

THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

FALL 1973

Our father, who art in hell,
Cursed be thy name.
Thy kingdom destroyed,
Thy will perverted
On earth as it is in hell.
Give us one day
Our distorted sight
And allow us to live
In a world without life.
And ask us not
To refrain from evil,
For lost is the kingdom,
Spent is the power,
Gone is the glory.
Amen.

And I know if I'll only be true to this glorious quest
 That my heart will lie peaceful and calm
 When I'm laid to my rest.
 And the world will be better for this,
 That one man, scorned and covered with scars
 Still strove, with his last ounce of courage
 To reach the unreachable star!

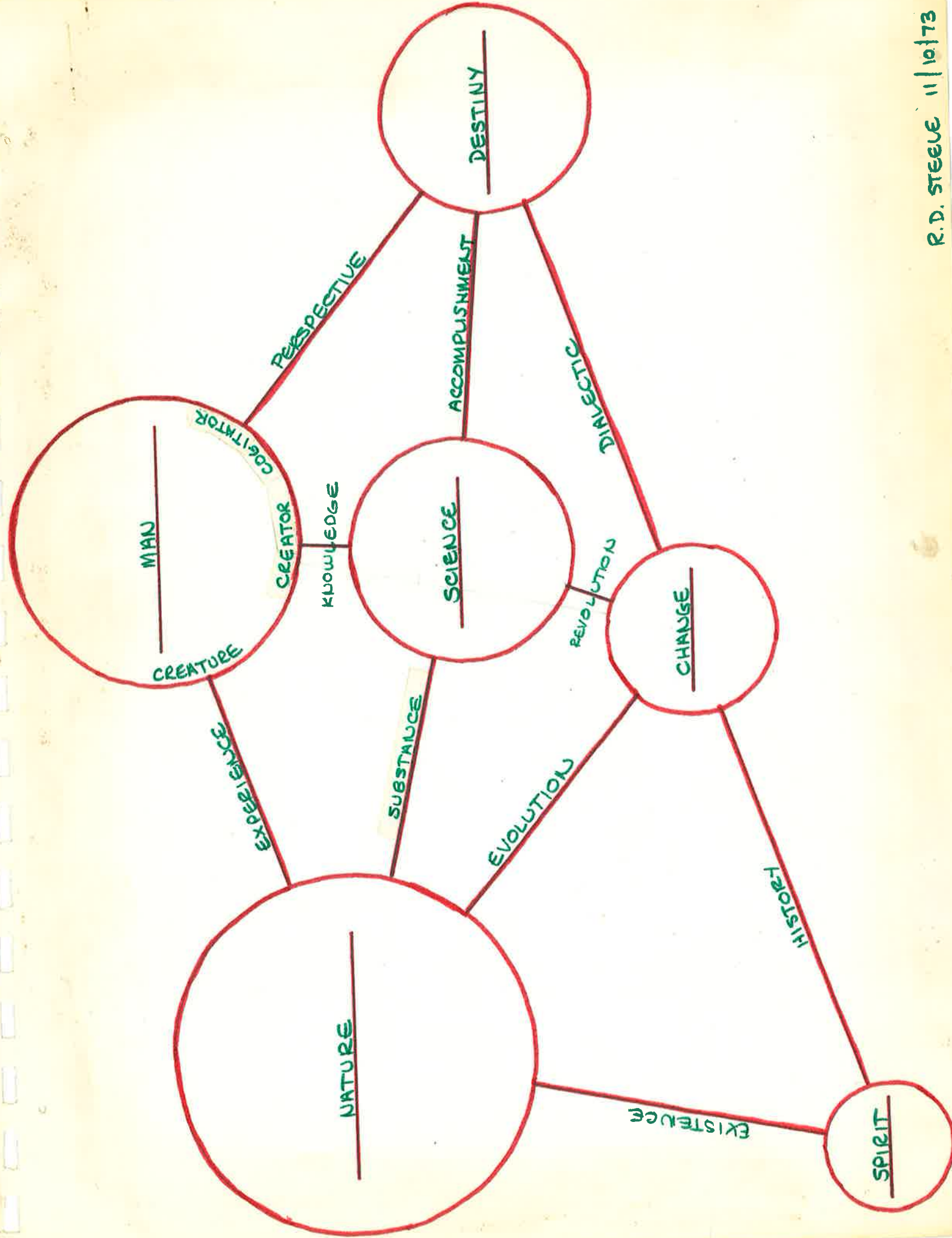
How nicely absurd! It is exactly those individual gyrations that have disturbed the equilibrium of the human cosmos. It has been man's presumptuousness, in assuming that he could transcend the requirements of his own nature, that has led us to create a starkly ephemeral universe for ourselves. We did have a world once, within a cosmos, both without limit. We could have been immortal; but man, in his glorified quest for that brilliant star, took it upon himself to change and dispense with certain elements of his etiological heritage. Today the consequences are increasingly visible, even to the most naive of the powerful, and the most apathetic of the weak. We have dissipated the moving energies, destroyed the natural foundations, perverted the image of man, and replaced the eternal cosmos with one dependent on spare parts from Detroit and funding from Washington. How did it happen? How might we salvage and share what remains of the fading stars? These are the elemental questions we shall address in our equally elemental way.

Examine, if you will, the general cosmology pictured below:

It would be impossible for us to elaborate on the substance of this particular picture; among other things, it is easy enough to construct a bare outline -- and much more difficult to relate the scattered details of experience, knowledge, and presumption to it in any consistent way. For our purposes, however, it will suffice. The force of our illustration, if any is to be acknowledged, must be seen in its portrayal of man as a three-faceted being; a creature whose association with nature provides experience, a creator whose use of the scientific method fabricates knowledge, and a cogitator whose synthesis of the acquired experience and knowledge suggests a perspective regarding the individual and collective destiny of man.

The order and diameter of the circles are meant to suggest a hierarchical relationship among the perceived fragments. Spirit, a vague term meant to denote force, or energy of whatever sort, while essential, is not considered a substantial influence -- its role is more a mechanical one, i.e. the provision of the existence, after which nature shall be observed as the arena where a destiny shall be developed. Nature is definitely regarded as prior to, and encompassing, man. Science is considered a tool, originally subordinate to man, coming between man and nature.

Our destiny, and the destiny of those that follow, is determined by the perspective we achieve, given our experience and knowledge, and by our achievements, given the substance of nature and the science of man. It follows that a change in the natural foundation, or differences in the application of science, will alter experience, knowledge, substance, perspective, and accomplishment. Destiny, never an absolute, will be revolutionized.



For the purposes of this essay, we will assume that change will occur, and that it will occur in general accord with the posited outline; i.e. the alteration of one circle will result in predictable consequences within another. One supposes that the relationships will be somewhat reciprocal. The point of this discussion has been to place man within a context from which his character and the consequences of his actions and thoughts may be evaluated.

.

Experience and perspective require a sense of time. It was this seventh sense that originally distinguished us from the animals; blessed or cursed, as the case may be, man found himself with a memory, and foresight. The one encouraged a far more complex collection of aspirations, beyond the temporal and physical desires of members of the other species, and the other allowed us to believe that we would have the opportunity for satisfying our polymorphous ambitions. With the realization of time man became immortal for a moment. Given the vastness of the natural experience available to the species as a whole, and the incredible dimensions of the future, man qua species-being seemed on the verge of recognizing its potential -- not only could it possess the present, it might record the past and construct the future. This dual infinity however, depended on the ability of the species to survive each individual, to contain within itself the otherwise ephemeral experiences, knowledge, and perspective of the mortal characters.

Most creatures, we assume, aspire only to those things they can consistently conceptualize. In cases other than that of man, we assume that a direct stimulus is required in instigating the aspiration each time; i.e. the desire for food will be renewed with the beginning of

5

hunger pains, etcetera. Man on the other hand has such an imagination that mere observation is enough to arouse his acquisitive instincts. It seems, to go further, that creatures will not generalize the range of expectations characteristic of man into the future. Things desired are desired in the immediacy of the present. Man, on the other hand, far expands the scope of his anticipations by accumulating his past desires and attempting to hoard them for the future.

Given his polymorphous and timeless aspirations, the fundamental question for man as individual or for man as species seems to be one of achievement. Regardless of the nature of the aspirations particular to the individual or the species-generation, the satisfaction of as many of those aspirations as possible is bound to be the only truly universal goal. Within achievement we find satisfaction. Without achievement we encounter frustration. The dispelling of that sense of frustration becomes itself a goal -- in so far as it provides a direct stimulus (in feelings of anxiety, etcetera) it can instigate actions meant to satisfy, but actually detrimental to long term satisfaction.

.

It seems credible to us that a hierarchy of achievable objectives should exist. Assuming that contemplative and otherwise nebulous goals may be considered "objects" within the hierarchy, we assume that some objects are more visible than others; some objects are more clearly related to direct stimulus than others; some objects provide more immediate and perceivable satisfaction than others; and some objects are more readily available than others.

These distinctions among the many aspirations of man would not normally be deleterious to his perpetual gratification; unfortunately they

have become significant with the advent of serious ~~fr~~ustration and the loss of perspective.

There must have been a contest at one time between the powers of ~~fr~~ustration and the powers of an achieving association. Man did acquire his infinite aspirations from his fellows -- unfortunately, he apparently failed to realize that infinite aspirations require infinite achievement if they are to be satisfied; and the only means of achieving this satisfaction is by bringing to bear, at once, the combined forces of species experience, species knowledge, and their consequence, species perspective.

As suggested earlier, the potential for immortality could have been present but for an instant; ~~fr~~ustration encroached on perspective soon after, and the fragmentation of time began. The immediacy of satisfaction became the criterion for action. Because the organization was not immediately effective, because the development of aspiration (requiring only the perception by one man of many) far outran the occurrence of achievement (requiring the participation of many for each), frustrations appeared as a new force impressing on man his unhappy situation, inspiring actions meant to alleviate his displeasure. Being but an individual, it is only natural that each should turn to what he perceived as visible, immediate, and available. With each daily reinforcement of individual activity, our potential for immortality was reduced by increasing (if such a concept is possible) decades, centuries, and eons. The assertion of individual perspectives and the use of individual bits of knowledge began the destruction of the natural foundation upon which all else depended. From that moment on a reciprocal and devolving interaction was instigated -- the individual would expend the natural resources,

leaving that much less substance for man to base his experience upon, and for science to utilize. We do not question the ability of man and his creation, science, to provide us with an artificial nature -- what might be pondered however, is the ability of this artificial nature, feeding upon itself, to provide the variety and depth of original experience characteristic of the organic environment. Further, in keeping with the loss of the sense of time, creation within the new nature appears to proceed sporadically -- it takes increasingly longer periods of time for technology to invent ways of utilizing the wastes of eras gone by, as opposed to the systematic, encompassing, and continuing process of the old nature. It may be that the new experience will prove as valid as the old -- we are of the opinion that it will not, and that man has seriously injured the potential of man qua creature, allowing man qua creator to subvert man qua cogitator and to set the preconditions by which the creature is defined. Such a self-imposed limitation we do not see as conducive to individual or species fulfillment. With the loss of experience, not only effective experience, but shared experience as well, comes the loss of perspective. No longer is there even a semblance of the associations that were originally responsible for offering men a vision of the future sanctified by the passing of time and the assimilation of subsequent experience. Religions have themselves been beset by the urgencies of frustration -- in attempting to cope with the chaos of the present, they severed the ties to the future. In retrospect, the Protestant work ethic has resurrected hell on earth, and returned heaven to limbo.

Gone is experience as we would have preferred it; gone is perspective as we might have had it -- we are left with the knowledge of science.

is this
correct?

8

It was presumptuous to isolate man from nature in the first place, but since we are considering the problem of our future from a personal perspective, it seemed permissible. Given that apology, recall then that initially, in our cosmology, man was tied to nature by experience, to science by knowledge, and to destiny by perspective. Secure in each of these relationships, man seemed well esconced. Today it appears that we hang by a thread; should it depreciate, there may not be another in reserve. We are tied now to nature, not through experience, but through science. We are tied to destiny, not through our perspective, but again through the objectified achievement of science. The arena for personal development seems much reduced. It would follow, we assume, that the arena for the evolution of the species is in turn restricted. The possibility of man's ever approaching satisfaction on anything other than a temporal basis is consequently negligible, as matters now stand.

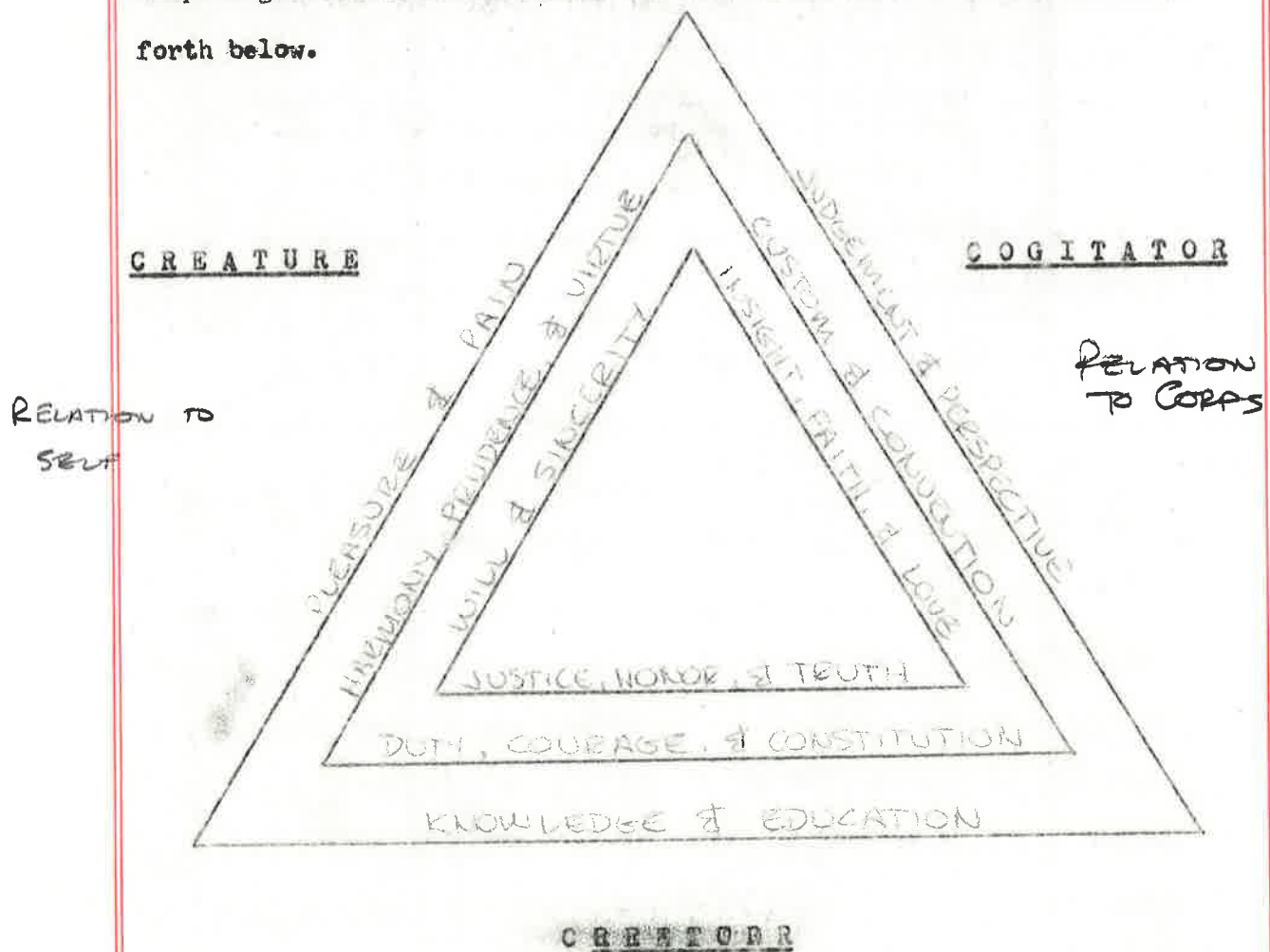
.

In the prescribed cosmos, man qua creature would have been, as indicated earlier, the man of experience. Within this category would come such concepts as pleasure and pain, happiness and desire, harmony and prudence, emotion and virtue, will and sincerity. Man qua cogitator, the man of perspective, would reflect judgement and a sense of proportion, custom and convention, insight, faith, and love. The man of science would conceptualize knowledge and education, justice, honor, and truth, and duty, courage, and a regard for constitutions. The man of today appears characterized by a lack of most of these qualities and a perversion of the rest -- for instance, temporal custom and blind duty. In the prescribed universe, man, a holier trinity than we may ever know, would reflect the harmonious interaction of all these qualities. Perhaps.

The proper work of the human race, taken as a whole, is to set in action the whole capacity of that understanding which is capable of development; first in the way of speculation, and then, by its extension, in the way of action.

Dante, De Monarchia

We have suggested that man might well be regarded as a three-faceted being -- creature, creator, and cogitator. Within each of these categories we find another triad; of greater significance, we suggest that each member of the lesser triads is intrically connected with a corresponding complement of the other facets of man. These inter-relationships might best be illustrated by three concentric triangles as set forth below.



We have deliberately set a particular triangle within another; our intention is to emphasize the intimate nature of sincerity, love, and honor, as opposed to the more external experience, knowledge, and perspective. Virtue, convention, and constitutions are naturally perceived on our part as mediums for the interaction of the inner and outer aspects of our complete man.

A twofold caveat must be inserted at this point; it is recognized that cosmologies and their creatures do not lend themselves to such simplistic analysis --- our intent is to suggest here only the vaguest of outlines, about which each might bring his particular definitions, and delineate his special relationships. Further, given the established pre-requisite -- conciseness -- our own definitions and delineations are, without apology, the briefest possible.

.

Let us begin with the inner-most triangle. Our creature is one of will and sincerity. Our cogitator suggests insight, faith, and love. Our creator we characterize as just, honorable, and truthful. Why? To what end do we apotheosize these traits, and in what manner do we define them so as to best serve our ends?

It is our contention, implicit earlier and clarified now, that each ~~apartmental~~ individual is inherently limited in terms of the potential scope of his personal experience, his comprehension of available knowledge, and ergo his consequent perspective concerning the character of his cosmos and the most optimistic course he might follow. Yet we have also suggested that the individual is capable of easily assimilating the infinite aspirations of his peers, given the facility of projecting desire, limited only by the range of the person's senses and imagination.

There is only so much a single individual can accomplish, given the a priori assumptions. This suggests to us that if any progress is to be made toward the universal goal of satisfying infinite aspirations, some attempt must be made by the individuals concerned to approach infinite achievement. Because ~~of the initial predominance of frustration~~ over achievement, and the subsequent deterioration of the foundations required for immortality, we doubt that this condition may ever be attained. Never-the-less, an appropriate course may be charted which may move us in that direction, lessening thereby the frustration induced by the traditional disparity between aspiration and achievement. We suggest, as has been suggested many times before, that only by combining the experience, knowledge, and perspectives of each individual member of the species can any serious and lasting accomplishment be realized. Anything perceived or perpetrated by individuals per se is bound to be incomplete, inappropriate, and evanescent; of greater consequence might be the ramification that inappropriate individual actions are seriously detrimental to the satisfaction of the species as a whole, in that they are most likely to abuse or dissipate the natural resources which might have been more significantly deployed by a species-being.

Here we begin outlining the importance of terms such as sincerity, love, and honor. A species-being we regard as a man so attuned to the experiences and knowledge of his fellows that he may no longer be considered an individual in the limited sense of the word. Because our being would ~~enjoyable~~ of all experiences, reflect all knowledge, and form commensurately comprehensive perspectives, his perception of the relative character and ramifications of each "achievable" goal would suggest to him a hierarchy of objectives which would, in the long run, best perpe-

tuate a sense of continuing satisfaction with minimal detriment to the sources of that satisfaction. Naturally we do not suggest that any mortal may ever achieve this delightful (or oppressive?) state; however, it might serve as an illustration of the importance to each individual of gaining as complete a perspective as possible---in that manner he may be better able to define for himself a somewhat more complete gratifying hierarchy of aspirations. We believe that such a scale would lessen frustration by bringing about more lasting satisfaction and ameliorating to some extent the vicious circle composed of frustration-induced activities detrimental to the resources, which in turn reduce the capacity of the resources to satisfy future desires.

It is in the composition of our hierarchies that love, sincerity, and honor play such an important role. Granting our infinite assumptions, all of which suggest that the greater our experience and knowledge the more appropriate (and satisfying) our subsequent achievements are likely to be, it must be argued that hate, insincerity, and dishonor can only distort our experience, knowledge, and perspective, thereby reducing the scope of our mental model, and the validity of our scale of objectives. If the insincerity or dishonesty of one of our peers affords us a misconception, we are less likely to act in a manner appropriate to the actual state of affairs. We can of course harm our companions in the same manner.

That these characteristics of man must be self-evident should be self-evident. In the world as we see it one can not force another creature to share any particular insight, or communicate any specific conception. One can force others to agree with one's suggestions -- but others can not be forced to describe experiences or relate knowledge un-

known to ourselves. Others must care to relate their perceptions; the feelings of love, sincerity, and honor assure that a speculation faithful to what has actually been perceived will take place, and that subsequent action will be as appropriate as possible to existing circumstances.

.

The intermediate triangle represents a creature dedicated to harmony, prudence, and virtue; a creator cognizant of duty, courage, and the need for constitutions; and a cogitator faithful to custom and convention. As noted earlier, each of these tendencies serve to nurture the characteristics of the inner triangle, given the opportunities of the external triad --- experience, knowledge, and perspective.

B

Knowledge and education objectify experience and suggest certain well defined processes and general methodologies. Adherence to these doctrinaire beliefs requires a sense of duty to the constitution of the species. Given complete knowledge and loyal duty, justice will be done to all in the sense that the fruits of achievement will be shared as completely as possible.

A

Pleasure and pain (experience) lend themselves to an eventual realization by the creature that just as he can hurt others, others can hurt him; the same would hold true for shared feelings of pleasure. The reinforcement of pleasureable feelings will encourage harmony; the distaste for pain will support prudence; virtue shall be the willful and sincere attempt by any man to share his experience as comfortable as possible with all other men, and all other creatures.

C

Judgement and perspective appear to us to be consequent to knowledge and experience. The extension of either of these buttresses will

alter the viability of the perspective to suggest appropriate courses of action for the individual concerned. Through custom and convention the many judgements shall be effected. Eventually, faith will be required in adherence to a custom for which the original judgement has been forgotten. While it may be that the original perspective is no longer applicable, it may be assumed that the custom grew over time, and that an equal amount of time and counter-opposed custom must be applied before discarding it. Some judgements may never be actualized in the form of custom; it may be that certain perspectives are inherent to particular creatures given particular circumstances -- thus insight must occasionally be relied upon. Finally, love is the only means by which a sincere and complete sharing of perspectives may be induced.

Given our willingness to accept for the moment the many assumptions, unspoken, implicit, and stated, that entered into the above deliniation of man's character as it might affect his destiny, it seems to follow that each ~~portion of our~~ trinity and all of its lesser triads is integrally related to every other fragment. The elimination of any segment of the whole can not but have a detrimental effect on the appropriate functioning and fulfillment of the remainder.

.

Where do we find ourselves today? Looking about our highly technologically structured society, and recognizing the pragmatic objectification of religion as simply another institution among the many organizations nurtured by science and the state, we are distressed by the apparent exclusion of experience and perspective from the cosmology of the modern man. We are at a loss to suggest specific means of re-asserting the balance between the facets of man that we believe are required if

any sort of continuing satisfaction is to be achieved. We do not have Schweitzer's trust in the individual's ability to engage in elemental thinking; nor Bonhoeffer's faith in the God that we suspect is a Feuerbachian figment; nor King's confidence in the ability of a select few to instigate an evolution among the recalcitrant majority; nor Franklin's arrogance of self as the cosmological center; nor Gandhi's belief that truth will prevail where insincerity is rampant; nor Camus' ambivalence regarding the absurdity of optimism and the dishonor of pessimism; nor Frankl's naive search for suffering in the world of neon and love in the state of efficiency. Perhaps Keen will contribute to our feeling for the future.

.

No longer can the world as we know it suggest any sort of immortality for ourselves or our nature. We have allowed individuals to create a chimerical and momentary world for themselves, at the expense of the longevity of the species and all it might have possessed. It may be that the same dynamic of time will return the blossoms it once plucked. We may each attempt to achieve our own balance, and thereby increment the equilibrium of the species --- but we are so few, and so much has been lost, that a future seems doubtful. It must be recognized however, that the application of balance by those that realize the alternative could ameliorate the discomfort of the brief present.

Lost is the kingdom;
Spent is the power;
Gone is the glory.
Amen.

A

Well done. You are strongest when speculating for yourself. Not so strong in patience (self-discipline?) with others' ideas.

Muhlenberg College Post Box 79
February 11, 1973

Dear Professor Rousseau:

Having perused Ebenstein's abridged version of your Social Contract, I find myself disillusioned with your ability to provide an alternative to anarchy or authoritarianism. I might note that I have also regarded portions of your complete work in Barker, when a point was not too clear, or when I wondered if Ebenstein was being faithful to your intentions. I am disappointed.

Does man have a "right" to anything? Are you serious in suggesting that "the social order is a sacred right which is the basis for all other rights?" The words "social" and "order" by their very definition would seem to preclude any connotation of right, inherent or otherwise. In joining a society, men agree to be subject to the order of that association, as a matter of convenience. They agree that for the purpose of achieving a mutually desired end (such as a future), it is advisable to grant to each other certain defined and reciprocal amenities, as outlined by the laws. One does not have the "right" to civil liberty, or any other sort of liberty. One creates that condition by exchanging with another the promise to adhere to what has come to be called "morality."

You have noted that there is no possible connotation of "right" to be found in the consideration of force. Must not the same argument be applied to morality? Is not morality, and the fear of punishment or ostracization, just as binding on each individual as was force or guile in a prior state? Just as beings of relatively equal strength or speed agreed instinctively that conflict was not worthwhile between them, so also, one might assume, have beings of the society agreed that immoral acts against each other are not conducive to progress toward a future.

You speak of "natural" liberty, and distinguish it from "civil" and "moral" liberties. I wonder if you are not simply drawing a distinction of mode, rather than of essence. It seems to me that there is really no difference between the limitations on an individual's desires to assert himself, be they called "force," or "law," or "morals." In each case, the individual is threatened with the loss of his future should he engage in a breach of the contemporary order. The only difference between force (which I take to include guile and speed as well) and laws lie in the organized promulgation of specific guidelines by all members at once, rather than all members at one time or another. The only difference between law and morals which I can perceive is that of participation in the mechanics of articulation. Does it really matter whether one took part in writing the law? Simple recognition of the desirability of adhering to the precepts of the law in order to achieve a greater end (such as continued existence in that particular community)

according
to whom

Just for
disphens
reasons

As
became

we may
have altered
the content
of the law

?? aristarchy is a word!

Rousseau -- Two

would appear to me to be ample sanction. How can you draw a distinction between "impulse to appetite" and "obedience to law?" Are they not different means of describing the same end? Is not "obedience to law" a manifestation of the hunger for existence -- a reflection of the appetite for a future? If you wish to draw a distinction between greater and lesser desires, and imply their association with greater and lesser men, I would be the first to agree. But to suggest that there can be a total transcendence of our appetite for any and all things is, to my thought, unacceptable. *a form of behavior*

How can you imply that the the passage from the state of nature to the civil state "produces a very remarkable change in man?" You indicate that in the state of nature man considered only himself. That is a ridiculous assertion, negated by your own discussion of the role of force in the state of nature, and the subsequent need to be wary of those with strength greater than one's own. You note that association turns a "stupid and unimaginative animal" into an "intelligent being and a man." You must be kidding! In order to perceive the advantage of association in the first place, the members would have to be intelligent. *difficult from reason*

Another point -- you note that any member refusing to follow the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This damns your entire concept, and is in fact contradicted to some extent by your discussion of the submission implied by residence. In originally becoming a member of the community, each member is possessed of a certain capacity for perception. Each member lives for certain ends which at the time of the contract are compatible with those of the other members. Who is to say that at some point, the member's perceptions having been improved by stimulation from the various facets of the association, a divergence of ends shall occur? At that point, it is no longer to the member's advantage to adhere to the the trivial laws, for the greater desire of continued association is no longer binding. At that point the member may be expelled from the society, but certainly not forced to maintain an association repugnant to him. Would you also force men to "participate" or perhaps even force them to recognize the "common interest" prior to voting? *but the social structure is homogeneous*

You have noted that perceptions of the "common interest" differ in degree and perhaps even in nature. You have noted that it is unlikely that the general will shall ever be unanimous -- thus there must be a "correct" and an "incorrect" view. You speak of the infallibility of the general will. One might read "mediocracy" for "the general will." You also speak of a legislator of great wisdom, guiding the common masses to enlightenment. The impression one might receive is that only a man so gifted as yourself could perceive the common interest, and feel capable of "changing human nature, or transforming the individual." It appears to me that you speak of an aristarchy -- why bother with a superficial description of non-existent, even in concept, state of citizens (as you would describe them). *only possible social contract*

Rousseau -- Three

Until you are able to prove conclusively the nature of the ultimate legislator, the means of his education, and the perfection of his judgement, you should not even be allowed to speak of an aristarchy. Certainly you should not have the nerve to subvert the perceptions of the masses to those of the few, who, in joining the association agreed to give of themselves as much as they received of others. Or would you have foreigners make your laws?

Legislator has a number of the sovereign assembly
No! taking traditions into account!
You speak of engineering a change in the perspectives and perceptions of the people. The major fallacy in this suggestion would seem to lie in the assumption that qualities of perception other than those already existing can be created. What is the greatest end of your legislator? The fulfillment of man? Can man be fulfilled in any sense if his environment is limited through the duplication of specific qualities? Wouldn't the lack of as much stimulation as nature would ordinarily provide be detrimental to the development of man? *Is deception so much removed from the guile found in the state of nature that your legislator can use it with impunity? Is deception excluded from the "moral" contract? What purpose does induced ratification serve? Is there any difference (in terms of efficacy) between force and deception?* *explain?*

because there is no sovereign assembly etc.
You speak of ratification through consent by the silence of the Sovereign. Why then can not representatives be allowed, the people retaining their legislative function in an ex officio sense? In joining the association, it seemed that one of the goals was the unison of resources to better allow man to exist. One of the direct effects of association was the immediate reduction of the number of personal contracts or understandings which the individual had to make, thus freeing him for purposes of contemplation or the fulfillment of other, lesser, desires. The use of representatives would be a further step toward the provision of more individual time -- the representatives choosing to govern, motivated perhaps by Cicero's articulation of one of the greatest satisfactions of man:

For there is really no other occupation in which human virtue approaches more closely the august function of the gods than that of founding new States or preserving those already in existence.

I haven't been as eloquent or logical as I would have liked, but I'm sure you can understand how difficult it is to type coherently after consuming a dish of chicken livers and mushrooms in the cafeteria. The chickens died alcoholics, and the mushrooms were grown in Manhattan.

Sincerely yours,

RD

1/28/73

YOU WERE RIGHT RE SARTRE.
PG. ⁵⁷/58 OF EXISTENTIALISM & HUMAN
EMOTIONS :

I AM ASHAMED OF BEING BORN OR
I AM ASTONISHED AT IT OR I REJOICE
OVER IT, OR IN ATTEMPTING TO GET
RID OF MY LIFE I AFFIRM THAT I
LIVE AND I ASSUME THIS LIFE AS
BAD. THUS IN A CERTAIN SENSE I
CHOOSE BEING BORN.

AS USUAL I REPLACED WHAT I
READ WITH WHAT I THOUGHT — I.E.
THE ABOVE IS RIDICULOUS. (ALBEIT
HE DOES QUALIFY — "CERTAIN
SENSE.") I SUGGEST THAT IN NO
WAY CAN MAN QUA INDIVIDUAL
CHOOSE BIRTH OR NON-BIRTH.
ONLY AFTER BIRTH, AND AFTER
FORMATION OF CHARACTER (AS
SARTRE HIMSELF NOTES "MAN IS
NOTHING ELSE BUT WHAT HE MAKES
OF HIMSELF") CAN MAN DECIDE
OVER

the
ultimate
man's
who not the present reality

Albert Schweitzer's Thought; the basis for comments by R. D. Steele. For Theological Ethics, Dr. Jennings, Muhlenberg.


September 24, 1973

Introduction	page one
The essential elements	one
Society for modern man	four
Prospects for the future	eleven

References:

- Life: Schweitzer, Albert. Out of my Life and Thought.
Man: Marcuse, Herbert. One-Dimensional Man.
Lectures: _____. Five Lectures: Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia.
Revolt: _____. Counterrevolution and Revolt.
Eros. _____. Eros and Civilization.
Science. Shepard, Paul and Daniel McKinley. The Subversive Science: Essays toward an Ecology of Man.

Notes: In Science, refer particularly to the article by Charles F. Hockett and Robert Ascher, "The Human Revolution." The quotations ~~and thoughts~~ in "Society for Modern Man," the second portion of this essay, are based on the reading, thinking, and writing which I did in connection with a paper for Dr. Charles S. Bednar of the Department of Political Science; "Society, Satisfaction, and Suppression: The Marcusian Perception of Functional Morality." (the ones re: Marcuse).

This is my own work
despite the Honor Code.


"Civilization I define in quite general terms as spiritual and material progress in all spheres of activity, accompanied by an ethical development of mankind....we may take as the essential element in civilization the ethical perfecting of the individual and of society as well." (Life. 155, 119)

Central to the concept of the thought expressed above is the idea of a harmony, a balance, between the many spheres of activity which man is capable of. It implies to me that each of man's faculties must be encouraged to evolve in conjunction with each of his other faculties, if the potential inherent in the whole man is to be realized.

Fundamental to Schweitzer's perspective of this development are a number of ideals - truth, sincerity, experience, and Reverence for Life. We shall briefly review each of these, and will then comment on the lack of each of these qualities in modern society. In conclusion, an attempt will be made to define prospects for the future as suggested by the disparity between modern society and the foundation which Albert Schweitzer believes we are no longer building upon.

.....

The essential elements. It is essential for Schweitzer that truth be sought, promulgated, and internalized. This truth can only come from personal soul-searching by the individual. It can not be assimilated from other institutions, however Christian they may be. The words of another should not be accepted as "fact" without personal evaluation. As men are distinguished by their ability to think creatively and reflectively, their suppression of, or lack of encouraging, thinking, is a major failing, a catastrophe. Without this personal thought, and the subsequent expansion of the individual as he realizes his relationship to the exterior whole,

man, (and therefore men) will not become the integral part of the whole which he is meant to be. Elemental thinking is that which "starts from the fundamental questions about the relations of man to the universe, about the meaning of life, and about the nature of goodness." (Life. 174) If man avoids this elemental thought, and allows himself to be distracted by other, superfluous, subjects, he will lose his perspective and will not be able to judge the ethical qualities of his new life. Existence is common to all men; the struggle to survive and procreate allows men to demonstrate and acquire qualities which each will respect in the other. These hard-found qualities will enhance man's appreciation for his environment; the same qualities seen in other men will reinforce his approbation and sense of kinship with his fellows - it seems reasonable to assume that those traits one values in oneself one will value in others.

This provides the basis of social association

Marcuse shows how an artificial existence warps perspective

"No less strong than the will to truth must be the will to sincerity. Only in an age which can show the courage of sincerity can possess truth which works as a spiritual force within it. Sincerity is the foundation of the spiritual life." (Life. 173) If perception of life as it is is vital to the formulation of man's sense of kinship to that life, then it follows that any insincerity, any deliberately propagated misconception, will be detrimental to the achievement of a "true" perspective. Delusions of whatever sort can only result in false perspectives. If man is seen as a creature with a certain potential, this potential to be realized as a result of the stimulation afforded him by the same forces determining his potential (life forces), then it appears that any "false" or insincere inspiration will force him away from the achievement of his "true" potential end; will encourage relationships with other beings which will not allow man to reinforce through thought what Schweitzer believes his instincts tell him, i.e. that only as an integral part

Rousseau shows the lack of sincerity - Berkeley emphasizes need for sharing perspectives since each has his own

of the whole of "experience" or "existence" can he become fulfilled. If we are defined according to our rapport with other existing beings, if their perception of us is instrumental in describing our place in the over-all scheme of things, then it follows that an incomplete or irreverent relationship allowed to continue on our part will keep from us the possibility of being complete.

! Rev. for Life
harmony,
etc.

Schweitzer emphasizes the importance of experience as the path to personal (and subsequently universal) understanding: "it is not through knowledge, but through experience of the world that we are brought into relation with it...it [our life view] renews itself in us every time we look thoughtfully at ourselves and the life around us." (Life. 157) ~~The importance of experience is reiterated when one considers the possibly corrupting influences of external knowledge and "reported" experience.~~ It is only through personal experience that one can be assured of grasping the essence of involvement, and from which one can derive personal values untainted by the "interpretation" of others.

In positing Reverence for Life as a workable ethic, Albert Schweitzer provides us with the perspective encompassing his ideals of truth, sincerity, and experience. Placing the highest value on life, Schweitzer notes:

A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow men, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that is in need of help. Only the universal ethic of responsibility in an ever-widening sphere for all that lives - only that ethic can be founded in thought. The ethic of the relation of man to man is not something apart by itself; it is only a particular relation which results from the universal one. (Life. 126)

The point of it all: the reason we should search for and adhere to the ethics arising from a Reverence for Life, is found in Schweitzer's contention that man can only be fulfilled as part of the universal whole.

importance
of
relative
ethics

need
for harmony
relativity
to "other"

All that man is, is a result of his interaction with all that man is not. If we apply a Berkleian principle here, and accept the suggestion that everything exists because something else perceives it, then man (in the objective sense, as something other than a self-conscious being) is a composite of the perceptions of all those beings and things that are not contained in the man being perceived. Crucial then to man's essence are the things exterior to himself. ~~How our environment responds to us will determine how we are. If we burn trees, then we will be cave dwellers. If we kill herds of buffalo, then we will be killers.~~

Four ingredients have been mentioned briefly: truth, sincerity, experience, and Reverence for Life. Without these, Albert Schweitzer questions the possibility of civilization's prospects for the future. His thought, as found in Life, published in 1931, shows amazing foresight in criticizing those aspects of society which are likely to corrupt man and undermine his ethical foundation. The situation has not improved since then. Today the ideals of truth, sincerity, "experience," and certainly Reverence for Life seem far removed from the perspective which we have grown accustomed to.

Society for the modern man. Schweitzer criticizes modern civilization because it discourages man from thinking of the elemental relationships and values...it turns man into a skeptic, a "nothink" being, distinguished from other animals only by the complexity of his purchased and artificial environment. The incredibly technical and extensive nature of "knowledge" precludes the typical man from grasping and mastering more than a small segment of that which is known. He is forced to accept as "fact" increasingly frequent "reports" from others, be they individuals or institutions. Because these facts are originated in and by others, they are not

not clear
 what this
 paragraph is
 supposed to
 say - you don't
 tie it to
 previous discussion

importance
 of "other"
 life in
 supporting
 and defining
 our own

grasped or "internalized" in the old fashion. These facts, now called truths, are external to modern man, and as such, worthless and degrading. ~~Internalization for Schweitzer~~

~~would have meant, ideally, the assimilation of the essence of the idea, concept, or fact; a result of understanding. Today, it means assimilation without evaluation; assimilation as a matter of course. The industrial era, by making knowledge an end in itself, of functional utility, has replaced the era of elemental thinking.~~

Whereas earlier elemental thinking about man's relation to nature and other men was required in order to survive and exist, this thought is no longer necessary. The ego is no longer threatened by the externalities that once were so all-important. The ego - experienced reality - is softened by the machine age; no thought is stimulated by harsh winds, cold nights, or children screaming in agony. These things are moderated by technology, by institutions. They are interpreted, reported, filed away, and forgotten. They are cured, cared for, or "explained." Thought is no longer necessary for mere survival.

The machine increases objectivity. It dismisses relative descriptions, making life functional rather than personally subjective. ~~All is the same for all.~~ There are common denominators which have been abstracted from the original environment. A life is defined according to the role its container plays. If the role is no longer functional relative to the new and encompassing system, then the life can be objectively destroyed. ~~A systematic transvaluation of values has occurred. The system that was a tool of man has, incomprehensibly, begun to regard man as a tool.~~

One of the causes of this transvaluation occurred in the worshipping of knowledge by the philosophers of the nineteenth century. By seeking to increase their functional

too
L. Wood?
H. are you set
the stage for
such a claim?
as.

Marcuse

knowledge as an end in itself, they lost their perspective, forgot the nature and purpose of knowledge. Rather than develop knowledge which would bridge the gap between man's perception of himself and his perception of reality; or other things; they simply increased the number of "things" with which man was forced to interact. Rather than a bridge, they created a higher wall. Man was that much further removed from the elemental thinking about himself and his relationship to other life.

Civilization today, with the emphasis on knowledge and external "fact" is also lacking in that it discourages sincerity. This connection I did not see directly in Schweitzer, but it is an easy connection to make. Given the importance which Schweitzer places on sincerity, it is certainly a vital topic for discussion. Here I refer to the Rousseauian concept of the effect of science on sincerity. It is clear that with the generation of tomes of knowledge, and with the increasing distinction of talents and bents, it is increasingly possible for individuals to assume a "role" of their choosing, beyond that which society has insidiously assigned to them. To the extent that one assumes a role divergent from the previous common denominators (such as virtue, manliness, fortitude, courage, foresight), to the extent that one becomes clever, articulate, esoteric, musically skillful - to this extent is a fraud perpetrated, and the vision of the "real" man obscured. It appears too easy, with the complexities of the modern academics, to become sophisticated - to answer question with question, fact with counter-fact, theory with anti-theory - all to the end of knowledge, and to the detriment of understanding.

We have seen to some degree how society (civilization?) has deteriorated our grasp of truth and our exercise of sincerity. So too has it affected our "experience."

this is important because I think the emphasis I place on sharing true perspective as a path to universal perception, etc.

We noted before that those things exterior to man were crucial to his perception of himself. From this we can draw a critical picture of society, as do Schweitzer and members of the New Left, such as Marcuse, Brown, and Goodman. They hold the common belief that society has corrupted the perceptions of the people by offering too many seductive "objects" which disturb the pattern of man's relations with the more elemental objects, by diversifying his interests, warping his perceptions, and re-ordering his values. By creating a functional society where men are defined by the roles they play within the organization, a new standard of association has been substituted for the old. It is no longer necessary for a man to be "good," or "virtuous," or even "intelligent." All that is required is the recognition by other men of his position within the organization, be he President, or Clerk.

This is significant as means change or ends.

What we are doing in today's society is providing pseudo-stimulation for ourselves and our peers. ~~We are creating "things" which are then expected to amuse us; after all, being our creations, they must serve some purpose! A rather good, and contemporary example of pseudo-events would be the soap operas and serials available on television today. It is my position that things such as these lead the people that identify with them to positions at least twice removed from the actual situation, with a subsequent loss of perspective, and an inability to be truthful or sincere. Consider: a playwright creates a serial, attempting to include all of the characteristics, in so far as he can stereotype them, of the audience whose interest he desires to attract. Thus we are at least once removed from actuality, in that he is interpreting his picture of reality, and imposing his view on the millions that can not take the trouble to see for themselves. His picture is then re-interpreted by the actors and the director. Twice removed. Finally, the serial is assimilated by all those who choose (or are induced?) to~~

This could be eliminated

~~identify with the program; their adaptation of the precepts, character, or "values" illustrated in the serial move them away from their original position, which the playwright was trying to portray in the first place. What was originally "A" has become "not A" simply through the circulation of the views of a very few among the very many. An artificial experience has been substituted for what might at one time been called "the real thing."~~

*

By providing "experiences" such as this for all members of the society, a common perspective is gradually built up among the initiated; by making these experiences at least somewhat satisfying, individuals gradually lose their ability to perceive contradictions within the system, and become accustomed and reconciled to the "happy consciousness," actually a state of unconsciousness. They allow the system, in effect agent for thought and action, to become moral agent as well. (Man. 79) The result is seen in the formation of a mass ego; the ego ideal, uniting all members of the society, transcending all particular individuals and groups, "becomes 'embodied' in the very tangible laws which move the apparatus and determine the behavior of the material as well as the human object; the technical code, the moral code, and that of profitable productivity are merged into one effective whole." (Lectures. 54, 59-60)

childish, unconscious

Put
THIS
ON
PAGE
10
*26

The commodities of today's "performing" society are ~~another~~ ^{ju} type of "experience" which ~~are~~ ^{is} corrupting the individual's perception of his true needs. By providing commodities which in turn provide degrees of satisfaction and stimulation (however muted and removed from the satisfaction and stimulation available in times past) the society encourages and imposes on the individual false needs which superimpose themselves on the true needs, and thus extend even further the control of society over man, now a "tool." (Revolt. 14)

* don't you think only a few ever have seen clearly

Marcuse defines false needs as "those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression." These needs have a "societal content and function which are determined by external powers over which the individual has no control...no matter how much he identifies himself with them and finds himself in their satisfaction, they continue to be what they were from the beginning - products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression." (Man. 4-5) True needs, by way of contrast, are defined in this fashion: "The only needs that have an unqualified claim for satisfaction are the vital ones - nourishment, clothing, lodging at the attainable level of culture." The latter qualifier naturally requires a sense of judgement and priorities. ~~Because Marcuse feels that resources are increasingly calculable, the "truth" and "falsehood" of needs reflect "objective" conditions "to the extent to which the universal satisfaction of vital needs, and beyond it, the progressive alleviation of toil and poverty, are universally valid standards." (Man. 4,6)~~ I will take issue later with the limitations of Marcuse; I do not feel that he is "subjective" enough; as can be seen, his "true" needs are completely materialistic in their definition. What I value is his differentiation between "true" and "false," and his excellent descriptions of the way he believes the "false" to be imposed upon the individual by society..

Beyond the imposition of common experience (and thereby of a common superego and morality), Marcuse points to other techniques which are used by productive society to further repress libidinal tendencies and divert energies (and stifle counter-productive thought) into the service of the dominant Reality Principle. The body can be desexualized; the sensual nature can be sublimated or repressed; nature can be controlled by the apparatus (thus restricting the fields of expression and stimulation); and leisure hours can be

controlled or at least influenced. These are all inter-related, so that a relative increase in the influence of one may allow a relaxation of control through the other; for instance, increased control over nature and the predominance of genital sex could be the basis for a relaxation of the morality inhibiting the practice of fetishes and perversions. (Eros. 85-86; Revolt. 76; Man. 75; Lectures. 17, 35)

In mastering the environment, and the individual's communion with that environment, technology has limited the amount of libidinal energy which can be expended (or stimulated) by the environment. ~~"The environment from which the individual could obtain pleasure, which he could cathect as gratifying almost as an extended zone of the body, has been rigidly reduced. Consequently, the 'universe' of libidinous cathect, is likewise reduced. The effect is a localization and contraction of the libido, the reduction of erotic to sexual experience and satisfaction."~~ (Man. 73) What this means, in ^{non} esoteric language, is that with the mechanization of nature, with the vast expanses of concrete, it is increasingly difficult to find a nice place to make love outside the marriage chamber. It is harder to find a place where the senses of smell and sight and hearing will not be overwhelmed with the smell of pollution, the sight of cement, the sound of automobiles. Thus the senses, through which man was aware originally of the life around him, become acclimated to the technological society.

How is all of this significant to our examination of the ethics of the Reverence for Life and its ethics? It demonstrates to me the difficulty any philosopher will face in trying to change the perceptions of the masses once they have become acclimated to the mores of the society. Once the transvaluation of values has occurred; once the "artificial nature" has become the basis for judgement, then a

monumental conflict faces the opposition; since legitimacy is by definition inherent in the society legislating, promulgating, and enforcing the laws, another foundation must be found for revolutionizing the status quo - and it must be one which can be recognized by the disciples. The question arises: can we hope to awaken the masses to the "true" perspective? or must they be "forced to be free," as would advocate Rousseau and Marcuse? or may they be left in the happy limbo of unconsciousness?

This latter point is one which might bear further exploration in conclusion. That conclusion will be my own however, and it is only fair to comment briefly on how Schweitzer might view the problem. It appears to me that Albert Schweitzer has an ~~optimistic~~ and unrealistic view of the ability and willingness of all men to search their inner depths for the elemental truths which he believes should be self-evident to all. Bearing that belief in mind, he would say, I think, that the social philosopher need but point out time and again the correct foundation for the ethical perspective, to eventually enlighten the masses. I doubt if he would condone a dictatorship of the proletariat, since the truths should be self-evident.

Prospects for the future. ~~This paper is getting overly long. Rather than going into further elaboration upon the Marcusean thought to which I tend to subscribe in some instances, I will explore briefly the last third of the question posed above: should the masses be left in the happy limbo of the unconscious condition?~~ Assuming that the mechanics for liberation are readily available (as explored in one of my recent papers "Society, Satisfaction, and Suppression: The Marcusean Perception of Functional Morality,") I tend to believe that we do not need to enlighten the masses. I see unconconsciousness as a condition akin to the lack of faith of the infidels.

*are you
down a
is for
such as?
ndgment?
class
discussion?*

But can we convert the infidels? ~~This is the question that has been on my mind for a week now.~~ And if we could, would it be worth our while? And if it were worth our while, should we use technically "immoral" methods to "awaken" the infidels?

~~It is easy to see the influence of the technic ethic on all that live within the context of society today. It is personally disturbing to me to realize that one of my closest friends "lives" a serial at twelve thirty every day. It is disturbing to watch a fat man in suspenders push a very small, noisy, and dirty machine along the paths on every day like today. The point of the process (which naturally incorporates the fat man) appears to be the removing of the small bits of leaves and twigs, and the occasional pop box, from the path. Don't you find that ludicrous and offensive?~~

Can we convert the infidels without resorting to the "educational dictatorship?" I do not think so. I don't think the dictatorship would convert anyone either - it would simply have the advantage of being able to control the environment in which the young members of the society grow, thereby "creating" them, and allowing the old "values" to die with the old people. If a man is happy in his unconscious state, I think we should let him be; not because I despair of effecting change, but rather because I have confidence in the eventual historical decision which will ratify whatever set of values it finds universally compatible.

Two points lead me to this conclusion. First, I think that we are all, liberated or not, over-emphasizing the importance of "modern man" and are being rather presumptuous in assuming that everything we do today will change the course of the universe (even the earthly universe) for the rest of time. I suspect that a hundred years from now they will be digging up New York City the way we dug up Troy - with the difference

that Troy had Homer to immortalize it; New York City has Tiny Tim. I can not believe that a species which took millions of years to reach this point, and which reached it's present state largely by accident (Science. 13-41), could possibly destroy the environment which nurtured it. One way I might look at our society today, relative to the eco-system, would be as one looks at a chancre - it can either be removed, if one has the qualities necessary, or it can be allowed to be covered with scar tissue over time.

My second point deals with the evolutionary potential of language, the functional morality, and the less tangible ethics. I see these as inherited characteristics which will be assimilated and expanded upon by succeeding generations. Where a child grows into the ego ideal, it is that ideal that his child will probably absorb. By the same token, where the child does not grow into the ego ideal, but is guided by a liberated parent or mentor into a different perspective, then that child will become liberated, and his children after him. As like seeks out like, so will these liberated people tend to associate, propagate, and perpetuate. Over time I see the growth of a very real counter-group. It may be that this counter-group will be ostracized from society. That does not lessen its chances of standing the test of time. It appears that our ancestors were the weaker apes that could not enforce their "rights" to certain clumps of trees. Just as they were "pushed" into "evolution," so it might be that the counter-group will become the surviving remnant of today's human species.

I think Schweitzer is right - that Reverence for Life and the ideals it incorporates are vital to a truly meaningful relationship to all that surrounds and stimulates our life; but I begin to wonder whether anything other than the original dynamic of time could influence the course our performing society is taking today. ~~As Bell has noted: "time will tell."~~

R.D.

Some good paragraphs, but as a whole it is ~~disappointing~~.

You try to do too much, say too much; you "ramble" a little and make too many generalizations (some are good).

You don't really tie A.S. and H.M. I'm sure you could find some basic differences (a mystic and a neo-Freudian?).

This could have served as a first draft. Then rework it, with some self-control and an attempt to stick to a consistent & well-outlined train of thought.

RED - DR. JENNINGS

PURPLE - SELF

B

"Civilization I define in quite general terms as spiritual and material progress in all spheres of activity, accompanied by an ethical development of mankind...we may take as the essential element in civilization the ethical perfecting of the individual and of society as well. (Life, 155,119)

Central to the thought above is the concept of harmony, of the development of one sphere (or one man?) being significant only in-so-far as the other spheres are able to develop, and complement each other.

Fundamental to Schweitzer's perspective of this development are a number of ideals - truth, sincerity, experience, and Reverence for Life. We shall briefly review each of these, and will then comment on the lack of each of these qualities in modern society as defined by a contemporary philosopher. In conclusion, prospects for the future will be briefly explored as they are suggested by the disparity between modern society and the foundation which Albert Schweitzer believes we are no longer building upon.

.

The essential elements. It is essential for Schweitzer that truth be sought and internalized. This truth can only come from personal soul-searching by the individual. It can not be assimilated from any other institution, however Christian it may be. The words of another should not be accepted as "fact" without personal evaluation. As men are distinguished by their ability to think creatively and reflectively, their suppression, or willing submission to, a lack of this thought should be regarded as a major failing. Without this personal thought, and the subsequent expansion of the individual as he realizes his relationship to the external whole, men will not become the integral part of the whole which they are meant to be. This presumes that we do regard man as part of a universal and ordered cosmos. Elemental thinking is that which "starts from the fundamental questions about the relations of man to the universe, about the meaning of life, and about the nature of goodness." (Life, 174) If man avoids this elemental thought, and allows

himself to be distracted by other, superfluous, subjects, he will lose his perspective and will not be able to judge the ethical qualities of his new life. Existence is common to all men; the struggle to survive and procreate allows men to demonstrate and acquire qualities which each will respect in the other. These hard-found qualities will enhance man's appreciation for his environment; the same qualities seen in other men will engender and reinforce his approbation and sense of kinship with his fellows -- it seems reasonable to assume that the traits one values in oneself one will value in others.

"No less strong than the will to truth must be the will to sincerity. Only an age which can show the courage of sincerity can possess truth which works as a spiritual force within it. Sincerity is the foundation of the spiritual life." (Life, 173) If perception of life, as it is, is vital to the formulation of man's sense of oneness with that life, then it follows that any insincerity, any deliberately propagated misconception, will bias the perspective achieved, and therefore be detrimental to a "sincere" and complete relationship of man and his surroundings.

Schweitzer emphasizes the importance of experience as the path to personal (and subsequently universal) understanding: "it is not through knowledge, but through experience of the world that we are brought into relation with it...[our life view] renews itself in us every time we look thoughtfully at ourselves and the life around us." (Life, 157) It is only through personal experience that one can be assured of grasping the essence of involvement, and from which one can derive personal values untainted by the "interpretation" of others.

In positing Reverence for Life as a workable ethic, Albert Schweitzer provides us with the perspective encompassing his ideals of truth, sincerity, and experience. Placing the highest value on life, Schweitzer notes:

A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow men, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that is in need of help. Only the universal ethic of responsibility in an ever

widening sphere for all that lives -- only that ethic can be founded in thought. The ethic of the relation of man to man is not something apart by itself; it is only a particular relation which results from the universal one. (Life, 126)

The point of it all: the reason we should search for and adhere to the ethics arising from the Reverence for Life, is found in Schweitzer's contention that man can only be fulfilled as part of the universal whole. All that man is, is a result of all that man is not. If we ascribe to all things exterior to ourselves, definitions based on our perception (as Berkeley would have it), then it follows that we are defined in turn by those things exterior to ourselves.

Society for modern man. Schweitzer criticizes modern civilization because it discourages man from thinking of elemental relationships and values...it turns man into a skeptic, a "nothink" being, distinguished from other animals only by the complexity of his purchased and artificial environment. The incredibly technical and extensive nature of "knowledge" precludes the typical man from grasping and mastering more than a small segment of that which is known. He is forced to accept as "fact" increasingly frequent and increasingly unverifiable "reports" from others, be they individuals or institutions. Because these facts are originated in and by others, they are not grasped or "internalized" in the old fashion. These facts, now called truths, are external to modern man, and as such, worthless and degrading.

Whereas earlier elemental thinking about man's relation to nature and other men was required in order to survive and exist, this thought is no longer necessary. The ego is no longer threatened by the externalities that once were so all-important. The ego -- experienced reality -- is softened by the machine age; no thought is stimulated by harsh winds, cold nights, or children screaming in agony. These things are moderated by technology and its institutions; they are either overwhelmed momentarily, or "explained." Thought is no longer necessary for mere survival.

Civilization today, with the emphasis on knowledge and external "fact," is also lacking in that it discourages sincerity. Here I refer to the Rousseauian concept of the effect of science on society. It is clear that with the generation of tomes of knowledge, and with the increasing distinction of talents and bents, it is increasingly possible for individuals to assume a "role" of their choosing, beyond that which society has insidiously assigned them. To the extent that one is able to assume a role divergent from the previous common denominators (such as virtue, manliness, fortitude, courage, foresight), to the extent that one becomes good at golf, chess, singing, darts--to this extent is a fraud perpetrated, and the vision of the "real" man obscured. It appears too easy, with the complexities of the modern academics, to become sophisticated -- to answer question with question, fact with counter-fact, theory with anti-theory -- all to the end of knowledge, and the detriment of understanding.

We have seen to some degree how society (civilization?) has deteriorated our grasp of truth and our exercise of sincerity. So too has it affected our "experience." We noted before, that those things exterior to man were crucial to his perception of himself. Today one can suggest that society has corrupted the perceptions of the people by offering too many seductive "objects" which disturb the pattern of man's relations with the more elemental objects, by diversifying his interests, warping his perspectives, and re-ordering his values. By creating a functional society where men are defined by the roles they play within the organization, and by creating a consumer culture where men are further defined by their possessions, a new standard of association has been substituted for the old. It is no longer necessary for a man to be "good," or "virtuous," or even "intelligent." All that is required is the recognition by the other men of his position within any given organization, and the acceptance of his credit card by the other organizations.

What we are doing in today's society is providing pseudo-stimulation for ourselves and our peers. The commodities of today's "performing" society are an "experience" which is corrupting the individual's perception of his true needs. By providing commodities which in turn provide degrees

of satisfaction and stimulation (however muted and removed from the satisfaction and stimulation available in times past) the society encourages and imposes on the individual false needs, more compatible with the structure of the society. (Revolt, 14) Marcuse defines false needs as "those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression." These needs have a "societal content and function which are determined by external powers over which the individual has no control...no matter how much he identifies with them and finds himself in their satisfaction, they continue to be what they were from the beginning-- products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression." (Man, 4-5)

Beyond the imposition of common experience (and thereby of a common super-ego and morality), Marcuse points to other techniques which are used by productive society to further repress man's instinctual tendencies and divert energies (and stifle counter-productive thought) into the service of the dominant Reality Principle. The body can be desexualized; the sensual nature can be sublimated or repressed; nature can be controlled by the apparatus (thus restricting the fields of expression and stimulation); and leisure hours can be controlled or at least influenced.

In mastering the environment, and the individual's communion with that environment, technology has limited the amount of energy which can be expended, and drastically hampered the stimulation of thought by the environment. With the mechanization of nature, it is more difficult to find a nice place to make love outside the marriage chamber. It is harder to find a place where the sense of sight and smell and hearing and taste will not be overwhelmed with the sight of cement, the smell of pollution, the sound of automobiles, the taste of DDT. Thus the senses, through which man originally evaluated his relationship with nature, are acclimated to the technological society. (Man, 73) This is most significant because the old foundation for evaluating and valuing oneself and others, the old common denominators, have been suppressed, leaving only the new ones. The system, which has been agent for action, which has eliminated thought, now becomes the basis for morality. (Man, 79)

How is all of this significant to our examination of the ethics of the Reverence for Life? It demonstrates to me the complete disappearance of the foundation for the old ethics, and it further points out the difficulty which any reforming philosopher will face should he attempt to change the perspective of the masses once they have become acclimated to the mores of the society. Since legitimacy is by definition inherent in the society legislating, promulgating, and enforcing the laws, another foundation must be found for revolutionizing the status quo -- and it must be one which can be readily recognized by the disciples. The question arises: can we return to the old foundation, nature, and the cosmological system of life supporting life, or must we find another source? Another question follows: can we hope to awaken the masses to the "true" perspective, or must they be forced to be free, as Rousseau and Marcuse would have it? Or may we leave them in the happy limbo of unconsciousness?

This latter point will be explored in conclusion. That conclusion will be my own, however, and it is only fair to comment briefly on how Schweitzer might view the problem. I suggest that Schweitzer, disregarding the fact that our social system has eaten away at the fabric of nature, and might have taken so much that within the century life as we know it may cease, would rely on the potential stimulation of those natural conditions existing. In addition, he would expect every man to delve into his inner reservoir, which I do not think Schweitzer would believe could be depleted by external forces, as Marcuse suggests and I concur. I believe Albert Schweitzer had an optimistic and unrealistic view of the ability and willingness of all men to search their inner depths for the elemental truths he believes might be self-evident to all. Bearing this in mind, I think he would ask that the social philosopher simply encourage the people to contemplate and eventually grasp the "objective consciousness," leading to the eventual withering of the unethical social system. I doubt that he would condone any sort of dictatorship of the proletariat, the philosophers, or others.

Prospects for the future. Assuming that the mechanics of liberation are readily available, I tend to believe that we do not need to enlighten the infidels.

I see unconsciousness as a condition akin to the lack of faith of the infidels. But can we convert them? And if we could, would it be worth our while? And if it were worth our while, should we use "immoral" means for the "moral" enlightenment?

I do not think that infidels can be converted on a significant scale, even with a dictatorship. The dictatorship would not convert anyone -- it would simply have the advantage of being able to control the environment of the young, "creating" them, and allowing the old values to die with the old people. If a man is happy in his unconscious state, I think we should let him be; not because I despair of effecting change, but rather because I have confidence in the eventual historical decision which will ratify whatever set of values it finds universally compatible.

Two points lead me to this conclusion. First, I think that we are all, liberated or not, over-emphasizing the importance of "modern man," and being rather presumptuous in assuming that everything we do today will change the course of the universe (even the earthly universe) for the rest of time. I suspect that a hundred years from now they will be digging up New York City the way we dug up Troy -- with the difference that Troy had Homer to immortalize it; New York City has Tiny Tim. And that is a commentary on the state of our culture as I see it. I can not believe that a species which took millions of years to reach this point, and which reached its present state largely by accident (Science, 13-41) could possibly destroy the environment which nurtured it. One way one might look at our society today, relative to the eco-system, is as one would regard achancore -- it can either be removed, if one can bring the techniques to bear, or it can be allowed to cover itself with scar tissue over time.

My second point deals with the evolutionary potential of language, the functional morality, and the less tangible ethics. I see these as inherited characteristics which will be assimilated and expanded upon by succeeding generations. Where a child grows into the social ego-ideal, it is that ideal which his children will probably absorb. On the other

hand, where the child does not grow into the ego-ideal, but is guided by a strong and independent parent or mentor into a different perspective, it seems likely that his child will become liberated, the parent having assimilated the strength to counter social pressures. As like seeks out like, so will these liberated people tend to associate, propagate, and perpetuate. Over time I see the growth of a very real counter-group. It may be that this counter-group will be ostracized from society. That does not lessen its chances of standing the test of time. It appears that our ancestors were the weaker apes that could not enforce their "rights" to certain clumps of trees. Just as they were "pushed" into "evolution," so it might be that the counter-group will become the surviving remnant of today's human species.

I think Schweitzer is right, that Reverence for Life and the ideals it incorporates are vital to a truly meaningful relationship, to all that surrounds and stimulates our life; but I begin to wonder whether anything other than the original dynamics of time could influence the course our performing society is taking today.



If you will protest courageously, and yet with dignity and Christian love, when the history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say, "there lived a great people--a black people--who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization." This is our challenge and overwhelming responsibility. (Stride. 48.3)

poor sentence (Love, reform, and justice are three principles intrinsic to our reading, Stride Toward Freedom, the autobiographical story of Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Montgomery protests. The quotation above is meant to serve as a résumé précis; certainly it is faithful to the spirit of the tale. Throughout, the means and ethics of change are adduced.

Four assumptions are immanent to the Mongomerian protest: a) that a heavenly order exists which must serve as the basis for judgement of the less ideal standards enforced by the oppressive elements of society, b) that the heavenly standards can be perceived and translated into practical demands for reform by newly conscientious peoples, c) that the church can and should serve as a primary agency of change, and d) that such change requires neither violence, nor revolution.

The purpose of this essay shall be to elaborate on my own thoughts regarding each of these assumptions. To that end, I shall only briefly discuss the original stimuli, and shall move quickly to the thoughts that Stride Toward Freedom suggested to me.

Throughout his narrative King expresses the conviction that the individual must be apotheosized as the child of God. This in turn leads to two corollaries, both of which King makes explicit: a) that the state (and presumably other institutions) are meant to serve man (75.1), and b) that all men, if they are to become one with God the Father, must in preparation become one with each other (21.). This requires an environment conducive to the growth and refinement of the soul; oppression, inequality, violence -- these are thus precluded. "Good" is defined in context as those conditions which allow one to be true to one's conscience and to God; "evil" is that which infringes on the dignity and potential of the individual (36.3-37.1, 129.2).

King is confident that the leaders of any group, particularly the

religious leaders, should be able to instill dignity within the people, convince them that they should not cooperate with the evil system, and in general provide a perspective of life as it should be that would encourage demands for the rights due each individual. (23.2, 167.1, 129.2)

While King recognizes the difficulty of changing attitudes inculcated within the oppressors from childhood (119.2,3), the severity of evil conditions can be alleviated by interim legislative methods pending the reconciliation of oppressor and oppressed. The pragmatic manifestations of attitude, such as the segregated buses so prominent in the Montgomery conflict, can be desegregated by law--by the prevailing law. (22.2, 87., 182.2; 18.3, 175.3).

One of the more important points in the book (the assumptions are stated in reverse order of debatability), was the emphasis on religion as the moving force for change. (73.3, 21., 182.3-184.2)

Religion at its best, deals not only with man's preliminary concerns, but with his inescapable ultimate concern. When religion overlooks this basic fact it is reduced to a mere ethical system in which eternity is absorbed into time and God is relegated to a sort of meaningless figment of the human imagination. But a religion true to its nature must also be concerned about man's social conditions. Religion deals with both earth and heaven, both time and eternity. It seeks not only to integrate men with God but to integrate men with men and each man with himself. On the one hand it seeks to change the souls of men, and thereby unite them with God; on the other hand it seeks to change the environmental conditions of men so that the soul will have a chance after it is changed. Any religion which professes to be concerned with the souls of men and is not concerned with the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them is a dry-dust religion. Such a religion is the kind the Marxists would like to see -- an opiate of the people. (21.)/Government legislation is part of the answer - but morals can not be legislated./ We must depend on religion and education to alter the errors of the heart and mind. (175.3)

The most significant suggestion found in Stride Toward Freedom concerned the possibility of achieving reform without violence or revolution (165.3). Whereas the earlier assumptions have concerned themselves with the ethics of reform, this last, while ethical in its foundation, is very much concerned with the means of achieving just ends. Given King's rejection of force as a method, and his commitment to

normative change, (as opposed to passive acceptance of the status quo), we find an advocate of non-violent resistance. Violence is eschewed, as it would only call for reciprocal bitterness, while love might shame the oppressor, and perhaps transform him. (80.3). Evil must be resisted if the righteous man is to be true to himself and to God, since the acceptance of evil is its perpetuation. (36.3-37.1). Non-violence is courageous resistance; it seeks understanding, not victory; it attacks forces, rather than individuals; it suffers without physical or spiritual retaliation; and it has a faith in the future, in being on the side of justice. Love is seen as "agape," or disinterested love, understanding, redemptive good-will, seeking to preserve and create the community. (83.-87.). If the precepts of non-violence are adhered to courageously and in a Christian manner, dignity and meaning will be afforded the community, which will then better serve the preparation of man for communion with God.

.

~~To my dismay, I find that I have lost whatever train of thought I had intended to pursue -- the following personal speculation therefore probably will bear little resemblance to the first portion of the paper.~~

It is relevant to your understanding of this piece of work that the thought that went into this, (the first portion of which was written a month and a half ago) served as a preamble to my cosmological endeavor. The whole question of perspective is intrinsic to the questions asked on page one about the existence of the heavenly order, and the possibility of individual perceptions of that order.

I will proceed then by addressing each of the assumptions which I have indicated are inherent in King's work. First, he assumes that a heavenly order exists as the basis for judgement of the less ideal standards enforced by the oppressive elements of society. To a large extent I go along with this. King I interpret as suggesting that there is a substantive Kingdom of Heaven with an autonomous and omnipotent "God." This I reject. But I do feel there is a potential Kingdom in the mind of man, which might allow the construction of some approximation of this ideal state on earth. Once again you can see the strong influence which Feuerbach exerts on me -- the idea of species conscience, the suggestion that the combination and cooperation of all members of the species provides for the fulfillment of the species. My cosmology outlined the importance of shared perspectives. To this extent then, I do believe in God and the Kingdom -- but only as we define it in the course of retarding history. (A whimsical verb -- I suppose I meant to imply that we will never achieve the history of accomplishment and perspective we could have because of our initial deterioration of the sources of this condition - experience and nature. The incremental place in the course of history which each generation will occupy is therefore retarded to an increasing degree.)

That the contemporary conditions of civilization are relatively oppressive is a fact of which I am convinced, having looked at the Marcusean interpretation of Freud for an earlier project. That the primal father established domination over the sons in order to preserve the choice portions of scarce resources for himself, and managed to suggest mores and morals which were assimilated by the sons after they destroyed the father and found themselves in his position, is a hypothesis which I find very credible. The point of morality, as a repressive force, is well illustrated. (On the other hand, morality may also be a progressive force if it is able to induce the kind of sharing and mutual effort required by the cosmology I submitted earlier -- the manner in which emphasis is to be shifted is an immense question -- perhaps one to be examined next semester, when we look at the role of social morality in legislating individual positions regarding abortion and so on.)

We do have scarce resources, and we have suggested the ease with which individuals can orient themselves to their own limited goals, all to the detriment of social accomplishment. As a consequence we agree with King's proposition that the existing society is generally oppressive, and that the contemporary morality generally supports this oppressive mode of existence. (Marcuse is the most familiar proponent of this theory from my point of view).

. . . .

The second assumption concerns the possibility of the heavenly order being perceived by the peoples under oppression. I have two thoughts on that subject -- first, that yes, it is likely that the new ideal can be perceived -- but the process of assimilation must be at

least as drawn out and complex as the assimilation of the normal super-ego and its concurrent morality -- thus I expect that it will take at least a generation for any "new" morality and ideals to penetrate to the Freudian dimension -- possibly two, or even three generations. I do not believe that an adult whose biases and patterns of thought have matured, could possibly be induced to assimilate these new patterns to the unconscious degree that he has retained his original codes of behavior. But then King comes to this realization, although he doesn't really make it explicit -- he does point out the need for legislation first, and morality later. It is the ramifications of this that interest me. How does one "educate" the recalcitrant masses? It is easier to do if one has organized support held together by some particularly visible factor of cohesion -- such as skin color; but what if no such cohesion exists? What if "ignorance" is a very comfortable feeling, as it was, for instance in the United States before the Arabs made our energy situation so acute? What is "good?" Good, to adroitly avoid the question, is what one learns to aspire towards; and one learns in the schools. One tentative conclusion then, is that if the concept of "good" and "morality" is to be changed at all, it must be changed either through the schools, where peer and teacher influence is at an all time high, or through the media, which will, if it has not already surpassed the school and certainly the parents in terms of its power of suggestion. The media is most directly a creature of the many organizations which sponsor its existence -- its advertisers. The chances of any "enlightened" group acquiring control or even influence within the media are extremely slim -- leaving us with the school. Not just the school, but the lower grades

of the school, where psychologists like Munson tell us that the real molding (beyond the yet paramount molding done by the parents in the infant stage) takes place. The elementary and nursery school teachers apparently have a power over the minds and future behavior of children that is awesome for its potential. [If I wanted to have a long-term impact on the nature of this society's future, one of the places I would look to first would be a position which would allow me to influence the character and inclinations of the nursery and elementary teachers in charge of the children of the elites where they could be isolated, and in charge of all children, where they could not. Properly trained teacher-psychologists have apparently been able to affect significantly the intellectual capacities as well as the modes of social behavior of the children they direct their attentions toward. Given what I think is the mediocre quality of elementary education today (the really ambitious and qualified people going on to graduate school or high-paying positions in industry and government), two thoughts follow. First, that there is room for change of a crucial sort -- if kids are affected by mediocre teachers, imagine how they might react to a corps of trained professionals. Second, if these teachers are mediocre, then the opportunity for schools to find find good teachers willing to sacrifice pay for the opportunity of teaching at the lower levels ought to be regarded as a god-send, and not as the insidiously revolutionary activity-opportunity which I hope it might be. So all we have to do is find ten thousand first-rate teachers of our inclination, willing to work for a pittance. Any ideas? Even then, it will take time. To safeguard whatever position we decide to create, we have to be certain that we maintain control of at least two of the better teacher-training institutions, since it can be assumed

that such an effort may take more than a generation to complete. } Also, I think it would probably be best to do one of two things -- either concentrate our teachers in specific schools, and try to take on whole age groups through all courses, or disperse our teachers, and have them pick five students a year for special attention. While the second seems more realistic, one wonders if the first might not be safer and more lasting. Well. I digress. I suppose the point is that change can come about in such things as the basic cultural mores, but that such change will have to be at a very elementary level -- right, Watson?

Given the statements immediately preceeding, we can then address King's suggestion that the church should serve as a major agency of social change. Generally we agree -- but with the caveat that the church can only continue what the schools start. Some religions, such as the Jewish temples and their institutionalized special schools, can continue their special traditions among a select few. This demonstrates to me the potential and the importance of religious education and cohesion -- but how many of these specially educated children continue to be faithful in the face of different and equally enjoyable institutions elsewhere? I was very affected by the quote on religion which I have included in the beginning of the paper -- there is no question in my mind but that every institution must concern itself with the daily lives of men -- on the other hand, the reverse is equally true -- the more mundane institutions must acquire that cosmological perspective I've spoken of, otherwise they risk becoming the captives of their own misconceptions, their own short-term desires which become self-fulfilling and perpetuating. Every question should have its religious side; I am reminded of the rabbi in

The Fiddler on the Roof, to whom the young men were always turning at important moments: "Rabbi, is there a blessing for sewing machines?" Well, today the question might well be, "Rabbi, is there a blessing for McDonald's wrappers?" If our imaginative rabbi fails to answer, perhaps it is not his imagination that has failed -- but the wrappers.

(Well, that was a bit too melodramatic. It is approaching 6:15, and I have to catch the 7:00 bus to make all my connections safely. I apologize for this rather anti-climatic /and somewhat mediocre/ conclusion to what was a fantastic and stimulating semester for me -- but that is what it is -- an anticlimax. After allowing my thinking to be culminated in the cosmology, I let myself down again -- the eternal loss of discipline which you have so properly noted.)

The last question, regarding the feasibility of change without violence or revolution, has been answered implicitly. To be explicit, I believe I agree that violence is not necessary -- but a revolution must undoubtedly occur, no matter how insidious, if any significant change is to be perpetuated. It is going to take more than legislation and overt behavior to change any society to the degree that King has envisioned and to some degree which his people have instituted (black and white). That is a starting point -- but any movement, any change, which can induce the kind of sacrifice required, and the kind which has been demonstrated by the grandmother with the tired feet and the quiescent soul, is unquestionably revolutionary. Pacifism is revolutionary.

Good-bye. See you February 16th or so (although you'll probably hear from me before then). Please mail this to me at my regular box number. If you write please forward it will reach me. (Just don't return any of my gold bricks!). Have a merry.

A

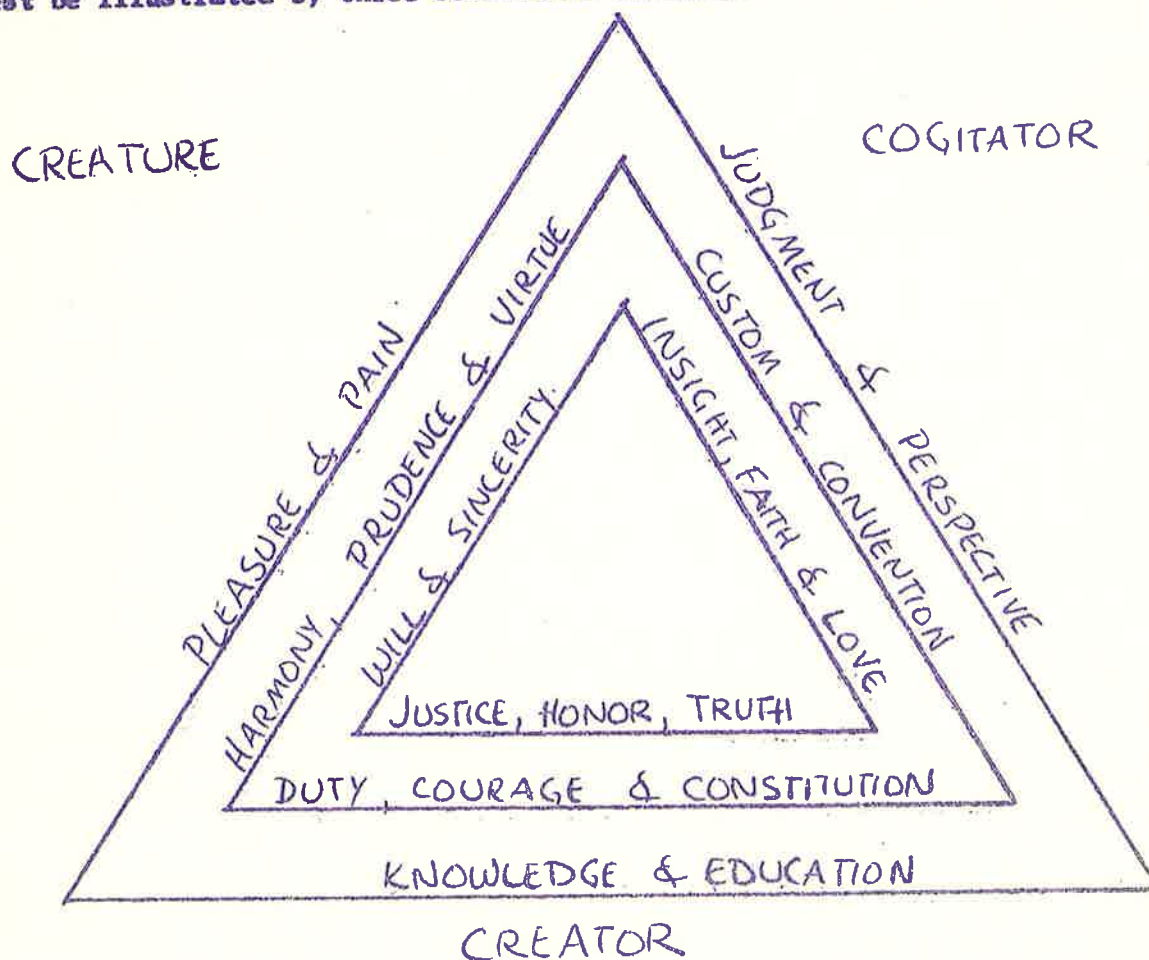
Course: A

In the prescribed cosmos, man qua creature would have been, as indicated earlier, the man of experience. Within this category would come such concepts as pleasure and pain, happiness and desire, harmony and prudence, emotion and virtue, will and sincerity. Man qua cogitator, the man of perspective, would reflect judgment and a sense of proportion, custom and convention, insight, faith, and love. The man of science would conceptualize knowledge and education, justice, honor, and truth, and duty, courage, and a regard for constitutions. The man of today appears characterized by a lack of most of these qualities and a perversion of the rest -- for instance, temporal custom and blind duty. In the prescribed universe, man, a holier trinity than we may ever know, would reflect the harmonious interaction of all these qualities. Perhaps.

The proper work of the human race, taken as a whole, is to set in action the whole capacity of that understanding which is capable of development; first in the way of speculation, and then, by its extension, in the way of action.

Dante, De Monarchia

We have suggested that man might well be regarded as a three-faceted being -- creature, creator, and cogitator. Within each of these categories we find another triad; of greater significance, we suggest that each member of the lesser triads is intricately connected with a corresponding constituent of the other facets of man. These inter-relationships might best be illustrated by three concentric triangles as set forth below.



R. D. Steele
December 73

It is the extent of my knowledge and acceptance of man's definitions withwhich I shall attempt to deal, for therein lies the concept of ethics. I believe nothing to be significant, or perhaps more accurately, important; I adhere to a kind of existential awareness and overview of life. There is no distinction between what is alive and what is not, except in the minds of living creatures. Mind category takes on a considerable degree of seriousness for a lifeform. My life is important to me, but this can't be justified within my rational construct. However, I transcend that rationality and will discuss how that unknown drive for life motivates me to think the way I do and act as I do. Given my presence in a world which appears "real" to me, what is the appropriate way to relate to those other forms which evidence that spark of life?

I cannot put my life into an objective perspective but am nevertheless aware that I am no more than any other person, no better or worse. I don't believe in judging others except with that qualification. It is simply silly to speak of what is good and bad, right and wrong within an existential framework. What is, is, and that is all there really is to it. The rest is perception, interpretation, and judgment. Men are limited in their perceptual ability and therefore cannot proceed to judgment without conceding their inability to be conclusive. I have been accused of being indecisive. I believe this is the only way to be true to myself. I am tossed about in a sea of stimulus and must feebly attempt to synthesize this incoming data. My reactions and responses are not correct and should not be regarded in such a light.

How to act
How not to act
These are not one question
The first is answered with ideals
The second with what is clearly harmful.
What is ideal or harmful?

What is appropriate?
All that which is not inappropriate
In whose eyes?
Mine
What do I see?
Eyes.

The sea does not address me
but I hear it speak.
I do not wish to impose my values
but others adopt them
Likewise do I.

Neal Monda
December 73

I have always had what I call "energy spurts" where I get sort of a rush of energy through me, and I usually clench my hands together to harness it, while I smile intensely to myself. It is always joyous, stemming from happy excitement -- sometimes over large things, often over the smallest things. Energy is an important element in my ideas about the universe. One day in the library stacks I was working rather creatively on a paper and an energy spurt came, and so did a realization: with great intensity I thought, "God is Energy" -- this very energy flowing through my veins! I could not concentrate any longer on my books; I wanted terribly to express what I was experiencing. I walked around the stacks in such a state -- whom could I talk to? Strangely enough I saw a nun going through some books on Shelley (one of my favorite poets, it so happens) and so, after a bit of hesitation I blurted out: Do you think God is energy? She said serenely, "Yes, God can be seen that way." The idea of divine energy had been growing a long time in my head. I liked it because it made Spirit into something relatively concrete -- the tests in parapsychology of brain waves, energy waves, auras, etc., backed it up. Also I was terribly excited because I really truly felt it in me. The idea that that energy I felt so often could actually be the awesome God I had been searching for was breathtaking. I was high for days after that experience, but of course its intensity faded away eventually, and now it is assimilated in my psyche in a subtler way.

I have had similar experiences -- but not quite so directly related to God -- with Beauty and Harmony in Art, Music, Nature, and People, which have reinforced my belief in a intermingling, pervasive, flowing, glowing, pulsating force in life. Because of the faith in this Unity many of the particular ethical positions I have held have been strengthened. My ideas of pacifism, vegetarianism, socialism, cooperation with nature, equality among people, openness and honesty in human relationships, and overarching all of these, Harmony, are all based on the thread of miraculous existence tying everything together and making everything the same, yet individual.

.....

Although everything is intertwined, I do feel there is a certain hierarchy in the levels of Reality. To realize Ideals and Spiritual Oneness is probably the "highest" level. If the living earth could be conscious of these, perfection could exist in life. Ethically, we should work towards such a harmonious and peaceful world. I believe the only way to stop war and hatred is if all the world holds the same basic moral precepts, one of which would be that we all come from the same divine source. We can impose all the political and social structures we want but people will still break out and fight one another unless all hold similar religious base roots. I believe all religions have the same base, with different trappings -- simply various manifestations of the same Truth. The only "True" religion would be one that draws all the similarities from all religions. When the day comes that people can accept such a universalist vision of life, the hate will be squelched by the glow of the unity of love. All would become ultimately aware of the Peace of Oneness amidst Diversity, and Harmony would prevail.

changed her
mind later, to
concentric values,
some more
"central" than
others.

Bunnie Kean
December 73

The origin of my ethic is religious, specifically, semi-humanistic protestantism. Admittedly, certain of my beliefs may not be protestant or even Christian in nature. However, it is the origin or catalyst for my underlying philosophy of life. This is not to say that I have not been exposed to other influences and alternatives. For certain reasons that I am unable to explain I have chosen to draw my ethic from liberal Christian theology.

Structurally, the ethic which is drawn from this orientation operates on a two-fold level: theological and interpersonal. It has conditioned the manner in which I relate to God and the way in which I relate to myself. Both of these operational levels determine my relationship to man, thus directing the social function of my ethic.

.

Religious doubting, if properly understood and resolved, leads to the establishment of a comprehensive and tested religious outlook. This point is confirmed by a study of religious doubting and growth conducted by Allport. The new religious atmosphere is characterized by a number of essentials. First, there must be a realization of the relationship between intention and behavior, producing an ethical outlook which is consistent. Likewise, the theological ethic must consider all facets. While a personal ethic cannot possibly resolve all questions, it must at least consider them and attempt to resolve as many as possible. Finally, and most important, the religious ethic must always be dynamic in nature -- open to constant doubt.

.

Draft boards around the country had that unique ability to construct those once in a lifetime situations where you were presented with the alternatives of killing or watching passively as your wife, mother and grandmother were respectively raped and then murdered. Can you believe that at one time I actually answered, "I don't know"? My God, I no longer even require a situation that intense. But, does this mean that I lost my integrity? Of course not. I arrived at this decision only through months of painful introspection.

My former cronies lecture me endlessly. They recount their experiences from the great cosmic battle still raging between the forces of good and the American middle class. One must choose sides or be caught in the cross-fire. Needless to say my friends stopped thinking even after the novelty wore off.

I'm no fool. I see the struggle. If I didn't see it then it certainly did appear to me as a vision after four days in the Goschen County Prison. My father most certainly saw it when he signed the check for six hundred dollars.

To be sure, there is a struggle. Mostly covert, but a struggle nonetheless. Is there nothing, however, which connects both forces? Show me a man of reputation who will allow himself to be quoted by the New York Times as opposed to the Boy Scouts Pledge. We may attack the Boy Scouts, but we cannot attack their code.

A friend at work says nice guys finish last, but he was never a nice guy to begin with. Bear Bryant says show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser. They're both wrong. Nice guys finish last in games they don't wish to play. Games they don't wish to win. In losing, they win. I'm trying to be a nice guy and the alternatives keep coming my way.

Crampled and empty my stomach screams as I walk the streets,
And the dampness turns my blood to cold sweat.

The endless pattern of streetlamps offer me no guide,
And the sewers, they're everywhere,
Hideous to the eye,
But they stand up well against time.

Looking up, the buildings soar skyward,
Their roofs are out of sight.
Building blocks to heaven, ^{but} how many stories up?

Cars pass in volleys.
I especially hate their bright lights.
They melt my eyes so I can't see their faces.
I'd like to know they're real,
But I'm afraid they're just damn robots anyway. *fetishism*

artificial
nature;
no basis for
experience

Chilled by closing shadows, hot coffee warms the night.
The automat swallows my coin,
And coffee steaming black and rich pours into my paper cup.
Saccarine tablets sweeten when stirred by a plastic spoon.
Must everything taste synthetic?
I guess I'll get used to it soon.

But Dreamers still wonder the streets.
And find in a drain a rainbow fresh painted,
As droplets of gasoline soften stale puddles.
A hypnotic daydream its colors dance.
Like a cloudburst that wakens the night.

Picture windows sparkle with fabricated visions,
But tirelessly searching, my eyes see only reflection.
Everything's a mirror and it ~~as~~ makes me feel unclean.
* Time makes me imitate what I should look like. ?

role of Dreamers
in society?
counter-influences
fantasy
imagination
nature
(Marxist!)

The reflection of a country pool,
I wonder if it's the same.
A stream won't melt a plastic spoon,
But might carry it away.

Is life born in the country?
Old and sterile city lights burn out fast.
Unlived dreams lose their meaning.
Better get the other cheek out,
Before it has to be turned.

Greg Seidler
December 73

I have grown up with the teachings of the Lutheran Church and am currently teaching these concepts to young children in Sunday School. In addition to this, I am quite involved in the workings and activities of the church. Because I am so active, I have just accepted the principles of the Lutheran Church without really questioning or thinking about my own ethics in relation to those I teach. Through my participation, I am associating with many clergymen who have not only influenced my beliefs, but also have strengthened my faith. These men have also showed me aspects of theology and church relations which I never considered before.

The most important and central aspects of my faith is that I believe in God. To me, God is a mystical spirit or some higher force which exists all around us. It is just difficult to describe exactly what God is in a physical sense. Instead, God can be explained better in terms of what He does for me and others who believe in Him.

.

In another manner, God serves as a model of all the most highly valued characteristics. He has the knowledge and capacity of both love and understanding for all of us no matter how we act. No human is capable of loving, understanding, and forgiving all of his peers in the same manner as God can and does. This characteristic alone makes God special and somewhat mystical or spiritual. His qualities are ones that I should try to incorporate into my own life even though I will never be perfectly like Him.

To prove that He does exist and care for us, God created Jesus as an earthly sign of love toward mankind. Even though Jesus was the son of God, he still had earthly and human characteristics to which man could relate. In a sense, Jesus was a super-human, part god and part man.

.

Life is one of the most valueable gifts that God has given us. In an indirect way, our existence has been mapped out by God. Even so, we should appreciate what we have and try to enjoy life to its fullest capacity. If we are not satisfied, we can modify or try to improve our existence with God's guidance. Most important is that we should appreciate the beauty of life which God created.

Kathy Buehler
December 73