position as passionately I do.

3

3.1

What was my concern about the work you did outside the class to develop realistic technique? Here is a very short over simplified version.

It did not feel lively. I strongly advise you to paint with energy. You have a boredom detector that does work for you that reflection on art does for others. If you feel bored while painting you are probably moving in the wrong direction.

3.2

The essence of "realism" is abstraction of given visual complexity into three – dimensional- forms- in- light within a space deep enough to contain them ... It is important to specify a source of light ... Form is disclosed as interplay of light and shadow.

Your painting was too flat for excellent realistic technique (though not necessarily for excellent figuration: see for example Matisse and Stuart Davis).

You were not energetically struggling towards solidity.

3.3

Please permit me a few remarks on "realism" as a visual "artistic language".

Every area of light and shadow is also a design element: realistic paintings are formally and emotionally integrated through interplay of light and shadow (see for example Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and Hopper). Many artists work towards integration by putting all lights in together as though in a single gesture: the same

with middle tones and with darks ... See also the discussion of "local color" in *Living Art*.

Technically mediocre realists recognize color changes but disregard discontinuities of texture. Yet skin is texturally qualitatively distinct from fabric, wood, etc. [See for example Holbein, Hals and (in paintings he executed personally) Rubens].

Interestingly, realism developed in the Renaissance in dialogue with a complex neoclassical idealism. Renaissance/ Post Renaissance "realism" is a species of geometrically mediated abstraction.

I am convinced that you can do this well if you see clearly what it is. Here teachers can help you. I see no limit to your ability in art

My wife and I are undergoing the natural diminution of age. No complaints, "Old age isn't so bad when you consider the alternative" ...Please try to enjoy your golden prime ... I find your sensitivity to your son beautiful...He is so lucky that you are his father.

P.S On re-reading your letter , I want to reassure you that it is *not* necessary for artists to feel powerful emotions as they paint...The passion should be *in the work*.

To E, On an Educational interpenetration of Painting and Acting (a)

1

“My teaching has been influenced by acting... Actors take for granted that their unique humanity is their instrument, and thus that “technique” is primarily the discovery, opening and education of sensitivity.

The teaching of painting has not yet had its Stanislavskian revolution. Sensitive practice exists, but its insights are not publicly articulated. In the absence of theoretical self-knowledge, arbitrary rules and the teacher’s own idiosyncratic way of painting are often confused with disciplinary necessities.

2

2.1

The statement that “The teaching of painting has not yet had its “Stanislavskian revolution” suggests a process in which vital practice is abstracted and translated into theory: not merely explicit statement but selecting and clarifying required themes. In chess one speaks of Steinitz, in acting Stanislavski, in history, among many others, R.G. Collingwood ... The great archetypical heroes are Socrates and Plato.

There is Socratic inquiry outside professional philosophy. Disciplines seek self- knowledge through reflection and awareness in the act.

My teaching is entirely committed to my students and entirely an exploration of the art of painting. My *Living Art* is a guide to students and a Socratic exploration.

Living Art argues that art has/is a necessary human project with inherent standards that permit accurate judgment of better and worse, and thus, can be taught.

2.2

I am not comparing myself in potential or achievement to Stanislavski. To identify oneself as a visual artist is not to identify as Rembrandt. Yet in a culture that has almost forgotten art one might say “I attempt_ at an infinite distance_ that which Rembrandt exemplifies”.

3

Art standards are rarely explicit rules with routine applications. They are normally communicable disciplined sensitivities and orientations that enable one to distinguish art from non-art and within art to discern excellence. The order of art is “a logic of freedom”.

An art teacher who grasps the character of the project understands that progress is assisted by component underlying sensitivities. Some are suggested in *Living Art*

“All painters should, for example, learn sensitivity to the expressive qualities of line, shape, texture and color [e.g., to the interplay of “sharp” with vague ambiguous areas (as a ship emerges out of fog) and to cool and warm colors (as in Picasso’s blue and pink periods)]. They should learn to draw the “figure” (e.g., person, tree, flower) as an “organic unity” and to explore the relationship between focal image and “background”. They should learn to compose expressively and coherently in space.

To become an artist in any medium one should learn open and sensitive dialogue between spontaneity and tradition, between theory and practice, and _perhaps most fundamentally_ between inwardness, medium and “creative process.”

4

All my exercises (e.g. painting to themes and to music, archetypical figure work) focus on developing and integrating these required sensitivities in soulful practice

Recognizing unity in diversity on all levels (e.g. design, color integration and mood) is emphasized in all exercises. Balance of thought and feeling... of spontaneity and awareness in the act... is always encouraged.

The artist dances with the act of painting, the emerging image and the world.... One is aware of the directionality of every stroke. One is open to each touch of charcoal or brush and every compositional inter-play of color and shape. There is an expansion of consciousness that can inspire sensitivities beyond the act of painting.

Beginning a painting, one seeks the first moment of dawning individuality. Once the painting is alive it tells the artist what it needs.

Only that which contributes to its emerging personality should be accepted in the work.”

Each creative moment is open to the world. One paints in moment-by-moment dialogue as in intimate conversation.

In the strange and wonderful realm of art, the intellect is not a detached “calculating machine” ... Thought is passionate. Emotion is thought saturated... The universal is transformed in personal voice as Monet’s cathedrals melt in light.

To E, On an Educational interpenetration of Painting and Acting (b)

1

You say that "the method's" exercises are only applicable to the development of specific characters (only case by case). My art exercises are intended to orient students to "the basic grammar" of visual expression.

My exercises are simple and basic. They do not need tremendous time or dedication... They do require momentary openness.

2

Lately to my surprise I "see" that the students I have trained from beginners have a dependable technical fluency transferable from painting to painting.

Each painting is new. "If it ever becomes easy (i.e. routine) one is no longer an artist"(Moses Soyer). Yet with fluent technique one is not entirely lost. One knows how to proceed. ("One never steps into the same water twice". Yet there is advantage in knowing how to swim.).

To E, On an Educational interpenetration of Painting and Acting (c)

1

My habitual analogy between art teaching and the culture of acting is articulated in *Living Art*

“My teaching has been influenced by acting.... Actors take for granted that their unique humanity is their instrument, and thus that ‘technique’ is primarily the discovery, opening and education of sensitivity.

A few more words on my approach to acting before we put the subject away.

2

2.1

When I act I begin by stepping step backwards from myself.

The inherent music of the lines appears .

Myself as “object” separates and is present to myself as subject...Object self appears as a living flow. It has its own dynamic. Yet I can within limits play it into a new form (some manipulation yet essentially I –Thou).

In reshaping a deeper me appears. This “context me” should be held outside all trace of manipulation yet can be called upon, invoked.

2.2

This requires work: for me, only with an actual role to play, and time to prepare with others and alone. Only four times in my adult life (all amateur and minimal).

One was the beggar in Brecht’s *The Beggar and the Dead Dog*. The director wanted us to walk through it: cold stale cheese. I don't know what Brecht had in mind: my guess is many leveled irony not dead level dull.

I was lost until a slice of rant suggested a crisis between Alexander the Great and his soldiers. I (correctly or incorrectly) grasped the beggar as a manifestation of the historical proletariat...He is not “a naturalistic character”. Yet his words and actions are available, flowing naturally from his archetypical “soul”.

3

In the early 70's I was teaching sociology at a small private college. I had moved away from locking isolated students into standardized tests (raw or disguised as essays) and towards individual and group projects. One group decided on a documentary film. We focused on the class room.

I envisioned the teacher as a hero. Yet the students outnumbered me. I played the teacher to their "music" as a cross between Dracula, Mussolini and a deranged machine.

We brought into being between our selves the genre of situated fantasy documentary. Situated documentary because bound to "the truth of a particular place". Fantasy because directly imaging shared inner life.

4

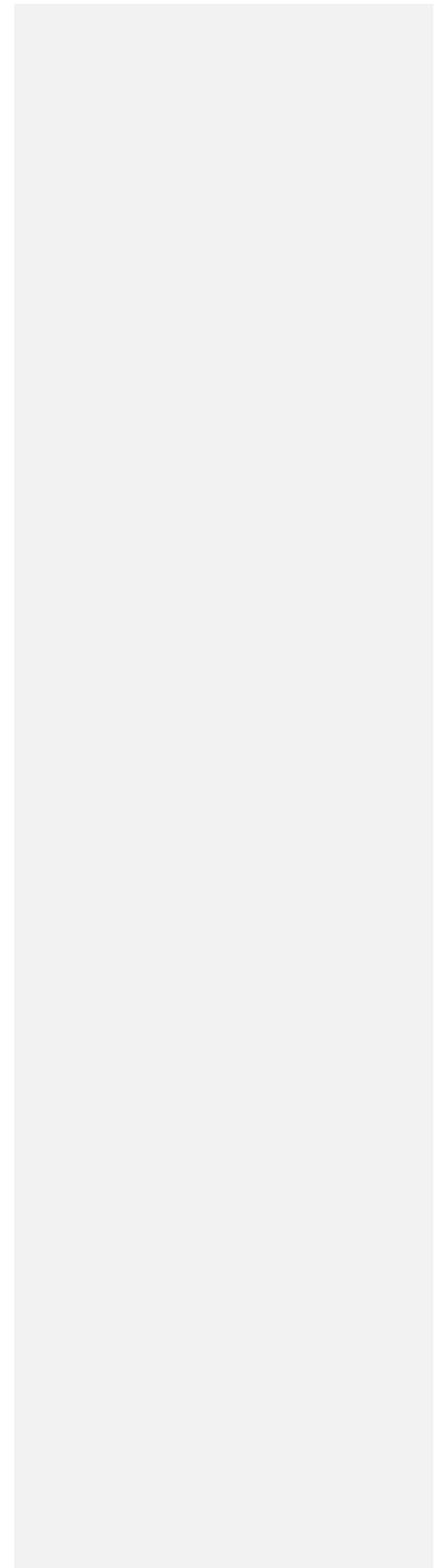
I am slightly acquainted, mainly through Yeats, with traditions of "mythic/stylized theater... I wrote a poem *Shaman in Winter* that I find incomplete on the page or even spoken by a single voice. It would be "mythical" not "naturalistic" theater... There would be dance and music. There would be a singing dancing chorus from which soloists emerge and into which they return.

5

I hope that these letters have eased miscommunication rooted in my class references to acting, explicated my concept of technique and clarified my approach to art teaching

I find myself with little to add to the presentation of specific exercises in *Living Art*. I would be happy to clarify any confusion and correct any errors you find there.

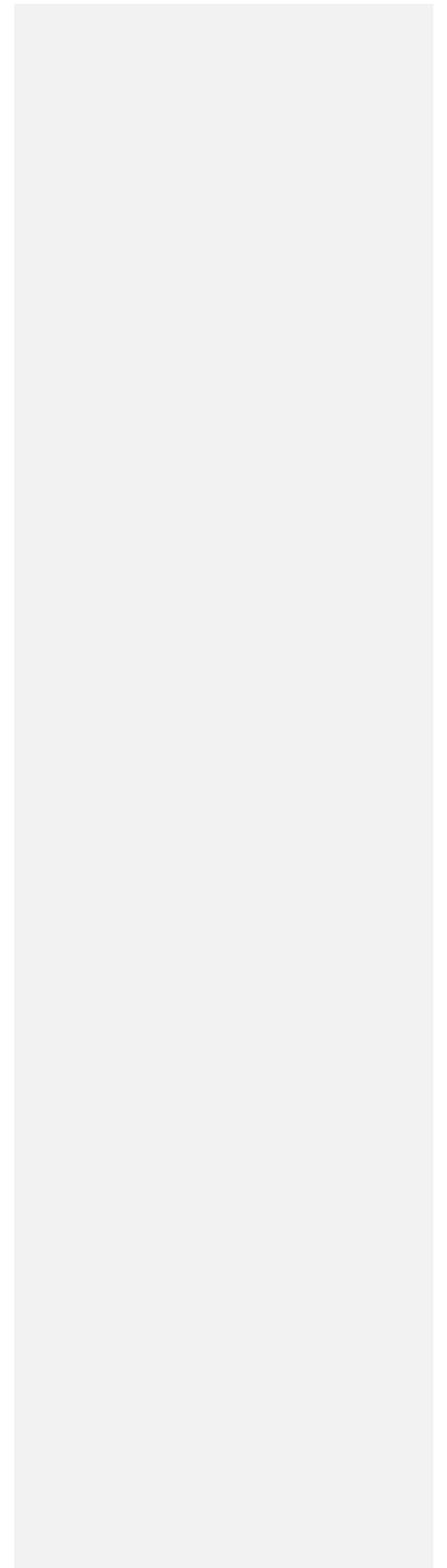
Section2: Reaching Out



Opening (2018)

I had no training in art therapy (and no degree in visual art). Yet “my practice” broadened. I initiated and taught classes in painting and poetry to substance abusers at Phoenix House Career Academy . I began to teach painting to homeless people diagnosed psychotic (i.e.the officially sad) at The Brooklyn Women’s shelter and C.U.C.S.).

A.Phoenix House



Notes from Living Art

I

Students often have a hard time with the idea that art can be learned and taught: that one can dependably recognize progress and regression.

A student in my class at Phoenix House turned towards a gray garbage can. “Until I met you I believed that to be an artist is to copy what you see. If I can copy this accurately then I am an artist.” He later told me that his dreams were full of fantastic visual images (I remember he said flying animals) saturated with color, as though he lived at night within a brighter richer world. Yet this to him had nothing to do with art. I remember saying, “Art is personal. One listens to one’s painting as one creates it, as though it is a person.”

He said, “If art is personal one can’t learn or improve.” I answered, “Learning is not limited to the external and ‘objective’. We are learning to listen to one another. People learn to be friends. Hopefully one slowly learns to understand oneself. You are working to recover from addiction...Learning to listen, understand and change resembles learning art.”

2

I teach creative writing as well as painting. My students speak about the honesty of the class.

This seemed strange at first. In “program” they talk about the most harrowing experiences. What could they say _ what could they confess _ that they hadn’t said a hundred times before?

Then I saw it. A student was speaking about his ex -girl friend. His face was tense. His voice was strained. He meant it. Hearing him in creative writing workshop we urged him to let us see what he saw and feel what he felt. Someone said, “I want to see her face in front of me.” He spoke again. I was amazed. A door had opened. He was present. She was present... I never imagined who was there behind the monosyllables.

From Proposals to the International Organization (None Approved)

I. Visual Art(2000)

1

When I first began teaching recovering addicts I noticed that many students were afraid to express themselves in their work. They demanded rules and rigid structures. Their paintings were bland and pretty, heavily self censored. I slowly realized that they were afraid of their own feelings.

A student who obviously had talent but always stopped short of strong visual statement told me “The last time I did this I was stoned out of my mind.” What I heard was. “I associate creativity and imagination with drug life. Thus I must avoid it”. My answer was “Your creativity is yours. You can use it as you want. It belongs to you.”

2

I have noticed a widening of intellectual and emotional horizons. Many talented students have never been to an art museum. They don't know who Michelangelo, DaVinci and Rembrandt were. I bring in art books. They are fascinated. (They also relate positively to varied music: blues, “soul”, folk, opera, jazz, played on C.D.s while they paint.). I emphasize that they are doing the same thing that these creators did: they are members of the same tribe. They are all artists together. In this context they do not experience the past as other and alien.

3

I have had dialogues with students who are graffiti artists. We distinguish graffiti style from writing on walls. We discuss the potentialities of graffiti style as an abstract language that is not necessarily tied to letters.

One resident after many attempts created a small graffiti drawing on paper without letters. Another was fascinated by a book on Arabic calligraphy that he discovered in the library; we discussed potentialities for integrating graffiti patterns with multi-cultural historical calligraphy.

II. Creative Writing

We began a successful creative writing class focused on poetry

Many students struggle passionately to speak honestly and write authentically. I am amazed by the care and intensity with which they attend to language. We recognize that our struggle to work and challenge one another in an atmosphere of mutual respect in class is one with our struggle to create living works of art. A resident stated that the search for honesty in art is helping him become more honest in his life.

III. Proposing Socratic Workshops

1

We intended to limit ourselves to poetry and prose fiction. Yet when a resident said that he often felt disrespected this led naturally into a class discussion of the concept of “respect”. We then discussed “love” and “friendship”. I pointed out that these are Socratic inquiries. We began to discuss the form. Exploration of experiences of respect, love, friendship and their opposites touched on the anthropological concern with discovering common humanity within cultural variation.

2

I recognize that many people who have been excluded and marginalized in our society have a wide range of educable talent in many disciplines. Moreover, it is important for its own sake to demonstrate that we can both learn from one another and “keep the faith”, that we can and should engage one another in respectful dialogue. Learning through creativity creates a platform in which “the outsider” can connect to higher education with full vitality and without loss of self-respect.

3

3.1

Education in the arts helps free the powerful drive for creativity from self-destruction and enlist it in the service of health. It assists residents to communicate feelings constructively and to empathize with others. Relevant

goals include increased ability to adjust creatively to ambiguous “open-ended” tasks and to use language flexibly and effectively.

3.2

Education in the Socratic project of the reasonable examined life helps individuals to take responsibility for themselves and to live ethically. Anthropology increases appreciation of multicultural diversity. It enables recognition of common humanity beneath differences. Education in reason is training to resist violent and self-destructive impulses.

2.3

A Socratic Workshop examines in the light of reason “notions” (e.g. respect) that influence action. We would disclose and critique personal and group taken-for-granted assumptions.

There is a variation influenced by anthropological field research that foregrounds diversity. Class discussion is supplemented by group focused journals and observations. There are also exercises in taking the position of the other.

2.4

2.41

The Socratic Workshop model can help counselor training . It is literally a life and death issue that counselors not be run by unexamined prejudices.

Counselors must be free enough from projection to see the other person as s/he is.

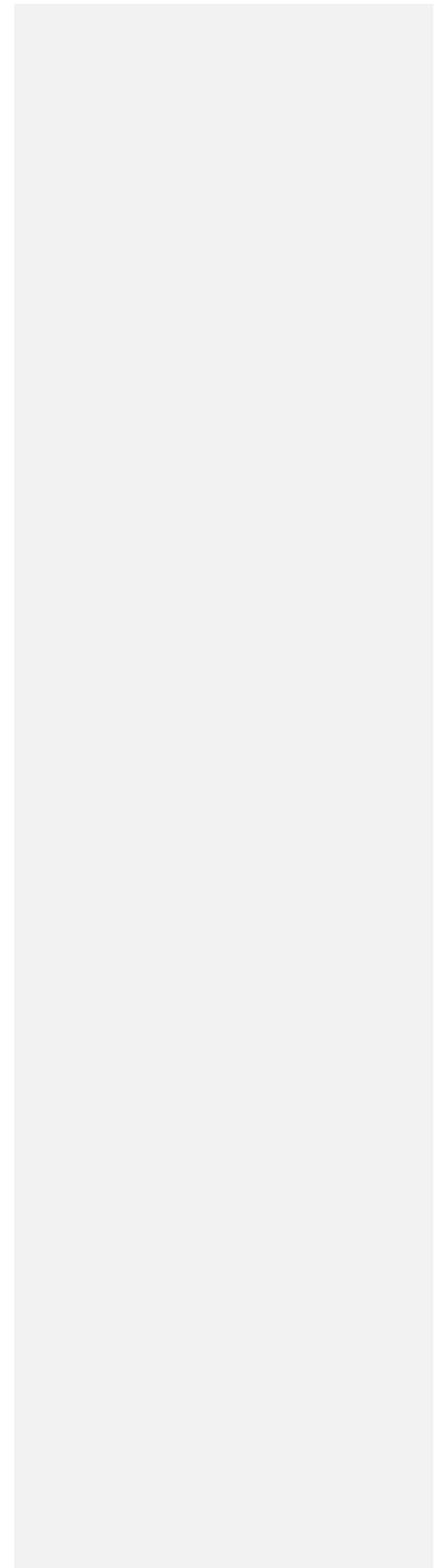
They must be able to distinguish what they expect from what is potentially possible and from what is actually happening.

They must understand “bone deep” that helpful communication is very difficult and that requires close empathetic attention

2.42

A Socratic Anthropological workshop aimed at counselor training would use some received academic theory, but would emphasize the exploration of

questions, problems, sensitivities, concepts and procedures commonly applied in practice to identify and/or correct substance abuse. It would be a project of group as well as individual self-knowledge.



To an Administrator on Substance and Image

One problem in our communication is that on issues of institutional policy, consultants are a species of servant and executives a species of “master”. Permit me then to put our difference in rank aside (as in an army movie where a private requests permission to speak “man to man”).

You say papers look for “hooks” etc. I interpret this as saying that the papers are in control and that they are conventional... Yet over time new situations can be created and “framed”. This was the communications challenge when the therapeutic community movement was born, and when Phoenix House began. It is the challenge whenever anything important and even slightly new occurs.

A publicity campaign, as I understand it, is a struggle between our message and conventional expectations... Your involvement arose in my campaign for recognition of the relevance of creativity to rehabilitation and for recognition of creative potentiality in those normally defined as limited.

2

Here is a statement of my project as I see it.

I am writing to announce a vital movement at the intersection of art and substance abuse rehabilitation.

I began teaching art and creative writing at The Phoenix House Career Academy in 1999. In 2004 I invited Ken Siegelman, the poet laureate of Brooklyn, to join us.

The Career Academy synthesizes clinical recovery and practical re-entry. Ken and I recognized that supporting creative potentiality through the arts and humanities is the next step in treating the whole person. We rejected the traditional model of teachers in one-way flow of knowledge... We were aware that some residents are graffiti painters and rap musicians . We compared ourselves to creative classical musicians in the 20s wandering into the birth of jazz.

There is a growing community of painters and poets at Phoenix House.

We are all surprised that new abilities and approaches are quickly evolving among us.

We are amazed that people who are relatively new to poetry and painting are quickly becoming fine original artists. It is like watching a speeded-up movie of flowers growing.

We are experimenting with collaborative writing. Our term is "jazz poetry". This is not poetry read to jazz or poetry about jazz. We are striving to achieve in poetry the formal qualities of jazz. We want excellent polyphonic poetry in which no voice is lost

This moment of discovery is both vital and fragile. We want to work with other groups in and outside therapeutic communities to develop jazz poetry. We want to document our work and process through publication. We want to help and be helped. We want to participate beyond ourselves.

If you say "This is too academic, it wouldn't go with the public. Journalists would laugh at you". My comment would be "Thank you". How can we adjust it to that audience?"

Your further professional contribution as publicist could be crucial. It would also help if someone with status (i.e., not a peripheral consultant/servant) advocated for the program with central office.

3

In the absence of a campaign energetically pushed by Phoenix House central office you are of course correct. We will be lucky if there is any newspaper coverage, and if there is we will have little control over it.

Personal/Theoretical/Poetical Reflections**Welcome to the Art Show at Phoenix House (2005)****Speaker I**

Welcome
To this show
Of paintings
By recovering addicts

You are
Envoys
From a place
Residents here
Literally
Pray
To enter

Your visit
Assists
Healing,
Reversing
Amputation
From the social body.

We are
A narrow bridge
Above the shoreless water.
Welcome.

Speaker 2(2006)

Last “opening”
Many invited
Eight appeared

The choir was Singing
“Come Back Home to Jesus”

Suddenly

People
Ran to the window
(which overlooks the river)

There was I swear
(Some of us now here were there and can give witness)
A double rainbow

I thought
Welcome
Halleluiah
Welcome.

Speaker 3

Some of these addicts are artists
Some of these artists ate garbage

Some sold their bodies
Some collapsed inward

Some were stone, ice, knife or bone.

In this house

Of broken masks
And open secrets

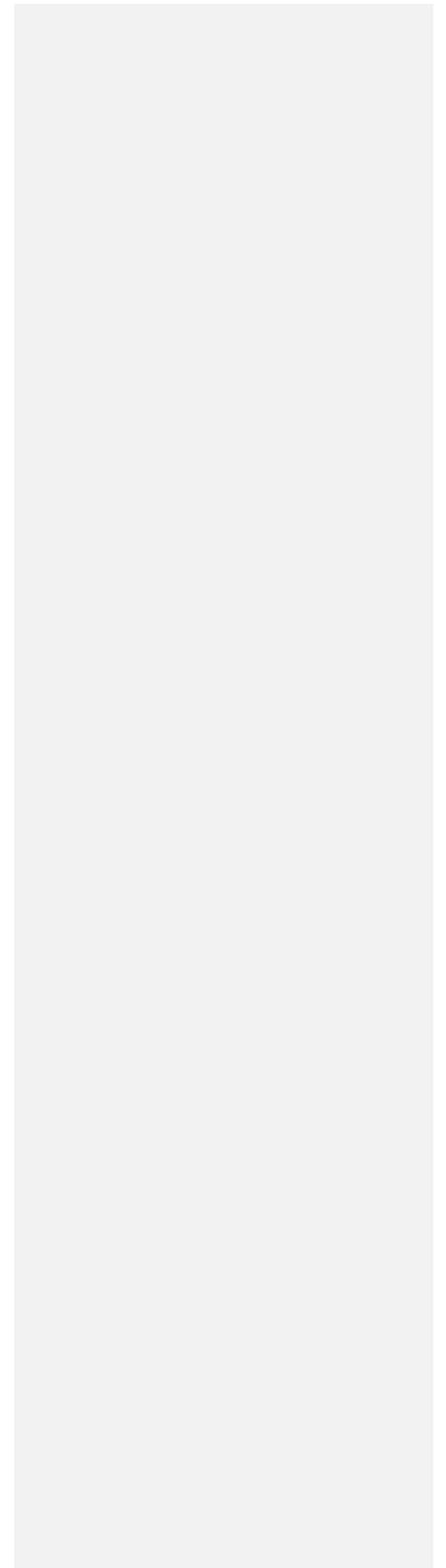
Where nerve naked ghosts
Dance with the living
Where distance collapses

Art is
Beyond
Repetitive confession
The long lost
Intimate honest voice
Returning

Art is
Hope incarnate.

Art is
The Phoenix singing

Art is
An unexpected rainbow.



From the Background(2007)

1

Cooks

Part time teachers

Maintenance workers

Clerks

Don't read charts

Never lead encounters

Yet the, hopefully, recovering addicts

Who generation after generation

(One way or the other)

Move beyond

Haunt

Bone screen.

Insomniac theater

Reruns

Behind eye balls

I yell

“No

Not that path
Vampire
Slasher
Werewolf
Haunting shadows”.

2

Look long enough at flow
One catches patterns:

Brave bull
Caught in matador’s
Calculated dancing,

Butterfly
Senses too late
Quivering
Vibration
Cautious spider._

3

Sirens sing
Outside this window,

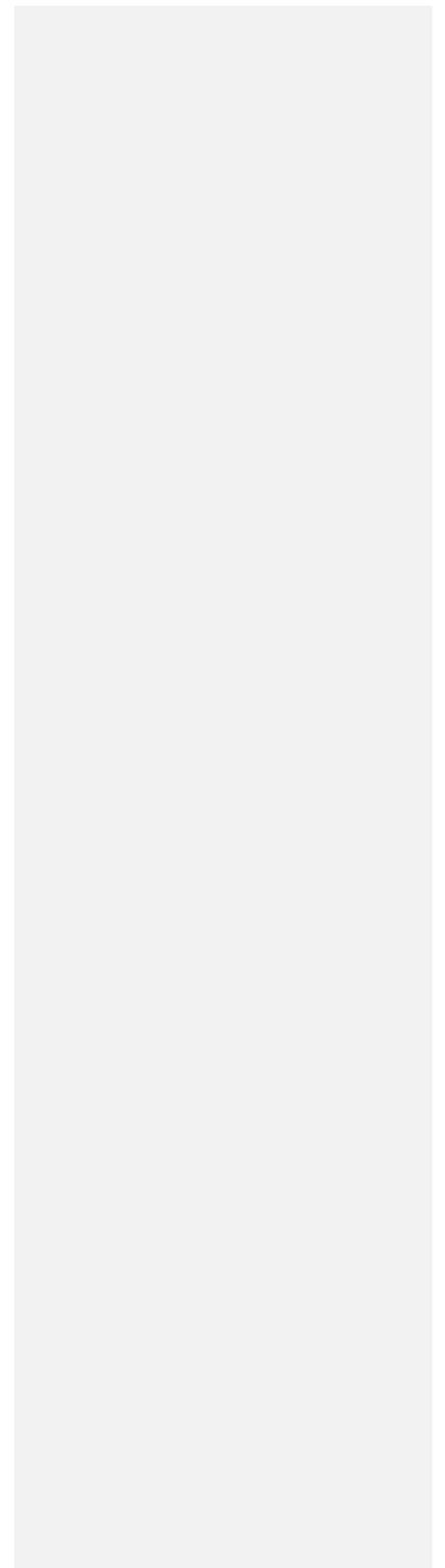
Long resistance
Lost in sudden outleap:

Devolution
In act of falling._

4

Children of Akhnaten
Arise beyond blood water,

Dawn sun blessing.



Homelessness**I.Prologue****To The City Hall Chess Club:****On the Death Of Anders Schuster, A Member (2005)**

1

One of us
Anders Schuster
Died in August Nineteen Ninety Five.

He lived in Blimpies many nights,
The place we play
As much home as he had.

2

All word traps
Programmed in the mind
To snap shut on the homeless
Did not in life
Will not in memory
Enclose
That
Kind
Hard working
Compact
Sensitive
Self-sufficient
Intellectual
Man.

3

He did not die of homelessness direct
But was so worn and tired from the street

That pain and weariness foreshadowing death
Was lost in each days search for that nights rest,

Until he could no longer move his arm
Until disease was too far gone for cure.

4

In the nursing home
We always met him in the yard,

The only tree
Behind the wire fence

Was a fine dancer
In the wind.

5

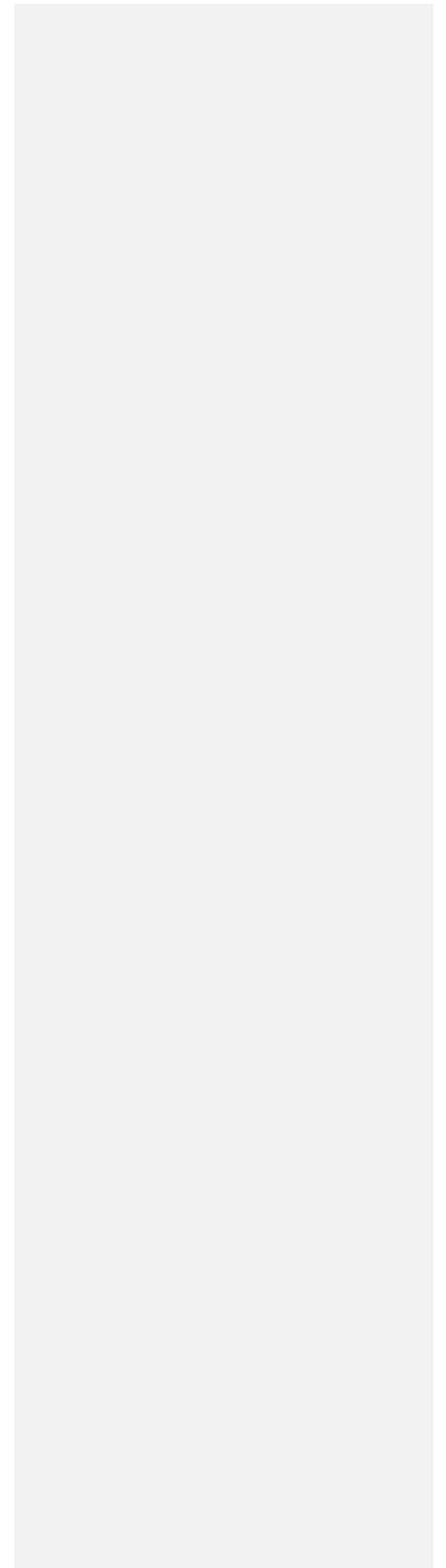
He
Sat up
All night
In Blimpies

Quiet
As a rock
On a beach

Within the ebb and flow
Of noise and gesture,

Reading
Or asleep
Beneath

Artificial sunlight of the bulbs
Artificial moonlight of TV.



Speaking to the Staff of The N.Y.U. Program for Homeless People Who Are Judged Mentally Ill, Located at The Brooklyn Women's Shelter (2001)

1

1.1

There may be initial rejection. A resident, publicly criticized me for not teaching and added, "Why don't you give demonstrations like the craft teacher?" I answered, "Art is not an external task. It is about you. I can't tell you who you are, what you see and what you want to say in paint."

A few weeks later she was different. Her work is unique, beautiful and extremely complex. There is a tiny angel hummingbird playing a harp on a high branch of a tree. There is a tree that turns and twists in and through itself in Celtic complexity... At a class show several months later she said, "I never imagined this was in me. I never knew that this existed and that I could do it"... Working on a painting she said, "It is passing through a tunnel all fragmented and lost." I wasn't sure if she was speaking of the shapes in the painting or her experience of painting it...or her life (all three?)

1.2

Class critiques can help. I say, "Please choose a painting by another student that attracts you. Let yourself feel something. Share with us how what you are seeing opens this feeling".

Students are surprised how much agreement there is about what paintings are "alive" and therefore art, and about the meaning of this art.

2

I suggest that dialogue with works of art and the process of creating works of art is healing. Not any painting and writing. Art.

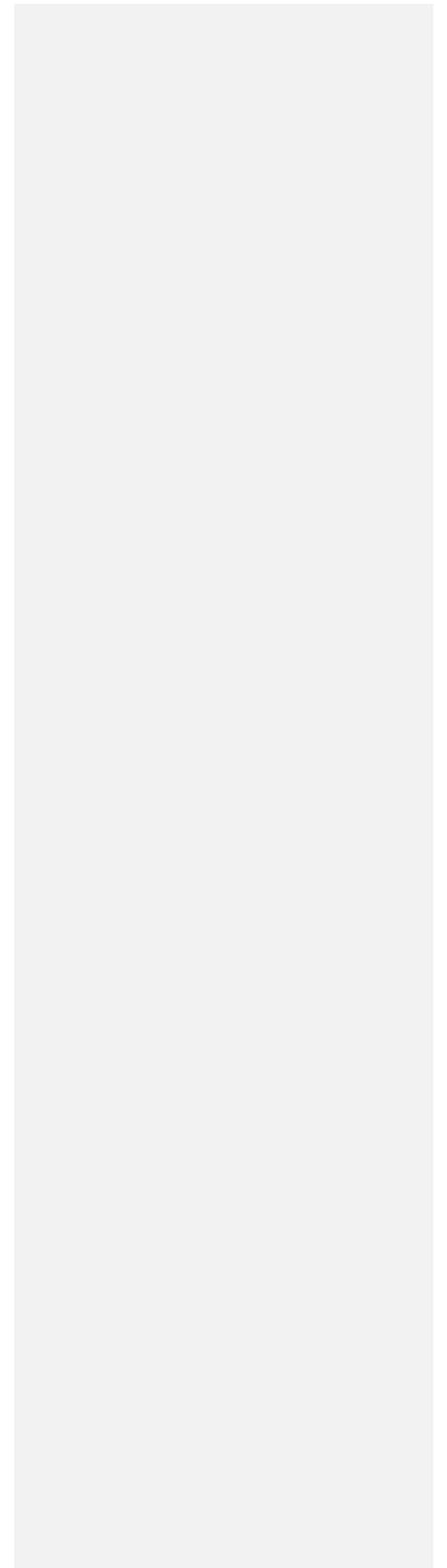
Teaching painting I am almost always surprised. I am so used to surprise now that it no longer surprises me. I see my students every term with wonder. I have no idea looking at their faces or even seeing their everyday "social selves" what they will create.

Why? I am not sure . The experience is naturally joyous. The focus is not overtly on one's feelings. One works to create an autonomous shape. There are no rules, only sensitivities. One is literally outside oneself.

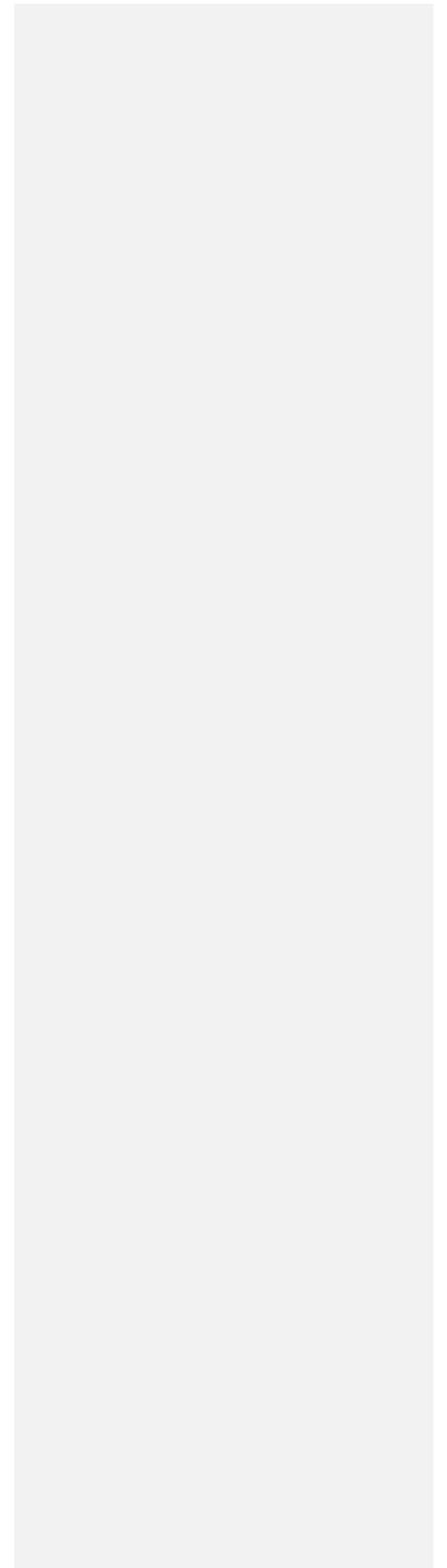
Perhaps the deepest source of this openness, surprise and honesty is that the notion of pathology, even the more primitive notions of shame and self-disgust, are entirely foreign to art. Art is in this sense a fragment of the Garden of Eden and a foretaste of paradise.

Can analysis appear within this garden without betrayal?

Book VII: Walking through 2 :Rejected by *The New School University* (2007-2015)



Section 1: Opening



Orientation (2019)

I

Influenced by the Socratic tradition I accept lived experience as a path to understanding. Influenced by James Baldwin I accept that learning does not require distance: that one can learn where one lives and loves, and where one risks oneself.

Influenced by Karl Mannheim I provisionally accept that a transparent disciplined dialogue of partial visions may suggest totality... I would explore The New School as it appears from my position as if it were the whole New School, and invite others to do the same from their perspectives

It is crucial not to misinterpret this approach through machine/animal distortions.. It does not project received opinions. Hypotheses are carefully examined and tested (I was surprised by my conclusions. They were not what I expected or desired).

I present The New School University as experienced by this adjunct art instructor.

2

I want to hear your stories and I want to tell you mine.

II

My tension with The New School University is presented as relevant to this moment in the history of The Republic of Arts and Letters, It matters what in fact occurred because it matters where historically we are.

Where I'm Coming From

I: Opening

There is a long personal path to these notes: first on a family journey, then on my own.

My father Isaac was an adjunct art instructor at in The Adult Education Division of “The New School”. I substituted when he was ill.

He died in 1980. His students successfully requested me

There was a Soyer teaching there for more than 40 years.

II.A Family Journey

Isaac and I never doubted that we were full citizens of a University where all voices in their uniqueness and shared humanity were respectfully_ thoughtfully_ heard... We took for granted that our relationship to colleagues (faculty, students, models, maintenance workers and administrators) was collegial and compassionate.

For us, as for many others, The New School was “an exile home”.

III Continuing on my Own

From 1981 until 2007 no administrator entered or formally evaluated my class.

There was a brief phone call from my department chair Julie Evans: “I never called a teacher before. I am reading the student evaluations. I just read yours. The students are trying so hard to say how much _ how deeply _ they care about your class... I was so moved that I had to call. Congratulations.” I responded, “The relationship with my students is mutual... I am very happy you called. Thank you.”

That was it in 26 years.

Charlotte Galper 9/9/14 5:37 PM

Comment [1]: A heading here – to make uniform ?

In Transition

Unknown to me _ perhaps to most adjuncts _ the ecology was changing...Parsons, a large somewhat commercially focused, art school was integrated into The New School._ Focus on adult education declined.. My students were increasingly full time Degree Candidates.

Deepening Tension

1

In 2007 a new chairperson Professor Banu entered and officially evaluated my class.

Professor Banu's visit opened my long one-sided pursuit of dialogue with the official university

Her assessment was the first, and mildest of four negative evaluations (three observational and one summary) by tenured faculty and administrators. The last observation rates me unsatisfactory in every category.

2

Throughout the process I acted on a profound faith that our differences would be submitted to the judgment of dialogic reason.

I find reflection on "What is art?" and "What are the imminent requirements of its practice and transmission?" natural and crucial to the performance and evaluation of art teaching. Thus I assumed that our dialogue would involve the relationship of my practice to the nature and requirements of art and art teaching.... I thought it would assist dialogue that I had *Living Art*, a manuscript on my artistic and instructional theory and practice

3

I invited, worked at, requested, pled for, dialogue.

I submitted copies of *Living Art*...I wrote

My responses included notes on potentially misleading expectations derived from traditional academic lectures (*On the Logic of Studio Art Classes*) and on academic governance (*Adjuncts and Excellence I and II*).

My consistently positive official student evaluations did not support the administrator's interpretation of my teaching...To assist evaluation I designed and submitted a questionnaire focused on the students lived experience and the dynamics of studio courses. I answered one observational evaluation in detail and at length.

4

4.1

I also suggested that the administration's evaluation process was descending below common sense... "My evaluations are so extremely negative _depicting an incoherent person out of touch with the students and teaching nothing _ that I refute them every time I speak a coherent sentence...If they were correct the positive student response would be impossible."

4.2

Evaluator after evaluator did his or her official thing as though I never responded...Perhaps an example would be helpful...I choose, for brevity, a relatively minor yet crucial instance.

.Professor Porcaro my second evaluator asserted as a negative that "Mr. Soyer... did not reference any contemporary artist or art movements."

I responded,

"Before the observational evaluation a colleague told me that it would be crucial to demonstrate knowledge of contemporary visual art. Yet (with one interesting exception to be explored later) I chose not to... Why?

I thought that in this context it was not required by (and might misrepresent) the discipline. I was also convinced that referencing contemporaries was not the best path to the goals of the class (i.e. it would not help the students). I believed that it was better for the students to "reference" wonderful artists whose names they knew, whose work was easily accessible and who have unquestioned authority.

Moreover, I find the belief that one must "reference" the historically contemporary in every class and on every subject only reasonable in teaching strictly cumulative disciplines [i.e. disciplines where (with minor and few exceptions) more recent is better]. It applies for example to physics.

The followers of Newton understood more than Aristotle about the basic dynamics of nature. A current graduate student understands more than Newton. Past pioneers were geniuses but the field moved past them. A contemporary instructor of physics who never refers to current paradigms is wrong and hurts his/her students.

As visual art is not strictly cumulative the great work of the past is not outmoded. It is permanently present... It is permanently relevant to practicing artists. It is (in that crucial sense) permanently contemporary.

In his summary evaluation department chairperson Daniel Hill restates and elaborates Professor Porcaro's point. He asserts as a negative:

“Most of the readings listed on the syllabus, as significant as they may be, do not indicate currency in the field. They included letters of Van Gogh from the 1880's, a collection of the writings of Robert Henri, published in 1923 and, from 2000, a collection of essays by Donald Kuspit written during the prior 25 years.”

For my Chairperson Daniel Hill my response did not exist.

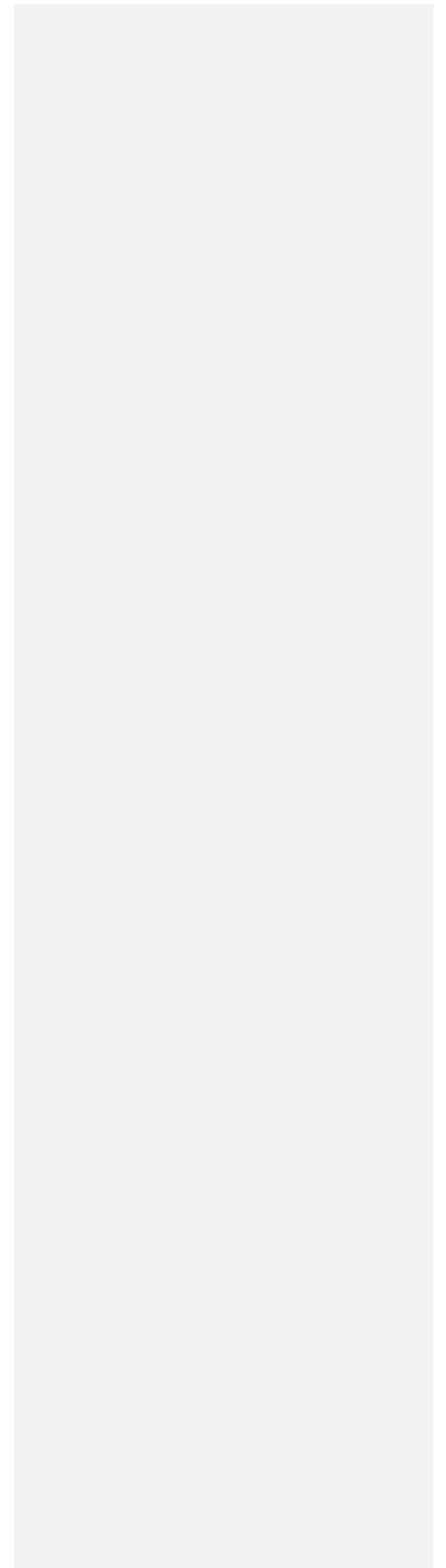
6

I began to suspect that administrators and tenured faculty entirely define the evaluation of adjunct faculty in management – labor terms as personnel actions.

I disagree.

A university is, whatever else it also is, a disciplinary ecology. Faculty evaluations have disciplinary relevance. They are instrumentalities of disciplinary selection.

Section 2: E-Mails to The New School University Community



On Studio Art Classes

I

What are the requirements of studio art classes?

I distinguish in class between learning a preexistent body of material and learning to become a proficient performer. The common term for teaching proficiency in performance is “coaching”. Coaches include pitching instructors, baseball managers, physical therapists, chess instructors, substance abuse counselors and acting teachers.

In a studio art class one is learning to do art (i.e. to become an artist). The studio art teacher is a species of coach.

All effective coaching has to go “bone deep.” This requires constant repetition of crucial orienting principles and techniques: “keep your swing level”, “go for sense memory”, “keep away from trigger situations and companions”, “don’t act, behave”.

II

1

I would add that the project of a game is unambiguously clear while “the nature” of a discipline (e.g., art, science, sociology-psychology) requires theoretical exploration.

2

Games are defined by rules. One can make choices, develop a distinct style of play, etc. However one must remain within the rules to play the game.

“Positions” (e.g., art, science, sociology-psychology) remain themselves although rules change. Thus positional boundary issues require direct problem/solution and dialogical exploration.

3

In a painting and drawing class (unlike a dance or acting troupe) the group is temporary and instrumental. Eventually each individual must perform on his/her own.

4

The basic communication occurs when the teacher passes behind the student's easel.

I explain to my students that when they share problems I will address them from the front of the class. This address is not in the normal academic sense "a lecture". It should annotate previous "one on one" comments. It should work variations on crucial orienting principles. It is situationally open and responsive. It often moves improvisationally from topic to topic.

5

5.1

Every coachable performance is open to individuality.

Every major league baseball player and chess grandmaster has his or her own style. Yet individuality is "not the point". If a batter's stance and swing exactly duplicated that of Ted Williams and he achieved the same results he would be a great hitter. If a chess player's tactics and strategy exactly mirrored those of Bobby Fisher he would be a great chess player.

If a painter's style was exactly that of Rembrandt he would not be a great artist.

5.2

Because personal inwardness and uniqueness play a unique role in art the art teacher must be very careful to encourage not discourage personal voice.

There is another reason for care and flexibility. Art is profoundly intimate and personal. Creativity is a primary human need and passion. One must be careful not to encourage students to "strip mine" themselves in order to perform. One must insist that each person is an end in him/her self.

There are many doors into art. No one should be forced down a path s/he resists.

Adjuncts and Excellence 1: Going to “The Contract”

1

The normal New School answer to questions about the evaluation of adjuncts is “read the contract” (a.k.a. “The basic Agreement”).

The Basic Agreement (2010) states,

Management of the University is vested exclusively in the University...The Union agrees that the University has the right to...determine the processes and criteria by which the performance of faculty is evaluated. (p.10)⁹²

The contract can be interpreted as asserting that my criticisms and policy suggestions about the evaluation of adjuncts are irrelevant because I am an adjunct.

2

There are other possible interpretations... The University has the power to choose. Yet it need not chose authoritarian rule.

The University will not exercise its management rights in an arbitrary and capricious manner An abiding commitment to preserving and enhancing freedom of thought inquiry and artistic expression is deeply rooted in the history of the New School for Social research...The New School since its beginnings, has endeavored to be an educational community in which public as well as scholarly issues are openly discussed and debated...The University has deep concern for preserving and securing the conditions which permit the free exchange of ideas to flourish. (p.p.10-11)

Because governance is the responsibility of the university norms of reason dialogue and scholarship are relevant.

2.3

There is a tendency to read the agreement as a contract between adjuncts and “The University”. It is a contract between The Union and The University. All

⁹² In this document “faculty” refers to adjunct faculty

adjuncts participate in both...All faculty members are “citizen of The Republic of Arts and Letters. All represent their disciplines

Many consider treatment of adjuncts reasonable and just if it conforms to procedures specified in The Basic Agreement. Yet this agreement focuses on adjuncts as wage laborers. It is an inadequate ethical guide to interpersonal relationships in a university community.

3. Reason and Dialogue

A university is the institutional home of the republic of art and letters ... It has a duty to discover, establish and maintain the conditions which permit the scholarly and creative disciplines, and thus our species' hopes, to flourish.

A university that disregards faculty appeals to reason and dialogue betrays itself.

A pattern of governance in which subordinates are evaluated through standards and procedures they have no role in setting or critiquing is authoritarian.

Authoritarian governance of intellectuals and artists is capricious and arbitrary but not random. It routinely distorts lived existence. It predictably mislabels innovation as incompetence. It endangers academic freedom.

Adjunct intellectual and creative participation in the university community should be reasonably and compassionately governed. Adjuncts should help create this governance.

I would like to hear from anyone who shares these concerns.

Adjuncts and Excellence II: Adjuncts and Excellence

1. Opening

In a previous letter I request a university dialogue on adjuncts as colleagues and disciplinary representatives.

I should not ask others to speak while remaining silent... Here are some thoughts

II. Seeking Evaluative Definitions

Who is the adjunct as “a social type”? What is “the idea of the university?”

The adjunct is a species of “included other”. The adjunct is “a stranger”. The adjunct is “the least advantaged”. The adjunct is a subordinate. The adjunct is an instance of the industrialization of the professions in late/cybernetic capitalism.

The adjunct is “a disciplinary representative, a colleague and a citizen of “The Republic of Arts and Letters”.

The project of the university is to embody “The Republic of Arts and Letters”. It is “the party” of reason, dialogue, cultural creativity and disciplinary integrity.

The university serves “society” as a model of reason, creativity and dialogue, and through disciplinary innovations.

The university serves species memory. It preserves beautiful old forms in hope of renaissance. It holds in light horrors other institutions would suppress.

The university community struggles for personal, disciplinary and institutional self- knowledge. It is committed to the reasoned critique of received labels. It would defend “the truth of lived existence and the unique moment” from routine processing[1] ... It is “an exile home” for all endangered projects and representatives of reason, dialogue and art.

III. Governance Models

1 Opening

It might be helpful to briefly examine some alternative patterns of of adjuncts faculty governance.

2 Innocent Anarchy

I wrote to a friend:

I have been showing up to teach once a week every fall and spring term since 1981

I recall Kafka's Chinese village included in yet infinitely distant from the public world of emperors and wars.

Chairpeople appeared then disappeared. The old men who taught visual art when I began disappeared (some into the ground). I am now senior in service and second oldest.

Generations of students flow on through.

Not static ... We began archetypical exercises the second year. Painting to music began, I believe, the fifth year. I began using verbal themes at Phoenix House and adapted it to the New School in the twenty second year... A local history of slow "organic" change.

Now our "bubble worlds" have emptied into public space.

There is, perhaps there should be, no way back.

3 Pure Authoritarianism and the Production of Hierarchical Facts

3.1

Under authoritarian rule experience (e.g. the lived reality of a class room) is what the powerful say it is. Hierarchy is its own ground and foundation. There is no equal discourse and no level ground.

There is no obligation to reply to the speech of subordinates. Autocrats set the standards by which subordinates are judged ... If one superior is required to transmute opinion into fact it is dictatorial. If two or more are required it is oligarchic. If a subordinate is punished for protesting it is totalitarian.

3.2

3.21

With respect to the adjunct as wage laborer the power of “the administration” is limited by The Basic Agreement. With respect to intellectual and creative participation The New School governance of adjuncts approaches pure oligarchy.

3.22

One can pile up “grievance” procedures and meetings twenty deep and governance remains authoritarian. As long as all power to shape structure belongs to the administration “hearings” are “show trials”.

3.23

Authoritarian governance of adjuncts betrays the idea of the University. It is also impractical... In the long run it endangers disciplinary integrity and innovation. In the short term unreasonable “authoritarian truths” may open the university to ridicule [2].

4. Aristocracy of Guardians

An aristocracy of guardians is an oligarchy whose members through a culture of honor, compassion and noblesse oblige dependably guard the least advantaged from injustice. Aristocrats “hold each other to the code”.

Procedures and standards are set and enforced by the nobility. They are flexibly adjusted to the individual case.

Individuals with authority (usually themselves on the periphery) have championed “the outsider”: Voltaire, Tolstoy and Zola immediately come to mind. I am not aware of an actually functioning aristocracy of guardians [perhaps among tribes (e.g. Cheyenne peace chiefs)].

5 Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy rules through expertise and law. Every position is open to review. If superiors perform competently they prevail. Subordinate’s claims of supervisory incompetence and/or bias are publicly investigated and answered.

Bureaucracy should not dominate the intellectual life of universities. Rule bound structure represses diversity and innovation... There is no clear relationship between administrative hierarchy and disciplinary excellence.

Procedures and standards are set by “the central hierarchy” and rigorously neutrally applied.

6 Dialogue

Dialogue is the direct rule of reason and persuasion. A dialogic university would examine its own practice and explore “the logics of disciplinary excellence”

Dialogue would recognize and deal justly with all relevant claims and voices. It struggles for non-repressive order.

Dialogue and bureaucracy avoid the direct explicit rule of power. They resist unexamined tradition and lowest common denominator simplifications. Bureaucracy would identify rank with knowledge. Dialogue would “bracket” differences in class, status and power.

In dialogue “local ecologies” enrich and are enriched by public life...The University of pure dialogue is a waking dream of reason.

IV. Tentative Governance Proposals

1 Noblesse Oblige

It would assist fairness and excellence in the evaluation of adjuncts if chairpeople knew that their work is dependably subject to serious peer review and sanction by the community of tenured professors.

2 Bureaucracy

It is crucial that observational and summary evaluations of adjuncts meet normal scholarly standards...Incompetent interpretation does no practical harm to Nietzsche or Max Weber. It can ruin a faculty member.

3 Dialogue

3.1

In each adjunct majority department all faculty members should help construct a written statement on “disciplinary logic”, excellence and viable alternative styles.

After a preliminary draft is written it should be circulated through the university. All faculty and administrators are welcome to respond.

Although department faculty have special responsibility for the “disciplinary logic” of their department others “can take it home and try it out”.

3.2

I propose that The New School open a Socratic exploration of disciplinary logics, and its own potentiality within the crisis of our time. Not advertising rhetoric. Not a bureaucratic “study” to be filed away. Theory and practice “word and deed” together: a disciplined creative essay in institutional self-knowledge.

I propose that this project justly and compassionately integrate adjunct faculty. Participating adjuncts and tenured professors should equitably share work and rewards (e.g. grants, conferences and publications)... “One team one level playing field”.

4 Representation

If there is a heavenly university it is entirely dialogic. On earth the institutionalization of dialogue requires pluralistic authority.

Full time faculty traditionally participate in the disciplinary governance of their departments. Adjuncts are traditionally excluded. As long as this exclusion exists there will be a powerful, perhaps irresistible, tendency towards authoritarian rule.

Adjunct faculty should have enough authority to be a meaningful constituency to their chairpeople.

If department chairpeople are required to respect departmentally generated standards then majority adjunct departments will move from despotisms to constitutional monarchies.

Adjuncts should interview and help select the chairpeople who will govern them. They should evaluate their chairpeople. Claims of capricious and arbitrary treatment should be publicly addressed and mediated.

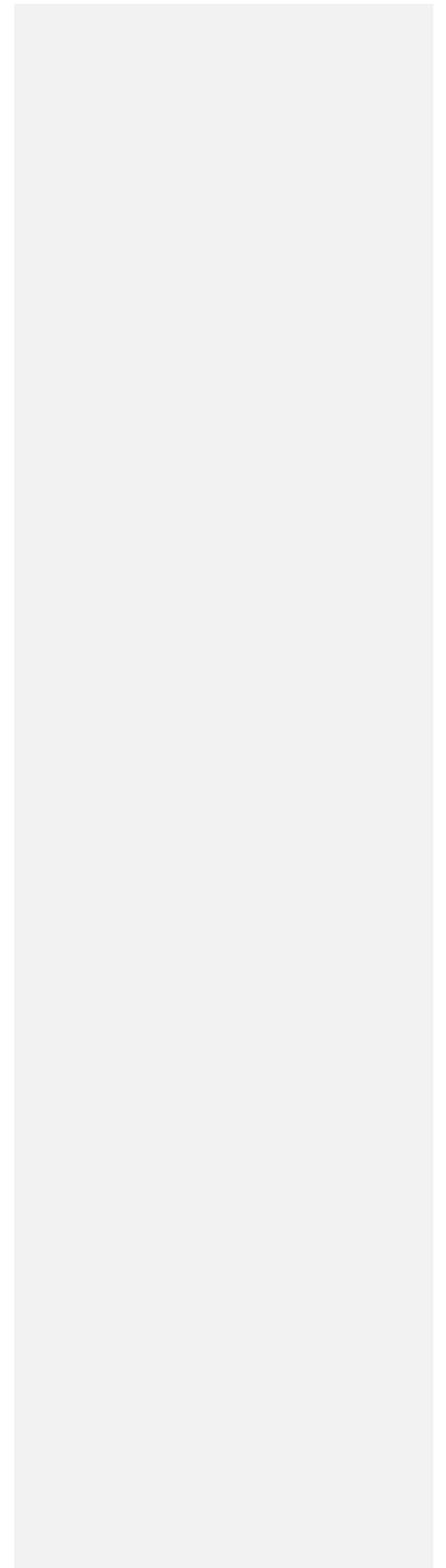
5. A Unique Opportunity

Values die unless continually retranslated and renewed. Our flawed present is “a work in process”.

Institutionalizing reasonable, compassionate, governance of adjunct faculty would free tremendous energy. It would place us at the cutting edge of educational practice and theory.

The New School, with its excellent adjuncts, its tradition of open cross-cultural cosmopolitan dialogue, its commitment to diverse traditions of critical reason (e.g. the principled pragmatism of John Dewey, the disciplined focused creativity of Max Wertheimer, the dialogic integrity of Hannah Arendt) is uniquely positioned to spark a renaissance in higher education.

Section 3: Communications to Individuals at The New School (2014)



To My Department Chairperson Daniel Hill

For many years we all worked in isolation. Now we are increasingly integrated in a system.

My response is to publicly assert my commitments and approach. I believe that all alternatives not publicly asserted will surely vanish... If we all speak and hear one another, diversity will reappear in dialogue. If we do not, then the ideal of humanistic education is endangered from inside.

I find a few learning goals and outcomes so basic to University art teaching that I have always taught them without including them in my syllabus. I now think it might be helpful to state them explicitly in writing. Thus, in addition to the syllabus, I plan to hand out a brief statement to my students.

It will read approximately as follows:

This course introduces the student to visual art as a profound, defining human species project. We will explore the nature of art, the process of creativity, the principles of aesthetic judgment, and the relationship of theory and practice, through the act of drawing and painting.

Art, thus art teaching, is distorted if reduced to isolated units of ability and knowledge. There are also tacit understandings.

To My Department Chairperson Daniel Hill

You object to my statement that,

“Don’s and Anne’s evaluations did not affect my self-evaluation as an excellent innovative, creative, disciplined, conscientious teacher. Thus they will not influence my teaching. As long as I teach at The New School I will teach as I did in the classes they evaluated as incompetent”

Many artists have day jobs”. For eleven years I was a clerk and first line clerical supervisor for The New York City Health Department where I routinely wrote and received evaluations. In such normal (I am tempted to write “secular”) contexts my statement would be nonsensical ...I imagine a response that superficially resembles mine.

“Dear Supervisor,

You state that I am an incompetent clerk. We agree that I take ten minutes to type one hundred words, and average five errors per page. Moreover, on the switchboard I misroute every other call. I am an excellent clerk. I promise to type slowly and inaccurately as long as I work for his organization...I will make every effort to misroute more calls.”

The clerk’s response is inappropriate because the task and its intended requirements (standards) are clear unambiguous and agreed on prior to the evaluation (the clerk signs on to his/her written “tasks and standards”).

In contrast, the great humanistic disciplines (perhaps especially art) are contested ambiguous spaces ...There are and will be different viable approaches to teaching.

In art, as in philosophy, there are principled disagreements

Disciplines embody profound species needs and potentialities...Instructors have a right and sacred duty to examine, assert and defend disciplinary diversity and integrity.

[Reading this now I would add, “There are policies no one __including clerks (or soldiers) _ should obey”.]

To My Department Chairperson Daniel Hill

We have discussed my evaluation and its implications. Many E-mails have changed hands between us...Last week we spoke for two hours face-to-face.

We have done all we can together and still disagree. If this were simply between us the story would end here.

Responding to my evaluation process, I went from dissatisfaction with my treatment as an adjunct to concern with the implications of such treatment for the university.

I moved from justifying my teaching in terms of accepted standards and procedures to seeking a guiding definition (i.e. “the spirit”) of higher education.

For us, as Bob Dylan sang, “the cause was there before we came...” There are issues that transcend this moment and ourselves. What is the “defining project” of higher education? What are its ethical responsibilities? What does it require of all participants (e.g. of teachers, administrators and students)?

These human-universal implications permit and I believe require, us to take our discussion out beyond ourselves... Thus, although I directly address you, this letter is “to whom it may concern.” It concerns every faculty member at this university, and beyond these walls, everyone who loves and values the great humanistic disciplines.

My local situation here is a moment in the history of “The Republic of Arts and Letters”... It is of special interest because it occurs in a university with a proud and glorious history as among the most reflective and humanistic in the world. Here, if anywhere, at the former “university in exile” the spirit of higher education, reason and the great humanistic disciplines should hope for embodiment and home.

To my Union Representative Marie Dormouth

1

Some of us have been singled out as no longer competent and/or qualified to teach our courses.

Those accused are expected to admit their errors, accept correction and conform. Supervisors praise each other (sometimes ecstatically) for enforcing reformation.

I propose that an isolating institutional language of “personnel actions,” “competence” and “qualification” covers a concerted authoritarian transformation of the university.

2

It is the duty of the creative-intellectual community to carry historical species dialogue with unbroken integrity into the present.

Given global warming and other deepening crises, the projected future we are ruthlessly driving our children to conform to may not occur... The corporatization of the socio-cultural world is analogous to the disastrous simplifications of the physical world. The university must maintain and defend species imagination, creativity and flexibility.

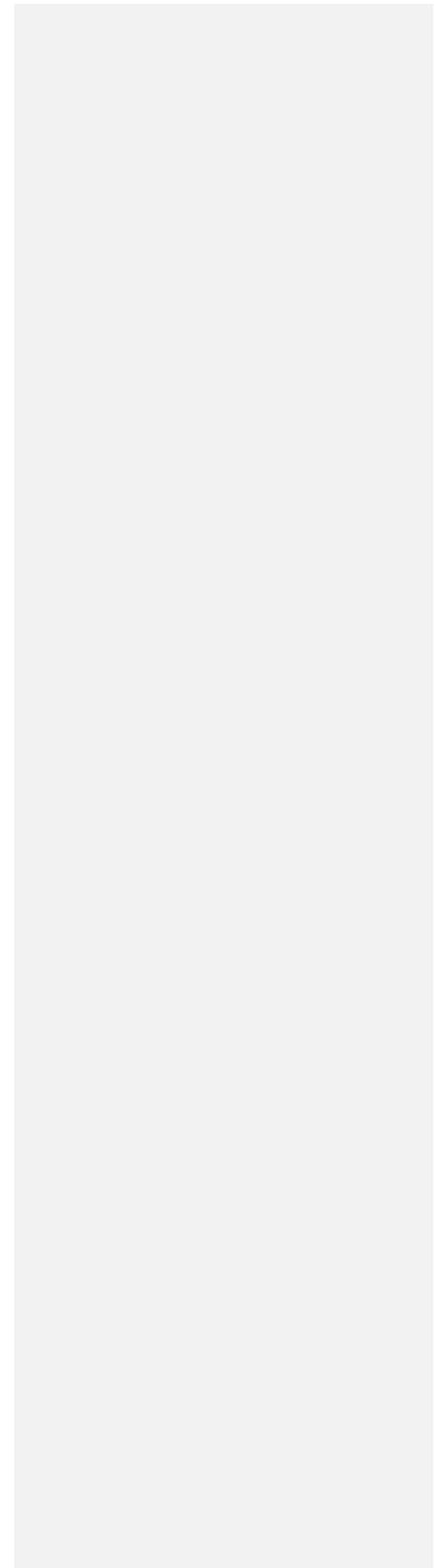
I propose that we oppose this common danger together.

3

I find to my surprise that the evaluation of adjuncts at The New School is unreasonable and anti-dialogical. It endangers disciplinary autonomy and betrays academic freedom. I want to oppose this.

The authoritarian version of higher education must confront an explicitly stated, reasonable, dialogical alternative. Everyone _ especially the adjunct faculty _ should participate in the choice.

Section 4 Looking Closely: Talking about a Class



Prologue

Looking Closely challenges Professor Don Porcaro's evaluation of one session of my class in *Beginning Painting by The New School*....It was written within the evaluation process and submitted to my department chairman Daniel Hill.

I include it here as a contribution to the history of The Republic of Arts and Letters at an intersection with *The New School*

My responses are edited to limit repetition

Introduction

I

Professor Don Porcaro's conducted an observational evaluation of my class in 12-2-2012.

It was extremely negative. I stand by this class. If I was incompetent on 12-2012 I have been incompetent since 1981.

Of course reason, fairness and university norms require that both sides be heard. I recognize that in order for you to do your job I have to do mine and submit a response.

In my response I'll argue that Professor Porcaro's observational evaluation of my work as incompetent:

1. Has little or nothing to do with what actually occurred in the class he observed.
2. Grossly misrepresents the excellent class that I taught.
3. Could , if accepted, deprive students of an important learning experience and thus weaken the creative and intellectual diversity of the university.

This is merely an opinion, unless it is reasonably explained and defended.

A reasonable response requires that I describe what actually happened and offer evidence to support my account.

Since Professor Porcaro denies the relevance of the class to previous classes (which of course he never witnessed) I must explicate these connections. There are important professional issues, some controversial, that must be examined. There are methodological issues (e.g. the relationship between observation and evaluation) that must be addressed.

This will take some time and effort. I am willing to spend this time in an attempt to prevent an injustice and to defend the norms of dialogue, reason and creativity crucial to the university.

I recognize that there may be an institutional bias in favor of Don Porcaro's assessment because he is a full time Associate Professor on an official mission, and I am an adjunct instructor. I find such a bias, if it exists, inappropriate in a University setting. Yet, taking this possibility into account, it is especially crucial that I present my case fully.

I have a few points to add.

1. The truth of what happened in my class Professor Porcaro observed is a factual issue. Our descriptions are mutually exclusive. These are not two subjective opinions to sit in a file next to one each other. One is true the other is false. A reasonable choice has to be made. Is Professor Porcaro's statement correct, or is mine correct?

2. I have been informed that the official observational evaluation is to be included in my personnel file. The basic agreement states "The University will not exercise its management rights in an arbitrary or capricious manner". An unreasonable evaluation that is not repudiated by the university is an instance of official arbitrary, and capricious action. Each administrator who does not explicitly repudiate such a document becomes implicated.

I am rated unsatisfactory in introduction, classroom organization and management, and student participation and involvement. I'm rated marginal in goals, and average in expertise. *Converting this into letter grades, this would be 3 F's 1 D and 1 C.*

III. A dilemma

There are at least two profoundly different evaluations of the same class, and the same teacher.

Professor Porcaro supports his evaluation by written comments. I will present our competing versions of the class category by category.

Two Competing Descriptions

I.Goals

A. Professor Porcaro

The goals were simplistic, i.e. “I want you to paint with thick paint” or “you should include the background” and Mr. Soyer repeated them over and over. But he did not show the student how to achieve these goals.

B. Adjunct Instructor Soyer

1

...Painting thickly was not the goal of the class that professor Porcaro observed. It was a technique. There were four interrelated goals, none of them simplistic. They were stated at the beginning of the class and repeated many times. One was technical and foundational. It was to achieve in color and texture the energy and coherence of their work with line. Three closely related goals directly address the crucial project of art. They are the basic goal of expressing ones inner world in the language of visual art and the crucial implied goals of attaining expressive intensity and achieving a personal style.

Art was defined in the first class and thereafter as “ the intense expression of inwardness in an interpersonal medium”. Expressiveness, personal vision and style were always presented as essential to art:

I also insisted from the first class that the achievement of art requires a “technical foundation”. Professor Porcaro observed the class at a crucial moment near the end of the course. In previous sessions the defining goals of art were subordinated to technical foundational goals (e.g. painting the figure as an organic unity, constructing and expressing form through light and dark, composing visually with sensitivity to interplay of shape, color and texture).

Preparing for the session Professor Porcaro observed, I judged that, with the partial exception of their use of color and texture, the students had achieved an adequate introductory technical foundation. Thus in that session the goals of expressing one’s inner world in the language of visual art is directly centrally and explicitly addressed. (This was in line with the syllabus schedule).

2

“Painting thickly” was clearly stated as a possible means of achieving in painting areas the energy and coherence of their drawings, I remember saying, “Most of you are applying paint with a lot of medium (gamsol). This is using only part of the potentiality of oil paint. It would be helpful to use the full range of oil’s possibilities. Thus I suggest applying some paint thickly.”

I also related it to the other lesson goals of increasing expressiveness and developing personal style. I said “Applying paint thickly doesn’t hold for everyone because we want to strengthen not weaken your personal voice. There are excellent artists who have used oil in thin washes. Let’s be alert to determine if introducing thicker paint is in line with your particular style and increases expression. If it does then stick to it.” As I went from student to student the expressive and stylistic resonance, of more varied paint application was one thing that I was looking for. I also talked about the expressive quality of brushwork.

3

Professor Porcaro is incorrect in stating that I did not teach the students how to attain class goals.

Using thick paint was clearly presented as a means to the class goal of expressing themselves richly and flexibly in oil paint. (i.e. to use the full potentiality of the medium.)

His assertion that in the class he observed I did not instruct the students how to integrate figure and background is also incorrect. I addressed the problem conceptually by suggesting, “What is called the background is actually the context or environment in which the figure exists. The nature of the background and the figure are mutually dependent”. I supported this statement historically and analytically “In Byzantine and Medieval art, for example, the flat, golden background supported flat relatively abstracted figures in a coherent supernatural ecology. The three dimensional figures of Renaissance art required a background deep enough to sustain them. If you try to place a three dimensional figure against a flat background it will fall out of the picture.” I also provided specific technical instruction in achieving figure ground integration. “The background must be distinct enough from the figure to set it off. Yet the figure and background must be integrated coloristically. One relevant technique is to subtly mix figure colors into the background and background colors into the figure. This led me to refer

briefly to a point discussed at length in previous classes. I said, “Remember that colors are not experienced as isolated. They are part of an integrated visual field.” I suggested a home exercise. “Take a few fruits, let’s say a lemon and orange on a white plate and change the color under them and behind them. You will see that the figure (e.g. the plate and the fruit) will appear differently.”

III. Introduction

A. Professor Porcaro

Mr. Soyer had very little structure to his class. He would call out commands with the expectation that students would understand what he is talking about. There did not seem to be an in structural link to previous assignments or classes.

B. Adjunct Instructor Soyer

Many of our comments on goals are also relevant to “Introduction”...

This was the twelfth of fifteen sessions. Many themes and concepts were already developed. Many skills had already been learned... When, for example, I instructed students to paint a figure in its archetypical resonance or to respect compositional balance I could rely on previously established understandings. Little or no new explanation was needed.

Other previous instructions required and received explicit reinterpretation... For example, students experienced difficulty synthesizing dark and light with color and expression. I told the students “We have already learned and worked hard on seeing and articulating light and dark patterns over the whole body. Not piece by piece. Remember that light doesn’t follow language. It doesn’t distinguish between hand and foot. It moves through the entire three -dimensional form. In previous classes we learned this from the perspective of “realistic” interpretation. Now this problem reappears in its emotional resonance . . . Remember that everything visual is also emotional.

IV. Class Room Organization and Management

A. Professor Porcaro

In Mr. Soyer’s syllabus for this week, he spoke about “colorful figuration’ but he gave no instruction on this and told the students to put in any color they wanted, adding “you don’t have to make it realistic”. He often referred to thick painting as

being expressive but didn't say why. There was no clear instructional movement from one learning task to the next, and hence no way to judge progress.

B. Adjunct Instructor Soyer

...A crucial struggle is to substitute higher-level intuitive creative processes for explicitly technical calculation. One approach is to include the figure in music-based abstractions and another is to work with archetypes.”

In previous classes there had been intense focus on the precise rendering of perceived color. It was to be mixed on the palate rather than on the paper or canvas. The students had been given formulas for Caucasian and for African American skin tone. They had also been given detailed instructions for rendering dark, middle and light variations. A basic accurate skin color should be mixed. There should be three piles of this color. One should be used unmodified as the middle tone. The perceived shadow color should be mixed into another pile. This would be the dark. Relatively light colors (e.g. white and yellow) should be worked into the third pile. This would be the light tone.

It is against this earlier instruction that permission to depart from variations on observed “local colors” marked the shift from naturalistic technical grounding to direct explicit focus on expression and personal style. I said, “The skills you have learned are aspects of a rather traditional ‘naturalistic’ ‘visual language’. There are other possibilities. There are artistic languages termed ‘faunist’ and ‘expressionist’ that deviate from observed local color, and juxtapose pure colors (relevant artists include Van Gogh, Matisse and Kirchner) ... Use any color you want to...Feel free to deviate from naturalism in the service of expression and personal style...”

Color was explored at length in previous classes. Focus was on the distinction between warm and cool colors. In the class professor Porcaro observed I focused on expression. “Cool colors (e.g. blue and green) resemble the minor key in music. They open calmness and suggest the elegiac. They draw resonance from sky and water. Warm colors (e.g. red and yellow) open vitality and heat. They draw resonance from sun and fire. There is a pretty good artist who explicitly explored the expressive qualities of warm and cool color. What is his name? (There is an opening for student responses.) The answer is Picasso. Picasso was from childhood a natural drafts person (Perhaps in the history of “western art only Raphael Sanzo was his equal in talent.) He was not an equally gifted colorist. You may have heard

of Picasso's blue and pink periods. Is blue warm or cool? (Students answer correctly) What about pink? (Students answer correctly) The blue and pink periods are expressively different. The works of the blue period are sadder and more elegiac.

Here is a story about another great artist and expressive color. I cannot vouch for its accuracy Let's consider it a fiction. Van Gogh painted a portrait of a middle-aged woman. Red and yellow predominate. He said, "I want this painting placed in a locked room in a boat sailing to Antarctica. When the scene becomes so white and cold that they forget their names and families, and are edge of forgetting that they are human, the door will be opened and the painting will heal them."

There were clear interrelated mutually dependent goals and the class was extremely successful. Paintings increased in emotional vitality and painterly richness. Personal style was enhanced.

V. Expertise

A. Professor Porcaro

Mr. Soyer seemed to know his art history but did not reference any contemporary artist or art movements. He didn't, during my visit, engage the students in any meaningful dialogue about art in a broader sense.

Also because he never actually showed the students how to achieve the painting goals he set for them, it was impossible to judge he level of his own expertise.

B. Adjunct Instructor Soyer

1

"Referencing" contemporary art and commentary is discussed above p.p;

2

I find it hard to understand what Professor Porcaro means by saying "because he never actually showed the students how to achieve the painting goals he set for them, it was impossible to judge the level of his own expertise." Since he clearly believes that he can judge my ability as a teacher (i.e. that I am incompetent) he must be referring to my ability as a visual artist.

I am convinced that it is not my role as a teacher to produce works of art in the classroom. That is the task of my students.

I have done some quick demonstrations in early sessions. But I find that the teacher painting in class is of limited value and in some ways dangerous. I have seen many teachers substitute their own limited understanding for the rich variety of art and for student diversity.

Nonetheless in preparing for the class that professor Porcaro observed I made a very difficult decision. It was near the end of the course. They had worked well but I believed they could go even further in vital expressive personal painting. For the first time in my thirty plus years of art teaching, I encouraged students to paint with the work of other artists near them to give them a sense of painterly performance.

I bought... post card sized reproductions of work by Gauguin, Van Gogh and others...to class. Just before leaving the house I was shocked by the immense distance between these reproductions and the originals. I sensed that they might be too flat and mechanically processed to communicate paint application.

...I thought, "Perhaps they should see some original work." "I do many small pieces on paper and work in various styles. I grabbed about fifty paintings of mine and brought them to class.

In class I explained to the students why I included original paintings along with reproductions, I did not say whose work they were ... I pointed to all the images and said. "It is very important that you don't imitate these paintings. There is danger that you might substitute other's solutions for the difficult task of evolving your own. They are here to inspire your own creativity. Pointing to the pile of my work I said: "This is not work by a historically acknowledged master. It is here because I feel you need to see some original work." To my surprise most of the students chose the original work. Professor Pocaro got up from his chair and looked closely at the work I handed out. There were many ways to determine that some were originals. I distinctly said so. Moreover, every visual artist I have known personally could immediately visually distinguished original paintings from poor reproductions. If he noted the presence of original work he could have wondered where so many came from?

The students, unlike the professor, made the connection. Professor Porcaro only stayed for roughly half the class he evaluated... After he left I stepped out for a

moment. When I came back I saw that the students had placed the original work on a table and gathered around it. One asked, “Is this yours?” I answered yes. Some praised it, especially the more expressionist pieces...Some asked, “How did you do this?” There was a brief discussion. I said, “ Please go back to your painting now. As you know, next week is the big class discussion. (I don’t like the term ‘ critique’ with its suggestion of finding mistakes). I will put my work out with yours. We will discuss it. If there is anything in them you would like to learn I will try to explain it. If there is anything you disagree with feel free to tell me.”

An evaluator who was as curious and observant as my students had an unusual chance to judge my competence as a painter.

I am puzzled by professor Porcaro assertion that “I didn’t engage the students in any meaningful dialogue about art in a broader sense”. He does not say what he means by “art in the broader sense”. Yet any conceptually sensitive use of the term must include explicating the defining project of art and exploring the problems and skills this project requires.

In the session he observed the students were ceaselessly painting. We did not engage in extended formal open discussion. Dialogue was between their work, the class goals and my interpretations. Yet the structure of art was crucial.

I suggested that the defining project of art is the intense articulation of inwardness in an interpersonal medium. Art is intimate communication between the individual and the species. The class goals of attaining expressive intensity and achieving a personal style directly address this defining project of art. The goals of expressive resonance of color and texture and the relationship between figure and background are instrumental. They explore crucial problems of painting. As in any excellent art class a vision of “art in the broader sense” shaped every moment.

VI. Student Participation and Involvement

A. Professor Porcaro

As the students were working only one followed the instructions that Mr. Soyer gave them. The rest just painted the model in whatever way they wanted. When Mr. Soyer looked at the student’s work his comment w

as “good” and did not engage with the student past this basic criticism.

B. Adjunct Instructor Soyer

... There was less need and room for personal discussion than in any other class session before or since. Nonetheless, I did not only say “good”. I have already cited many comments (e.g. about warm and cool color, figure background relationship, the personal resonance of interacting dark and light patterns).

... here were many more... I told two students that as they had painted richly, personally and emotionally for the entire term their task was to go further. I told another to consider that her consistently thinly painted, almost “watercolorish”, application of muted color might be right for her. I mentioned the English painters Gwen and Augustus John: Gwen’s quiet restrained style is now recognized as equal or superior to her brother’s “painterly” flamboyance. With another student I emphasized the interesting effects that could be achieved by juxtaposing pure primary colors and subtle nuanced mixed colors.

Why My Version Should be Privileged

I. Directly Comparing Two Competing Narratives

1

The class described by Professor Porcaro is incredibly awful. Please take a minute to imagine what that class would look like. A man is standing for three hours screaming out orders. He teaches nothing. The orders screamed out are simplistic. Examples given include paint thickly, put in a background and use whatever color you want. I can't imagine what other sentences on this level might be. Perhaps he just repeats these three over and over. There is no discussion with students beyond the word "good". There are no explanations. No skills are imparted. There is no reference to the deeper meaning of art. The class he describes is absolutely bad. It is almost an ideal-typical model of bad art teaching.

2

2.1

How could such horrible teaching exist at the New School? There are possible explanations. None apply.

2.2

1.21. The teacher never taught before.

I am not a rookie.... I have taught for over thirty years in the New School and 13 years at The Educational Alliance Art School...

1.22. The teacher, once somewhat competent, is now senile.

I'll be seventy-four next month. Yet old age does not necessarily imply senility. I don't experience myself as senile but senility is not marked by increased self-knowledge. If anyone reading my response to Professor Porcaro's evaluation finds it a product of senility let's discuss it (The issue is not whether you disagree, but whether you find it simplistic and/or meaningless).

1.23. Perhaps the teacher is normally competent but the class observed by Professor Porcaro was an exception.

No one who knows how to teach and is not deathly ill can teach as badly as the person Professor Porcaro describes. Moreover, after the observer left I said to the

students “I know that every class is different, but did I basically teach as I always do?” They answered “yes”.

Since I’m able to describe in writing a complex integrated class structure it is extremely improbable that I would actually spend most of the class calling out unconnected (fragmented) superficial orders. Even without external evidence the extreme mindless incompetence of the teaching that Professor describes testifies against his version of events.

II. Bringing in the Witnesses.

1 Introduction: Some Basic Assumptions

1.1 Opening

In order for student evaluations to “speak to” the issues between Professor Porcaro and I it is crucial to make some mediating assumptions. This should be done as fairly and transparently as possible. I will construct an explicit model of probable student responses to distinct types of instruction.

1.2 A model of probable student responses to distinct types of instruction

1.21. Introduction

I am tempted to designate the type of disordered fragmented irrelevant, undisciplined teacher described by Professor Porcaro as “anarchic”. This fits common usage. It is ruled out here because my partner Maxine Kern and I are fans of Emma Goldman (She is writing a play on this marvelous anarchist). I will refer to it as “dysfunctional disordered”.

There are two other relevant types. I will designate them “good conventional” and “good innovative.”

I suggest that each type would lead to a predictable student response.

1.22. Disordered/ Dysfunctional

Almost everyone would rate a dysfunctional disordered teacher incompetent. In an introductory class a few of the least thoughtful and talented students might incorrectly rate the teacher competent. Yet that is improbable because they have taken other courses and thus have some idea what competent University teaching “looks like”. No one would rate such a class superior. No specific skills would be mentioned. The discipline in the broader sense (e.g. its nature, principles and problems would not be mentioned.).

1.23 Good Conventional

The competence of a good conventional teacher would be reliably recognized in student assessments. There would be few if any unsatisfactoriness. Many students would rate the teacher superior. Many specific skills taught would be cited. It is unlikely that many students would find the class surprising or eye opening.

1.24 Good Innovative

A class taught by a good innovative teacher would be somewhat controversial. There would be some polarization. The class would be seen by most students as superior, exciting and eye opening (i.e. as opening new perspectives and questions). Skills, principles and approaches will be cited. Some will dislike it. There may be some unsatisfactoriness. Most of those who would not like it would criticize the class as being too difficult, complex and unconventional.

1.25

Which pattern best fits student responses to my class?

3. Two Student Evaluations

3.1 Opening

Professor Porcaro and I are not the only witnesses to the class. There are two separate anonymous student evaluations.

One is official. They answered questions designed by the university to apply to all students and disciplines

I designed the other specifically for art students.

Both evaluations were filled out by people who observed and participated in the course for more than one meeting. From the perspective of reason and fairness both student evaluations are relevant.

3.2 The Official Student Evaluation

3.21

There is an official evaluation, created and sponsored by the university. It is primarily a checklist. There are few comments and thus there is little sense of the thinking behind the marks on the checklist, yet the results are useful.

3.22

One important difference is that in the official student evaluation, I am highly rated. Professor Porcaro's evaluation in numerical terms is a 1.4 mean average. In the student evaluation it is a 4.41 mean average. I am rated by all students, as either very effective or effective in almost every category, these include teaching effectiveness, respect for diversity, cultural, ethnic differences and intellectual points of view, and effective use of class time. All agree or strongly agree that the course was academically and/or creatively challenging. All agree or strongly agree that I was well prepared. No category that deals with my teaching rated me under 4.0. The only category under 4.0 had nothing to do with me but with the facilities and equipment provided for the art studio. It is clear that the students were capable of a negative response.

3.23

There were some extremely positive comments. "Avron has incredibly keen insights about painting and also has a remarkable ability to quickly read and teach a student's exact situation" . . . "Within seconds of looking at my work, Avron could read me and help me. I've never experienced anything like it in a class before" . . . "I understand in a much greater way the process of painting and making art in general."

"Avron is really a genius at this. Emotionally present, and such insightful comments. I actually wanted to take notes in a painting class, which is rare."

"An absolutely incredible teacher-balances technique with expressiveness; I felt that he was teaching me exactly what I needed when I needed to hear it. Very encouraging, inspiring and helpful, but also realistic. I'm extremely happy with the teaching I experienced in this course-it was greater than just painting."

3.24

There were negative comments. The course is criticized as being too difficult, complex and unconventional. The main complaint is that it "should have been labeled as an intermediate class."

3.25

It is extremely improbable_almost impossible_ that the dysfunctional disordered class described by Professor Porcaro, would elicit such enthusiasm. The results of the official student evaluation fit almost exactly the predicted response to a good innovative course.

3.3 The Student Evaluation Designed for Studio Art Classes

A. Reviewing Particular Questions

3.31 Presenting the second student evaluation.

Here are three of the questions with student responses. I will address questions one and two in more detail below.

3.32

Question 1) Do you think your work has improved over time? If so, how?

Student A Yes, definitely. Sometimes I feel like I've moved backwards, but I guess that's the non-linear nature of art. Soon enough, I always recognize how overall I've improved. I was starting from almost nothing, so even learning to draw, to see as a whole and translate, was a huge step.

Student B As a beginner painter, I think that my work has extremely improved over the course. I started without knowing how to really paint as a unity, and without knowing how to mix colors and use different textures, but now I feel like I've really mastered those things.

Student C Yes, my drawing has improved (figure). My use of colors also.

Student D Yes. When I first entered this class I would draw, sketch, paint, what I thought I saw (which was the object). Now I see my object in shades, shadows, tones and shapes.

3.33

Question 2. Did the teacher encourage you to express yourself in your work?

Student A Yes, absolutely and gave me concrete examples of how to achieve this.

Student B To tell the truth, Prof. Avron is one of the most wonderful teachers I ever had. He encourages me to always bring out the best of me and to follow my personal style.

Student C Yes. Definitely.

Student D Yes he did. I now learned how to trust my artistic instincts.

3.34

Question 3) Did you learn anything about standards of art and how to attain them? Please describe this with detail and or examples.

a. Presentation

Student A Yes, For example, my early drawings had an editorial (as in fashion) quality to them, like fashion design sketches. I've begun to understand how that differs from the arts. How expressiveness is the key to this, individuation, following something perhaps unexplainable.

Student B I learned a whole lot when it comes to painting in this class. I learned how to mix colors, paint as a unity, emphasize the dark and light, have different textures, and also how to read artworks and give constructive criticism.

Student C Yes. To create skin tone colors, shadows and light with the correct palate. To have other painters as reference.

Student D Yes. I now know how to approach my work; How to intake information of an object; (elbow to wrist/spine/ divide face, eyes, ears). I know how to look at light that falls on the object/subject. I've learned to translate object/subject with the image I'm trying to express.

b. Comment

These discussions of art and its standards written in a studio course are appropriately different from normal discussions in a philosophy or an anthropology class. They synthesize personal struggle and disciplinary concern within the attempt to become artists. They are theoretical reflections on practice.

I am gratified by the student's excitement and eagerness to explore the nature of art. The question captured their imaginations.

This desire not simply to proceed class by class but to question and understand the disciplines they are learning appears to have been strengthened by my art class. I asked some students to define the field they majored in. They had difficulty understanding the question. The Socratic openness they showed in my class was unusual. It was something they learned that transcends the material covered in class. This is in line with the potentiality of art classes in University settings.

3.35

Question 4) Was there any comment or instruction by the teacher that was particularly helpful? If yes, please describe.

Student A Working as a unity. Seeing different kinds of colors, paint applications, kinds of colors, paint applications, lines needed for different emotions. That exercise, as crude as it seems, was hugely helpful for me . . . Instruction on how to think about light and dark, although this is something I still struggle with.

Student B His unique way of teaching really helped me become a better artist. I like the fact that he teaches us the different painting techniques but also encourages us to use our own approach. The lectures he sometimes gives to the class are also very helpful as they contain a lot of wisdom.

Student C Professor Avron is amazing for his encouragement and praise and referral of painters. He took the extra time to look at my work.

Student D Yes. Follow what you see and express it to the fullest. Trust yourself.

3.36

Question 5) In what ways could the instruction of this drawing and painting class be improved?

Student A Maybe talk more about the relationship between genre and tradition, and individuation. This is something I'm curious about both in my own work and intellectually. But perhaps that isn't for an intro class, where we're just establishing our own kind of work, unsure of where they fit.

Student B I think that the course is great the way it is because we not only learn how to paint but explore new ways to draw as we paint and new ways to read artworks.

Student C To have a 5 minute interval of instruction where students must listen without painting. Thank U!

Student D None, keep teaching and inspiring. Thank you.

B Comments on Student Evaluation two.

In responding to the evaluation designed for art classes students cite specific lessons learned. There is a close relationship between the students specification of what they learned and the skills specified in the syllabus goals. Student statements go beyond the syllabus in their thoughtful comments on the nature, standards and requirements of art.

4 .A Concluding Discussion of the Student Evaluations of my Teaching

4.1

It is highly improbable_ almost impossible__ that if the class were as Professor Porcaro described students would gain the skills they claim. [There is no way that beginning students (or the incoherent simplistic disconnected instructor constructed by professor Porcaro} could have made up the skills they claim to have learned. They must have come from the class].

It is highly improbable_ almost impossible_ that most of the students who answered one or both evaluations would find the dysfunctional disordered mess described by professor Porcaro creative challenging and valuable and would respect, honor and praise its incompetent teacher.

4.2

It is highly improbable that professor Porcaro's account and evaluation of my class is correct. The class observed by professor Porcaro was not an instance of dysfunctional disordered teaching. It was an exemplary instance of good innovative teaching.

Some implications of Professor Porcaro's Misstatements

1

An Associate Professor far outranks the organizational status of both students and their adjunct teacher. Yet ... in a university community reason and evidence must rule.

From the perspective of reason it is clear that Professor Porcaro's evaluation is wrong. If it is not explicitly repudiated:

- a. Professor Porcaro's false vision of my class will become the official truth. I will unreasonably exist in the system as incompetent.
- b. Students could be deprived of a valuable educational experience (in the final analysis it is the students that we are concerned with.)
- c. The creative and intellectual diversity essential to any university and especially to one that claims to be progressive and non-traditional will be weakened.

2

It is for the sake of higher education and disciplinary integrity as much as to defend the truth of my classes' experience that I have taken the time and expended the effort to write this response.

To support professor Porcaro's evaluation over my student's and over mine because he is a full time teacher on an official assignment would accept and further authoritarian rule.

A "university" in which institutional authority outweighs dialogue and reason can no longer consider itself an innovative and humanistic institution of higher education.

It is unlikely that I am the only person who will be in this situation. The decision made here has implications for the evaluation of all adjunct faculty.

3

I hope that this unfortunate episode will have positive consequences for the university.

I hope it will lead to open dialogue about university governance of adjunct faculty.

It is because he has performed this evaluation as a representative of the university that his evaluation should be explicitly repudiated by the university. I request that professor Porcaro's evaluation of my class be formally and explicitly repudiated.

Each administrative level that does not repudiate an unjust official evaluation lends it increased institutional weight. It becomes more and more strongly a statement by the university.

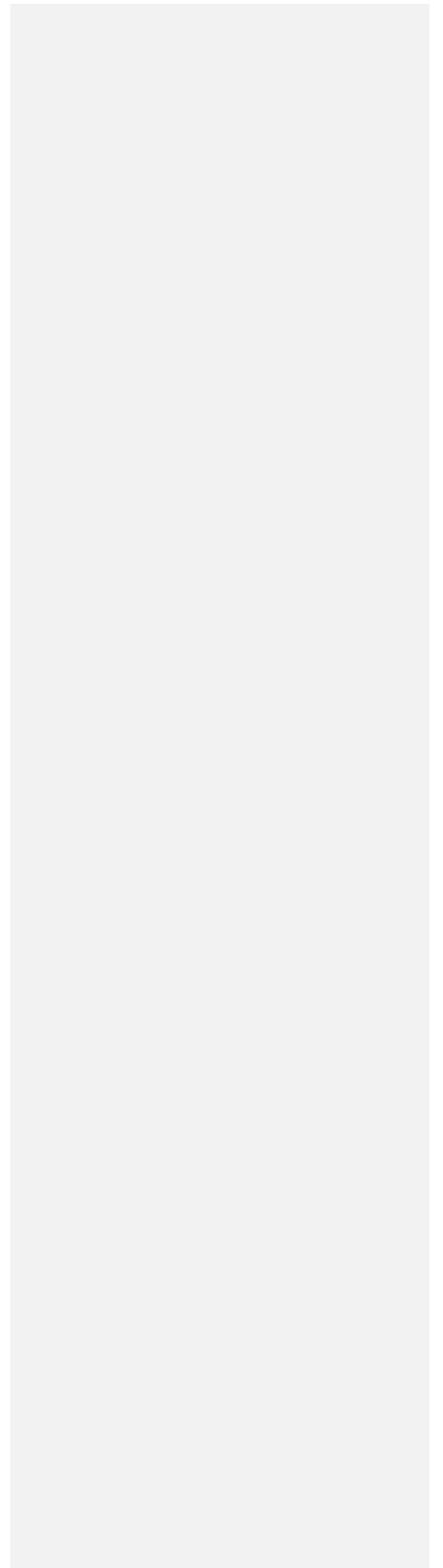
Because the University is pledged to dialogue and reason and has promised not to treat its adjunct faculty arbitrarily and capriciously that it is the duty of the university to explicitly and officially repudiate a false and unreasonable negative evaluation.

Post Script

... Hopefully discussion of this unfortunate incident can be a step in an unfolding and deepening dialogue. I hope to participate in further stages of that dialogue.

Section 4: End Game

Final Evaluations



Professor Porcaro's observational evaluation was followed by another conducted by Dean Anne Gates.. My teaching was assessed as entirely unsatisfactory...Here are some excerpts.

During the hour of the observation the faculty paced the room speaking about his artists philosophy and his teaching philosophy and sometimes the three-week goal of painting using "unity." The faculty talked continuously jumping from topic to topic nonstop for the entire observation, which included moments when half of the class had left the room during model breaks. The faculty stopped his general commentary twice in the hour to move from student to student to address their work briefly. The students moved from one painting to the next as the poses changed although the faculty did not communicate next steps other than to give the model a direction for the pose. The faculty comments did not seem to play a direct correlation to how the students were painting. For example, the faculty spoke about importance of paying attention to the background in a general way more than once in the hour but most students did not incorporate a background into their sketches.

The students worked on their paintings while the faculty talks about being an artist in general, and the constant commentary was not coordinated with actions of the class...

The faculty continually stated that he is modeling being an artist for the class, but only references his own philosophies. The faculty mostly referenced his own development as an artist as his examples in class. The faculty talked about his influence from the teaching of acting but doesn't explicitly connect it to the course or objective of the projects. The faculty tended to espouse his personal philosophy of being an artist occasionally referencing known artists but he did not communicate any arts knowledge based on history or contemporary practice. Most of what the faculty states is confusing and depends on personal history and not professional knowledge or expertise.

The general behavior of the class was to ignore the faculty's constant communications and questions. The students steadily painted while the faculty continuously spoke on multiple rambling topics. The model takes a break and students leave the room and while the faculty continued his constant commentary.

Finally there was a summary evaluation by the chairperson....Here are relevant excerpts.

The two most recent classroom observations rate Mr. Soyer's teaching as being Unsatisfactory in either the majority or all of the five categories. The earlier observation from 2007 rated his teaching as either Competent, Sufficient or Marginal, however the comments and criticisms are remarkably consistent across all three observation conducted by three different faculty members.

As stated above, the comments and criticisms are consistent and hence appear to be objective. All three observers describe the class as lacking in structure and organization and devoid of any technical instruction that would enable students to achieve the abstract and personal philosophical goals inadequately presented by the instructor in rambling lectures.

. Mr. Soyer's students describe him as being "nurturing," "kind and considerate," "passionate and committed to his field," "a gentle soul and very energetic," "inspiring and instructive," possessing "keen insights about painting," and creating "an atmosphere of openness and creativity." However, they also responded "a bit more direction and instruction on how to properly draw" and "some introductory techniques." They commented that "The language used by the instructor to critique my work was vague and unhelpful." "It would be helpful to start with the basics— not begin with painting the figure and told to 'go for the unity.'" "Demonstrations by the instructor (watching him paint) would have been helpful." "Plus, painting emotions like 'happy,' 'sad' or 'angry' seemed out of place in a college-level course." "Perhaps more instruction on technical aspects of materials." "The professor ought to teach/educate students not just verbally, but also provide examples or demonstrate what he means by certain instructions that he is trying to communicate. As a beginner's class, it seemed to me that he expected that I understood the term 'unity.'" A number of students questioned this being a beginner level class due to the lack of technical or basic instruction.

Despite students' high regard for Mr. Soyer's character and the high mark they give him in the quantitative sections of the course evaluations, there are sufficient comments to corroborate the statements of the faculty members conducting the classroom observations. The manner in which Mr. Soyer is teaching his classes is not appropriate to an introductory level, credit bearing, university class.

Based on the classroom observations and the students' comments, it is clear that Mr. Soyer has not incorporated into his curriculum any instructional methods or

assessable tasks in keeping with the course description (see below) that would enable students to achieve the broader learning outcomes of the course.

From the course descriptions:

- *Beginning Painting and Drawing: Short Course, Sp 12 "...beginners learn fundamental skills of perspective, light and shade, and three-dimensional form. Principles of design and color are also discussed in context."*
- *Beginning Painting, F 12&13 "Students are introduced to fine art materials, with demonstrations of their use and proper care; colors, including setting up the palette, mixing colors, contrasting warm and cool colors and realistic and abstract uses of color... and fundamentals of composition and design, including proportion."*

In his most recent iteration of his syllabus (fall 2013), Mr. Soyer has added text that thwarts the objectives stated in the course description—"Art, thus art teaching, is distorted if reduced to isolated units of ability and knowledge. There are also tacit understandings."

- *Mr. Soyer's cv submitted in the fall of 2013 does not reveal a current professional practice. The listing of exhibitions of his work is limited to five occurring in 1999 and 2000. In two, he exhibited with the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition (BWAC). The BWAC web site does not indicate that it is a selective organization. Two other exhibitions were at places of employment (Phoenix House and the Educational Alliance) and one was at the Hudson Guild, a community-based social services organization in Chelsea. Collectively, these do not constitute an ongoing or current professional practice.*

- *Most of the readings listed on the syllabus, as significant as they may be, do not indicate currency in the field. They included letters of Van Gogh from the 1880's, a collection of the writings of Robert Henri, published in 1923 and, from 2000, a collection of essays by Donald Kuspit written during the prior 25 years.*

Mr. Soyer's approach to art is deeply rooted in particular mid-20th C. thoughts about art and expression, yet there is no evidence that he balances that in his teaching with other more current viewpoints.

Mr. Soyer submits his syllabi and cv in a timely manner. When I instituted a syllabus template in Spring 2011, he complied and easily adapted his syllabus to the new format. However, in Fall 2013, his syllabus uses a slightly altered format

with multiple type faces and sizes that is less legible and omits the sub-section of "Student Responsibilities" under "University, Division and Class Policies and Resources." The Course Outline section had always been clear and concise, but is now broken out into more detail without being descriptive of activities or articulating assessable tasks that could be linked to the Learning Objective. For the most part, the additions focus on the goals and not on methods for achieving them.

- *Mr. Soyer is well liked by his students, but his methods are inappropriate for the introductory level studio art classes he has been assigned to teach. Beginning Painting has no prerequisites and is offered in the context of a Liberal Arts education. Given that this may be the only studio art class that a student takes while others may continue to more advanced study, it needs to strike a balance between a strict "materials and methods" approach and one that encourages the personal expression of a philosophical approach to art without teaching any of the skills or concepts needed to develop or manifest that philosophy.*

Mr. Soyer needs to include lessons that are more concrete, that directly address all parts of the course description and are specifically intended to bring about student achievement of learning objectives that are attainable within the context of a 6 or 15 week course.

Based on the similarity and consistency between the two recent observations (F '12 & F '13) and one conducted in 2007 as well as his course evaluations over the years, it is clear that Mr. Soyer made no modification to his curriculum or teaching methods in response to the 2007 observation. To this date, Mr. Soyer shows no interest in modifying his pedagogy. In his email to me dated Dec. 22, 2013, he states, "Don's and Anne's evaluations did not effect my self-evaluation as an excellent, innovative, creative, disciplined, conscientious teacher. Thus they will not influence my teaching. As long as I teach at The New School I will teach as I did in the classes they evaluated as incompetent."

- *As a member of the part-time faculty, Mr. Soyer is obligated to teach the curriculum that is designed by the University, and to adhere to the University's curricular requirements and pedagogical expectations. As the University's practices develop over time, Mr. Soyer—like all members of the faculty—must change his courses accordingly.*

- *I propose to meet with Mr. Soyer between now and the first meeting of his class on Sunday, Feb. 9 to assist him in the revision of his syllabus and the development*

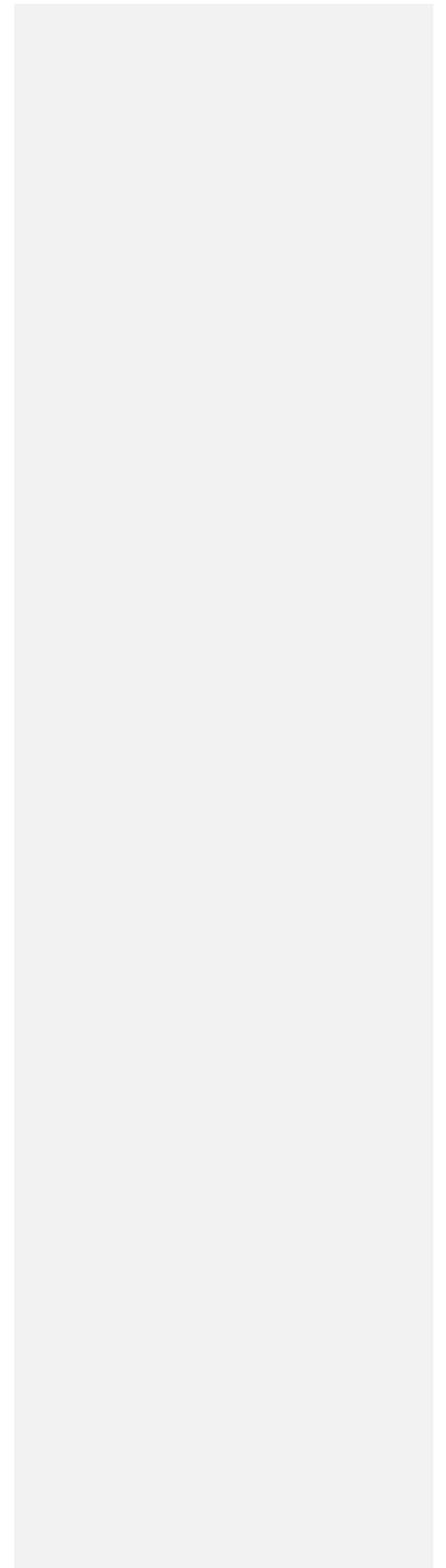
of new assignments and classroom activities. In addition, further visits to his classroom and additional meetings during the semester will be needed to ensure that appropriate teaching methods are being implemented.

Jan. 17, 2014 Daniel G. Hill

There is no consideration to my questions, discussions and concerns... My speech was silence.

The students are recognized but the thoughtful positive words of the majority are spun into almost negatives and have no effect.

Section 5: The Way it is



A Statement of Principle

1

The summary evaluation of my teaching by Chairperson Donald Hill contains an explicit official statement of principle

“As a member of the part-time faculty, Mr. Soyer is obligated to teach the curriculum that is designed by the University, and to adhere to the University's curricular requirements and pedagogical expectations. As the University's practices develop over time, Mr. Soyer—like all members of the faculty—must change his courses accordingly.”

2

2.1

What is the resonance of Chairman Hill's statement? What does it mean? What are its implications? How should it be approached?

Let's take a second look,

“As a member of the part-time faculty, Mr. Soyer is obligated to teach the curriculum that is designed by the University, and to adhere to the University's curricular requirements and pedagogical expectations. As the University's practices develop over time, Mr. Soyer—like all members of the faculty—must change his courses accordingly.”

The tone suggests precise, direct factual assertion. Yet I sense ambiguities.

2.2

The chairman's assertion occurs in the late stages of the negative assessment of a “part time” (i.e. “adjunct”) faculty member; the immediate context and intent are local and particular.

Yet there are universal implications.

, *“All members of the part-time faculty are obligated to teach the curriculum that is designed by the University, and to adhere to the University's curricular requirements and pedagogical expectations. As the University's practices develop over time all members of the faculty must change their courses accordingly.”*

There is an ethical resonance to “obligation”: The position of Professor Hill’s assertion in practical action suggests a “should” (Y should do x).

A normal and reasonable response to the statement that one should do x is “why?” The reasonable answer is “Y is obligated to do x if x is right”.

The statement gives no reason why “all members of the part-time faculty should teach the curriculum that is designed by the University and adhere to the University's curricular requirements and pedagogical expectations”. An imperative without reasons is an arbitrary order.

Professor Hill is an administrator and my direct supervisor. The document is a step in my severance from the organization.

The New School through this document officially asserts that (at least in higher education) institutional power requires no ground outside itself in reason, but is autonomous (a law unto itself and to the world). Institutional power is proclaimed the ultimate ground of ethics and the final arbiter of right and wrong. The new golden rule of ethics is “just follow orders”.

In the next sentence “obliged” mutates into “must”.

“As the University's practices develop over time all members of the faculty must change their courses accordingly.”

2.3

The administration is not submitting a proposal for a centralized hierarchical regime to the judgment of dialogic reason. It is enacting an authoritarian regime in which “the default position is “just follow orders” and the meaning of relevant terms (e.g. competence and good teaching) is what the agents of institutional power say it is.

If the administration asserts that a discipline (e.g. art, philosophy, theology) should to be taught only through content x and in only y style then this proposition is true and reasonable because truth and reason is what institution says it is.

3

To insist that faculty members follow the institutional line and change as this line changes denies that there is a project inherent in higher education to which institutionalized power should defer.

I am convinced that higher education has an inherent project and logic that is crucial to “our socio-cultural nervous system” and thus to our existence.

4

If the species dream of a polity guided by dialogue, reason, Socratic questioning, disciplinary integrity, compassion, sensitivity to lived existence and openness to intellectual/ creative diversity is exiled from its natural home in higher education how and where will it survive? If academic freedom dies how and where will freedom live? If the speech of the powerless is silence here where will it be heard?

The Sleep of Reason

1

My recent experiences at The New School convinced me that it and higher education in general are in extreme danger.

I am not referring to the relatively minor and unlikely scenarios that The New School is mobilizing to address...I do not fear that it will fail to attract prestigious teachers and talented students. I am not afraid that it's students will lack the marketable skills to win a competitive share of prestigious high paying jobs ...I do not fear that it will fail accreditation

I am afraid that our great universities are betraying the autonomous project and ethical imperatives of humanist education. One enabling symptom of this danger is a chronic atrophy of self- examination.

2

During World War II intellectuals left universities that efficiently taught marketable skills but lost their souls for The University in Exile at The New School

Where can we flee to if The New School fails?

3

3.1

The corporatization of the socio-cultural world is analogous to the disastrous simplifications of the physical world. The university must maintain and defend species imagination, creativity and flexibility.

I am convinced that the health of The Republic of Arts and Letters is crucial to our "societal nervous system: if our brain is wounded we might still feel and look well, but would be mortally ill.

Academics often speak of "social engagement" and envision themselves as importing enlightenment (somewhat as American's "see" themselves as importing democracy)...

I suggest we begin by questioning ourselves..

3.2

The authoritarian corporate threat to academic freedom is not unique to this institution. The unresisted triumph of “just following orders” at the historically humanistic and brave New School would be a terrible defeat of dialogue and reason.

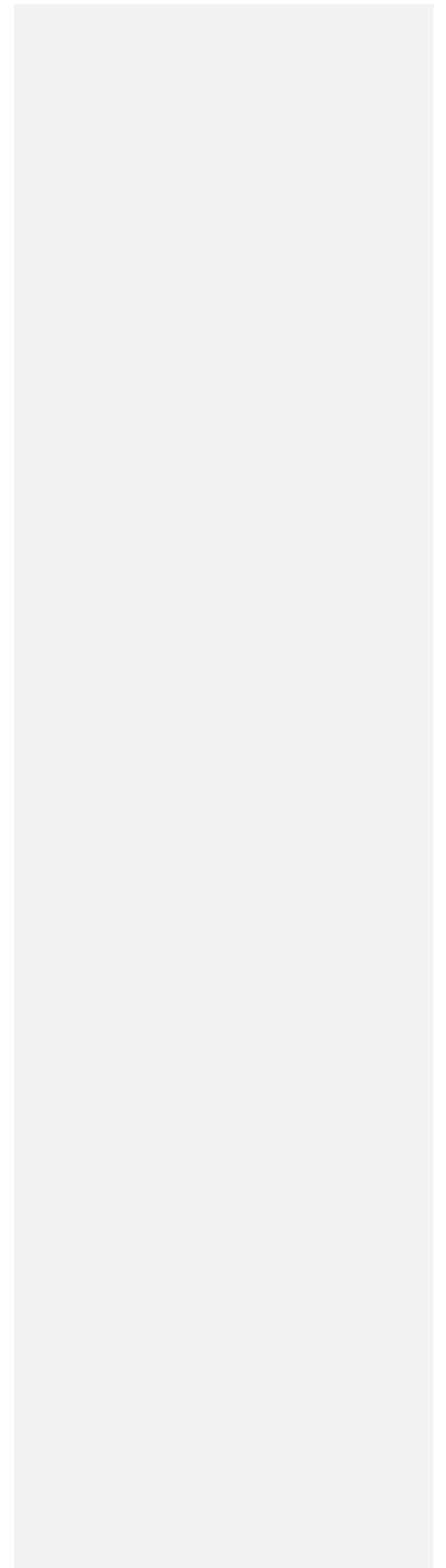
Given global warming and other deepening crises, the projected future we are ruthlessly driving our children to conform to may not occur.

The corporatization of the socio-cultural world is analogous to the disastrous simplifications of the physical world. The university must maintain and defend species imagination, creativity and flexibility.

4

My evaluation process has revealed two incompatible coexistent regimes, the regime of command and the regime of dialogue. The university, at least in relationship to adjunct faculty, has explicitly embraced command. I stand, hopefully not alone, for dialogue.⁷

Book VIII: Walking through the world 3: On the Edge (2016)



Listening In

1

I enjoy playing five minute chess (blitz). For many years I have played in Greenwich Village at *The Chess Forum*. Most of the players are old men.

One day I overheard three young African American women speak while playing about what they called “woke”... I never heard the term before.

I was focused on my game yet think that I remember “How does one stay woke? How not fall back?”.

When they apologized “to the room,” for making noise I said “I was glad to hear you. It is wonderful to hear young people speak so wisely”.

It would have been against the culture of the room to question speech I overheard.

I do not claim I understood them ... A seed was planted in my mind

Here in my own words is what their conversation brought to me. I interpreted the process into “woke” as reclaiming vision and action from banal contemporary programing and the state of “woke” as the resulting freedom

I remembered Plato’s image of the cave. Yet Plato’s cave is the eternally enduring baseline human condition. Only a few escape each generation. Only a few can justly rule the many.

Banal contemporary programing and its dominance is historically contingent, politically conditioned and within our power to challenge and alter. We can help each other awake. We can awake together... We can govern justly and compassionately together.

I interpreted them as wondering how to prevent what is freely freshly sensitively seen from hardening into dogma... My wife and I come from immigrant and first generation Russian Jewish ancestors who walked a path of broken hopes and dreams to (permanent or temporary) sanctuary in America. We escaped the European Jewish fate of annihilation and the Russian fate of revolutionary hopes trashed by brutally reinforced clichés.

How can we help each other stay awake? How find and free “the better angels of our nature”?

2

In the notion of theory emerging from practice not all action figures as practice. Practice is a species of reflective action. It is action struggling to awake.

3

For me awakening is almost always partial, and temporary (my junior high school vision of reason was an exception): less direct passage from ambiguity to pure illumination than slow passage from deluded clarity to ambiguous vision.

Yesterday in Philadelphia Working for Hillary

1

This is a quick record of first impressions that (right or wrong) affected me.

2

Riding on the bus to Philadelphia was the first time we experienced speaking humanly about the election with people other than our friends.

Compared to media coverage we were in another world. We were people were of all types, women, men, black, white, Chinese_ truly rainbow_ who truly loved Hillary... People who look past prejudice.

3

When we went house by house the young people we were with looked past how much older my wife and I were than the rest

We were passing out material on getting out the Democratic vote in an economically poor African-American neighborhood

In a row of battered houses, some were beautifully kept. The people we met seemed immune to the madness and nonsense of the media. In the streets children on their bikes told us who was home, who was out, and who didn't live there anymore. My wife said "They reminded me of growing up in Brooklyn where we played together on the streets and knew everyone in every house."

Residents and canvassers showed an easy natural comradery that one rarely see on TV depictions of ghetto and economically poor neighborhoods.

Really looking and listening was surprising. It made me think... One thought was that working people who support Trump are patronized by "liberal spokes people", as though relative poverty and absence of college absolved them of responsibility. The people we met were struggling to make their lives work in an even more difficult situation with compassionate political understanding and sharp insights...I saw and questioned a tendency to subsume the person in the category to predict and control: to manipulate: to buy and sell

These notes are partially programmed and part free...Living and writing on the edge of woke.

4

There were visits to the Clinton Headquarters from Madeline Albright and Cory Booker who knew Hillary personally and spoke about her life as the human being and hero that she is. Senator Booker spoke of the passion of our founding language (e.g. The Bill of Rights) and the love its authors felt for the people of a nation that they wanted to build and lead.

5

In the bus going home we praised the humanity of both speakers... They connected to personal thought and vision rather than being programmed by the blind machine.

Some people reverted to TV thought and praised Senator Booker for being “skilled in the ways of a modern politician.... He spoke well and was impressive”. This well intended praise reminded Maxine and I of a media and public culture that sees politics as a game. There must, as with Booker, be something reasonable and compassionate to express.

6

This isn't a terrible election. It is one that pits love and a rainbow community against a cold game playing cultural machine.

I was amazed to compare the lustful indiscriminate hunger of credentialed public news experts for harvesting rating rich melodramatic nonsense with the soulful dialogues we shared yesterday in Philadelphia

Hillary

1

This morning (10-4-2016) I read in *The New York Times* that “voters express disgust in U.S politics”.

There is no equivalence between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

Hillary is an expert statesperson. Donald is an expert bully. His seeming errors are actually skillful. He knows how to threaten, demonize and brand. Unconcerned with truth he expertly uses the blogosphere to repeat and force banal disfiguring names and phrases into his audience. He knows how to mold hate and fear into a frightening dangerous mob.

He knows how to turn the media’s addiction to cruel melodrama against reason. He knows how to exploit natural dignity and loyalty to one’s friends as weaknesses.

No one would look perfect if everything s/he wrote privately was leaked and twisted by Trump and Putin. Donald expertly models tyrannical brutality.

Donald, expert bully, has until now swept away all competitors.

His brutal attack is a coldly calculated attempt to draw us into nightmare (images of violation, entrapment and death to break her down and free the brutal bully in us all).

It does not work on her. She keeps her human balance: neither weak nor cruel. She is a hero.

The cavalry is coming.

For our children and grandchildren, for our parents and grandparents, voluntary and involuntary immigrants, hopeful, wounded and oppressed, for this endangered planet, we stand here with her.

2

Why be deprived of the joy of electing a heroic woman: a person who transcending the history of women's oppression is fighting for us.

People who should know, better (including many liberal women) disrespect her (speak of “sitting his one out” or “holding their noses while they vote for her”). They swallow misogynist poison.

She dances through the terrible traps of this still misogynist world. If she appears sensitive and compassionate she is too weak. If she asserts principles strongly she is too hard. If she carefully examines policy she is a detail freak and/or a cold manipulative operator. If she is pragmatic she lacks conviction. If she is idealistic she is naive.

We are trying to find a new, more loving world while full of old prejudices and hatreds ... Underneath the surface is tremendous desperation.

We may be looking for sound bite solutions because they signal a new electronic world. But they are shallow.

We need to be able to think long and deeply to see the experience and wisdom of Hillary against the poisoned clouds of novelty that block and hide deep possibilities for benevolent change.

It is a beginning but not enough to “recognize” global warming, plague, and totalitarianism as theoretical possibilities. We should personally envision them_ walk through in imagination_ until we plan against them as practically and seriously as we plan for health insurance, or career advancement, or, perhaps more to the point, as the cancer patient works for recovery...We must grasp, bone deep and personal, that democracy is not a game .

This moment, on the edge.

3

Now they rarely say her name

Threatened with death

She laughed and walked on through.

She bent to find a language we can understand.

The shame of our rejection will be lived in floods.

Trump's Victory

A

1

Everyone we know is frightened of the potential practical consequences. There are different vulnerabilities.

My wife is 75. I am 77. If social security and/or Medicare is seriously wounded we would probably have to crawl to our children, or else...The modern family is not built for this. We did not bring them up for this. We would probably choose "or else"...Of course not only us...The population of the senior village where we live part time is mainly retired working people. Leisure Village East with its lakes and ducks and dances and neighborly good manners would dissolve...There is a 15 year old grandson. I recall the wars and the draft.

2

In 1998 I wrote,

We hypothesize that, everything else being equal, the greater the industrial development of a fascist order of life, the more virulent and efficient its genocidal cruelty and brutality. Nazi Germany was by far the most industrially advanced fascist order of life. Compared to the United States of the 1990's Nazi Germany was industrially primitive.

3

Ancestral and personal narratives intimately haunt and interpenetrate practical fears ... A 90 year old friend's first response was that election day was on the anniversary of Crystal Nacht... Writing "permanent or temporary sanctuary" I had a waking dream of Syrian refugees transposed into American Moslems, and Jews . I recognized my family among them.

Each personal and shared uniqueness must be honored. Not only each their own, also equally each other's: if not, our grandchildren could die young.

Current mass migrations are a foretaste of the reality of global warming...The terrible tragedy of A.I.D.s is a foretaste of possible global plagues that pass through breath.

Political decisions are cruel panicked and unreasonable now. Imagine what our politics will be (what we will do and suffer) unless we reflect and change course now.

4

Trump's victory was not a coup

He was not masked ... As the campaign continued his brutal disrespect for women, his whole hearted fiercely focused mockery of a disabled reporter, his energetic acceptance of extreme torture, almost a commercial, his refusal to decisively renounce nuclear war, were seen as ensuring his defeat.

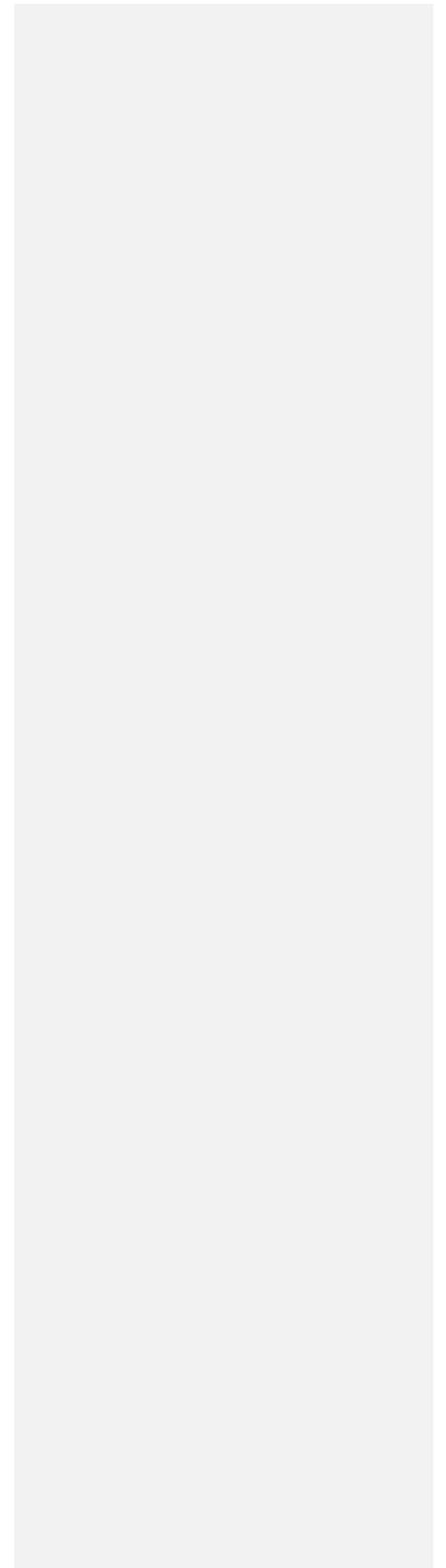
These predictions were based on an assessment of the American national character that his victory disproved.

5

The contradiction between our tranquilizing illusions and the reality revealed by Trump's election is so powerful that many of us are on the edge of waking ...Our only hope is to awake and stay awake.

\

**Book IX: Notes to a young Sociologist-Psychologist:
Suggesting Potentialities, Envisioning Structures
(2018-2019)**



Opening

1

The intent of *Touching Reason* is foundational. A foundational exploration does not require or permit final answers. The struggle is to open.

Cimabue, Duccio and Giotto could not have envisioned Di Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael.

I believe that I can responsibly finish *Touching Reason* but I cannot completed it.

2

A Foundational exploration points beyond itself ... When the author seeks a solitary completion s/he can “catch” interminable writing ... Dialogue cures this illness ... Disciplinary solitude and isolation helps cause it...Maxine Kern, my partner and colleague, is helping me escape it.

3

I am ending my foundational work but would finish by helping others carry it beyond...I must do this without beginning work again (without succumbing to the addiction of interminable writing).

I must break all sense of ownership’

I must not substitute myself for you (my present for your future). [I don’t know how I would continue if I were young and could begin again. There are alternatives, errors and implications I would never find in all eternity because of who I am...I see that I will soon see nothing.

4

Perhaps I should fall silent now, just stop...Yet...There are late fragments_ that mediating between us_ could help me honorably end this work that I cannot complete

Questioning Notions

I
1

I believe that Sigmund Koch's 1964 remarks on psychology also apply to sociology and psychology in 2019:

Problems - psychological problems - of art and morality, of scientific creativity, of human sensibility in all manifestations of language, problem/solution... etc. do stand before us almost untouched. If psychology is to study the condition of the phenomena in anyone of these areas, it must premise its research on "discrimination pools" of all those widely ranged human areas. It is grotesque to suppose that someone totally devoid of the special discrimination and sensitivities of the artist could make contributions to the psychology of art. Just as grotesque as to expect, say, that an illiterate can contribute to the psychology of language. (28-29)

These problems and sensitivities should be crucial to sociology-psychology.

2

Touching Reason welcomes dialogue with art into the disciplinary foundations of sociology-psychology. Yet it focuses on painting and acting. Music is barely mentioned. Poetry appears but is rarely discussed. James Baldwin is the only novelist who plays a central role...I have only touched the surface. The deeper journey will be yours,

3

Because the problem/solution connection is omnipresent and usually taken for granted it is hard to abstract and articulate. *Touching Reason* struggles towards a relevant "language".

The problem/solution sociological-psychological orientation is open to surprises. We do not know prior to investigation all of a group's or an individual's

problems, or all of the abstracted constellations in which particular problems participate.

Full “real world” mapping remains an open task .

II

1

Touching Reason foregrounds awareness in the act.

2

One examines and questions one’s movement as one moves. One explores the requirements of one’s action as it proceeds.

One maps problems, concepts and procedures as they arise within the work. One explores horizons these locations open.

3

How, in detail, does awareness in the act proceed? Are there contextual variations (e.g. between art, history, natural science. philosophy and sociology-psychology and/or between open and constrained situations)?

Here again full “real world” mapping remains an open task.

III

Discussion of dynamics in *Touching Reason* focuses on immanent processes. Propositions of immanent dynamics rarely explain completely. Some hypothetical external dynamics (e.g. the machine animal dichotomy) are briefly examined and many processes discussed “in the literature” would count in our framework as external. Yet the relationship of immanent and external dynamics requires further exploration .

The complex relationship between species universal (generic) and emergent dynamics has been profoundly explored in the tradition (e.g. by Arendt, Durkheim, Malinowsky, Marx, Simmel and Weber) yet remains endlessly open.

IV

1

. The promising controversial suggestion that sociology and psychology can be fruitfully joined in a single discipline needs further exploration

2

Is our call for “a theoretical reason that will not exile potentiality, inwardness, uniqueness, autonomy and I-Thou connection” reasonable? What are the full constructive implications of committing dialogic sociology-psychology in the name of reason to the struggle for a just, compassionate, and creative human existence?

3

I remain puzzled by the operation and relevance of “constructive implication”.

IV

If I were restarting now from where I am I would attempt to preserve the autonomy of sociology-psychologies struggle for self-knowledge (and of all disciplinary and personal self reflection) while opening dialogue with the main Socratic line that is traditionally designated philosophy...The natural path would be through Hannah Arendt and her teacher Karl Jaspers. (Both have deep complex inter-disciplinary roots, Jaspers was a psychologist and was profoundly influenced by Max Weber. Arendt considered herself as much a political theorist as a philosopher).

I love the beautifully, fluid, inspired, powerful flow of Arendt’s thought

It is painful that I cannot take this necessary step (I began to read their books this year)...I leave the pleasure of this work to you.

Concluding Fragments 1: Inviting Theory?

1

Hitler was defeated, The counties that defeated Nazism are now (perhaps mortally) infected... We suffer from an illness that transcends the moment.

2

2.1

Where are we? What in us is illness? What are its symptoms? What is natural healthy process? What preserves from infection? Questions best explored together.

What is the inherent pathology of late industrial cybernetic “society”? What is its process and prognosis? How can it be treated? How can person, group and species recover?

2.2

The appalling pathologies beneath the everyday surface of our lives should not blind us to potentialities for human hope progressively fulfilled.

What would be a desirable species outcome? What is human hope fulfilled? What is human potentiality actualized?

What kind of questions are these? How should such questions be reasonably addressed? Can they be resolved? What would count as resolution?

3

3.1

Reasonable diagnosis, prognosis and treatment requires theory. Yet illness operating in meaning can infect the theory that would cure it... Again, and again the disease metaphor turned deadly.

3.2

When Marx said, “All that is solid melts in air” the path we walk was still near it’s beginning.

One meaning of “Marx” in the project of human theoretical self-reflection is “prophetic ancestor”, another is “be frightened. Theory can harden into malevolent programming.

4

Between dream and awakening there is no dependable common sense: only translation between partially formed “languages”, almost born and almost dying.

We must be very careful.

How can we theoretically engage and move beyond this potentially terminal crisis with minimal infection?

Concluding Fragments 2

Theoretical reason emerged through recognition that the realm of opinion can be challenged from outside itself...The Socratic dialogues are not shouting matches (although unreason is enacted). The participants work together “to awake and see beyond”. (Criticism of received opinion need not imply rejection of democracy... I suggest that in the light of reason democracy appears as a political modality of dialogue).

Concluding Fragments 3: Exile Home

I. Opening

1

The place where one awakes is not immutable. It is a space of ethical, political and creative choices on the border between known and unknown.

There are redeeming possibilities to free

This moment is radically unique. The planet's fate is in our hands. Universal planetary interconnection foregrounds the species.

2

We (the human species) can address and reconceive the categories and situations that contain us.

Through the arts and humanities we compose the music to which we dance and write the scripts we enact.

3

We must each inhabit the factual here and now, even as it narrows and becomes more brutal [even as our neighbors (e.g. Mexican immigrants) are rounded up...even as we fear the knock on our own doors].

If humanity is to survive we must also live in potentiality, in hope.

II. The Republic of Arts and Letters.

1

The arts and humanities liberate, explore and actualize species potentialities: they follow the “constructive implications” of “generative co-constitutively human problematics.

We designate the immanent potentiality of the arts and humanities “*the republic of arts and letter.*”

2

The Republic of Arts and Letters struggles to preserve personal and species potentialities from elimination by historically dominant orders of life and their pathologies... It defends the unique moment from routine processing and supports the harmonious complexities of reason

The health of The Republic of Arts and Letters is crucial for human existence ... If your brain and immune system were wounded you might temporarily feel and look well but would be mortally ill.

III.On Dialogue

Presentation

1

I see the spirit of The Republic of Arts and Letters as dialogic.

I commit this invitation to the principles and requirements of dialogue as I understand them.

2

Why dialogue? What is dialogue? If we agree to dialogue what do we commit to?

I need some requirements of dialogic and reason...Not a full search for evaluative definitions...To wait to consider the definition of higher education until reason and dialogue are fully defined (to wait to consider any problem until all contextual and foundational issues are resolved) is tempting but self-defeating...I propose alternation and interpenetration of statement and reflection.

3

3.1

Here are tentative notes towards a vision of dialogue hopefully adequate to our purpose.

The crucial principles are transparency and respect

Dialogue struggles to recognize and deal justly with all relevant claims and voices..... It struggles for non-repressive order.

One task is to construct a literary style that comments on itself as it proceeds (i.e., that embodies awareness-in-the-act.

3.2

In dialogue:

- a. The rank and social status of participants (including “academic” positions and degrees) is irrelevant to the reception of their ideas
- b. There is constant interplay of openness and assertion. [All apparent assertions in this manuscript (including those on dialogue) are disguised questions.]

Dialogue loves and clings to natural curiosity and to the I-Thou roots of speech.

B.Shadows

1

Here from the beginning there are problems to disclose.

2

I speak of dialogue. Yet to invite people to help liberate and protect higher education is a political proposal. Our language of politics is sharp, quick, unambiguous and assertive; the literary model is the corporate sales pitch, even when it is Shakespeare being sold.

Those who would advance dialogue now live in tension between harsh competitive assertion and the slow reflective movement of dialogic existence. Hopefully this movement will suggest its action dance.

3

When liberate and higher education appear together in a sentence the focus is rarely on the immanent potentiality, the spirit, of higher education. The proposal, explicit or masked, is that higher education serve another master. There is almost always a hidden agenda.

Higher education has been in bondage for so long that recognition of and love for its beautiful soulful spirit is fading from our minds. We must try to paint that spirit in our words.

IV.A Practical Proposal.

1 Opening

1

If, as I suspect, the academy has lost “the mandate of heaven” external and internal exiles should gather together to sustain a remnant (or perhaps begin again).

I am looking for such work and for the people who create it ...I am looking for anyone (wherever located) who loves the intellectual and artistic creative disciplines and recognizes that they are in crisis.

If the academy with its established hierarchies and immense investment in brick and concrete no longer authentically embodies the Socratic spirit and (a separate issue) is technologically outmoded then an intelligently designed alternative could become a new dominant form.

2

I write to help build an international movement, *Exile Home*.

The primary mission of “Exile Home” is to help free judgement of excellence in the arts and humanities from domination by authoritative assertions and open it to dialogic (Socratic) reason.

Exile Home proposes an unprejudiced space devoted to disciplinary excellence Labels (including academic credentials) are irrelevant to the evaluation of contributions

3

Setting aside conformity to establishment labels opens questions.

What is the history of your creative life? What is your experience of dialogue? Has your creative life been affected by the struggle for credentials? If so how? What paths can be returned to and what hopes redeemed?

What are “the shapes and colors of your inner life”? What was the rhythm of your mother’s walk?

What are the humanist/artistic disciplines as fields of potentiality (What are their evaluative definitions)?

What is one's (your or my) unique existence in relation to species potentialities (e.g., for love, courage, justice and beauty)?

What are the historical roots of *Exile Home* [e.g. the long triumphant struggle (from the impressionists to Picasso) against "academic art"]?

What is the inherent pathology of industrial -postindustrial society? What is its process and prognosis? How can it be treated? How can person, group and species recover?

All questions can be explored through explicit theory and in the moment. They can be explored in words (poetry and prose) in paint, music, number and in dance.

IV. Corporatization

1

Corporatization with its interchangeable replaceable parts, mass production, standardization, simplistic standards and mechanical conformity to hierarchically established labels (e.g. credentials) is the dominant post-industrial modality of the machine principle.

Corporatization_ misinterpreted as a universally correct means to all ends _rules all realms, disciplines and projects (e.g. art and the humanities), like a weed...like a metastizing cancer.

So far, no amount and extremity of failure (e.g. inhibiting resistance to global warming, to inequality, to economic instability, to escalating violence) can break this obsessive possibly mortal hallucination.

2

Education is increasingly instruction for the machine. The arts and humanities are contingent content "to be played" (the game you win to make it through).

The danger is to fall in love .The trick is to pass through untouched.

The corporatization of instruction is analogous to global warming and other disastrous simplifications of the physical world.

I am convinced that at this crucial moment species creativity is profoundly endangered by corporatization and the academy (a.k.a. the university) is so profoundly corporatized that it wounds the life it should protect.

I propose *Exile Home* as a response to this mortal threat.

Exile Home would challenge the emerging internet world of electronic interaction with its academic “ivory towers” surrounded by unreflective immediate mechanical assertions and counter assertions_ tweets and retweets_ its trolls_ its repetitious flesh and blood reality show enactments.

We would inter-translate past and present on the internet as Plato recreated Socrates speech in writing

This invitation is a wake-up.

V. A Socratic Project

Exile Home is a Socratic project

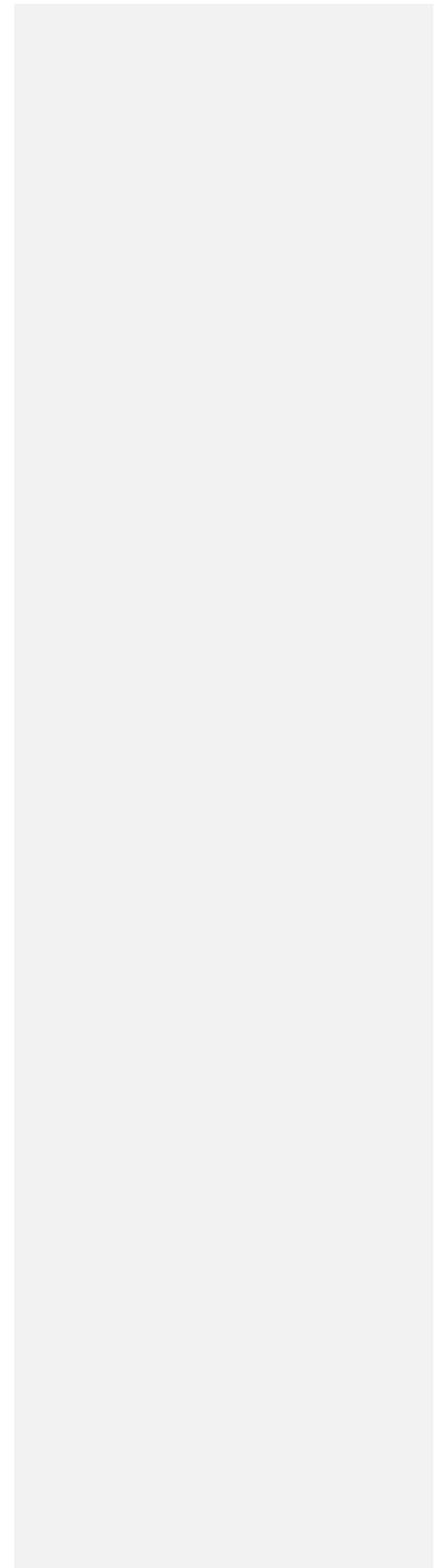
Socrates questioned particular people in specific contexts. Yet the questions foreground human universal projects (love, justice beauty, reason).

We reflect upon ourselves in action. We seek ourselves in our involvement (awareness in the act).

Everything, including the meaning of “ project”, “creativity”, “dialogue” “reason” _ and meaning__ is open to examination:

There is no professional monopoly on self- knowledge as there is no monopoly on love.

The potentiality for self -knowledge is omnipresent in our life together and apart as stars in the Milky Way.



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