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From existence to essence : a conceptual model for an Appalachian studies curriculum.

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FROM EXISTENCE TO ESSENCE
A CONCEPTUAL MODEL
FOR AN
APPALACHIAN STUDIES CURRICULUM

A Dissertation Presented

By

Billy F. Best

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1973

Major Subject Appalachian Studies

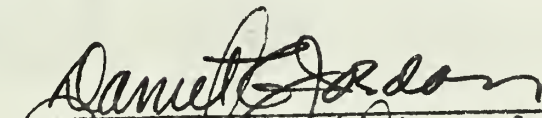
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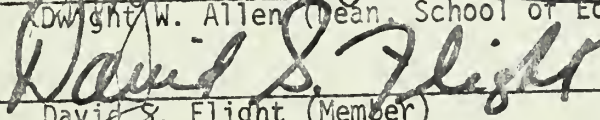
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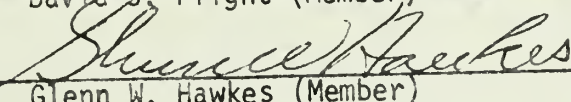
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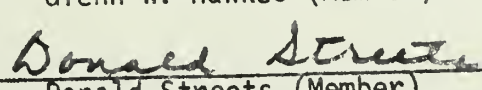
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May

1973

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Some Personal Considerations:

Pedagogy of a Hillbilly

My home community was, and still is, a rather typical non-mining Appalachian community. Most of the people are farmers, though some of them work at public jobs and farm on the side. Some of our people have years of formal education, while others have very little and some none at all. Some have good "book sense", others have good "horse sense", some have both and some neither. In our community it is much more important to have good "horse sense" than to have good "book sense" and therein lies the root of our community educational dilemma.

I received two very different types of education during my formative years. Each had its own distinct impact, though one clearly over-shadowed the other. The public school provided one, the extended family provided the other.

My immediate family during my early years consisted of my parents, my father's parents, a brother and a sister. We lived on a fifty-six acre farm which my parents and grandparents worked diligently in order to try to make a comeback from the effects of the depression. Since Grandpa and Grandma were getting on up in years, they didn't work so hard in the fields and spent more time around the house and in the gardens. I was not old enough to do the heavier work and was in the care of Grandpa most of the time. From him I learned how to tell cockleburs from sweet potatoes, sound character from poor character, and quite a few existential philosophical concepts. Grandpa's impact was so strong on me that when my first

grade teacher asked me for the name of my father, I gave Grandpa's name instead. The teacher really knew who my father was and her first lesson to me was to clarify points concerning my ancestry, a clarification I haven't forgotten.

Grandpa was always interested in education and had helped plan and build our community school. He was elected to the county school board and was taken to town quite often by my father to attend board meetings. While Daddy was out trading our weekly crop of eggs for our staple groceries at McClure's in Hazelwood or up on Hyatt Creek buying hides from trappers for shipment with his periodic shipments of 'seng, Grandpa and I spent our time in the County Court House. He talked over school problems with the other board members in one of the large rooms of the court house while the sheriff's daughter and I talked over the problems of pre-schoolers around the gum vending machine and while numerous adults solved the problems of the world around the spittoons throughout the lobby.

Out from our house a way lived four second cousins and their aged father, Grandpa's first cousin, whose wife, before her death, had been Grandma's sister. Theirs was the only house that could be seen in any direction from my house. Over the hill in the distance lived an aunt and uncle and some of their children who had not yet established homes of their own, while around another hill in a nearby cove lived another aunt and uncle and their son who was the age of my sister, two years younger than I. Farther down the road lived three more cousins and their families. Our particular section of the Upper Crabtree community, the Rogers Cove, contained the seven families described, and since we were all related by blood, I suppose we could be considered all part of an extended family. Over on

Liner Creek, about two miles from our house, lived my other Grandma, a widow of some twenty years, and many other uncles, aunts and cousins. We visited Grandma Sanford every Sunday afternoon after having attended either the Methodist or Baptist church, or sometimes both in the morning. She always filled my belly with good-tasting tea cakes after having "put a bug in my ear" about where they could be found.

In church, I always sat next to Grandpa and held my hand on him as he knelt to pray -- one of his roles as Sunday School Superintendent. After church, while Mother was cooking dinner, Daddy usually took out his fiddle and played for my sister and me. Earlier in his life he had been a member of different country music groups and had a real appreciation for a multitude of fiddle tunes. Sunday was not complete without listening to music. Sometimes, when she felt like it, Grandma would join in on the harmonica. Earlier she had been a good banjo picker, but some bouts with arthritis had diminished the nimbleness of her fingers.

Daddy was sort of the peacemaker in our extended family. For some reason he was very troubled when some of my uncles and a cousin didn't always get along. I remember vividly when he once persuaded one of my uncles and a second cousin from fighting a duel and possibly killing each other. Only two or three years before that time, two men in our community had fought a duel and had killed each other.

Daddy was also very influential in setting up our work schedules during crop gathering time when several families would get together and harvest each crop at the peak of ripeness. Working together served important social functions for all of our families and, as a very young child, gave me a feeling of solidarity with my family and a really vital sense of

identity. In a sense, each person knew who he was and what was expected of him.

Another part of our culture had a special place and that was the family reunion. Usually each July or August, most of my other uncles, aunts and close cousins would come to our house for a reunion. Some of our family lived in the cities and had lost some of their attraction to rural life. However, the family bonds were so strong that the differences in dress and outlook vanished nearly as we rejoiced in our common humanity. At the end of the day when everyone took off for home, I always felt a sinking feeling in my stomach because I realized that I had usually seen some of my kinfolds alive for the last time.

The experiences I had as a very young child within my extended family are experiences that I look back upon now as having had a profound impact on me. From Grandpa I learned the importance of individuality and being true to oneself. He always went with me to catch the school bus each morning and shared my travail should I be a few minutes late and miss the bus. One morning he was especially irritated and took special offense when he felt the driver had deliberately left me behind even though he should have seen me coming down the road. He then uttered an admonition which has had an immense effect on my life: "Son, you're better than nobody, but just as good as anybody. Remember that." I'm sure Kierkegaard would have understood what he meant, though Plato would probably have had trouble with the concept he was referring to. Grandpa respected everyone and expected everyone else to do likewise.

Grandpa had done his hard physical work and had earned the right to think and reflect. Though I did not usually understand the philosophical

insights he was always sharing with me, I am thankful that he was there to share them. He died when I was in the second grade. I do not yet fully understand or appreciate his impact on me.

From Mother and Daddy I learned the value of planning, cooperation, and patience. To a degree, our very survival depended upon our willingness to work together with other people. The quality of all our lives depended upon working within the limits imposed by nature and knowing how to interpret nature's signs. We were tied together both by mutual interdependence and by common values. This did not interfere with the cultivation of individuality.

I was one of sixty-six children who began the first grade in the Crabtree-Iron Duff school in August of 1942. Only twenty-two of us eventually graduated from high school. Of the remaining forty-four, some left our community and probably graduated elsewhere, but most of them became dropouts -- at least we have been in the habit for the past several years of labeling them as dropouts. I feel that a more accurate label would be "pushouts", because I really don't believe that any of my fellow students dropped out as a matter of free choice. I now believe that there was something inherently wrong with our educational system that gave my fellow students little choice other than to leave school.

The education I received at the public school was usually more contradictory than complementary to that which I received at home. To use current educational terms, the "curriculum" I received at home remained hidden from my teachers. I suppose it was just as well since, even though most of them were of our culture, most had adopted so many "fotched on" ways, they had lost their ability to understand that which once had been of utmost importance to them.

I earlier told of my first lesson in school -- learning that Grandpa

was not Daddy. My next lesson was to learn to sit still, eyes to the front and my mouth shut, a lesson I unlearned in self defense in graduate school some years later. I had a great deal of respect for my first grade teacher, but the curriculum was something of a problem. Even though Dick and Jane were not like me, they did remind me of some of my city cousins. Their language was different, however. None of my cousins were so repetitive when they spoke. I never heard any of them saying: "Run, Jane, run; Come, Dick, come; Sit, Spot, sit." I figured that in the city it took twice as many words to get your message across, perhaps because of the increased noise level.

In all fairness, I must say that most of my teachers treated me very well. I rarely caused any of them any trouble, partly because of my nature and partly because of my fear. Our different principals usually took care of offenders of whatever nature in full view of whoever happened to be near and this was enough to convince young children of the value of remaining perfectly silent and still except when asked a question.

Not only did I get along with my teachers because of fear, but I felt that most of them were very good people as people. Though many of them spoke affectedly in order to set a "good example" of "correct English", certain non-verbal behavior patterns helped give away the fact that they were really of our culture. I developed my own type of affectedness to match theirs and thereby avoided much of the scorn heaped upon some of my less fortunate classmates who still used many of the older Anglo-Saxon and Elizabethan language forms, and who, for one reason or another, refused to develop affected speech. These teachers never seemed to understand that their scorn of their young charges really reflected a deep-seated hate of themselves and their own

backgrounds. Tragically, they fooled not only themselves, but most of their students.

As mentioned previously, at home I learned the values of individuality, trust in oneself and others, planning, thinking, cooperation and patience. Spontaneity and humor were also valued highly. In contrast, at school I learned the values of docility, rote memory, competition (especially for grades), conformity, "objectivity", "rational thought", and self-detachment. The primary realities I dealt with at home were the family, and planning within nature. The primary realities of the school were the outside world of institutions and learning to conquer nature. The "book sense" I studied at school never harmonized with the "horse sense" I learned at home -- the reality of school seldom or never mirrored the reality of home.

Thirty-one years have now passed since my initiation into the ways of the school, but the disjunctiveness between school and community remains. The community school no longer exists, except at the elementary level and our students are bussed to one of the two consolidated county high schools -- schools that were built despite the vehement protests of most of the people in our community. In addition to losing our community school, we have lost an elected voice on the school board.

Although the "horse sense" of the community has found its way into ecology textbooks, and the "book sense" of the school has infiltrated the farms with synthetic chemical fertilizers and other goods made available through our technological advances, the gap between the school and community has become a chasm.

Historical and Cultural Considerations:
Telling Cockleburs from Sweet Potatoes

Few people seem to take seriously the theory of the "melting pot" any longer. I certainly feel that it is a concept that has long outlived its usefulness. Curiously enough, however, the melting pot was at one time a reality in Appalachia. During the settlement of the frontier one of the prime motivations among frontier people was survival. Though they were from many different ethnic stocks and were moving in different ways from the developing urban areas of the country, the Appalachian frontiersmen did not have many traditions to defend and so meshed to essentially form a new ethnic stock. At one time during encounters between settlers and Indians, and between Indians and Indians, there existed a decimated Indian male population, while at the same time there was a surplus of male stock of European origins. The logical result was an intermarriage of Indian women and men of European origin. Consequently, many, if not most, of us from the region remember Indian grandmothers and great-grandmothers.

Indian culture played a predominant role in forging the present day Appalachian culture. The frontier log house was patterned after the Indian houses of the Cherokee and many of our foods, particularly those made from corn, squash and beans were of Indian origin. In large measure the Indians and Appalachians of European descent got along well together, with land being purchased by the settlers from the Indians. When the Cherokee were forcibly taken to the Oklahoma territory upon orders of the

federal government, the mountaineers helped many of them hide out in the mountains until the federal government finally agreed to set aside some land which now comprises the Cherokee Qualla Boundary. Very little research has been done concerning the Cherokee influence in present Appalachian culture, but most people agree that it has been very significant. ¹ The religious patterns brought by the Europeans were similar enough to those of the Cherokee so that the Cherokee were largely "converted" to Christianity. Today several thousand Indians live within the Qualla Boundary and many still speak the Cherokee language, which under severe missionary pressure, almost died out. Today the language is enjoying a revival and is being taught in the Indian schools.

Most minority ethnic groups of this country at one time or another have been missioned to by various church and governmental groups interested in their souls or their resources and usually both. Appalachians have been no exception. During my eighteen years on the farm before leaving for college, I was exposed to many missionaries. I usually listened to them politely as they explained their positions and then continued with whatever I happened to be doing. Since we lived only eight miles from a large summer church conference and recreation center, we were many times the objects of in-service training of church workers. They became, in a sense, an itinerant, recurring part of our culture. However, I'm sure they didn't perceive of themselves in that way.

One thing which is particularly striking to me about missionaries, and not only the religious types, is that they are usually trying to promote cultures that are out of date even by their own standards.

Generally speaking, they have left their own cultures, having received particular indoctrinations in the ways of those cultures. Then while they go out to indoctrinate others in their "better ways", their own cultures continue to change, leaving them behind. Thus they become out of touch with their own cultures while trying to sell the culture of which they were a part to members of another culture which is itself in process. Consequently, the missionaries become people apart from both the sending and the receiving cultures, and live in a sort of bastardized culture, which to an alarming degree leaves them alienated and only on the fringes of both cultures. I have talked with the children of such missionaries many times and can certainly understand the identity crises they face being unable to identify fully with either culture and often being accepted by neither.

The Presbyterian Church was predominant for a long time in the mountains, but for the past hundred years, it has fought a losing battle to keep up its membership and influence. The lifestyle of the mountaineer, as it evolved over the years, drifted away from the hierarchical, deterministic, authoritarian, theology of the Presbyterian Church and in its stead have sprung up a multitude of sect denominations, usually dedicated to a more democratic mode of selection of ministers and a more free-wheeling gospel than the older main line denominations.

In these churches the missionaries found their work. To many it seemed "there was little organization and discipline, and still less of instruction in Biblical and Christian truth".² Attempts to change the church and the religious beliefs of the mountain people were met with limited success. Loyal Jones, in "Appalachia Discovered

and Rediscovered", provides an explanation: "They [the missionaries] came with seeds of failure inherent in their religious programs. Their presence and attitude told mountaineers that there was something wrong with them which must be corrected. Their mission implied that they had the true gospel, and conversely that their subjects' religion was spurious, or worse, that it held them poised over the skirts to hell."³ Consequently, mountaineers go to their own church to hear the gospel, but have gone to the mission churches when in need of material goods.

If missionaries have been largely unsuccessful with their clerical endeavors, they have been much more successful with their educational endeavors, and at one time controlled most of the educational institutions of the mountains. Mountaineers didn't object to their children learning to read and write since these arts had generally died out during the early frontier period. They lent their energy and gave their land to those who had come in to bring education to their children.

Unknown to the early mountaineers was the fact that the missionaries were not only interested in teaching their youngsters how to read and write. Many, if not most, of the missionaries felt that the mountaineer was an inferior person who could be uplifted by education. I'm afraid most of them felt as did Arnold Toynbee, when he wrote:

If we compare the Ulsterman and the Appalachian of to-day, two centuries after they parted company, we shall find that the . . . modern Appalachian has not only not improved on the Ulsterman; he has failed to hold his ground and has gone downhill in a most

disconcerting fashion. In fact, the Appalachian 'mountain people' to-day are no better than barbarians. They have relapsed into illiteracy and witchcraft. They suffer from poverty, squalor and ill-health. They are the American counterparts of the latter-day White barbarians of the Old World. . . . but, whereas these latter are belated survivals of an ancient barbarism, the Appalachians present the melancholy spectacle of a people who have ac-
4
quired civilization and then lost it.

Robert F. Munn, in "The Mountaineer and the Cowboy", gives an earlier reference: "In 1844 Edgar Allen Poe published a short story in which he made passing reference to 'those Ragged Hills and. . . the uncouth and fierce races of men who tenated their groves and caverns'. Now the 'Ragged Hills' were the Blue Ridge Mountains and the 'uncouth and fierce races' were, of course, the moun-
5
taineers."

The early "settlement schools", a name given to the missionary schools, catered to both local community children and those farther away who came to board at the school. Undoubtedly, they provided a service that brought certain forms of enlightenment to mountain children. However, one does not often read of the mixed blessing brought by the missionaries.

There is a saying in the mountains that one should beware of one who "has gotten above his raising". Children who went to the

missionary schools often took on different values from those of their parents and those of the people of the community, which, of course, was one of the primary intentions of the teachers. Instead of having a chance to add to his knowledge and understanding, the young mountaineer often found his only choice to be one of substituting new knowledge and values in place of those he already embraced. Some who could not accept the choice simply stayed away from school. Those who stayed often found themselves alienated from their parents and peers and many migrated to other areas of the country. I have known of many who have completely renounced the culture of their upbringing, but few who did so who are really happy with themselves.

One of the little known consequences of the early and contemporary settlement schools, has been their impact on the present day public school systems. The influence has worked something in this manner: The early teachers brought a new lifestyle, new modes of learning, and new perceptions. They usually considered themselves to be a "cut above" the people of the community and felt the students of the community should learn to "come up" to them. One of their interests was also to train a home grown cadre of teachers to continue the work begun by the missionaries. Consequently, many young people of the mountains were helped to go either outside the region to college or somewhere inside the region to a related missionary college where they continued to learn the "better ways".

When the region began to initiate its own school systems under

the influence of educational movements in the rest of the country, the only local people "skilled" enough to provide personnel were those who had been earlier educated in the missionary institutions. Consequently, those who started the public schools were people who were of the culture, generally speaking, but who had become alienated from their culture and, in a sense, from themselves.

The psychological consequences of this form of inbreeding are only now being understood, though we have been trying to deal with them for a long time.

Perhaps the most overt form of this type of cultural imperialism occurred with the Cherokee Indians. Watty Chiltoskie, an elderly Cherokee who lives in the Qualla Boundary in North Carolina, recently told me of having his mouth washed out with lye soap whenever the missionary teachers caught him using his own language. Teachers often made fun of the Elizabethan forms of language spoken by the children of the mountains, causing untold heartbreak to young children, many who suffered the consequences of such unthoughtfulness for the rest of their lives. Most such children dropped out of school at the earliest possible moment while others seized upon such incidents to develop in their own ways in spite of their teachers. Cratis Williams, currently Dean of the Graduate School of Appalachian State University and a specialist in regional speech, told me that he picked up his start in the study of linguistics when one of his teachers chided him for using the Elizabethan "hit" instead of "it". Unfortunately, such degrading experiences rarely

inspire a youngster to go forward in his own self-development.

One of my friends had a teacher so concerned about his speech that she suggested a special tutor. Since his parents had done pretty well financially in the coal and timber business, they provided him with a private tutor for eight years. Years later while studying for his doctorate, he began delving into psycho-linguistics. He was astounded to learn that he had traded his Kentucky accent for an Ohio accent. Such experiences probably inspired him to become a leader in the newly emerging field of Appalachian Studies.

Language is only one of several values which the mountaineer is asked to discard or at least modify, if he is to be carried along into "mainstream" America. From the earliest writings to present studies, certain characteristics or values, which in part have given rise to the undesirable hillbilly image, have been cited. To my knowledge, there have been few, if any, attempts made by anyone to set out on a systematic study of Appalachian culture. Anthropologists are not usually among the thousands of observers who find themselves among us each year. However, many observers have lived in the Southern Appalachians during the last hundred years and have written frequently of what they consider to be our more quaint and amusing characteristics. Although writers have varied opinions and explanations of the values they describe, they are in general agreement that a new or modified value system is in order, if the Appalachian is to move "forward". Some of

these writings, such as Horace Kephart's Our Southern Highlanders and John C. Campbell's The Southern Highlander and His Homeland, contain much objectivity and incisive insight in most instances. Others, such as Jack Weller's Yesterday's People, are personal interpretations, rather than methodological explorations within the confines of an academic discipline. Seldom, if ever, is the mountaineer's point of view considered and included in the writers' conclusions. Consequently, in some instances, values are only partially explored and oftentimes misinterpreted. Using some values which both Appalachians and outsiders consider to be important throughout the mountain people's lives, let me illustrate this point.

Practically all writers have stressed the mountaineer's individualism and independence. But as Robert Munn points out, "independence is a word subject to many interpretations. I, for example, am independent, but you are plain bull-headed." ⁶ According to Campbell, the mountaineer's most dominant trait is "independence raised to the fourth power". ⁷ Campbell viewed this independence as anachronistic in "a new age, one that calls for cooperative service and community spirit". ⁸ It is difficult for the mountaineer to accept Campbell's explanation for two reasons: (1) the "new age" to which Campbell referred had taken hold in his own culture, but had not seeped into the mountainous areas at all. Although the frontier had passed on "to the westward", it had not vanished. The mountaineer's

life remained much the same and the same spirit, the same qualities and skills for survival were called for; (2) "cooperative service and community spirit" has long been an important part of Appalachian culture. Indeed, without these he would not have been able to survive.

Kephart observed that "the very quality that is [the highlander's] strength and charm as a man -- his staunch individualism -- is proving his weakness and reproach as a citizen".⁹ Weller echoes a similar assessment of independence: "This independence-turned-individualism, a corruption of the virtue which was the foundation stone of the mountain man's way of life, now proves to be a great stumbling block to his finding place in our increasingly complex and cooperative society. A man cannot 'go it alone' in our modern age."¹⁰ It is true that Appalachian people have not made "togetherness" a basic cultural expression, but traditionally, they have worked together when their occasion demanded it.

The mountaineer is always willing to cooperate, provided that there is an immediate and specific purpose which he feels is important. But his cooperation is never such that he becomes dependent on that with which he is involved. "The pride of the mountaineer is mostly a feeling of not wanting to be beholden to other people," says Loyal Jones, Director of the Appalachian Center at Berea College. "We want to do things for ourselves, whether or not it is practical -- like make a dress, a chair, build a house, repair an automobile or

play the banjo. There is satisfaction in that in this age when most people hire other people to do most of their work and a great deal of their living." ¹¹ Too, I believe that mountain people, by and large, try to maintain a certain amount of independence and individuality as a matter of principle, because when one is scarce in material goods, he relishes more that which he has: his own personality, for example. In my home community, as I was growing up, few people had more than they needed for subsistence living. But personalities were extremely diverse and provided me with much stimulation and entertainment. Yet to those who came in to "save" our souls, we were probably a pretty dreary lot with little expression.

All in all, the mountaineer's independence/individualism has been described and explained, by most writers, in terms of an industrial economy, where purchasing power, rather than self-sufficiency, is considered the standard of success. And viewed in those terms it is little wonder that this independence/individualism is met with fury and frustration and is understood seldom by outside observers.

Another trait of mountaineers is traditionalism. Weller, perhaps, comments more on traditionalism than do other writers. Because his book is currently being used in many, if not most, of the budding Appalachian Studies courses springing up throughout Appalachia and elsewhere, I feel it deserves some close attention and perhaps even a challenge is needed in order to at

least present another point of view for those interested in Appalachia for whatever reason.

Weller feels that we have a "regressive outlook" in that we look backward to yesterday instead of forward to tomorrow. He correctly notes that "mountain ballads often refer to friends, family, or situations of a time now past." Also "much of mountain literature is backward looking. Folk stories paint the picture of the hero going back home, either to find the old security again around the fireplace or front porch, or else to find it gone, while memories flood in. Much of mountain talk and gossip is backward oriented: how things used to be, how much better things were, what fun people used to have, how 'everybody' went to church then -- as if the 'good old days' held the only joy."¹² I agree with Weller that mountain people are very traditional in their orientation, but traditions serve to insure the continuity of the culture.

Our adherence to our ways may seem "stubborn, sullen and perverse" to outsiders, as Kephart noted.¹³ But if most mountain people are convinced of the value of some new innovation, it does not take long for it to be adopted, as, for example, automobiles and electricity. Some people may hold out for a while but if they become convinced of the value of the innovation, it soon becomes interwoven into the traditions of the culture. Is traditionalism not something of a universal characteristic except perhaps only among the middle class which Weller uses as his referent? With so many middle

class parents upset that their children are not following in the family pathways, perhaps it could be said that traditionalism is not really absent from middle class culture.

A second way Weller describes traditionalism deserves some comment also:

The second set of word parallels that help to explain the meaning of traditionalism consists of the phrases "existence oriented" and "improvement oriented." Middle class America tends to be improvement oriented; its people are not satisfied with mere survival at the level on which they find themselves. They want things to be better -- a more modern-looking mailbox, a newer car, a better house, a vacation house by the lake, more education or cultural advantages, a better community. The middle class American has a general desire for excellence in everything about his life. He is always striving for something better -- better and more. Improvement is a great motivating force in his life.

The existence oriented society, on the other hand, is geared toward achieving only the very basic goods needed for survival -- food, clothing, shelter and a minimum of comfort. The secondary goals of beauty, excellence, refinement, "the good life" -- these are not considered. This description

characterizes much of mountain life. Even when a coal miner is enjoying a good income because of a long period of steady work, his house -- which he may own -- may show no sign of improvement, and his cultural investment for himself and his family may show little change. He is contented with just getting along. Satisfied when his survival needs are achieved, the mountaineer seldom looks beyond them. He is, for instance, a very poor contributor to fund drives for community betterment programs. He simply does not see the need for, or the value of, supporting such improvements with his money (or his energy). The mountaineer insists that his taxes be kept unbelievably low, even while he complains that his schools, roads, and public health and welfare services are incredibly inadequate. For example, several kindergartens were being sponsored by our parishes in order to prepare children for the first grade. In one of these, the parents would not pay more than five dollars a semester for each child, even though the expenses were much higher than this and most of the families could pay more. They had been able to get along all these years without a program, so why was it necessary to spend much for it now?

In his first paragraph concerning "improvement oriented" people, Weller gives a description of some characteristics he considers to be representative, which might explain why more and more young people of middle class backgrounds are becoming disenchanted with their styles of life. Yesterday's People was written in 1965 which was before the current concern for the environment had gotten underway. Many people would now consider his "improvement oriented" group to be more exploitation oriented and ecologically irresponsible. However, most people would probably agree that the words still fairly accurately describe the attitudes and aspirations of those who feel they belong in the middle class.

I take exception to Weller's contention that the "existence oriented" Appalachian society does not have the secondary goals of "beauty, excellence, and refinement". They are merely expressed in different ways from those of the "improvement oriented" society -- more a part of the basic fabric of the culture rather than being something "out there" which can be purchased or won. For example, as Weller himself acknowledges, mountaineers are very concerned about good interpersonal relations. Since the mountaineer does not aspire to leave the culture and become an "object seeker" perhaps good interpersonal relations are more important, than with the upwardly mobile person who can leave those with whom he does not get along. Whereas the middle class

individual might wish for excellence in his sales record or in his corporate relationships, the Appalachian individual might turn his drive for excellence into being a good coon hunter, muskrat trapper, vegetable gardener, story teller or horse trader. Excellence is by no means an exclusive domain of the middle class.

Neither is beauty a captive aspiration of the middle class. Anyone who has witnessed the ways farmers lay out their fields for planting, harvest their crops, and groom their animals cannot surely think that the mountaineer has no feel for beauty. Traditional crafts which are currently enjoying a revival follow the mountaineer's feel for form and harmony. What about the forms of music which are a product of Appalachian culture, such as Blue Grass and Country music? The old adage that "beauty lies in the eye of the beholder" applies when one examines Appalachian culture for its appreciation of beauty.

Refinement is not sought only by the ballet dancer or the Broadway actor. The folk singing and shaped note harmonies produced by mountain singers may not require the lung capacity of an operatic star, but the subtleties of style found throughout the region are not learned overnight either. Mountain people are not just spectators at the performances of other people, but enjoy producing their own culture. Neither do they object to selling their cultural artifacts to middle class collectors of culture, if such sales serve to meet their financial needs. Who is unrefined, though -- the producer of the cultural artifacts or the purchaser, if either? And why does the

middle class person collect artifacts? Could it be that he still has a longing for a more "existence oriented" society rather than being so much at the mercy of his "improvement oriented" society?

The traditionalism of Appalachian society insures that those who are raised in the culture understand and appreciate the forces that have shaped the culture. It gives some sense of the past and makes the present intelligible. The log house still standing on our farm and in which my father was born, gives me an understanding of my culture which I couldn't get from a book or a lecture. Farther down the road on my uncle's farm is the log house where my Grandmother was born, and it also serves as a physical and cultural landmark for my entire extended family. The traditions which both houses symbolize help me understand who I am, by helping me understand the sense of purpose of my ancestors, and the conditions that helped shape their values.

Traditions arise in response to felt needs (and probably unconscious needs as well) and are not simply misguided cultural aberrations. Changes of traditions occur in the same way and one can't change another simply by telling him that he is too traditional in his outlook. The person who is living at subsistence level has a lot to lose if some new innovation is a failure instead of a success, while someone who is blessed with a surplus of goods can easily fail and still maintain what he considers a good standard of living and retain his dignity.

When hybrid corn was first introduced in the mountains most subsistence farmers refused to try the new seed. However, it was perfectly acceptable for 4-H club or F.F.A. members to try the new corn since these young people didn't have established reputations to lose, nor families to support. No harm was done if the project turned out to be a flop. Young people are expected to fail occasionally but older people are expected "to know better". If the innovation is a success, the older people will soon be claiming they invented it. Traditions are always changing, but the process of change is not usually understood by those who wish to be change agents.

For example, during the summer of 1966, an honor student at Princeton came to Appalachia "to develop some universal community action techniques" and, incidentally, solve the problems of the region. A self-professed atheist, he, nevertheless, approached his work with missionary zeal. After surveying a community in Knox County, Kentucky, and locating some thirty "grass roots leaders", he then arranged with one of the local ministers to hold "in-service training" in one of the community churches. He made a trip back to Berea to tell me of his good fortune and then returned to begin his training program. To his surprise and dismay, not a single person showed up. Needless to say he was badly shaken by the experience and in a moment of despair actually questioned the relevance of his Princeton education. Predictably, he recovered quickly and made plans to go to Africa where his services were "much more needed and appreciated".

In order to understand traditionalism in Appalachia, it is necessary to understand the difference between traditional mountain culture and the culture of poverty. The traditional mountain culture is usually geared to subsistence living. The original settlers were primarily woodsmen and lived off the game, wild berries and nuts, and other staples garnered by trading. As the game diminished and small plots were cleared for farming purposes, the primary mode of existence became subsistence farming. Moonshining flourished because making whiskey was a very economical way of transporting grain out of the mountains. Also, the meager corn crop, when distilled into liquid form, brought many farmers their basic income for the year. Under pressure from federal authorities, moonshining has gradually declined, but is still the basic living for many families in many areas. Now that coal mining and small industries have offered the mountaineer still other alternatives for earning his living, the basic mode still remains subsistence with few families accumulating more than they actually need. The low wage industries have barely allowed the mountaineer to keep the wolf from the door.

In many communities the wolf has crashed through the door. During the early mining period, many mountain families left their small hillside farms and moved into the coal camps. There they lived well as long as there was a demand for coal, but were hard put when the demand slacked. The coal companies were very pa-

ternalistic and the company store provided all the groceries and clothing any family needed. The families lived in company houses and paid rent to the companies that employed them. In many instances families lived for months without ever handling cash and instead used the tokens handed out as wages by the company store. Recall the popular song "Sixteen Tons" sung by Tennessee Ernie Ford some years ago.

During hard times these families in the company towns did not have farms to go back to and even if they did, in many instances they had lost the subsistence farming skills which had sustained their forbears. Consequently, they became at the mercy of private and public welfare and relief organizations. Every time coal has suffered a decline, many thousands of people have had to go onto the welfare rolls. Other hundreds of thousands have migrated to cities in the northern and mid-western states to find jobs in industrial concerns, but most retain the hope of eventually coming back "home" for good. It is very common practice for a man to leave his family in the mountains and work in Cincinnati, Dayton, Detroit, or other cities "across the river". The men then come back to spend the weekends with their families, leaving as early as they can on Friday and going back as late as possible on Sunday night. Other men go "make cars" for a few months and then come back home to spend their money over the next few months. One of my cousins has done so consistently for the last twenty-five years.

Those who have managed to find some type of work and who have avoided going on welfare except perhaps for a time during the depression, constitute broadly what I would call traditional mountain culture. Their

basic cultural mode is subsistence, which fosters independence. Those who have had to go on welfare and who have remained except during periods of exceedingly good times I would classify as a culture of poverty. Some families have now been on welfare for over three generations. Their basic mode is dependency. People of both cultures share many of the same values and one uninitiated to the ways of the mountains probably couldn't tell the difference between the two. While both groups are individualistic to a degree, traditionalism is less dominant in the culture of poverty. Those in the culture of poverty have less to lose when change comes to the social order and they can usually be found willing to join many of the new programs which have proliferated in the region since the early sixties. Some people are reluctant to join because they fear retribution from the political bosses, but their reluctance has diminished considerably in recent years.

The other group most likely to become involved in the new programs are the children of the region's small upper middle class who are usually coal mine operators, businessmen, and professional men. These young people are usually leaders in trying to initiate social change and usually do most of the planning. Poverty culture people are invited to participate in order to "legitimize" the operations, but they usually do not share in the positions of power. It is interesting to watch as the powerful in terms of ownership and control and the powerful in the movements to gain control (their children) joust for power. It makes one wonder how really different they are and

whether or not those of the poverty culture are not simply being used one more time in a seemingly endless charade.

Those who come from the outside to "improve" mountain life are concerned with the traditionalistic thinking, for to them "it is a culture trait that seems strangely out of place in a national society that so highly prizes progress, achievement and success."¹⁵ Again, the Appalachian's traditionalism is viewed in terms of a foreign culture, with little thought and understanding being given to the culture in which it is dominant.

Because much of the traditionalistic thinking is thought to be of a "fatalistic philosophy", fatalism has been named by many observers to be another dominant Appalachian characteristic.

Of this characteristic Weller writes:

Within the folk culture, fatalism has joined the hands with traditionalism to give the mountaineer's outlook a somewhat different cast from that of people in other rural societies in which traditionalism is also a characteristic. It is not to be supposed that the qualities of fatalism and traditionalism were wedded in the early pioneers of the area. No doubt these families had as high hopes as any pioneers in other parts of our nation. On the great plains, the homesteaders met with some degree of success in achieving wealth, comfort and security. In the mountains, however, nature did not yield; instead,

the harshness of the land overcame the man. His confidence in himself was slowly but surely undermined. From this grew a fatalistic attitude, which allowed him to live without the guilty feeling that he himself was to blame for his lot and assured him that his way of life was fundamentally right even when he was discouraged by it.

While traditionalism can thwart the planners and molders of industry, education, and society in general, fatalism can so stultify a people that passive resignation becomes the way of life. There is no rebellion, little questioning, little complaining. Observing this, a reporter who came to the area to write a story about what unemployment was doing to families remarked, "Nobody yells about the situation, do they?" She added, "But I guess there is nobody to yell to who could do
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any good, anyway, is there?" Precisely!

In these particular passages Weller reveals not so much enlightenment about the fatalism of the mountaineer, but the bias through which he forms his value judgements about the mountaineer. Mountaineers in general have never sought to develop the farming society of the Pennsylvania Dutch or the Northern European immigrants to the middle west. Our forbears were seeking religious freedom, the opportunity to be oneself without having to cope with the

religious heirarchies, and to interpret the gospel according to one's own choice. Many of our ancestors left Europe as a measure to preserve life, not in order to seek fame, fortune, or upward mobility. Many latter day immigrants came primarily seeking economic opportunity in the United States, but our ancestors usually did not. Consequently, fatalism did not, in my opinion, develop as a result of having met with failure on the frontier. It was present from the beginning.

Loyal Jones gives a good description of the attitudes and backgrounds of some of the early settlers:

The Scotch-Irish were made for the mountains.

They were an independent, solitary people, unaccepting of authority. They had fled the British Crown and the Church of England, first to Ireland and then to America. They were not about to be intimidated by the British after they were established in Appalachia. When they were threatened by Ferguson and his army they trounced him at King's Mountain.

In their migrations they had missed--avoided the Renaissance, moved to America and into the coves and hollows of Appalachia and there avoided the main-stream of culture in this country. Thus their culture was unique, maintaining aspects of the old life in seventeenth-century, lowland Scotland and northern England. The hard life on the frontier had its input also. The value system, the religion, the outlook on life were shaped by the environment. Above

all, the Scotch-Irish loved the solitude and independence which the mountains provided. Next to the mountains they loved the flag of the United States, and they rallied every time it was threatened. During the Civil War, both the North and the South were astonished when great numbers of mountaineers all the way from western Virginia to Georgia joined the Union Army. They joined up again with alacrity in both World War I and II. When the war was over, however, they returned, most of them to the mountains.

I know of many Appalachian migrants to northern cities who have lived away from the region for twenty-five to thirty years and who command salaries in excess of thirty thousand dollars yearly, who are planning to move back "home" at the earliest possible opportunity, even though it means a drastic cut in salary. Many are saving to buy the old home place or a place nearby. Our sense of place is very strong and the neighbors of Appalachians who plan to "go back home" many times think they are stupid, crazy, or both to give up financial security and social prestige in order to live what they perceive to be a more satisfying life. Perhaps the adage applies that "you can take a boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy".

As I stated earlier it is often hard for one not reared in

the culture to understand certain attitudes held by mountaineers. What might appear to be passive resignation to an outsider might appear to one of us as contentment. We are not necessarily out to "thwart the planners and molders of industry, education, and society in general", but we have learned through the years that one politician's plan becomes another's platform and that promises do not necessarily bring results. I also feel that most of us are somewhat skeptical of "planned and molded" societies since our ancestors left the countries of their births to escape just such societies.

Thomas R. Ford notes that fatalism is "an outlook which seems peculiar only where advanced technology has given men confidence in their own ability to master nature."¹⁸ The farmer, who looks on helplessly as his land floods during a torrential rain or who must cart off his lightning-struck cow, is continuously reminded that his life is closely governed by external forces over which he has very little, if any, control. Most of us who have been raised in the mountains would agree that we have many fatalistic attitudes. Yet most of us would also quarrel with the word "fatalism" and would argue that realism would be more appropriate. One man's fatalism can be another's realism.

Weller sees mountaineers as being "action seeking" in contrast to the middle class, who is "routine seeking". Although he states that these qualities are not precisely measurable, he feels that mountaineers are predominantly at one end of the spec-

trum while middle class Americans are predominantly at the other end:

The routine seeker makes a constant effort to establish a stable way of life socially, economically, and emotionally. A regular, secure job is a necessity and is the object of search. The routine seeker is likely to attend church on a regular basis and participate in the on-going work it has to do. He is likely to join clubs that have long range plans or that in the long run have values that are those he wants to uphold but that are not easily taught or achieved, such as citizenship or integrity or faithfulness to ideals. He saves money, looking forward not only to tomorrow, to the purchase of a cottage or a boat, but years ahead to the education of his children. He is content to live for years to build himself into a community in such a way that he will be respected. There is a highly regular and recurring schedule of behavior patterns, which is not in the least burdensome. Rather it is sought and planned, for in this schedule his work is done, his satisfaction is found, his goals are achieved.

The action seeker is at the other end of the scale response. For him, life is episodic. During the routines he cannot escape, he usually just exists,

waiting for the next episode of action that will provide the real meat of life. The routines are only endured; the satisfactions of life are found in action -- those intermittent times of thrills, challenge, and excitement. The action seeker may well work all week long at a very routine job, but in this he finds little satisfaction. He is waiting for the weekend drinking bout, the card game, the hunting or fishing expedition, the horse or automobile race. His jobs are often the unstable ones, or those offering excitement or change. . . .

In his response to the life of every day, the mountaineer is an "action seeker". He does not wish to commit himself in advance to a routine meeting because something of an action nature, which he would greatly prefer, may come up at the last minute -- a most frustrating trait to the calendar-minded middle class worker in the area.

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The world of the "routine seeker" which Weller describes is fundamentally a creation of advanced technology. The world of the "action seeker" is more the world of nature, which is certainly episodic, and of a more primitive technology such as coal mining. Many people would argue that the technological world has really enslaved large numbers of people making them adhere to rigid

schedules devised to be very highly efficient but with questionable human qualities. Do middle class people really enjoy their lives which are so programmed that they must group together in order to "uphold values that are not easily taught or achieved"? I would offer the hypothesis that many middle class people are quite disenchanted with "routine seeking" and that this is one of the reasons so many of them "mission" to "action seeking" cultures not only in Appalachia but throughout the world through VISTA, the Peace Corps, and a multitude of private organizations. There seems to be something fundamentally appealing about the rhythms and passions of people who live in a state closer to nature and who are not subjected to the artificial regimentation of advancing technology. Why do Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers always come back to their homes proclaiming that they got more than they gave? And is this why both organizations are in danger of going out of existence?

What Weller and many other observers of Appalachian culture don't understand is that there is routine and stability in mountain life. However both are based on meeting minimum needs and not upon planning for the future. When one lives under the specter of a slag dam collapsing and washing hundreds of people away in one swipe or the ups and downs of the energy market, or the benevolent instincts of summer storm clouds avoiding dropping hail on a tobacco crop, one's primary relationships are with concerns of faith and not with the certainty of technique. Prayers in the sect churches often begin with gratefulness for being spared

calamity for another week and end with a petition for continued grace for the next. This way of life is not without meaning, meaning that is often deep and profound. In a sense one does not have time to drift away from experiences that contribute to giving meaning to life.

Experiences which are meaningful to the mountaineer, however, are often obscure to the onlooker. Weller observes:

Never having been taught to face and overcome difficulties, but instead to retreat and "keep out of it", mountain people often have no confidence in their abilities. "I can't do that" is their common reaction to being asked to do something new, whether it be serving on a committee, being treasurer of a group, or taking part in a meeting. This response is not simply a case of extreme modesty, a man confessing that maybe there are others more able than himself, but expresses a deep fear of failure and consequent inferiority. Even young people
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often show this fear in fairly trivial matters.

It is not fear of failure that produces the reaction "I can't do that". The feeling that one should not be too forward or "get above his raising" inhibits mountaineers from offering too readily to do something new or even something in which he has great skill. Some good humored coaxing will soon elicit a response from the most reticent. The response comes when the

mood of the group becomes one of unconditional acceptance. From personal experience I know that mountain people dislike being put on display for another's purpose, particularly if there is some reason to suspect his motives. Outsiders who try to elicit "correct" responses from either mountain children or adults are apt to experience considerable difficulty and may even have to change the definition of "correct" before succeeding. I am unclear as to how Weller could conclude that mountain people have never "been taught to face and overcome difficulties". Living in the mountains has never been a bed of roses. For many, living from one day to the next is ample evidence of having overcome considerable difficulty.

Weller sees as another difference between the mountaineer and his middle class counterpart the poles of behavior which he terms "object orientation" and "person orientation":

The object-oriented person strives toward a goal or object outside himself. This can be a moral object, a principle, a material object, such as a level of income or bank account; a cultural object, such as a particular style of life; a social object, such as a vocation or status in life; or an educational object, such as a college degree. The object-oriented person puts these objects, which are outside himself, as his goals; everything else is subordinated to these. If the persons in his family or among his friends do not share his hopes and

labors for these goals, he will leave them to find persons who do share them. If the community in which he lives stands in his way or fails to provide whatever is needed toward the achieving of these object goals, he moves away to another place. In each case, the object toward which he strives can be conceptualized in a deliberate manner.

The person-oriented individual also strives, but not for objects. His concern is to be a person within the group. He wants to be liked, accepted, and noticed, and he will respond in kind to such attention. He is reluctant to separate himself from any group in which he finds this acceptance. His life goals are always achieved in relation to other persons and are a product of participation in the group. Without such a group, the goals cannot be achieved. While the object-oriented individual will either join or leave a group in order to achieve his goal, the person-oriented individual can find what he is seeking only within the group. For the object-oriented individual, ideas are central -- something "out there," beyond the person himself. For the person-oriented individual, social relationships are central -- something within and very personal, a security of acceptance, which can be found only within the group.

Weller continues:

Such person-oriented behavior among mountain people tends to make them supersensitive to presumed slights or criticisms of their behavior: "One thing I can't stand is to be ignored or slighted." A school teacher, for example, may paddle a disobedient youngster without raising any fuss, but an insult through words or looks is taken with extreme resentment, and in older pupils may even be the cause of their dropping out of school altogether. It becomes difficult to evaluate a program after it has been held, since the security of the people taking part is so clearly bound to what went on. Any suggestion or even hint that some part of the preparation or carrying out of the program might have been done differently to advantage is likely to be taken as a personal criticism.

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From my experience I would agree with Weller that these poles of behavior do exist when comparing mountain people and members of the middle class. However, I do not quite follow the rationale for trying to make an "object-oriented" person out of one who is predominately "person-oriented". Granted, "object-orientation" seems to be the dominant characteristic of most members of our larger society, but there is increasing evidence to suggest that many members of the larger society are looking for ways to become more "person-oriented". Many people who have aspired toward goals that are "outside" themselves are now turning inward to discover something of themselves. Witness

the attraction of "sensitivity" groups and "human potential" groups which are popular with many educational and industrial concerns. Many people are realizing that in striving for only object goals, they have become alienated from themselves and their families and are trying to reorient their lives to include more inter-personal and intra-personal activities which might illuminate some of their object striving.

I do not pretend that the person-orientation of the mountaineer is a desirable mode of life when carried to its extreme, but it gives cohesion to mountain communities that is not usually found in the middle class suburbs. One does know who his next door neighbor is and he is likely to know him well since he will probably continue to be a neighbor for some time to come. Getting along with him is important if for no other reason that one can't simply pull up stakes and find a neighbor more to one's liking without undergoing severe financial and emotional strain.

Weller speaks of the school teacher paddling a disobedient youngster without raising a fuss, but insulting a child and perhaps having him drop out of school. It seems to me that this is one of the problems which arise when the "object-oriented" person confronts the "person-oriented" person. The child who was paddled was at least a person worthy of attention while the person who was ignored or insulted was something less than a person. Why should he remain in school to continue to be insulted?

Recently, I was speaking to an "Appalachian Culture" class at Lees Junior College and was surprised to find in the class one

of my former college classmates who is a professional geologist. He related to me how he had tried to "make it" in middle America for the past fourteen years but had considered himself ill-adapted wherever he went. He went on to say that for the first time in his life he was learning something about himself, in a sense, putting aside his "object goals" to discover himself as a person. He was very happy to be discovering that the culture of his upbringing really did have a logic to its value system and that the profession in which he had learned to excell need not interfere with his pursuit of many of the cultural values of his childhood which he had retained.

It seems to me that one of the problems of the person-oriented individual is that he, by the nature of his person-orientation, can become the pawn of the object-oriented individual who views life more abstractly and who can, without realizing it, manipulate the person-oriented individual as a mere object. I see this happening all the time in Appalachia.

I once attended an O. E. O. meeting in Washington, D. C. and heard a young bureaucrat tell of some plans he had for saving Appalachia. Though he had never set foot in most parts of the region, he had flown from Washington, D. C. to Bristol, Tenn/Va., and back through Huntington and Charleston, West Virginia. In addition he had read The Other America, Yesterday's People, and Night Comes to the Cumberlands and he was ready to do battle in

the War On Poverty. He did not know personally a single Appalachian individual. I don't challenge the young man's idealism, but from a practical point of view, he was a private in a position that demanded the experience of a general and the wisdom of Solomon.

I feel that the single most important reason for our high drop-out rate in the region is that our schools are staffed, by and large, with individuals who have become object-oriented, while most of their students are person-oriented. Though most of the teachers of the region are from the culture, they have been taught to be object-seekers and have lost the person-orientation which could make them very effective teachers for most, if not all, students and not just those who also have object goals. One of the encouraging signs is that many teachers are no longer blaming the drop-out for his failure in school and realizing that students must be approached through curriculum methods and materials that have relevance to them and which go a long way toward meeting their personal concerns. This conversion of many teachers, which I at one time thought impossible, is one of my great hopes for the region.

Dr. David Loeff, a clinical child psychiatrist in Eastern Kentucky has recently written a book about mental health problems among the region's children. Though he is a well trained individual and has dedication which I can't question, he is quite dependent for his model of cultural understanding upon Jack Weller:

My observations of the way mountain families focus on their children's infancy parallel Jack Weller's con-

clusions. "Babies have a unique place in the mountain family. Though the mountain man often pays little attention to the large children, he will make a great deal of fuss over babies, playing with them, fondling them, and carrying them about. . . . Children are highly valued, because they give meaning to the parents' lives. One mother expressed it: 'If I didn't have my children, I wouldn't have nothin'.' Another, speaking of her nine-year-old son, her only child, said, 'Yes, I dress him and tie his shoes. It's my pleasure to do so as long as he's at home.'" As children grow, adults largely cease to play with them, supervise them inappropriately, and furnish no positive models for training in setting limits on impulses, for establishing disciplinary controls, or for training in age-appropriate relating to or talking with other adults. Toddlers and preschool children are shoved off to play when someone calls; they are not allowed to interrupt the adults' conversation. Disciplinary training is set in the same mode: adults generally notice the misbehavior of children, usually in public, only when the situation is beyond the point at which an adult could have intervened to set the training model for the child's more effective mastering of his feelings, impulses, and relationships. Instead, misbehavior

is allowed to come to a head, and physical punishment is meted out swiftly and sternly as a consequence. I noted these patterns more in families of the very poor and the working class, but found that in a somewhat attenuated way they held true for the middle and upper classes as well.

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Both Weller and Loeff, I feel, are quite incomplete in their observation of Appalachian children. It is certainly true that to the outsider we give the appearance of being very permissive in our child rearing practices. However, what the outside observer rarely sees is the level of control that takes place at the non-verbal level. The child who appears to be doing anything that comes to his mind without fear of retribution usually has very implicit agreements with his parents regarding the limits of his activities. I have discussed this subject with many mountain people, both those with and without formal education, and practically all feel that the primary control comes at the non-verbal level. Part of the control, as Loeff observes, is that children are not allowed to interrupt adult's conversation. Children ordinarily understand this at an early age and then usually refrain from trying to change the pattern established by the parents and other adults. Many mutually understood patterns and restraints between parent and child, parent and parent, and child and child completely escape the outsider's observation. The same children who appear to the outsider as being under no control or restraint definitely feel the influence of many re-

straints and controls.

The implicit control of the parent gives the child much more security than the explicit control of the teachers, in my opinion. Loeff deals at some length with the phenomenon of "school phobia" and attributes the primary causes to the dependency themes developed in the home. I don't doubt that many parents are overly protective of their children, but I feel that another phase of the problem needs to be explored.

Some years ago in the same county in which Loeff did his study, a first grade teacher asked each of her students to bring a dime to school the next day to buy paper towels for drying his hands after washing up for lunch. Three of her students were unable to bring a dime. She asked each of them to wash his hands and then stand in front of the class and wave his hands in the air to dry. Had this happened to me as a first grader, I undoubtedly would have become "school phobic" to an extreme degree, and I feel similar degrading instances are often the cause of "school phobia" in many areas of Appalachia. The person oriented, implicitly disciplined young child could not be expected to cope with an adult in such a degrading situation. Though such teachers are relatively rare, and hopefully getting rarer, they are still predominant enough to cause severe problems for many young children. I cannot over-emphasize the sensitivity of many young mountain children to structured situations which tend to degrade them -- especially when one is taught, as most Appalachian children are, that he should

respect the person fulfilling the teacher's role.

One of the primary differences between Appalachian culture and the culture(s) of the middle class is the Appalachian emphasis on the extended family as the primary basis for social relationships. One's family just does not consist of the mother and father and the children. Grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins and step-relatives are all considered part of the family. This familism extends to others in the community who have close relationships with the family and the terms "uncle" and "aunt" are fondly bestowed upon those dear to the family who may not be of a blood relationship. There are particular times when families get together -- Memorial Day (Decoration Day), family reunions, and funerals. Some families develop special relationships around certain days that are particularly memorable to them. Regardless of where one happens to be employed, he will usually try to make it back home for the family reunion or a funeral.

I was personally always impressed with the funerals in our community and, even though they were very sad occasions, I enjoyed feeling the very deep feelings people felt for one another. Perhaps most impressive to me was the number of men who cried at funerals while they were rather unemotional most of the rest of the time -- at least they give this impression to young children. Within my own family I really feel my sense of identity when surrounded by relatives at the funeral of a loved one.

Looff makes some interesting observations regarding schools and familism which deserve some comment:

Of particular importance, as we saw in the clinics, was the relationship between this familism and the children's (and families') view of the schools and what was to be expected of them. In earlier years, the schools in Appalachia were direct expressions of the values held by the people: like the people they served, the schools were inner-directed, isolated, and generally poor. . . .

The highly personalized nature of these early local schools -- their emphasis on persons and relationships -- was quite in accordance with the mountaineer's view of the world. But now the world, and Appalachia with it, have changed. The trend in Eastern Kentucky is toward consolidated schools, at all levels, in all counties. Every year more and more of the isolated schools in neighborhood hollows are being closed.

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If Looff had been a little more familiar with the educational history of the mountains, I doubt that he would say that the schools have ever been "direct expressions of the values held by the people". As mentioned previously, most teachers in the region have been raised in the culture, but the systems themselves have never been indigineous to the region. The early schools were primarily home missions projects of the larger religious denominations in this country and the early teachers were not native to the region. Later teachers were taught by the missionaries and, by the time they had become teachers, had adopted, to a large degree, the values

of the missionaries. We were first taught by those who had come to "save" us and later by those who had "been saved" by the missionaries. Our schools are yet to be direct expressions of the values of the people.

The movement toward consolidated schools did not originate in Appalachia, but in other parts of the country. State school boards generally agreed with the rationale behind consolidation, economy of operation and expansions of offerings. It seems that few foresaw the tragic consequences for many rural children, not only in Appalachia but throughout the country.

As long as they went to the small schools, most mountain children at least were usually dressed in much the same way and carried the same types of food in their lunchboxes. If they felt inferior, it was only when they faced the teacher or compared themselves to the children in the candy-cane world portrayed in their readers. In the consolidated schools, they have had to face the drastic differences in dress, speech, and manners, between them and their small or large town companions, the children of the region's upper middle and professional classes. Generally the teachers are more attuned with the town children and tend to favor them with comments, questions, and other indirect forms of paying attention to them. They are patted on the shoulders to indicate jobs well done while the less stylish and uncomfortable children from the hollows and creeks rarely get nods, touches,

other gestures of approval.

Consolidation has definitely been a mixed blessing with most of the benefits going to those least in need of them. One of my friends in college had four brothers and sisters drop out of school on the same day, never to return, when their county schools were consolidated. This phenomenon has happened consistently throughout the region, and yet relatively few people have risen up to protest the continued consolidations. Children have to leave home before daylight and arrive home after dark in many instances, a situation that really harms family relationships in many closely-knit families. Dropping out is the logical consequence of such situations, particularly in the families with few object goals and where personalism is highly valued. The six high schools in my home community, in themselves consolidated schools to some degree, were consolidated into two high schools some six years ago. and the dropout rate immediately raised several percentage points. Many of the service clubs in the three small towns of the county immediately raised cries of alarm and set out to do something to try to get the students back in school. Generally they represented the values of those who had pushed consolidation in the first place, and not surprisingly, they met with little success.

In many mountain communities, the high school was the social and cultural center of the community. When it closed, people saw the work and involvement of many years suddenly evaporate without

a comparable institution left in the community to take its place. Parents who had helped construct the community school, who had supported it with their taxes, who had been class mothers, who had been sports boosters, and who had profited from the numerous social and cultural activities inspired by the school were suddenly left without the one community institution, inadequate as it may have been, which gave them some real solidarity with the larger community and not just the extended family. What purpose does the "superior" academic program of the consolidated school serve if those who should profit most are unable, because of the nature of the school, to take advantage of its program? Making the consolidated school relevant to the needs of Appalachian families is still a herculean task waiting to be undertaken.

Another commentator on Appalachian culture is Monica Kelley Appleby, who in Appalachia in Transition describes what she feels are some unique traits of mountaineers:

Lack of communication. The casual observer of Appalachians would tend to describe them as laconic and nearly catatonic. Neither observation is, of course, correct. Nonetheless, the observer does notice behavioral patterns: a cautious and extremely limited verbal repertory, and guarded, slow-moving, nonverbal behavioral patterns. Although the rate of speech tends to be slower, the most significant observation would

be the people with whom they talk, how often, the variety of subjects covered, and the extent of the vocabulary, all implying an interest or lack of interest to communicate. Important, too, in a description of communication patterns, is the distribution of silence. Children can be observed sitting for many hours in one place, neither responding or attempting to initiate responses.

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In addition to her own observations, Mrs. Appleby points out a fairly unique aspect of Appalachian culture: "the casual observer". Before proceeding with an analysis of her comments, I would like to give some attention to these "casual observers".

During the last hundred years Appalachia has been host to thousands of visitors from the rest of the United States and even foreign countries. The English and Scotch had discovered lost parts of their cultural heritage still being retained in remote mountain settings. Mr. Cecil Sharpe, the famous English folklorist, spent a considerable amount of time in the region in the early 1900's collecting folk materials and taking them back to England. Different college professors and administrators have observed throughout the years and one college president claimed to have "discovered" the region in the late 1800's. Another college president, in speaking of the region, said that the cabins "must give place to neatly painted and glazed dwellings surrounded by neat fences. . . ."

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Observers have continued to come into the region throughout the years and many have made quite successful publishing ventures from recording their observations for the larger public. There has been one exception to this general rule, the mountaineer himself. Mountaineers who have observed and written about their own culture have not found waiting markets, generally speaking, and their works are now mainly housed in library collections often uncatalogued and generally unavailable to the public. There is considerable effort at the present time to unearth some of these long forgotten writings in order to enable the mountaineer himself to gain a glimpse of his history and culture as written by his own people. As an avid student of such literature, I feel its impact will be very important in the developing Appalachian Studies programs.

Going beyond the pathological overtones of Mrs. Appleby's comments, her observations offer a chance to understand some of the cultural communication patterns. The "limited verbal repertory", as so appearing to the observer (from another culture) may not seem limited to the mountaineer at all. There are words, many of them not listed in the dictionaries, to describe those objects, experiences, and feelings which are important to those of the culture. The verbal repertory is limited only in the relative sense and not in an absolute sense, it seems to me. Anyone who has sat with a group of men on a lazy Sunday afternoon listening to them tell of the relative merits of their different

foxhounds or the size and variety of the fish catch the preceding day would have a difficult time being convinced of the non-verbality of the mountaineer. However, in the presence of strangers or an acquaintance of many years from another culture, many mountain people would be quite inhibited about talking especially if they felt they were being judged on the correctness of their grammar or their pronunciation. Previous experience with "observers" who had come to teach "better ways" makes many mountain people very self conscious in the presence of those who are not intimate acquaintances. At such times they tend to get by with as few words as possible, letting non-verbal gestures carry the burden of the communication load. This is a way of communicating and still retaining one's dignity at the same time. Mr. Paul Doran, a native minister in the mountains, gives some insight into such encounters:

The mountain man watches the stranger and every movement of the body and every muscle of the face tells its tale, while his own stolid countenance reveals nothing. He knows how the stranger feels and what he thinks, and his proud sensitive nature easily detects any slight feeling of superiority and resents it.

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The "stranger" in the encounter is apt to go away thinking he has just met a very non-verbal person and be completely unaware of how much his own non-verbal behavior has told about himself.

Mrs. Appleby correctly identifies long periods of silence as

being characteristic of many mountain children. It is also characteristic of adults. I can recall many times sitting on our front porch on a Sunday afternoon with the other members of my family with many hours passing without an exchange of words between any two of us. Other families in our community behaved in much the same way, and it seems to be a general cultural characteristic. This type of silence is worthy of some analysis.

When the mountain person is in harmony with himself and his family and in a setting which makes him feel secure, his imagination is free to wander. Many young mountain children have fantastic imaginations which they are not allowed to express in the carefully controlled schoolroom atmosphere. Expression does come at home, however, and periods of very creative play often follow the long periods of silence. Also the mountain home setting is very often close to the sounds and silences of nature. Mountain children are often caught up in these sounds and allow their imaginations to be influenced by such sounds. The child who appears to be in a catatonic state is very often much involved in the world he knows best. When he is approached by the person raised in a different sound environment, and if his family meets the government's criteria for being in poverty, the person coming in to visit or help is very likely to encounter him with the appropriate stereotypes furnishing the gist of the encounter and not the actual encounter itself. Their perceptual worlds do not mesh

except at very superficial junctures. One exasperated young volunteer once remarked to me: "When those families ask you to come in and 'set a spell', they mean exactly that." "Setting a spell", however, does not preclude communication either between individuals or between individuals and nature.

Perhaps better than anyone, Muriel Miller Dressler expresses this communication, in addition to summing up a great part of our culture:

I am Appalachia!

In my veins runs fierce mountain pride: the hill-
fed streams of passion; and, stranger, you don't
know me!

You've analyzed my every move -- you still go away
shaking your head.

I remain enigmatic.

How can you find rapport with me -- you, who never
stood in the bowels of hell, never felt a mountain
shake and open its jaws to partake of human sacrifice?

You, who never stood on a high mountain, watching
the sun unwind its spiral rays; who never
searched the glens for wild flowers, never
picked May apples or black walnuts; never
ran wildly through the woods in pure delight,
nor dangled your feet in a lazy creek?

You, who never danced to wild sweet notes, outpourings of nimble-fingered fiddles; who never just "sat a spell" on a porch, chewing and whittling; or hearing in pastime the deep-throated bay of chasing hounds and hunters shouting with joy,

"He's treed;"

You, who never once carried a coffin to a family plot high up on a ridge because mountain folk know it's best to lie where breezes from the hills whisper,

"You're home;"

You, who never saw from the valley that graves on a hill bring easement of pain to those below?

I tell you, stranger, hillfolk know what life is all about; they don't need pills to tranquilize the sorrow and joy of living.

I am Appalachia: and, stranger, though you've studied
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me, you still don't know.

At the same time, we seem not to fully know ourselves either. In 1905, Emma Miles wrote: "Although . . . our nature is one, our hopes, our loves, our daily life the same, we are yet a people asleep, a race without knowledge of its
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own existence."

Eight years later, Kephart wrote: "The great mountain masses still await their analyst, their artist, and in some places their explorer."³⁰

Half a century passed and during that time a great many of our potential "analysts, artists and explorers" were devoured by those who came to the region to "help", to "uplift", to "improve" our lot. The region was drained of its would-be leaders. But with the new consciousness brought by the Civil Rights Revolution in the early 1960's, we, although more slowly than other ethnic minority groups, began to awaken to the fact that we, too, have a right to our history, our cultural heritage, our own identity:

The window shade from Youth to Man
 Is jerked and whirling up,
 Up with speed to break dull panes
 And shock the eyes of Youth.
 And through new panes of naked glass
 A brisk unblemished hungry light
 Flies on my man-grown eyes by day,
 And my searching, startled inner Self
 Is mirrored back at me by night.

Oh proud, blind, lying Youth!
 Insatiable, fickle, star-eyed Youth --

Swaying seaweed in windy waters,
Wheat straw in shifty wind,
Boy of bigger than the biggest,
Hero, greater than the greatest,
Liar, worse than the worst pretender
Of everything to every man --
Youth, forever shed your mask!

You were not the sherry-sipper,
Nor the pool nor poker shark,
Nor the flat-land Hereford raiser,
Nor the son of a county court.
You corn-shucking hillbilly farm boy,
You didn't like that lordly tea!
Not the kind you drank in Devonshire
And well those Britons knew
That you drank clearer, stronger brew.

You didn't learn to shoot a-feudin',
That hinted lie you catered to;
You shot out birds' eyes, rats' and rabbits',
You clay-daubed-cabin country boy.
And you walked to school and "said" your lessons,
Pronounced no rounded English i's;

You stumped your toes and "skunt" your knees
For lack of shoes and patch-kneed pants
Nor did you wish nor like nor need them --
Not for the summer's running fun.

Now fading, mirrored mountain boy,
You traitor to your memory!
Step out, confess, you hypocrite,
And quit your city-slicking ways!
Cut out that stuck-up school-larnt talk
With all those dictionary words.
Come clean; you've seen now what you are
And what you've always been
Beneath your two-faced head.
Tell it to the whole blamed world,
Your shame for being ashamed
Of being a backwoods boy
Talk, son. Tell your pap and maw.

Almighty God, and mighty mountain men,
Men with horny hands and hoary heads,
Hands of axe-handles and saw-handles;
Of pick and mattock and plow handles;
Heads of horse hair and horse sense,

Of holey hats from the Jew stores;
Men with hearts like bushel baskets
Full in June with red-veined apples
Hearts red like blood without
But white from sin within,
(Not "wicked" sinners -- you);
Veiny-nosed men with snappy turtle mouths
Warmed around with grassy beards
And browned and blacked mustache;
Men who are pappies and paws and paps,
Many times over and twice grand,
Untired owners of child-worn laps,
Keepers of meal sacks and flour pokes
For mummies and grannies and maws,
With their hooky hands and bowed backs
And sympathetic grinny, chinny smiles;
Their hand-shaking howdy-dos
And meat-platter hospitality;
Women of long hopes and long hair for Glory,
Thinning, thready hanks of twisted hair
In shawl-wraps or bonnets or dust caps.
Women working for God no less than for me --
Women and men, flay your fatted hogs for me;
Ladle deep your cast iron kettles;

I bend my soul and humble knees
To fit your broad-backed tables.

Now I am a seeing Man
Home from all the dreamy days
Of denying, and even damning, all I knew and was.
God, you understand.
Cannot a fool begin anew?
And can I start with a tongue like a shovel
Of self-heaped sin around my head?
Let me wear out my gloves to my knuckles
And slough off the striffen from my soul;
Let me win back my birthright and restamp it,
Reforge it in a Man-sized mould.

But let me never lose the image
Of the ridge-runner, briar-hopper, squirrel-hunter
Of a mountaineer, a pioneer, a farmer--

. . .And Now I reclaim my birthright and liferight.
I am reborn out of college and war;
I am feasted on fatted hog meat,
I am wearing my pap's coat of arms.

It says, "Mountaineer, Pioneer, Farmer forever",
And my crown is a holey hat,
Whose brim is the distance from Youth to Man
Through a raised shad, a washed window -- 31
I'll raise that glass and through I'll walk!

Scope and Definitions

The preceding two chapters were designed to put the reader into a receptive mood for Chapters III and IV. Before proceeding further into those chapters, the following definitions and explanations may prove helpful to the reader.

In order to attempt to refute popular stereotypes and misconceptions regarding a particular group of people, I find it helpful to use the definitions commonly in use and to examine the same phenomena which led to the particular definitions and stereotypes while using different premises. This I tried to do in Chapter II. Specifically these are the definitions I employ with regard to the following frequently used words and phrases:

Culture -- The configuration of institutions, individuals, and systems that collectively and in concert with inborn biological mechanisms provide individuals with forces and experiences that structure their personalities. From the vantage point of the individual, this definition is dealt with at length in Part II of Chapter III.

Middle Class -- The group(s) of people who are active and reasonably full participants in the so-called "mainstream" industrial, educational, social, religious, and governmental processes and who, as they assumed roles in such processes, gave up or lost their ethnic/sub-cultural identities. I realize that this is a very broad definition, but I could find no disciplinary definition broad enough to define

what I had in mind when I use the term.

Conceptual Model -- My use of the term "Conceptual Model" is limited to the philosophical rationale, "From Existence To Essence" as defined in Chapter III. Chapter IV deals with a limited amount of extrapolation from the model and offers suggestions for research and curricular and institutional reform.

Throughout this work I have concentrated primarily on the individual becoming "organized in his individuality". I do not wish to underrate the importance of "humankind becoming organized in its collectivity", especially in view of our rapidly shrinking "global village". However, such a pursuit is beyond the scope of this work, and I would hope could be undertaken by others.

Philosophical Considerations:

From Existence to Essence

If one examines my Grandpa's admonition to me: "Son, you're better than nobody, but just as good as anybody", it is possible to extrapolate the type of educational philosophy that might bring meaning to mountain people and perhaps help us gain some control of our own destinies, both individually and collectively. This admonition, so deceptively simple and so utterly profound, contains some fundamental philosophic structures around which an entire curriculum could be built. Our other alternative is perhaps to continue listening to Weller and his compatriots. Weller expresses his feelings concisely: "We, the outsiders, must have the long-range plans and move the mountaineer along one decision at a time. Certainly we have to think in terms of 'five years from now', lest the slowness of the pace utterly discourage us."³²

Weller is somewhat less explicit than an earlier commentator who expressed his feelings forcefully:

The majority of mountain people are unprincipled ruffians. They make moonshine, 500 horsepower, and swill it down; they carry on generous and gentle feuds in which little children are not spared, and deliberately plan a wholesale assassination, and when captured either assert they shot in self-defense, or with true coward

streak deny the crime. There are two remedies only--
 education or extermination. Mountaineers, like the
 red Indian, must learn this lesson.

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Do we really need to be "moved along" or "exterminated"? Are our values really so out of harmony with the type of world which poets and ecologists are telling us we need to develop if man is to survive? Or could Weller's middle class learn a few things from us? The revolution currently going on around us concerning ecology may affect the middle class more than the mountaineer, and we may have to move them along (or back) one decision at a time.

It seems to me that Grandpa's philosophical insight by which he lived so much and which is a very dominant mode in Appalachian life is derived from the existential premise "existence precedes essence". If one's own existence is a primary reality and if one can measure himself and be measured by others on the basis of living up to his own potential rather than some external criteria "out there", which someone else reveals for him, then it seems that a curriculum could be developed from an analysis of the basic premise. Teilhard de Chardin in The Phenomenon of Man wrote: "It often happens that what stares us in the face is the most difficult to perceive."³⁴ Another philosopher once remarked that the most profound insights can be obtained by examining the obvious. I would like to suggest an Appalachian Studies curriculum model determined by examining the obvious in the premise "existence precedes essence".

I have developed five steps to show how existence precedes essence. In the following pages each step will be analyzed separately. The steps

include: (1) the existence of the self, (2) the self as formed and structured through interaction with institutions, individuals and systems, (3) the self discovers itself, (4) the self defines itself, and (5) the self transcends itself.

I do not mean for this model to be just for Appalachian people but would hope it could be used by members of other ethnic minorities or by anyone else who wishes. At times I feel that members of the middle class, who are so far removed from their ethnic origins and traditions, are most in need of the type of analysis I am about to delineate. What follows, then, is my way of examining both the external forces and internal forces and, given a different premise, suggesting ways of freeing the individual to become the person he is capable of becoming.

Part I

The Existence of the Self

For some years I have been puzzled by the existentialist dictum that "existence precedes essence". What does existence mean and what does essence mean? If one precedes the other then there must be a path from one to the other. What is that path? Do some individuals, in proceeding from existence to essence skip some steps while others take a more precise path? What is the nature of the path and how does one conceptualize the steps in the process? What happens to those who become lodged somewhere along the line and are unable to proceed farther? These are serious questions for me and I hope that my personal inquiry might be of value to others as well.

If, as many people believe, essence precedes existence, it is easy to perceive man as only an object in space. People can be "objective" while pondering differing spatial relationships of those objects which we call human beings. Some particularly talented human beings, such as theologians and philosophers, can discover and/or have revealed to them especially humane ways of manipulating people so as to achieve the greatest good for the largest number. Politicians can then devise the schemes and construct the manipulatory apparatus. Psychiatrists can aid those who find themselves unable to adjust to the grand designs while priests and ministers can help alleviate the guilt of those who transgress. The individual can then live his life through without ever contemplating the possibility of accepting responsibility for himself.

I don't deny that much of man's life is spent being manipulated as an object, and I realize that much of our philosophical and theological literature deals with the mechanics and metaphysics of such manipulation. A lot of literature in other fields also describes and analyzes the impersonal forces of the universe and of our cultures and of man's inner being that tend to keep him in a state of servitude to all forces except his own will.

Some schools of thought imply that man is a completely determined organism -- that his present and future are completely determined by his past -- and that it is not only a waste of time but stupid as well to try to gain some measure of control over one's destiny. This thinking is understandable since there are so many impersonal forces at work which tend to enslave the individual. Perhaps this is especially true with so many technical means of enforcement of societal dictates at the fingertips of those who have the mandate and the desire to enforce.

It seems to me that at this time in history when so many forces are at work to enslave the individual, it is now time for the individual to take a stand. Carl Jung in The Undiscovered Self states that "resistance to the organized mass can be effected only by the man who is as well organized in his individuality as the mass itself".³⁵ The primary purpose of my analysis of the premise "existence precedes essence" is to try to show how one can become "organized in his individuality".

If one begins with the premise that existence precedes essence, it is important to perceive man as something other than and in addition to an object in space. If one's existence precedes his essence, then time -- the time span from when one begins to exist until one perceives and acts upon his knowledge of his essence -- becomes an important fac-

tor, since he must also be considered a subject as well as an object. Though this sounds like a very innocuous statement at first hearing, it can have some very profound implications for human beings, our institutions, and all of our fields of study.

Being fully aware of the battle raging concerning abortion, I am arbitrarily beginning my argument by stating that, for me, an individual begins his existence at the moment of conception becoming both an object in space and a subject in time. Prior to his existence his potential existed in the form of a sperm and an egg located in two other existing beings -- a sperm and an egg that came together by random choice. I do not deny that he also existed in the mind of God, in which case his essence would precede his existence. As a matter of practicality, however, the individual is faced with his own existence and this facing of one's existence will bear heavily on my thinking.

The individual who is formed by the union of the sperm and the egg is immediately faced with both internal and external forces beyond his control which determine the terms and duration of his existence for some time to come. If he begins his existence inside the body of a person who does not desire his existence, he may be aborted at either the zygote or fetal stage. If his host is in ill health or becomes the victim of an accident, he may be miscarried. He is also subject to disease bearing organisms passed on to him by his mother or an easy victim of toxins produced by diseases his mother might have the misfortune of contracting while he is in a precarious developmental stage. He also carries a genetic code which determines many of the terms of his pre-birth existence and perhaps even more of his after-birth existence.

The individual thus comes into the world, at birth, already having faced some of the most precarious trials he will ever have to face.

The individual comes into the world possessing certain characteristics which, though superficial, set him apart from other individuals and groups. If his parents are Japanese, his urine will most likely contain an acid not contained in the urine of other groups. If he is either Japanese or Chinese or a member of other oriental groups, his ear wax will probably be dry and crumbly as compared to members of either the Negroid or Caucasian races. If he is born into certain West African tribes, his blood cells might contain a factor which makes them sickle-shaped during his adolescence creating the debilitating disease called sickle-celled anemia. The sickling factor in the blood of his brothers and cousins may not be severe enough to cause illness but may contain enough of the factor just mentioned to prevent malaria, a boon to anyone living in that part of the world.³⁶ He will, of course, possess the color of skin of his race if he is born into a "breeding population" that is relatively stable but may show very different characteristics from his parents if they are from different races. At any rate, the characteristics he brings with him into the world are not of his choosing, although he must accept the consequences of possessing them.

The newborn infant also comes into the world equipped with several survival reflexes which include the carbon dioxide reflex that automatically controls the amount of air the baby will breathe; the coughs and sneezes which keep him from drowning in his own secretions; and the group of nursing reflexes including suckling and swallowing activities, the rooting movements in search of food, and the hunger

cry, all of which help him meet his need for nourishment.

C. Anderson Aldrich and Mary M. Aldrich in Babies Are Human Beings suggest that babies are well prepared for living by the time they arrive on the institutional scene:

As we look at these crude infants in the hospital it is difficult to believe that they can do anything purposeful. Their behavior, however, is by no means the random activity one would expect of a beginning individual but is, on the contrary, full of meaning; for newborn babies have been at their job a long time and have already gone part way toward their ultimate achievement.

One cannot be specific about the duration of their preparation for living, for as a matter of biologic fact there is no definite point at which life begins. It is true that each human being starts with the union of the sperm and the egg. But before this time growth changes necessary for producing a new life have already occurred in both the egg and the sperm, when the process of maturation which precedes fertilization reduces the number of chromosomes to one half the original quota in each of these cells. It is evident, therefore, that the process of beginning a new individual antedates fertilization, which becomes a mere punctuation point in the stream of life. At birth, then, we are seeing in these babies the result of all of the progressive

changes which have been taking place during the entire evolutionary period of the race. They have been growing and will continue to grow, according to the specifications of their own heredity plan of development.

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The individual also comes into the world possessing a way of valuing. He prefers certain experiences and things and definitely does not prefer others. Carl Rogers in Person to Person gives an interesting approach to the infant's way of valuing:

Hunger is negatively valued. His expression of this often comes through loud and clear.

Food is positively valued. But when he is satisfied, food is negatively valued, and the same milk he responded to so eagerly is now spit out, or the breast which seemed so satisfying is now rejected as he turns his head away from the nipple with an amusing facial expression of disgust and revulsion.

He values security, and the holdings and caressing which seem to communicate security.

He values new experiences for its own sake, and we observe this in his obvious pleasure in discovering his toes, in his searching movements in his endless curiosity.

He shows a clear negative valuing of pain, bitter tastes, sudden loud sounds.

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Birth is the end of one mode of existence and the beginning of another for the developing individual. It is, in a sense, the

end of his pre-institutional existence and the beginning of his institutional existence. Prior to birth, he has been largely, though not entirely, under the influence of his built-in automatic controls. At birth his automatic controls are supplemented and influenced by outside influences which affect not only his developing body, but his nervous system as well.

Anthony Storr in The Integrity of the Personality speaks of the unity of the individual at the beginning of his existence:

The predominant belief which many workers appear to share, and with which I find myself in sympathy, is that at the beginning of its existence the child is a unity, undivided against itself, harmonious, and, in a certain sense, integrated. The assumption is that, in the natural state of affairs, the baby has no problems, and that it is only in the course of its development towards adulthood that the difficulties arise. We have already postulated an ideal final state, a state of maturity which appears to be the end of human striving; now we postulate an ideal initial state, from which the child has necessarily to emerge. It is the transition between the two which gives rise to difficulties and tribulation.

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If the child is truly "undivided against itself" at the beginning of its existence, it certainly does not take long for such divisions to begin to occur.

Part II

The Self as Formed and Structured

Through Interaction with Institutions, Individuals and Systems

Basically, the infant is an open system. John Gardner in Self Renewal tells how in our early years we are "receptive, curious, eager, unafraid, willing to try anything, and above all not inhibited by fixed habits and attitudes."⁴⁰ And having been born without most of the automatic action responses of the animal, man is dependent upon his parents, or foster parents, for a considerably longer time than any animal. As a result of the lack of instinctive equipment to handle his problems, man is continually subjected to dangers and fears. As Erich Fromm states in Escape From Freedom,⁴¹ "Man's biological weakness is the condition of human culture". Whereas, in the animal, there is an uninterrupted series of reactions beginning with a stimulus and ending with a response which is to a large degree automatically pre-determined, man must contemplate the choices which are open to him. Therefore, all of us who live to what we ordinarily call adulthood go through a long developmental process of being taught through various means and learning through our own resources and initiative how to play the various institutional roles demanded by our cultures.

Each institution is an information system through which individuals learn to perceive the world and to translate experiences into meaningful concepts. Each institution also has its own symbolic system perhaps similar to others, but yet different in form and kind.

Most individuals born in the United States arrive on the world

stage in what is commonly known as the nuclear family. Individuals born in non-industrial countries may make their debut into what is known as a tribe or an extended family. But wherever the child is born, he immediately enters into some form of society and the societal structures known as institutions. During infancy the family, or its equivalent, provides most of the choices available to the individual. In addition, the family institution is responsible for providing food, warmth, security, and, as we are finding out through research, love, without which the individual finds it impossible to exist. The child's first tasks in life include learning to be competent in his institutional roles.

This task involves a major step in his development -- that of separating himself from the world around him. Storr hypothesizes that the "infant's world consists originally simply of itself; itself not separated from the mother who tends it, nor the blankets which cover it, nor the air which it breathes, nor from the milk which it imbibes. In the beginning was the All and Everything, the wholeness which comes from total dependence, the wholeness which is only broken by the realization that since every desire is not immediately fulfilled, there must be something external to the infant, who is therefore not whole, but incomplete."⁴²

Slowly the small child becomes aware of himself as a separate entity and sees other people as separate also. Barry Stevens in Person to Person gives an account of such a separation:

In the beginning, I was one person, knowing nothing but my own experience.

Then I was told things, and I became two people: the

little girl who said how terrible it was that the boys had a fire going in the lot next door where they were roasting apples (which was what the women said) -- and the little girl who, when the boys were called by their mothers to go to the store, ran out and tended the fire and the apples because she loved doing it.

So then there were two of I.

One I always doing something that the other I disapproved of. Or other I said what I disapproved of. All this argument in me so much.

In the beginning was I, and I was good.

Then came in other I. Outside authority. This was confusing. And then other I became very confused because there were so many different outside authorities.

Sit nicely. Leave the room to blow your nose. Don't do that, that's silly. Why, the poor child doesn't even know how to pick a bone! Flush the toilet at night because if you don't it makes it harder to clean. DON'T FLUSH THE TOILET AT NIGHT -- you wake people up! Always be nice to people. Even if you don't like them, you mustn't hurt their feelings. Be frank and honest. If you don't tell people what you think of them, that's cowardly. Butter knives. It is important to use butter knives. Butter knives? What foolishness! Speak nicely. Sissy! Kipling is wonderful! Ugh! Kipling (turning away)

The most important thing is to have a career. The most important thing is to get married. The hell with everyone. Be nice to everyone. The most important thing is sex. The most important thing is to have money in the bank....
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Thus, the separateness having been realized, the road to "difficulties and tribulation" lies straight ahead.

Soon after entering the world of the family, the individual finds that someone or some group is attempting to provide answers of a seemingly unanswerable nature -- answers about God, the afterlife, and other hard-to-answer questions. During this time he may experience ritualistic processes that his ancestors have devised in order to explain the unexplainable or he may be taught by his parents that no one can unexplain such questions and that he is foolish for believing in anything "supernatural".

Today, if our American individual is born into an affluent family, he can usually expect to have the chance of going to a prep school which, if he does reasonably well, can practically guarantee him a chance to enroll in one of the more "prestigious" educational institutions of the country. Additionally, during his prep school, grade school and high school years, he is supported by other institutions such as camping, private music and art lessons, private athletic instruction, etc., which tends to keep his motivation high and which is also supportive of the learning he is getting in school.

However, if our American individual is born in a city slum, an Indian reservation, a Barrio, or an Appalachian hollow, he is likely to find an entirely different set of circumstances facing him.

If he is an Alaskan Eskimo, he will likely be taught by a non-Eskimo for his first few years, either a person from one of numerous missionary groups or an employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He soon learns that being Eskimo is no good since his teachers live in places other than his village and, with their relatively high salaries for the area, engage in a style of life totally different from that of the people of his village. Likewise, his language is inferior to the "correct" English he is being taught in the school and he may be punished for using his own language.

If he is a Black child and begins his existence in a city slum, a unique combination of circumstances awaits him. He may begin his life in a rat infested tenement and run the risk of losing life or limb to a voracious rodent. Or he may be moved out of the tenement into a "Welfare Hotel" while his former "home" is being razed to make room for a freeway to allow the parent of our "affluent" individual to get back and forth to work from the suburbs.

If he is a Chicano child from the Barrio, he soon learns in school that Spanish is bad particularly when spoken in school. Likewise, his Spanish surname is also bad. He may find his teacher expects very little of him. He may be tracked in the lowest of several tracks in the school because he may have tested out in his IQ test as an imbecile since he could not use well the language of the test, nor understand the giver of the test. The actions of the teacher come through very clear and they explain a not too rosy picture for him in terms of education.

If he is an Appalachian child from a nearly abandoned coal camp or a remote hollow, his lot is unlikely to be more conducive for

growth and development than those representatives of other ethnic and racial minorities. His father may be a disabled coal miner who became disabled while mining in a mine on his own land since the mineral rights had been sold several generations ago for a pittance to some absentee coal company now enjoying the fruits of earlier speculation. Or his father might have died of black lung or in any one of the numerous mining accidents which have taken over 80,000 lives in this century alone, a rate three times higher than any other mining industry.

School is not a pleasant place for the young Appalachian individual to receive an indoctrination into the more pleasant facts of life. If he doesn't have much money (and most Appalachian children don't have much), he may not have enough to contribute a dime for buying paper towels for drying his hands after washing them before lunch and will have to wave his hands in the air to dry, a visible signal of his poverty to anyone not having caught the signal already. Or he may be called to the front of the room to receive his "free" lunch ticket and further demonstrate his absence of ready cash.

The teachers in his school, most of whom are natives who have "escaped" through the help of missionary institutions or through the help of those prepared to teach in missionary institutions, do not see much future for this young individual because he comes from one of those "sorry" families who have been on welfare for three generations, or from a family that just refuses to "get ahead", or from any one of a dozen other stereotyped families daily portrayed in such media as "Lil Abner", "Snuffy Smith" or the "Beverly Hillbillies". Many of his teachers also have a vested interest in having a high dropout rate since

that assures fewer competitors for jobs in many counties where the school board is the biggest employer. Many industrialists also have a vested interest in a high dropout rate in order that there will always be a good complement of labor around for the mines. The Board of Regents at a well known Appalachian university recently turned down a \$3000.00 request to buy materials for a tutoring program whereby college students would serve as volunteer tutors for numerous high school dropouts and near dropouts in a large city in the Appalachian coalfields.

The school is not the only institution ill prepared to meet the needs of individuals from minority groups. The welfare system through its numerous programs such as A.D.C., food stamps, surplus foods, etc., usually insures that the family doesn't stay together, since welfare rules generally preclude having an able-bodied man in the house. In many, if not most, areas of the country, the welfare program is subject to political abuse and manipulation making it necessary for many of those hopelessly dependent upon welfare to engage in political activity for the party in power in order to assure a steady subsistence from the welfare program.

During their pre-school years many middle class children are prepared for school by their mothers who read to them and by special pre-school programs financed collectively by a group of parents or in some cases by the state. By the time he enters school, the middle class child has been well prepared for school by the curriculum of the home. The low income/minority child has also been learning, but his learning has been of a somewhat different type.

If the non-middle class child has parents who follow the harvest, picking fruits and vegetables, or if he lives on a small family farm, he learns at an early age how to tell a good fruit or vegetable from one of poor quality. He learns insect pests and plant diseases and their controls or the consequences of not controlling them. However, these types of learning are usually not valued by the teachers these students will encounter in school. Teachers usually value "basic" skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, etc.

Middle class parents have usually learned how to succeed in the corporate world or else they probably could not consider themselves members of the middle class. Non-middle class parents have also learned survival skills particularly the skills which enable them to cope with social, cultural and governmental institutions which are usually managed by members of the middle class. They also develop intuitively in order to know who to trust and who not to trust, a basic survival skill for those with little income. Usually they are not able to articulate the characteristics of trustworthy people to their children, but the children learn from their behavior nevertheless. Non-verbal learnings which enhance survival are not usually valued by teachers, however, so these children never get a chance to demonstrate those types of intelligence and training in which they excel and upon which a positive sense of self might emerge.

Generally speaking, those who are in the teaching profession consider themselves upwardly mobile and respond best to the children of those who also perceive the world in that way. Consequently, the non-middle class child is confronted in life quite early with the

institution of his "suckling" being in conflict with the institution charged by our national government with giving him his primary training in the basic skills considered necessary by members of the middle class who control educational institutions to get along in our modern industrial society. This is a particularly crucial problem when students who do not speak English are taught only in English and are placed in classes for the mentally retarded because they have been given IQ tests in a language of which they know nothing.

In an article for Saturday Review, Jeffrey Kобрick wrote:

One reason schools are failing in their responsibility to these children is that they offer only one curriculum, only one way of doing things, designed to meet the needs of only one group of children. If a child does not fit the mold, so much the worse for him. It is the child who is different, hence deficient; it is the child who must change to meet the needs of the school.

During the first four years of life, a child acquires the sounds, the grammar, and the basic vocabulary of whatever language he hears around him. For many children this language is Spanish or Cree or Chinese or Greek. Seventy-three percent of all Navajo children entering the first grade speak Navajo, but little or no English. Yet when they arrive at school, they find not only that English is the language in which all subjects are taught but that English dominates the entire school life. Children cannot understand or make themselves understood even in

the most basic situations. There are schools where a child cannot go to the bathroom without asking in English. One little boy, after being rebuffed repeatedly for failure to speak in English said in Spanish: "If you don't let me go to the bathroom, maybe I piss on your feet."

The effects of this treatment on a child are immediate and deep. Language, and the culture it carries, is at the core of the youngster's concept of himself. For a young child especially as Theodore Anderson and Mildred Boyer point out, "Language carries all the meanings of home, family, and love; it is the instrument of his thinking and feeling, his gateway to the world." We all love to be addressed, as George Sanchez says in, en la lengua que mamamos ("in the language we suckled"). And so when a child enters a school that appears to reject the only words he can use, ⁴⁴ "He is adversely affected in every aspect of his being."

In short the educational institutions work cooperatively, harmoniously, and in tandem with the middle class home while they work disjunctively, non-cooperatively, and out of harmony with the non-middle class home. Schools are sometimes considered irrelevant by those of the middle class because so much material is out of date by the time the students learn it and, in a sense, because it prepares students for the past instead of the present or future. The primary problem for the non-middle class child is not so much one of irrelevance, but one of irreverence. The child is held in contempt, constantly subjected to ridicule and embarrassment, told that he has no history and is worthy

of only the poorest of futures. Perhaps the only way that the non-middle class child can maintain his dignity and self respect is to sever relations with those institutions which degrade him and embrace more strongly than ever those which offer him acceptance. Perhaps this is why the extended family is so strong in Appalachian communities and why tribal loyalties remain such a binding influence among many Indian tribes. Sometimes when an individual is given especially strong support at home, he can survive scorn and ridicule at school and still develop in spite of the system(s). I'm afraid that such people are the exception and not the rule, however.

While we learn our institutional responsibilities from active participation in institutional processes, we are also being influenced by particular individuals as personalities, regardless of their roles in our institutions. Our idealization of such people may serve very important functions in our development process. Concerning this influence of individuals, Storr writes:

In the course of development children are usually emotionally attracted to a whole series of people of both sexes. Such people are commonly school teachers and older children; since these are the people outside the home with whom the child has most to do. The glamorization and idealization of such people is so much a part of normal development that it is taken for granted; but there can be few parents who have not sometimes been surprised by the intensity of feeling aroused in the breast of their child by some apparently dull and undistinguished person.

I believe that it can generally be shown that these people epitomize undeveloped parts of the child's own personality, and that they attract him so strongly because they stir a subjective response. It seems probable that those parts of the personality which are latent -- undeveloped -- and only potential, those parts, therefore, which can be said to be unconscious -- are in fact recognized by the individual concerned, but, to start with, are thought to belong to others rather than to himself. Personality is like a harp with many strings. Not all strings are plucked at once, and some may lie silent throughout life. Others may be set into vibration by the impact of personalities with the same frequency. The irrational attraction and sometimes adoration which an older child or a teacher will inspire in a pupil may be explained in terms of a projection of the latter upon the former. The child can be said, as it were, to "fall in love" with its own latent potentialities.

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I believe one of the values of the extended family in Appalachian and other rural cultures is that it provides such a wide diversity of models for emulation. Perhaps this is also why there is sometimes so much stress in the nuclear family of middle class culture. Within the extended family the wide variety of models relieves the parents from having to be "all things to all people" for their children.

While individuals receive much of their structuring within institutions and by individuals, cultures contain over-arching systems

that contribute to the structuring of personalities in ways that we are only beginning to understand.

Edward T. Hall in The Silent Language has developed what he calls "Primary Message Systems" which interact with each other in the workings of culture:

In order to qualify as a cultural system, each system had to be:

A. Rooted in biological activity widely shared with other living forms. It was essential that there be no breaks with the past.

B. Capable of analysis on its own terms without reference to the other systems and so organized that it contained isolated components that could be built up into more complex units, and paradoxically --

C. So constituted that it reflected all the rest of culture and was reflected in the rest of culture.

These criteria are operational. That is, they are based on direct observation of the actual functioning of a cultural system, in this case language. The criteria, from an anthropological point of view, are firm. There are ten separate kinds of human activity which I have labeled Primary Message Systems (PMS). Only the first PMS involves language. All the other PMS are non-linguistic forms of the communication process. Since each is enmeshed in the others, one can start the study of culture with any one of the ten and eventually come out with a complete picture. The Primary Message Systems are:

1. Interaction
2. Association
3. Subsistence
4. Bisexuality
5. Territoriality
6. Temporality
7. Learning
8. Play
9. Defense
10. Exploitation (use of materials)⁴⁶

Hall feels that any culture contains at least these ten Primary Message Systems and that they provide the basic matrix of culture. I have not found a better model upon which to base the structuring of individuals.

Interaction involves speech, including tone of voice, gesture, and writing and takes place in space through time. Hall feels that interaction "lies at the hub of the universe of culture and everything grows from it."⁴⁷ The most highly developed form of interaction is speech while writing is considered a special form which uses particular symbols in a particular structure.

Association includes the ways we arrange ourselves in both formal and informal "pecking orders" and the specialized ways we develop to demonstrate and recognize status of different types. Association is involved in caste, class, and our different governmental models. A good example of the combined effect of interaction and association can be found in the chain of command in the military and in highly structured organizations such as hospitals.

Subsistence is a very basic system which includes our systems of economics, our ways of providing the basic essentials of food, clothing,

and shelter, and such things as our elaborate divisions of labor.

Bisexuality is also one of the most basic systems with sexual differentiation occurring in all known groups of people. However, that which is masculine in one culture might be considered feminine in another and vice versa. When one particular trait comes to be accepted in a particular culture as being especially masculine or feminine, it is usually dropped by the other group, according to Hall. In some cultures male and female behavior is carefully prescribed by custom and control is largely situational, while in other cultures the individual's internal controls are expected to weigh most heavily in bisexual encounters. Serious misunderstandings sometimes arise when individuals from different cultural sexual expectations confront each other.

Territoriality is such an important system that a disproportionate share of our time is consumed in settling territorial disputes. Farmers have fought over the placement of a line fence or the ownership of a spring with the same savagery that nations have fought wars. The gang member is just as conscious of his "turf" as the blue jay is of his trees. Different cultural groups require different amounts of space for their optimum functioning and different individuals regard different "space bubbles" as being their personal domain. Misunderstandings also arise when individuals with different space concepts interact with each other and the unconscious claim to space can wreck an otherwise compatible intellectual encounter.

The PMS of temporality has to do with cycles and rhythms and our differing uses and perceptions of time. Different cultures mark the passage of time in diverse ways while for some cultures time accumu-

lates rather than passes. Agricultural or hunting cultures have entirely different concepts of time from industrial cultures. While five minutes may be a normal wait for an appointment with a business man in the Eastern United States, the waiting period before one becomes uncomfortable or restless in Mexico may be considerably longer. We are all influenced by our inner rhythms and cycles including respiration, metabolism, heartbeat, menstrual cycle, the cycles of the seasons, etc.

Learning is obviously one of the most fundamental systems which, according to Hall, assumed primary importance when "an unknown common ancestor of birds and mammals became warm blooded at some time either late in the Permian or early Triassic periods, over 100,000,000 years ago". Becoming warm blooded freed large groups of animals from being tied to the temperature of the external environment. Such freedom gave these animals enhanced survival value, improved sensory perception, but placed a premium on adaptative mechanisms such as migration, nesting habits, and other adaptations which enabled the organisms to cope with different extremes of temperature.

According to Hall, people of different cultures "learn to learn" differently. While some learn by making use of "logic" others stress memory and rote. Each culture's particular system is laden with emotion which makes transfer difficult and points up the cause of many of our difficulties encountered when trying to impose an alien system upon our so-called disadvantaged populations.

Cultures employ both formal and informal systems to transmit that which it considers worthwhile and of value to the young of the culture. Of course many problems arise when different population

groups within the same educational system disagree on what learning is valuable. Indian leaders once responded to an offer of education in this manner:

You who are wise must know that different nations have different conceptions of things and will therefore not take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same as yours. We have had some experience with it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the northern provinces; but when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods... totally good for nothing. We are, however...obliged by your kind offer...and to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send up a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their educations; instruct them in all we know and
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make men of them.

Play is a PMS that is not very well understood. It is well recognized in animals just as it is in man. Play and learning are much intertwined with play often a component of learning. People who enjoy their work often regard it to be just as much play as work. Humor, which is an aspect of play is binary (turned on and off) in some cultures while it exists on a continuum in others.

Our systems of defense are varied and elaborate. We defend ourselves against dangers in the environment, either real or imagined, and protect our emotional and spiritual selves just as we protect our physical selves. Medicine as a defense against disease can become just as much a ritual as the religious ceremony which protects against spiritual harm. Each of us develops elaborate defense mechanisms which protect one's dignity in stressful situations.

culture. Many animals have developed specialized bodies to exploit their environments such as the long neck of the giraffe, the toes of the tree sloth, and the hooves of the horse. Man's opposable thumb is a specialized adaptation that enables a fantastic amount of environmental exploitation. We have exploited materials to make weapons all the way from the crude club to the hydrogen bomb. New exploitive discoveries change the ways we relate to one another. We are only now beginning to understand the impact of such inventions of typesetting, the steam engine, the automobile, and television, for examples. Exploitation also has its price as we are now learning while we watch the deterioration of our environment.

Hall has held up a mirror of our activities which, I feel, we need to take seriously in order to better understand the ways which we, as humans, are formed and structured.

Institutions, individuals and systems -- in essence, every aspect of one's culture -- lead to the formation and structure of the individual. While in the beginning this is an external process, there comes a time in the life of the developing individual when he adopts this structuring and it becomes internalized -- a part of him, so to speak. Rollo May in Man's Search For Himself explains:

The authoritarian shackling which the person endures earliest in life is external: the growing infant, whether a child of exploitative parents or, let us say, a Jew born in a country with anti-semitic prejudice, is the victim of external circumstances. The child must face and adjust to, by hook or crook, the world he is born into. But gradually in anyone's development the authoritarian problem becomes

internalized: the growing person takes over the rules and implants them in himself; and he tends to act all his life as though he were still fighting the original forces which would enslave him. But it has now become an internal conflict. Fortunately there is a happy moral in this point: since the person has taken over the suppressive forces and keeps them going in himself, he also has in himself the power to get over them.

Part III

Self Discovery

"Every one of us in our little village of Anatevka knows who he is and what God expects of him."

(from Tevye's speech in "Traditions" in "Fiddler on the Roof")

Undoubtedly everyone in Tevye's village in Tzarist Russia in the early 1900's had a good idea of who he was and for many reasons. As a member of a despised minority group, each person knew the price he had to pay if he attempted to step outside the roles those from his culture and religion were allowed to play. Likewise, as a member of a tradition oriented society, he also knew the price he had to pay for violating his own traditions, as, for example, by marrying outside his faith. If anyone had any doubts regarding his role in his society, the priest was always around to furnish answers and to satisfy the curiosity of the curious. As a pretty wise sage himself, Tevye did not always need the services of the priest to handle his family problems as witnessed when he explained to his daughter his rationale for not allowing her to marry a Russian soldier: "It's all right for a bird and a fish to be friends, but where will they build a home together?"

As Tevye and his fellow villagers found out though, tradition alone does not assure that all will always be well. Traditions are broken and value systems are disrupted very often by forces beyond the control of those who are disrupted.

Not having old traditions and values to lead the way nor back us up in our beliefs, we are then forced to find out for ourselves just "who we are and what God expects of us" in addition to finding out what we expect of ourselves.

When driving through the mountains and valleys of Appalachia one often encounters V-shaped valleys that have been altered by a message swinging from one side of the mountain to the other. Very often the message is perhaps the most fundamental dictum of fundamentalist religion: "Ye shall be born again." The message is usually taken from Jesus' conversation with Nichodemus:

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nichodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nichodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I say to you, you must be born anew. The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or

whither it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the spirit." (John III, 1-8)

As a child I often paid close attention to what revivalists preached in our church or in the tents which they often pitched by the side of the road. The "rebirth" message was the one that sticks in my mind most vividly and only recently have I come to realize its full meaning. (That is, I understand a much fuller meaning for me.)

Jung also speaks quite forcefully for the need for rebirth:

Ultimately everything depends upon the quality of the individual, but the fatally shortsighted habit of our age is to think only in terms of large numbers and mass organizations, though one would think that the world has seen enough of what a well disciplined mob can do in the hands of a single madman. Unfortunately, this realization does not seem to have penetrated very far -- and our blindness in this respect is extremely dangerous. People go on blithely organizing and believing in the sovereign remedy of mass action, without the least consciousness of the fact that the most powerful organizations can be maintained only by the greatest ruthlessness of their leaders and the cheapest of slogans.

Curiously enough, the Churches too want to avail themselves of mass action in order to cast out the devil with Beelzebub -- the very churches whose care is the salvation of the individual soul. They too do not appear to have heard

of the elementary axiom of mass psychology, that the individual becomes morally and spiritually inferior in the mass, and for this reason they do not burden themselves overmuch with their real task of helping the individual to achieve a metonia, or rebirth of the spirit -- deo concedente. It is, unfortunately, only too clear that if the individual is not truly regenerated in spirit, society cannot be either, for society is the sum total of individuals in need of redemption. I can therefore see it only as a delusion when the Churches try -- as they apparently do -- to rope the individual into a social organization and reduce him to a condition of diminished responsibility, instead of raising him out of the torpic, mindless mass and making clear to him that he is the one important factor and that the salvation of the world consists in the salvation of the individual soul. It is true that mass meetings parade such ideas before him and seek to impress them on him by dint of mass suggestion, with the unedifying result that when the intoxication has worn off, the mass man promptly succumbs to another even more obvious and still louder slogan. His individual relation to God would be an effective shield against these pernicious influences. Did Christ ever call his disciples to him at a mass meeting? Did the feeding of the five thousand bring him any followers who did not afterward cry "Crucify him!" with the rest, when even the rock named Peter

showed signs of wavering? And are not Jesus and Paul prototypes of those who, trusting their inner experience, have gone their own individual ways, disregarding public opinion? 50

Marya Mannes also speaks to the concept of rebirth in Who Am I?

Essays On The Alienated:

For there are really two births -- the first physical, the second spiritual. Both share something in common: Premature expulsion, premature exposure, can damage both foetus and soul. The prenatal fluid that protects the foetus until it is ready for air has its counterpart in the secret world of the yet unborn identity....And that is precisely why I pity you. You stand naked and exposed in too large a world and that prenatal sac of your soul has been so repeatedly punctured by external influences, persuasions, and pressures that it must take superhuman will to keep yourself intact. Many of you don't. Or at least you find the only answer to a fragmented self in a fragmented life -- or a withdrawal from life. How in any case, are you going to know what you are or who you are when these hundreds of voices are doing the job for you? How do you know how much of what you think and do is what you really think and want to do, or how much is the feedback from what you hear about yourselves -- daily, hourly? 51 A lot of it, of course, is true.

It seems to me that the real crisis confronting humanity now is that we live in a world of overpowering institutions which are so all pervasive and all time consuming that one neither has the time

nor the inclination to try to find himself. It is really easier to just continue performing our institutional roles and reaping our institutional rewards than it is to challenge the status quo(s).

However, let us remember that Jesus' admonition to Nichodemus was made also at a time of overpowering institutions particularly the Roman State and Jewish culture of that time. In a sense, most of us today are asking the same question Nichodemus asked two thousand years ago, but gaining no clearer understanding than that which he seemed to have.

Another way of thinking about rebirth is to speak of "knowing thyself" or "conquering self". John Gardner writes:

Josh Billings said, "It is not only the most difficult thing to know oneself, but the most inconvenient one, too." Human beings have always employed an enormous variety of clever devices for running away from themselves, and the modern world is particularly rich in such stratagems. We can keep ourselves so busy, fill our lives with so many diversions, stuff our heads with so much knowledge, involve ourselves with so many people and cover so much ground that we never have time to probe the fearful and wonderful world within. More often than not we don't want to know ourselves, don't want to depend on ourselves, don't want to live with ourselves. By middle life most of us are accomplished fugitives from ourselves....

Niebur has written: The conquest of self is in a sense the inevitable consequence of true self-knowledge. If the self-centered self is shattered by a genuine

awareness of its situation, there is the power of a new
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 life in the experience.

Perhaps the best way to understand what self discovery or rebirth can mean to the individual is to explore the nature of institutions -- those multi-faceted organisms through and in which we play our minute-to-minute, day-to-day roles. Institutions are more than collections of people carrying out specialized tasks. Institutions take on special characteristics which are not just the sums of roles played by people. Institutions become greater than the sum of their constituent parts (people playing roles) and live a life of their own. This is not as far fetched as it sounds.

For example, let us take a college. A college contains students, teachers, janitors, administrators, cooks, trustees, donors, friends, alumni, etc. Yet none of these individuals or groups could claim to embody all of the institutional characteristics. However, each group accepts certain channels through which it conducts its relationships with other groups and through which it jockeyes to make its presence felt more powerfully in making policy. The insider and outsider both see the institution as an entity greater than the sum of its parts.

In order for their members to make sense of institutional structures and to inspire service to the group, institutional managers develop codes of ethics, great commitments, principles, objectives, etc. Often such published codes and creeds obscure what is really happening in the institution which may bear little resemblance to the stated goals.

It seems to me that the rebirth talked about by Jesus, Jung and

Mannes and "knowing thyself" talked about by Niebuhr, Billings, Gardner and others are one and the same phenomenon. First the self discovers itself, and as a consequence of self discovery the person is born again. Another way of explaining this concept is to say that the individual has become greater than the sum of his institutional roles. In other words, I am not just a son, husband, father, teacher, farmer, student, etc., I am an individual capable of playing many roles, and being many different things to many different people. But above all, I am conscious of my individuality and can define, to a large degree, the qualitative aspects of my institutional relationships.

If we can assume that rebirth/self discovery takes place, what then are some of the ways that such can take place? (For the purpose of this analysis, I am going to define rebirth and self discovery as being one and the same and will further refer only to self discovery.)

The mechanism that is self discovery is quite simple to understand if we return to looking at an institution as something greater than the sum of people playing institutional roles. In discovering self, the individual becomes greater than the sum of his institutional roles. Another way of looking at self discovery is to say that the individual understands the nature and source of his values. After such an understanding has taken place, he is then free to choose what his values are going to be or, in other words, use free will.

I recently served as an Appalachian Studies consultant to the high schools of Dayton, Ohio. In Dayton there are a large number of Appalachian migrants living who have had to migrate to the city to find work. Though some have been there over twenty-five years, they still regard Appalachia as home and eventually plan to return. The students in the lower grades are very conscious of their "Appalachianess" and

are also conscious of the other ethnic groups living in the inner city. However, their friends and relatives still living in the mountains have no such consciousness because they have not had to continuously confront other groups in social situations. In a sense, those in the city are learning something about their values by learning about the values of people who are different from them. This situation can also create some serious problems when the young migrants are being taught by teachers who assume the young students to be without values or as possessing an inferior set of values.

It seems to me that the chief function of the school, after basic skills have been imparted, should be to help the student undergo self discovery as the necessary prelude to learning how to be free. (See next section on self definition.) Others might feel that this is the prerogative of the church, but, if so, how do we reach the more than half of our population who do not darken church doors?

What follows are some suggested ways of accomplishing self discovery:

One can discover something of his personal history and gain insight into his values by studying systematically who he isn't. I once asked a group of my Upward Bound students to participate in an exercise in discovering self. We agreed to use the religious self in our exercise. The questioning was between me and one student with the remainder of the students participating whenever they wished. I knew the particular religious group of which the student was a member so I deliberately asked her if she was a member of other groups. We started with a question as to whether or not she was a member of the Islamic faith. She stated that she was not and I then asked her why she was not. This led into a discussion of the Islamic faith and some research into the subject.

We next went on with questions into other religions and research into those religions. Finally we came to the Christian religion and she stated that she was a member of the Christian faith. She was not Catholic, which led us into a discussion of the Protestant Reformation. She was neither Baptist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, nor any of the sect denominations active in the Appalachian region. We finally narrowed the search down and "discovered" that she was Methodist. When asked why she was Methodist, we again had to do some further exploration and finally hypothesized that one of her ancestors had been influenced by Asbury during one of his numerous treks through the region during the nineteenth century and this particular ancestor had handed his new found faith to his sons and daughters who had in turn passed it on down. Our exercise took only about two hours and was only superficial at best, but this student, and the others as well, had gained some insight into a technique which could enable them to investigate their personal histories, not just for an explanation and exploration of religious values, but to investigate the source and nature of many of their values and attitudes. Additionally, these students gained some glimpses into historical, social and religious movements and the circumstances leading to "reformations" and revolutions. Continued over a long period of time, this type of analysis could give one profound insights into history, philosophy, psychology and anthropology.

By asking questions about systems one can discover the mechanics of role playing within systems and some of the ways that systems can intimidate and/or enslave people without their knowing how and why.

Postman and Weingartner in Teaching as a Subversive Activity offer some questions that give students a basis for understanding systems:

These questions, with variations and modifications, may be used as the basis for examining any system (e.g., the home, the government, mathematics, historical description, war, marriage, astrophysics, the school, suburbia, the draft, etc.).

What are the purposes of the system?

What roles are people assigned?

What rules must be followed?

What rights and restrictions are given and imposed?

What are some of its critical, underlying assumptions?

What are its key words?

To what extent do the problems of the system require decisions? choices? solutions?

To what extent is the system changing?

What are the mechanisms for change within the system?

To what extent is the language of the system obsolete?

What are the critical, nonverbal symbols of the system?

To what extent are these changing?

What is the actual effect of the system on people?

To what extent is this different from the ostensible purpose of the system?

Are there alternatives to the system?

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Can we do without it?

Asking these questions about one's institutions puts one in the positions of being able to examine the more overt forces which, to a

large degree, systematically control his actions and determine his attitudes toward his perception of reality. Just because one is able to examine his institutional roles systematically does not mean that he will discontinue playing roles, but the examination will alter his perception and could make him more a master than a servant of his institutions or at least bring more equality into the relationship so that one does not always have to feel that he is being "put down" or dealt powerless by someone in a power relationship above him.

Self encounter enables one to discover self. Much has been written, pro and con, about "sensitivity" and "encounter" groups during the past few years, and I hesitate to get involved in the controversy. However, I feel that self encounter is one of the primary methods of self discovery. During the stage(s) of our lives when we are being formed by institutions, our sheer security and survival usually demand, to a large degree, an uncompromising acceptance of what we are told. This uncritical acceptance of institutional demands, particularly when those institutions are working cooperatively and in tandem, can lead one to believe that the reality he perceives is the only true reality and that the perceptions of others, especially in other cultures, are heretical. Cross cultural encounters may serve the purpose of making one seriously examine the values he has held uncritically. This baring of defenses can lead to some very traumatic situations, but, I believe, when approached within a group where unconditional acceptance is present, such encounters tend to strengthen, rather than weaken individuals and can be one of the best mechanisms for discovering self. The high school and college students I have taught over the years generally agree with me on this point.

A comparative study of the usage of languages and symbols aids in self discovery. A trait that seems to be uniquely human is our ability to codify reality and transmit our perception of such through the use of symbols. By examining the way we codify reality in comparison to the ways of codification by others of other cultures, we can gain some insight into our psyches, particularly if we believe that language is a personal thing which represents the particulars of our own personalities, as well as the collective thoughts and mores of our cultures.

A relationship with a self transcending individual helps one to discover self. If one has a continuous in depth relationship with a self transcending individual (see later discussion), the dynamics of that relationship can add additional meaning to the self discovery techniques already mentioned.

Discovering self is, in a sense, also discovering a potential for self. Self discovery enables one to gain some objectivity about who he is and how he came to be that way, and at the same time allows him a glimpse of who he might become.

Part IV
Self Definition

When driving through the mountain and valleys of Appalachia one passes some churches which have "free will" written before their denominational names. It is possible that most of the individuals who claim membership in that particular church do not know what is meant by free will, since they have inherited from their secessionist elders a ready made church with ready made symbolic expressions which tend to structure the service and free the individual members from worry about the implications of names and other symbols.

It seems to me that the individual who has been "born" again begins to use the term before the denominational name, "free will". In other words, the person who has discovered self then begins to freely define self. This does not mean that he is free from the many deterministic influences that play such a great role in the lives of all of us, influences such as heredity, geography, economics, etc. It means that he has become a "choosing" individual in the sense that he is now choosing values. He may choose values which have influenced him all his life, but he may also choose values that were anathema to his parents, peers, and teachers, simply because he feels that the new value is more important to him.

For example, an individual may have been brought up in a culture that values large families. Through a historical analysis, the individual may have reasoned that the purpose for the large family

lies in the fact that so many children in the culture used to die that it was important to have a large family to insure propagation of the culture and species. Modern medical care may have lessened the dependence on large numbers of offspring needed to insure survival. The individual may also be aware of the problems of overpopulation and pollution problems brought on in part by overpopulation and wish to make a personal commitment to controlling both population and pollution, both for the sake of himself and his children and for the sake of society and the world.

It is possible to freely affirm a new value only if one understands the source and something of the nature of the old value. Otherwise, the person would always feel a sense of guilt for giving up something deemed necessary by his culture.

This understanding of one's cultural and personal values, in a sense, puts one in the position of being what Postman and Weingartner call a good "crap detector":

We are talking about the schools cultivating in the young that most "subversive" intellectual instrument -- the anthropological perspective. This perspective allows one to be part of his own culture and, at the same time, to be out of it. One views the activities of his own group as would an anthropologist, observing its tribal rituals, its fears, its conceits, its ethnocentrism. In this way, one is able to recognize when reality begins to drift too far away from the grasp of the tribe.

We need hardly say that achieving such a perspective is extremely difficult, requiring, among other things, considerable courage. We are, after all, talking about achieving a high degree of freedom from the intellectual and social constraints of one's tribe. For example, it is generally assumed that people of other tribes have been victimized by indoctrination from which our tribe has remained free. Our own outlook seems "natural" to us, and we wonder that other men can perversely persist in believing nonsense. Yet, it is undoubtedly true that, for most people, the acceptance of a particular doctrine is largely attributable to the accident of birth. They might be said to be "ideologically interchangeable", which means that they would have accepted any set of doctrines that happened to be valued by the tribe to which they were born. Each of us, whether from the American tribe, Russian tribe or Hopi tribe, is born into symbolic environment as well as a physical one. We become accustomed very early to a "natural" way of talking and being talked to, about "truth." Quite arbitrarily, one's perception of what is "true" or real is shaped by the symbols and symbol manipulating institutions of his tribe. Most men, in time, learn to respond with fervor and obedience to a set of verbal abstractions which they feel provides them with an ideological identity. One word for this, of course, is

"prejudice". None of us is free of it, but it is the sign of a competent "crap detector" that he is not completely captivated by the arbitrary abstractions of the community in which he happened to grow up.

....Those who are sensitive to the verbally built-in biases of their "natural" environment seem "sub-
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versive" to those who are not.

The person who has discovered himself through uncovering his built-in biases and who is defining himself within the larger community must then run the risk of violating community mores and must be prepared to defend his actions. This may mean a temporary and often final break from the security of the peer group, but it also points up the fact that the self defining person need not unnecessarily alienate himself from family and peers by flaunting his defining/choosing in such a way as to unnecessarily threaten the security of those who still find security in behaving according to group dictates. One can march to his own drum beat without stumbling over the troops of the drill sergeant every time.

The person who has discovered self and who has begun to define self, suddenly sees his world in a different light when compared to his perception prior to self discovery. "Crap detecting" is just one of many new perceptions.

The self defining person views roles as societal necessities, but is not troubled when he has to define his roles in non-traditional ways. After assessing what needs to be done in a particular situation,

he feels free to act even though his actions may violate the traditional prescription for action in a particular situation, but he acts on the basis of what he feels needs to be done and not on the basis of social prescription. He views roles as transitory, as means to ends, but not as ends in themselves.

If he is a member of an organization and has reached a level of incompetence, he has no qualms about asking to be allowed to return to a prior status where he was more valuable to the organization and more confident of his abilities. If necessary, he may leave the security of his organization to join another at a lower level financially if he feels it is necessary in order to make the contribution he feels he is most capable of making to himself, his family, and society. In other words, he may be willing to play corporate gamesmanship, but only if he can satisfy his own deepest desires at the same time.

The self defining person may willingly and actively take on community responsibilities, but he resists taking positions that will allow others to become and remain dependent upon him or that will place him in a position of acting responsibly while others can act irresponsibly. He resists becoming a martyr for popular causes of the day, though is not totally opposed to the concept of martyrdom.

The self defining individual realizes that he is constantly in a process of discovering self and the discoveries made on a day to day basis enter into the continuous defining process. He is both "being" and "becoming" at the same time enslaved neither by traditional definitions of his institutional roles or by striving toward a future role or position that requires sacrificing present needs to achieve

the possible later, greater reward. He can live for the moment while at the same time planning for alternate future courses. His life is in a creative flux, planning but not planned.

He is open to experience and does not rely on preconceived concepts in order to evaluate each new experience. In fact, new experiences need not be thought through rationally at all, but enjoyed simply for the feelings involved. He is not worried that others will think his actions "inappropriate" for a mature adult. He is not content to enjoy only those experiences that are "proper" for someone in his station in life.

He is philosophically eclectic. Different philosophical constructs may be quite appealing, but he resists being labeled as an embodiment of a particular philosophers' ideal. He is aware of the many deterministic influences in his life which are beyond his control, but he rejoices in the choices of possible lifestyles open to him and lives life fully within what he perceives to be his freedom to do so.

He is self confident, but not cocky. He can objectively evaluate his talents and the relative degree each has been developed. Being aware of his talents, his choices and options, and his own aggressiveness to develop, he does not have to damn others in order to give himself a feeling of worth in a relative sense.

During self definition, the individual is existing in something of an institutional vacuum -- in a sense, he is on his own personal "forty day trip into the wilderness". Self definition could be compared to the adjustment period the infant goes through just after birth, except that this time the individual is beginning to draw

upon the psychic nurture he will need when he re-enters the world of institutions as his own man, or, as the mountain minister would say, after being "made whole".

During self definition, one has temporarily suspended interaction with institutions and other individuals. During this suspension, the individual actively chooses certain values around which he will organize the "willing" part of his personality. The gap between his conscious and unconscious has narrowed (Jung).⁵⁵ The cognitive is [fact] has become fused with the ought [value] (Maslow).⁵⁶ The individual has "created himself" (Tillich) and becomes "organized in his individuality" (Jung).^{57,58}

Having defined himself, the individual is now ready for re-entry into the world of other individuals and institutions, or to transcend himself.

Part V
Self Transcendence

I was recently engaged in a conversation, with a theologian friend, concerning the Appalachian region. Specifically, we were talking about the tendency of many mountaineers to accept a literalistic interpretation of the Bible. He stated, in effect, that "mountaineers need to be ridded of their impossible theology, just as they need to be ridded of the worms in their stomachs", a statement that would stun a kicking mule.

In addition to having different philosophical and theological viewpoints, our differing "space bubbles" also became involved in our encounter. Whereas we began our conversation on the sidewalk, we soon moved to the grass -- my friend advanced and I backed up slowly until I had backed into a holly bush, receiving his points and several points of the holly simultaneously at two different points of my anatomy. At that point, obviously, the encounter ended, at least for the time being.

While reflecting later upon the content of our conversation, it occurred to me that my friend was guilty of almost exactly what he was scolding mountaineers about. While chiding some mountaineers about taking a literalistic interpretation of the Bible, he was taking a literalistic interpretation of his own thoughts.

While many mountaineers perhaps need to transcend the literality of the Bible, in order to more fully understand its symbolic meanings, I feel the theologian needed to transcend the literality of his own

thinking, in order to symbolically understand the content of his own thought. Had he done so, he might have felt more in tune with the religious striving of many mountaineers, and perhaps lessened the severity of his judgement on them.

Transcendence is a word that lends itself to many meanings, of which the above usage is only one. It has been discussed by several writers (Maslow, Jung, Frankl, Tillich, Gregg). Most usually transcendence is used to describe an attitude, a perception or a level of consciousness. But for my particular purpose, I am using transcendence to describe the acts of self defining individuals and the consequences of the acts determined by his attitudes, perceptions and his level of consciousness.

Jung states in Modern Man in Search of a Soul:

In my picture of the world there is a vast outer realm and an equally vast inner realm; between these two stands man, facing now one and now the other, and, according to his mood or disposition, taking the one for the absolute truth by denying or sacrificing the
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other.

It seems to me that the self defining person transcends these realms, not by accepting one or the other, but by bringing them into harmony or into a transcendent whole. Also, with regard to his own existence, I feel the self transcending person, in a sense, surpasses the inner organization of his being and perceives the universal blue print or essence by which all men are formed. He has gone From Existence to Essence -- perceiving essence via

existence (his own).

One of the consequences of transcending one's own existence (self defined) is to participate in what I believe Carl Rogers would call "an organismic commonality of value directions". He states:

In persons who are moving toward greater openness to their experiencing, there is an organismic commonality of value direction. These common value directions are of such kinds as to enhance the development of the individual himself, of others in his community, and to make for the survival and evolution of his species.

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In other words, the values such individuals choose not only enhance self, but the whole of mankind as well. One chooses for himself and for everyone simultaneously.

The most important thing to me about self transcendence is not what it is, but what it allows to happen -- its consequences: while self definition occurs in an institutional and cultural vacuum, self transcendence brings one again back into the context of culture and into the context of individual to individual encounters.

At the person to person level, the self transcending person becomes the midwife for the rebirth or self discovery of the other person. Kierkegaard states in Philosophical Fragments: "Between man and man the Socratic midwifery is the highest relation, and begetting is reserved for God, whose love is creative...."

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The self transcending person is creative in the sense that he has, during self definition, participated in his own creation by choosing values. Having gone through the existence to essence process he has gained an understanding of his own humanness which allows him to have what Rogers calls "unconditional positive regard" for others. This seems to me to be the primary requirement for being a successful midwife.

At the person to culture level, the self transcending person is able to fulfill several important roles: He can serve his culture(s) as a poet holding up a mirror so that those within can gain a transcendental look at the ethos of the culture. He can serve as a prophet by making those of the culture aware of the conditions which shaped and molded it into its particular form and by offering different models for change and growth. He can serve as a sage by his wise counsel and keep us from being led astray by "false idols and graven images". In a sense, in addition to serving as midwife for the rebirth of individuals, he serves his culture similarly.

In summary then, in the beginning the child is a unity. Separation takes place as he is structured and formed by institutions, systems and individuals. In self discovery/ rebirth a person becomes aware of his freedom to choose what he is going to be -- i.e., the values he will later act upon. His self definition is the sum total of the choices he makes once he has become aware of his freedom to choose and is a mental, emotional, spiritual process. During self definition he acts upon himself, or gets in tune with himself. At the operational level, the self defining self must go one step farther, and that is

to transcend self. While self definition is the self acting upon itself, self transcendence is the self acting again within the context of institutions in relation to other people. The self transcending individual, choosing and acting on values which at the same time are the best for him and for society, hence universal, does not have to suffer the conflict between what he feels is best for him and what is best for society since they are close to being one and the same. At the more intimate person to person level, the self transcending individual becomes the midwife for other individuals in the struggle for rebirth. At the end, after having gone through in one way or another the developmental steps I have described, the individual becomes unified again, except this time the unity is in a completely different realm.

The individual is at one with himself. He has been "made whole".

He is unified with his culture, though not bound by it. He knows where his freedom lies.

He is unified with mankind. He knows where his responsibilities lie.

He can know of his being in three ways:

*I am unique in that there is no one else exactly like me. I can rejoice in my uniqueness.

*I am like some in that I am a product of a particular culture, and though I become a self transcending human being, I will still exhibit the stamp of my culture in many ways. I can rejoice in being a Hillbilly.

*I am like all in that many of my characteristics are universal in nature. I can rejoice in being part of the brotherhood of man.

In a certain broad sense of the word, as long as any man is enslaved, I am not free. In a more specific sense, as long as those of my culture are subjected to the enslaving tendencies of our own and outside institutions, I cannot rest, unless I am contributing to their liberation. The freedom granted me through rebirth carries with it a responsibility to serve as midwife for the rebirth of others when called upon.

Practical Considerations:

My Crown is a Holey Hat

In the early thirties a young theologian came to an Appalachian college to undertake a special task. Upon his arrival he was given the following charge by the president of the college: "You will be responsible for building a golden bridge from an impossible mountain theology to the modern world."⁶² At about that same time a Black graduate of an Appalachian college, Carter Woodson, was writing in The Mis-education of the Negro a thought somewhat at variance with the doctrine expoused by the college president: "History does not furnish a case of the elevation of a people by ignoring the thought and aspiration of the people thus served."⁶³ Each of these men, the theologian and the historian, was to make his mark in his respective profession, but their divergent viewpoints have yet to be reconciled.

There is a story in the mountains about a farmer who was particularly prone to interpreting signs, even to the point of cerebrating about their meanings, while at the same time allowing weeds to take his corn. While plowing one day, when he was at the end of a row, he decided to rest his mule and also catch up with some of his prognosticating. As his mule devoured some of the Johnson grass growing up around the fence, the farmer, while lying on his back looking up at the sky, noticed a cloud formation in the form of "P" and "C".

Being of a somewhat religious orientation, he immediately recognized the signs as meaning that he should "Preach Christ". So he answered the call.

Some time later he came back to his farm in a state of almost total disillusionment, being a failure in the small church he ministered to and on the revival circuit as well. While standing near the same spot where he had originally noticed the "P C", he was approached by his neighbor who was plowing on the other side of the fence. After sharing his experiences with his neighbor, he felt that a hard burden had just been lifted from his back. The neighbor, something of a sign reader himself, took note of the weeds swaying higher than the corn in the farmer's field. "You have misread the signs," said he. "The 'P C' meant 'Plow Corn', not 'Preach Christ'."

Like the farmer, the would-be builders of "golden bridges" often misread the signs also. Hence, the golden bridges, which perhaps could have meant the beginning of an intercultural understanding, have merely been "one way" passages to the "better way" on the other side. In most instances, however, these bridges are only dreams in the minds of the builders, rather than realities for the people they are to serve. The gap between the cultures remains unbridged. For the most part, these "construction engineers" are merely captains of tugboats, pushing along their cargo (us) to a polluted mainstream.

Mr. Weller has stated succinctly: "We, the outsiders, must move the mountaineer along one decision at a time...." (presumably across the

"golden bridge"). Although I do not claim to be able to interpret signs, I see signs which indicate that a new approach to education needs to be tried in Appalachia -- an approach that will build bridges which allow students to enter other worlds, so to speak, without having to forsake their own. Such bridges need not be golden; perhaps they could be built more profitably from yellow locust, a material with which we're more familiar. Although it might not have the glitter of the former, its composition would not obscure its purpose. Such a bridge would obviously greatly reduce the tugboat traffic.

Although outsiders and Appalachians may disagree on what changes need to be made and how they are to be implemented, it seems to me that most of us agree that some fundamental changes do need to take place. I offer my list to those already in circulation: (1) institutional reforms, (2) "recalls" and (3) curriculum reforms.

Institutional Reforms

Although Mountain writers have been calling for a regional cultural identity for over a century (starting at about the time the frontier melting pot had been accomplished), institutional structures have not yet been devised to make this dream a reality. One of the seemingly never ending ironies Appalachians deal with daily is that those institutions which have the will to do something of a very positive nature for the region have yet to develop the means, while those institutions blessed with the means have yet to develop the will.

Since the Civil Rights Revolution of the Sixties many ethnic minorities have developed scholarly studies programs dealing with their own groups. Tragically, in my opinion, most groups had to conduct demonstrations and even resort to violence in order to have their grievances addressed in any meaningful way. It is my sincere hope that Appalachian people will be able to bring about institutional reform with less drastic action.

One of our primary institutional problems has to do with the political jurisdictions which divide up the Appalachian region. Mountain people are not only ethnically different from the other people in their respective states, but, at least since the Civil War, have tended to be politically different as well. Mountain counties generally stayed with the Union during the Civil War and were considered to be traitorous by their Confederate neighbors. Yet because of their geographic location and because of the general lack of cultural understanding of mountain people by Northern leaders, they were also distrusted by the North.

One of the results of the severe divisions that racked many mountain counties during the War was the numerous feuds that did not die down until the early part of this century. Consequently, the region took much longer to recover from the effects of the War than did either the North or the South. Recovery, in fact, is still going on.

The political realignment that occurred as a result of the Civil War left Mountain counties aligned politically with each other, but unaligned politically with respect to the other counties of their

respective states. Most of these counties became staunchly Republican, while the states became part of what until recently was considered "The Solid South" for the Democratic Party. Consequently, these counties are the last to receive services provided by their states and the first to lose the services during a budget crunch.

State governments have been sometimes unbelievably unresponsive to the needs of those living in the Appalachian portions of their states. Yet our "helpers" are always chiding us for being "uninterested" in government, as if government would somehow miraculously respond if we would but show some interest. The sad political reality is that we don't have enough numbers or own enough property and money to make a purely political showing.

Edgar S. Fraley has suggested, not altogether facetiously, that the answer to our political problems is to create a separate state of Appalachia which would become the 51st state. Such a state, he notes, would be our wealthiest state in terms of resources -- timber, coal, limestone and water -- and have more natural beauty than any other. Additionally, it would be controlled by those who reside within it.⁶⁴

The closest thing we now have to a "state" of Appalachia is the Appalachian Regional Commission. The ARC is a cooperative endeavor of the Federal Government and the thirteen states which have Appalachian counties. Thus far, in my opinion, the Appalachian Regional Commission has been noted more for its not too "benign neglect" of the region than for living up to its innovative potential. It has been responsible for building a modern highway network throughout the region, now more than half finished, and for developing a network of vocational schools. Now we can at least move faster physically to and back from "middle America",

equipped with job skills in demand in the industrial cities of the midwest.

Since each governor of each participating state has a veto over programs to be initiated by the ARC, timidity is all too often the primary attribute exhibited by the Appalachian Regional Commission with regard to human resource-type programs. Concrete and bricks and mortar projects usually do not stir up much opposition and it is not too hard to get the open cooperation of the different governors for construction and road programs.

The ARC was conceived at the end of an era, an era characterized by simplistic notions that all was needed to "solve Appalachia's problems" was to devise ways to hasten our integration into the "mainstream". Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on one's viewpoint, the "mainstream" became polluted before we got there necessitating further development of conceptual schemes. Hopefully, this time the needs of the mountain people will become integrated into the grand design and our political institutions will become more indigeneous to the culture and responsive to our needs -- both human and material.

Perhaps part of the reason we are in so much need of political reform can be attributed to the media stereotypes that have become so prevalent over the years. W.D. Weatherford and Wilma Dykeman in The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey state: "Mountain life had the misfortune of being represented for many years by authors from outside the region--missionaries, Northern teachers, junketing newspapermen, or even by such able storytellers as O. Henry." Their article,

published in 1962, came before another onslaught of outsider's writings in the 1960's, some of which I referred to in Chapter II. The net effect on a people of being defined by the "other" for two hundred years is hard to imagine, but I can't conceive of it being positive.

Many of our educational institutions bear a very uncomfortable resemblance to the old plantation slave systems of the South. The Overseer can be compared to the "Northern teachers and missionaries" mentioned by Weatherford and Dykeman. These missionaries and teachers, who were many times one and the same, often felt, as did the plantation owners and the Overseers that their charges were entirely devoid of culture and completely dependent upon them for intellectual, vocational and spiritual guidance. Also, like the Overseer, they had to produce or run the risk of no longer having their jobs. Numbers were of utmost importance and one's standing among these groups depended upon how many souls had been saved (translated -- how many had joined their church?) or upon how many had become literate (translated -- how many now perceived the world as they did?). Failure to produce could mean losing the financial and moral support of those funding the missionary work.

Some large plantations in the South, in addition to having Overseers in charge of working their slaves, also employed black "slave drivers" who received a better diet and better clothes than the other slaves, in return for assisting the Overseer.⁶⁶ In Appalachia those who sold out their feelings and thoughts in order to gain the rewards of the systems of outside exploitation could be compared to the

slave drivers of the plantations with their better clothes and better diets. The differences between the exploitation of slaves and the exploitation of mountaineers are of degree and not of kind.

Some years ago, an Appalachian college granted an honorary doctorate to Al Capp, the creator of the comic strip "Lil Abner". Capp's accomplishment would make the most dedicated Overseers and slave drivers of the last century green with envy. "Lil Abner" has long been the most widely distributed media portrayal of Southern Appalachian life. Undoubtedly there are many universal truths examined and developed by Capp through the strip, but how many people are insightful enough to look beyond the degradation and misrepresentation of a people in order to garner such understanding? By way of analogy, imagine what would happen in the Black community if Howard University were to grant an honorary degree to George Wallace. The degree to which many of our people have been led to believe the outsider's portrayal of our culture is underscored when one notes that the Capp incident occurred with scarcely a ripple.

The reform of Appalachian educational institutions after one and one-half centuries of control by non-Appalachians is going to be very difficult, but I hope not impossible. Our identities are so closely interwoven with that which we control, that it isn't easy to get off the back of the other guy. Reform of our educational institutions, it seems to me, will have to be from the top down.

We have no university that is regional in its orientation. Although the region is heavily populated with universities, all state

supported, for the political reasons discussed earlier, they are not allowed to undertake the types of research and curriculum development that could take us a long way toward solving some of our worst educational problems. Attempts to form research consortia have met with interest on the part of many university administrators, but no ways have been found to fund such programs. It would be nice to have a regional university or a cooperative venture of several regional institutions to serve university purposes, but I'm afraid we can't muster the resources to begin such a project.

Appalachia is also populated heavily with private and religious denominational colleges. Although many of these colleges were specifically established to serve people of the region, financial realities made many abandon such ideals long ago. James Branscome offers a description of some of these institutions in "Annihilating the Hillbilly";

Forced by accrediting agencies, visiting boards, and hundreds of other pressures to maintain a facade of "academic excellence", usually with Christ thrown in somewhere, the church-supported schools spend little time thinking about the community below their mountainside. Their emphasis on admitting Appalachian students is so small, their tuition so high, and pressure so intense from church supporters outside the region to admit their sons and daughters, that most of these colleges have an inordinately high percentage of students from states like New Jersey. Certainly to these colleges, "Christian" education has nothing to do with serving the victims of Caesar's educational system.⁶⁷

State institutions can usually weather troubled times more successfully than small private institutions. If a state college has a poor president, the state will not stop providing money for the continued operation, and instead will shop around for a new administrator. Because of the intricacies of church school politics, it is not always easy to correct such a problem in a church-related college, and an institution can practically die from having its sources of funds dry up while administrative hassles are resolved. Many Appalachian colleges have undergone and are even now undergoing such transitional pains.

Several private Appalachian colleges offer relatively low-cost educations to Appalachian students and many have work programs whereby students can avoid going deeply in debt and draining meager family resources. Supplemented by Economic Opportunity Grants, College Work Study, and National Defense Loans, it is now possible for many students to obtain a college education where such was unthinkable even five years ago.

However, most colleges which cater largely to an Appalachian clientele do not mirror Appalachian culture in such a way as to allow their students opportunity to go back to their culture as leaders. These colleges were usually missionary in their early years, and their organizational structures still reflect such origins. Boards of Trustees are from outside the region or else from the outside missioning to the region. Administrators and teachers, likewise, are from outside, although some natives who have adopted the values of "middle America" are sometimes given positions.

It seems to me inevitable that trustees will choose administrators who reflect their cultural values and that administrators will choose teachers who reflect their cultural values. The process continues as admission directors select those students who most nearly reflect the values of those in charge, or at least those who by their test scores and recommendations demonstrate the possibility of being trainable for the industrial society from which most of the teachers and administrators come. This cycle of privilege is just as much of a reality as the cycle of poverty in Appalachia.

How does one break the cycle of institutional bigotry and racism and initiate the types of reforms that will make our institutions of higher learning responsive to the culture(s) wherein they reside? I wish I knew the answer! For any meaningful reform to take place, we must somehow either gain some voice in the governance of regional institutions or else try to gather the resources to begin new ones. We can not and, I believe, will not continue to serve the larger society with a source of raw materials for industry and a people to be exploited for an indefinite amount of time.

Lest I give the impression that at no time have we had institutions responsive to our needs, I would like to point out that there have been exceptions to the general situations which I have described. James Still, Don West, and Jesse Stuart all attended and graduated from Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, within a relatively short time of each other. Each of these writers has contributed greatly to regional literature and cultural analysis. Without taking away any of the credit which must be given them as individuals, it seems to me that something was also happening at LMU at that time which

allowed and encouraged the talents of each of these men to flower. Perhaps it was a single teacher, or perhaps it was the general climate of the institution at that time. At any rate, it was a unique watershed period, which I would like to see recur more often.

"Recall"

In this day and time when the consumer is beginning to demand accountability at the marketplace, a new concept has gained its place in our daily affairs. This new concept, which affects many of our encounters, is the concept of "recall".

Hardly a day goes by when we do not read of General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, or some other huge corporation sending out recall notices for consumers to bring in their automobiles, televisions, refrigerators, heating units, etc., for repairs and modification which enable the products to live up to advance billing and which make the corporations more immune to lawsuits due to injuries sustained from defective merchandise.

But what about the person who has been subjected to a defective education or who has been victimized by institutional racism and bigotry? Could the consumer movement begin to deal with his legitimate grievances?

Carter Woodson, the famous Black historian, entitled one of his most noted works: The Mis-education of the Negro. Woodson went into great detail to explain how Negroes were subjected to educational processes which systematically proceeded to drain them of their identities both individually and collectively. His work is extremely notable for

its philosophical justification for Black Studies and serves well as a rationale for ethnic studies in general.

The Mountaineer, having been similarly drained of his identity and similarly degraded, is also the victim of miseducation although not as overtly as the miseducation of Black people. Just how do we go about demanding a recall?

Obviously, all Appalachians who have been victimized by the formal educational processes cannot suddenly present themselves again at the schoolhouse door demanding redress. Yet there are ways that we can go about re-educating ourselves and through the process bring about a cultural renaissance that might prevent further miseducation from taking place.

Two years ago I taught an "Introduction to Appalachian Studies" course at Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Kentucky. The class was held at night which allowed several of the college teachers to take the class and also encouraged people from the surrounding communities to take advantage of the opportunity. I was completely unprepared for what happened in the class.

Until that time Appalachian Studies had been a developing interest of mine which I had used effectively in motivating dropouts in a special dropout program which I had directed some years before and which had also proven effective in motivating Upward Bound students. However, I had not pursued Appalachian Studies in an in-depth systematic way. Therefore, the Cumberland class gave me a chance to see what serious-minded adults could do with some interdisciplinary inquiry

into Appalachian culture.

Most of the students in the class were over thirty with some members in their fifties and sixties. Several seniors in their twenties also took the class. Practically all of the students had an Appalachian background. Some took the course in order to satisfy a social science requirement, but most took it in order to understand more completely their own identities.

At first the class members were a little apprehensive about embarking on such a previously uncharted course. Most first started defining Appalachian culture in terms of the media stereotypes so commonly used with the primary definitions being of an economic nature. As we proceeded further the overt defensiveness which characterized the class at first began to fade and we began to seriously examine Appalachian values, speculating about how they were formed and modified through time and by circumstance. People began to deal honestly with each other and share some of their own special trials and tribulations especially those concerned with what had happened to them during the formal educational processes.

Suddenly, and in ways which defy description, the members of the class seemed to experience rebirth -- both individually and collectively-- and the class began to proceed on an entirely different level than before. Individuals who had never written a poem began to stay up all night writing poetry, poetry which usually reflected their experiences while growing up. Others began to do serious research into their own backgrounds and scholarly papers of from seventy-five to 150 pages began to be presented by members of the group. One student, Mr. Charles

Smith, a mathematics professor at Cumberland and a native of Clay County, Kentucky, began an extraordinary analysis of Appalachian culture which, I feel, may soon become one of the definitive works about the region. He divided the culture into three categories which have special meaning for most of the region: the "hollow people", the "big road people" and the "downtowners". When completed and published, this work will fill a void that continues to exist in regional analyses and which the social scientists have thus far been unable to fill -- perhaps because of their training. It is possible that individuals unencumbered by conceptual models that may be obsolete when dealing with present day situations may prove to be of great value in developing Appalachian Studies as an interdisciplinary field. Appalachian Studies is certainly not the exclusive domain of any existing academic discipline.

Significantly, members of the Cumberland College class had begun to define themselves in terms which had personal meaning to them, issuing neither blanket approval nor blanket condemnation of the culture of which they were a part and viewing it with a rare objectivity. Because it had assumed personal meaning, most of the class began to view scholarship in an entirely different light also -- in short, they were "turned on".

What happened in "Introduction to Appalachian Studies" at Cumberland could happen at all other institutions of higher learning throughout the region, once there are enough leaders trained in the

field. I do not for a moment underestimate the time and energy necessary to generate such leadership, but at least we have begun to overcome institutional inertia.

As I have mentioned earlier, I feel that one of the greatest tragedies of the miseducation wrought upon Appalachian people is that perpetrated upon the teaching profession. Appalachian teachers who have been convinced of the innate inferiority of the culture which nurtured them are poorly equipped to boost the sagging morale of students, who because they cannot successfully negotiate the "fotched on" education system, are candidates for dropping out of school at the earliest possible date. There are at least four ways of helping such teachers overcome these handicaps: (1) Appalachian Studies Master's Degree Programs, (2) In Service Training Programs, (3) Journals -- educating each other and (4) Night School.

Appalachian Studies Master's Degree Programs. Many teachers in the region are expressing interest in obtaining a Master's degree in Appalachian Studies. Unfortunately, no institution has yet begun the necessary steps to begin setting up such a program. Some are willing, but financially unable to generate the necessary capital to finance the program. Others are financially able, or could easily obtain the necessary funding, but are philosophically opposed to developing such a program. In another of the ironies to which I have referred, an Appalachian Studies program will probably have to be brought into the region by some college or university from outside the region and utilize the talents of those from the region who have

been developing programs on their own. This is one of the handicaps of not having a truly regional university.

Although it is hard to get such a new degree program started, I believe it is necessary to study the culture as an entity unto itself since practically all previous studies have compared the Appalachian and his culture to a middle class norm -- usually to the disadvantage of things Appalachian. There are literally hundreds of studies showing how we are unlike those of the middle class, but I am unaware of any that try to systematically examine why the culture is what it is and how it came to be that way.

I believe that the only way that we can begin to correct many of the historical and cultural inaccuracies now perpetrated in the public (and private) schools of Appalachia is to develop a research/teaching oriented Master's Degree in Appalachian Studies. There is so much research to be done that it will take years to begin to adequately fill the information gap perpetrated upon us by those who have initiated and controlled our formal educational systems. Just to get things started I have listed some suggestions about subjects that seem, to me, to be worthy of intensive investigation:

**The American Indian has always known that the Puritans weren't his ancestors. Blacks and Chicanos, likewise, have probably never confused themselves with those who settled our New England shores some three hundred years ago. However, it came as a surprise to me some years ago to discover that the Puritans weren't my ancestors, neither biologically nor spiritually. All through my school years I had

I learned about my Puritan "forefathers" and we had dressed in Puritan hats and coats to celebrate Thanksgiving. No one at home ever mentioned the Puritans -- just the teachers at school. I suspected something was amiss, but I didn't understand why until much later in my life.

**The Sect Church of Appalachia and those churches derived from the puritans are all Calvinistic in some of their orientation. Yet why are there such dramatic differences in outlook among the two groups? Research in this area might help explain why Appalachia has been such a fertile ground for New England missionary attempts and perhaps also why their efforts have met with mixed success. Research findings might help both native and missionary understand why so many communications problems have existed throughout the years of intensive mission work in the region. Last, such research might help all concerned to understand the integrity of Appalachian religious beliefs so that needed changes could be sought in a more enlightened and humane manner.

**Itinerant youths have long found Appalachia to be a fertile ground for gaining "experience" in "relating". Is there something about Appalachian culture and the different youth cultures that makes Appalachia so attractive to wandering youth? Some observers feel that youths and Appalachians are similarly exploited by the "system". Others feel that the mountain closeness to nature is attractive to students whose lives have been spent in more artificial environments. Since so many youths have "discovered" us, perhaps it would be instructive to both us and them to find out why.

**As I mentioned earlier, a cultural "melting pot" actually happened in the mountains. Yet in other parts of the country, it

seems that it did not occur. Why did it happen in the mountains and not in other parts of the country? And how much of present day Appalachian culture was contributed by the different groups who participated in the process. There is much to be gained in such a study of our cultural formation.

******What was there about the Cherokee Indian culture that made them embrace Christianity so readily? How much of Appalachian culture is directly derivative of Cherokee culture? What are the differences between the Eastern Band of Cherokee and the Oklahoma group who are descended from those who went west in the infamous "Trail of Tears"?

******Who are the Melungeons and what is their cultural significance? This unique group of people, usually found in and around Greene county, Tennessee, and some parts of Kentucky have a history that no one has been successfully able to trace. Are they descendents of Phoenicians, Jews who left Israel to escape the Romans, descendents from the "Lost Colony", from the Portugese, or whom?

******Is Appalachia really a "colony" of Eastern industrial interests as some say? A group of researchers who form the "Peoples' Appalachian Research Collective" have advanced this thesis for some time.

******How did the Settlement Schools influence present day Appalachian education? Do they have a viable future role to fill in the region? Given our very high drop-out rate, could they redefine their missions to take care of some of our more pressing educational problems? Many settlement schools have become defunct and others are in danger of becoming so. What would be necessary in order to change their orien-

tation toward serving those unable to succeed in the public schools -- a numerical majority of students in many, if not most, Appalachian counties?

**The mountain courthouse has become a symbol for those who feel that the "power structures" of Appalachia have the people in bondage. How much power do county politicians really have? How much are they really the puppets of interests outside the mountains such as Philadelphia, Pittsburg, New York, Boston and Washington, D.C.? What is the nature of the power relationships?

**How much did the Civil War have to do with the present political alliances in the states in which the Appalachian region lies? How did the depression of the 1930's change those alliances created in the 1860's? What were the different reactions to the depression between the coal producing counties and the non-coal counties?

**It is generally agreed that the Civil War had much to do with the feuds that developed in many mountain counties after the war. The history of these feuds needs to be traced as part of larger studies having to do with the effect of the Civil War on the region. Other Civil War related topics include the Underground Railroad, such anti-slavery publications as "The Liberator" which were published in the mountains, and the feelings of distrust toward the mountaineer which were expressed by both Northerners and Southerners.

**There have been numerous out-migrations of mountaineers since the time of the depression. Yet few studies have been done on those who migrated to the cities of our Northern states. Comparative surveys need to be done on those who migrated twenty or more years ago, those within the last twenty years, and those who are still contemplating

migration. Other studies need to be done on those who stayed away for differing periods of time, but who later returned to their home areas. Studies need to be done on the families where the father works during the week at an industrial job in the North, but who returns home on the weekends to the mountains to be with his family.

**Few, if any, studies have been done on the culture of poverty which has developed alongside the traditional mountain culture, particularly in the coal mining counties and the bureaucracy which has been developed to handle the welfare case load in those counties. What happens to the attitudes and values of those who find in their later years that they have been automated out of their jobs and for whom there is little alternative, because of the job market and their skill levels, but to go on welfare? What do such situations do to the aspirations of children in such families? How do teachers in the public schools treat the children from these families?

**Other than Dr. Cratis Williams, Dean of the Graduate School of Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, no one has really undertaken a serious study of Appalachian speech. Most teachers try as fast as possible to get their students to stop using the "archaic" language forms they hear at home and in their communities without realizing the consequences this type of pressure has upon the children. Some modern commentators have talked about the sterility of our present day use of the English language and perhaps we are unwittingly forcing our young people to give up language forms which are colorful and add greatly to a person's command of his language, particularly in the areas of expressing

feeling or feeling/thought combinations. Many people need to join Dr. Williams in his studies.

**It is my feeling that many present day Appalachian attitudes and values are pre-industrial revolution European in nature. The people who settled Appalachia came for different reasons than those who settled many other parts of the country but their reasons have never really be investigated thoroughly. Such an investigation, I think, would help us greatly in understanding our history and culture. What are some of the consequences of having avoided the Industrial Revolution and the Renaissance? Are we in many ways more ready for the post-Industrial Revolution than our fellow citizens who have been with it all the while?

**Much has been written about such religious phenomena as speaking in tongues, snake handling, and shouting, but it seems to me that most writings, while descriptive, are far from being insightful. Robert Coles is one of the few writers who has attempted to understand the religious experiences of many mountain people from their point of view. Much work needs to be done from the anthropological and psychological point of view.

Obviously, there are many other subjects waiting to be explored. Appalachian Studies Master's Degree programs could be a major source in the search for information which could reveal the forgotten pages of Appalachian history, politics, cultural anthropology, etc., in addition to better equipping teachers to deal with the children of the culture.

In-Service Training Programs. Most school systems in Appalachia, like those throughout the country, now have several days each year devoted to in-service training. As more administrators are beginning to become aware of the need to change the school in order to meet the needs of those unable to profit from present philosophies, policies and programs, Appalachian Studies specialists are being given more opportunity to make teachers aware of their increased potential in the classroom. I realize these words may be more prophesy than fact at this time, but I am confident that Appalachian Studies will play a much greater role in future in-service training programs for most schools.

Journals -- educating each other. Some Appalachian colleges and organizations are beginning to do serious research -- both by collecting oral-tradition material and by researching existing historical literature. Too often their findings pass by unnoticed because, most usually, they are not published, or if they are, they appear in various periodicals which have a limited circulation or in local newspapers and occasionally in institutional newsletters. There is a real need for a serious journal which could collectively publish materials so they would be more readily accessible. Several high schools and colleges have begun Appalachian Studies programs, but seldom do you hear anything about the programs. If we could share some of the methods, our findings, our problems and our attempted solutions to these problems with others who are involved in this type of work, or those who are contemplating involvement, it would

no doubt, benefit all who are concerned.

Night School. The enrollments of many private colleges in Appalachia have declined in recent years, while those of the public colleges and universities have stabilized. Many, if not most, of both types of institutions have under-utilized staffs and physical plants. Since the road building programs of recent years have made transportation easier, our colleges and universities could provide night classes within an hour's drive of probably 90% of the adults of the region. Such a move could gain for them community support which has been so badly lacking in the past and maybe even help some of them out of current financial crises brought on by declining enrollments and rising costs. State and county governments could perhaps be persuaded to subsidize such classes if the burden is too large for the school. "Adult" education could become popular if the content becomes meaningful. Certainly, such classes would indicate that colleges and universities have begun to take regional educational needs seriously.

Curriculum Reforms

I believe that in our educational ventures of the past few hundreds (perhaps thousands) of years, people have sought diligently to answer the fundamental question "what is it?" This question was fundamental because man was in the process of learning to conceptualize what he saw "out there" in order to be more in control of his external circumstances. Tools became an extension of his hand, his hand which was an extension of his brain. He, in a sense, became known by what he did with his hands or with the tool in his hands so that the

"who am I" question was largely a function of the "what is it" question. One was, in a sense, what he did.

Tools became so highly developed over time that in the last hundred years or so, man has become an extension of the tool or machine leading one philosopher to lament that "things are in the saddle riding mankind." Consequently, the most fundamental question it seems, has now been reversed. "What is it" is now a function of the more fundamental question "who am I". I am not saying that the "who am I" question is new -- it has been asked for centuries -- whenever cultures clashed. But it has never been so predominant as now, as we seek to overthrow technique and put man back into the saddle.

The "From Existence to Essence" model which I described in Chapter III is at least one way of attempting to answer the "who am I" question. What follows are some ways the model might be applied to Appalachian Studies.

Since 1965 there has been considerable emphasis within the region on pre-school programs such as "Head Start". The usual emphasis in these programs has been to prepare children for the experiences they will meet in the predominantly middle class oriented schools they will attend as first graders. There is considerable emphasis upon "reading readiness", "socialization" and other practices favored by middle class parents. Low income mothers are hired as aides to help with the activities of the children and so that they can learn how to imitate the rearing styles of middle class mothers. Emphasis is on the development of verbal skills.

Some readers may quickly ask, "Well, isn't this the way to prepare these children for the experiences they will meet in the public schools and will they not be better prepared to succeed there?" The answer is a conditional "yes". I explained earlier in some detail how Appalachian schools are really not derivative of the culture. The standardization processes promoted by state departments of education and schools of education acting in tandem and cooperatively have further promoted the types of educational experiences which do not mirror the cultural experiences of Appalachian children. Consequently, the child is quickly made aware at the pre-school level of two sets of expectations, at times harmonious but usually not. Consequently, the child is many times able to develop two different sets of behaviors -- one designed to please those at school and the other to please the members of his nuclear and extended families. Many children, being as malleable as they are, encounter little difficulty in meeting the two different sets of expectations. Others are not quite so successful.

I once talked with a psychologist who consulted with a Head Start program in an Ohio city with several hundred thousand Appalachian migrants. He told of how he had seen pre-school and first grade children with bleeding ulcers who had become completely incapacitated by their educational experiences. He didn't pretend to have any solutions. I have no guaranteed solutions, but would like to offer some suggestions for consideration.

It seems to me that the Appalachian child, whether living in his native setting or in a city where his parents have migrated to find

work, should be taught by those who have shared his life's experiences. This would allow some type of communication to bind them together before verbal contact is established. It is very important that the child be given unconditional acceptance so that he need not feel that he must change some part of himself before acceptance by those in authority.

As contrasted to other parts of the country and many other ethnic groups, storytelling has long been a favorite pastime of mountain people. History and traditions are passed from generation to generation by the oral method as opposed to the written method of many other groups. Therefore, it seems to me that storytelling should be an integral part of a pre-school experience for the Appalachian child. This type of activity would be a continuation of the types of experiences the child has already had and would be a good bridge to later reading experiences. In addition, the children could also be encouraged to tell stories for each other and further develop their vocabularies as the teachers assist them in finding words to describe the situations they are attempting to describe.

Children who watch Sesame Street are constantly bombarded with the letters of the alphabet in many different forms. If Appalachian children could be taught the alphabet in a similar way utilizing words, situations, and scenes that are a part of the everyday life of the children, I believe it would facilitate development of simple conceptual skills at a much earlier age and get the children to become active observers of their environment.

Appalachian children become active listeners to the environment at a very early age, particularly if their parents do not read or read seldom. A minister friend of mine, who is in his eighties, is an expert on bird calls, and is very much in demand as a lecturer, as well as a preacher. This particular man never learned to read and write until he was twenty-one years old and within a period of nine years went through grade school, high school, college and seminary. Yet during his twenty-one years of "illiteracy", he became very literate in the ways of his environment. He learned the nesting habits and mating calls of all the birds and animals in the particular part of the North Carolina mountains where he lived. He also developed a good memory and could quote the Bible from cover to cover before he learned to read. At one time when I lived near the church where he was ministering, I would go early to listen to his children's sermons just to listen to the extremely vivid way he described biblical scenes for the children. Though I was in my late twenties at the time, the stories came alive to me as they had never before. The children (and many adults) were always on time for Rev. Franklin's stories.

Since many Appalachian children are tuned in to the sound environment at such an early age, it seems logical to me that the teachers could assist in verbal development by having the children relate the sounds they hear to others in small groups. When the children need assistance in telling what they have heard, the teacher could help the child explore words to describe what the children have heard. Another reason for having such exercises is that the children will

sometimes hear things that are of importance to them and tip the teachers off to problems some of the children are having. For example, if the class is out in a meadow full of the sounds of crickets, animals, and birds, and a child tells that he hears animals fighting, weeping or laughing, the teacher could gain an insight into the child's emotional frame of reference and also a deeper understanding of the child. The teacher could perhaps then help him to analyze these thoughts and encourage him to cope with them in a self-enhancing manner. Unfortunately, many teachers teach as though verbal development was the only type of development worth having, leaving the Appalachian child to feel that many of his previous experiences are simply not worthwhile, particularly those experiences where he is doing something other than reading or writing.

Appalachian children, as probably children everywhere, play many games such as "hide and seek", "steal the bacon", "hop scotch", "red rover", etc. These games arise spontaneously when children are together. I would suggest that teachers at the pre-school level allow for a lot of spontaneous play, with the teachers only assisting in a general supervisory way and not actively directing. Some students who might be timid about joining with a group could be encouraged to form a group of their own and learn to participate among themselves. Many children are extremely frustrated when certain children are allowed to dominate each situation, but will oftentimes say nothing and

suffer in silence waiting for the adult in control to take some initiative in "leveling up" the situation.

Two hundred years of isolation as a cultural entity has encouraged mountain people to retain many language expressions common to 17th century England, Scotland, and other European countries. Many words in common usage in Appalachian households are rarely, if ever, used in the schools and when they are, the teacher usually quickly "corrects" the person using the "archaic" word or phrase. Consequently, many children come to the early elementary grades with a whole vocabulary unacceptable to those in charge, just as the Chicano child and other non-English speaking children arrive at school unlearned in the language of acceptance. Carl A. Lefevre in Linguistics, English and the Language Arts writes of dialects as being the "socio-psychological bond" that unites the individual with his culture:

...a child born into a subculture feels, thinks, and speaks as a part of that subculture.

Anyone who attacks or appears to attack an individual's dialect is immediately understood to be attacking the person himself, attacking him and his very way of life; this is doubly true if the attacker is a teacher, a powerful official who may represent an alien, even a threatening way of life. A teacher who peremptorily undertakes to alter deeply ingrained language habits can inflict irreparable damage, especially a teacher who does not have linguistic in-

sights and knowledge, or who lacks strong bonds of empathy with the student. Such inept efforts, no matter whether well meant, constitute a direct threat and will be so taken. The professional teacher's understanding of the meaning of language to each individual will preclude such threatening behavior.⁶⁸

As other minorities have demanded and received the right to retain their own language while learning the language patterns most commonly used by the larger population, I believe that mountain children should be allowed to retain and encouraged to use the expressions that have meaning in the home situation. Often it is the children who have most difficulty adjusting to standard English who are most in need of special acceptance by the teachers but who are least likely to receive it. It is no surprise to me that they later become school-phobic children and still later the bulk of our dropouts. I see no reasonable way out except to teach language in a bi-lingual way as is being done with many Chicano, Puerto Rican and other non-standard language speaking groups. Such an approach is not merely reasonable and compromising, but practical as well.

Lefevre writes:

The student's natural dialect, unchanged, can be his immediate bridge to the skills of literacy; the teacher should not bewilder him in his initial approach to literacy by attempting to force him to learn a new dialect

as a prerequisite. The two linguistic processes, learning to read and write, and learning to speak a new dialect, cannot be combined without serious danger that both will be jeopardized.

If dialect change is to be effected, each individual speaker must first volunteer to make the change himself. No captive audience in an American classroom, no captive people in a conquered land, have ever been forced to change their language without their consent; language change must be motivated, because it cannot be forced. If the student cannot be persuaded to volunteer, it is unlikely that he will ever consent to change his dialect, and nothing can be done about it. He must volunteer or else.

There is another way to look at dialect change. First and foremost, such a change need not involve "elimination" of any dialect; rather, it should involve mastering a second dialect without sacrificing the first.

Language is not just a matter of having different words for different objects, feelings and processes, but a whole perceptual style. I am currently teaching an interdisciplinary college course for freshmen in "Issues and Values". This course combines some older courses such as composition, speech, social science, and adds some qualities all its own. However, it is still supposed to get the students ready to write with fluency. Teachers from many fields were chosen to teach in the course, but English teachers made up

a third of the entire number of some twenty-two. As part of our orientation into the course, some of the English teachers presented us with a syllabus outlining some "correct" ways of grading composition papers which the students were to write as we discussed different issues. The sample papers were reprinted in their entirety, followed by the comments of the teachers.

I was particularly intrigued by one of the papers which described the advantages and disadvantages of a liberal education. The paper contained many similes and metaphors and was written with a type of self-depreciating humor characteristic of many mountain people. I found the paper highly humorous and well thought out, though obviously not written in a way which would satisfy someone addicted to "Walter Cronkite English". However, I was totally amazed by the comments of the teacher. He had given the paper an "F" grade and had written some comments that revealed that he understood very little of what the writer of the paper had to say. For example, the paper contained the following sentence: "A liberal education could be a disadvantage if you intend to 'get rich quick'." The teacher responded: "There is no reason for the quotation marks around 'get rich quick' in the final paragraph, and, of course, 'quick' should be 'quickly'." The teacher, though someone who has been in the region almost twenty years, still had not learned of the fundamental differences in perception between many who come into the region as "helpers" and those who are to be helped. How many people have heard of a "get rich quickly" scheme? How many people have heard of a "get rich quick" scheme? I would wager that more have

heard of the latter than of the former.

The teacher involved in this particular instance is generally accepted as being one of the better teachers at our college. Yet, to him, the paper which was coherent to its author and to many of us who read it, was totally incoherent. But who suffers the consequences of these types of encounters? This instance, which happened at the college level, is a regular occurrence at all levels of education throughout the region.

Just as interesting were the types of compositions which received the good grades and favorable comments from the composition teachers. One student had written a paper entitled "Berea College Suits Me Best" which received a grade of "A/A-". The paper used practically the same language as found in several college publications and contained often near direct quotes. It did not contain a single original thought, no similes and no metaphors. Some of the teacher's comments are as follows:

The three aspects are introduced and named in the first paragraph. Each of the three paragraphs following the introduction develops in order one of the stated ideas. The concluding sentence of the paper is a summary of the original thesis. Each paragraph, factual and tightly knit, supports a topic sentence. In this way the writer gives an orderly, accurate and full presentation of facts about Berea College with precision and balance. The subject is treated in a competent manner.

The summarizing sentence could have been a separate paragraph.

The style is clipped and precise, factual and unemotional. The sentences are well-structured and reasonably varied. In diction there are a few questionable spots: e.g. "enrichens" instead of "enriches" in paragraph four and "recognizes" instead of "realizes" in paragraph three.⁷⁰

These two papers were among some half dozen presented to the twenty-two Issues and Values teachers as "model" types for the rest of us to pattern our evaluations by. Basically, we were to reward the student who had found some good ideas in previously published materials and had managed to use them almost verbatim and penalize the student who in a somewhat less precise way had done considerable original thinking while writing his paper. Positive value was to be placed on style which was "clipped", "precise", "factual" and "unemotional". Negative value was to be placed on a style which was thoughtful, reflective, metaphorical and colorful. In other words, we were to reward the person who had learned to suppress his emotions, propagandize easily and avoid thought and penalize the creative, original, and thoughtful person who dares challenge standardized techniques. One would never know that this course was supposed to deal seriously with issues from the perspective of differing values. These were models which we teachers who could not teach composition were to follow for the entire year in evaluating all papers.

When several staff members objected to the very shallow and narrow forms for our suggested usage, we were hastily introduced to another aspect of the course. Later I asked the director of the

course to give me some reasons for these particular evaluative goals and he replied that this was the way it had "always been done" in the past. We are now almost three years into the course and controversy is still raging over the composition goals of Issues and Values. The fact that the "way things have always been done" has been challenged is highly significant to me.

The controversy which cropped up in Issues and Values is symptomatic of some very profound perceptual differences among different population groups in our country. One way of illustrating this is to relate some information from a book which my first grade daughter brought home to read. The book is a teacher's manual which one of the teachers had given her because she was so eager to continue reading her "school books" at home. Since the regular reader was not to be brought home until the entire class had finished it, the reading teacher kindly loaned her one of the sample textbooks distributed by various publishing houses. The reader was designed to give elementary children an introduction to different cultures and contained stories about urban Black and Chicano families. In addition, it included stories and fables which help children discover certain values and attitudes. In reading the stories, I felt the reader was a great improvement over the usual "Dick, Jane and Spot" series, but upon reading portions of the teaching suggestions, I became painfully aware that we were teaching the same information with different materials. This particular quote relates to the fable about the turtle and the rabbit:

Using reading to stimulate thinking

Ask, "How did the rabbit feel at the beginning of the story? Have you ever felt that way? When?"

"How did the turtle feel at the beginning of the story? Have you ever felt that way? When?"

"How did the rabbit feel at the end of the story? Has anything like that ever happened to you? What happened to you?"

"How did the turtle feel at the end of the story? Did he have a right to feel that way? Have you ever succeeded in doing something which seemed impossible to you at first? What was it?"

"What lesson did the rabbit learn? Which animal was the wiser?"

Guide the pupils to discover the maxim: A steady worker wins. Then encourage them to cite instances in classroom work which verify this lesson. The children may compare personal experiences.

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In the classroom environment which the teacher can control to some degree she can make sure that the maxim fits and have the steady worker win. Outside the classroom, however, how well does the maxim really fit? How does the teacher explain to the young child whose father is unemployed and can't find work that he must be like the rabbit and therefore a loser? And why must the rabbit lose? In other tales the rabbit makes a fool of a fox by tricking him into

throwing him into the briar patch, which is his natural habitat. Perhaps that is a better maxim for Appalachian children. And aren't there some ecological situations where it is clearly more advantageous to be a rabbit than a turtle?

In most parts of Appalachia it becomes clear to children very early in life that the steady worker does not always win. They learn very quickly, also, that it is oftentimes hard to find steady work, especially when a particular area may be almost totally dependent upon a single industry, such as coal mining, which is always very susceptible to the fluctuations of the energy market. In certain situations it becomes clear very early in life to young children that the father's steadfastness is not nearly as important as his political affiliation when it comes to producing a good income for his family. The child who is raised on the small farm soon becomes aware of the great role the weather and diseases play in "winning" while farming and also the dependence on the soil, climate and terrain. One maxim which may fit some situations may be clearly out of place in another. It would be very hard to convince the children of a coal miner who has worked over forty years in the mines steadily and who is laid up with black lung on a very small pension, if any, that the steady worker wins. I could give thousands of examples, but I think this is enough to demonstrate my point.

The middle class person who has been reared in an environment where rewards come on an incremental basis in a very systematic way will perceive the world in a certain kind of way and his writing will

reflect his perception. The Appalachian person whose life has been more dependent upon the rhythms of the seasons and the fluctuations of the energy market or whose life has been more episodic than systematic or systematically episodic will perceive the world differently from the middle class person and his writings will reflect these different perceptions. The problem arises when the teacher is from the former group, while his students are from the latter. Communication is difficult because they live in different perceptual worlds.

Let me try to explain more fully what I am trying to say:

It seems to me that most middle class people live in a world that is a creation of our mastery of technology. They are involved in our systematic use (and abuse) of our raw materials. Civil Service, tenure, guaranteed union wage contracts, and other organizational forms grant job security and the chance to move upward through the organization. Security is more or less taken for granted, and the person can become optimistic rather than fatalistic. His primary perceptual mode is one of "becoming" and he reflects his perception through his choice of words and the way he structures his sentences, in addition to his choice of friends, his social life, the car he drives, and the community in which he lives.

The Appalachian person, generally speaking, is one who produces the raw materials used further up the line of process by the middle class individual. He endures the hardships and faces the dangers inherent in shaking loose from a generally inhospitable Mother Earth her riches which we need to use. Security, both job and physical, is

a sometimes thing, and he can't afford the luxury of feeling optimistic. Tilling the land is not a certain way of gaining sure rewards, so his general attitude reflects a quite realistic fatalism. His primary perceptual mode is one of "being" and he, also, reflects his perception through his choice of words and the way he structures his sentences. Likewise, his choice of friends, his social life, his community and his luxuries reflect his perception.

The educator, at all levels, needs to be aware of these different perceptual styles, particularly if he has developed the "becoming" style while most of his students are of the "being" style. The "becoming" (middle class) person will most likely be projective and use verbs heavily in relating his perception of life to others. The "being" (Appalachian) person will most likely perceive the world as more static and less hospitable and will use a greater number of adjectives, similes, metaphors, and other language forms to describe situations and objects that are not so much in motion. The person who is predominantly "becoming" will most likely have a very difficult time communicating with one who is predominantly "being" and vice versa. By the nature of society the "becoming" person is most likely to be in charge of the "being" person, and it is the "being" person who is most likely to suffer the consequences of being unlike the "becoming" person. Such is the story of Appalachian education, particularly in the areas of language arts. When those of us who live a little in both worlds challenge the "becoming" person on his assumptions, we are usually met with the standard retort: "That is the way it has always been." The "being" person is left to accept

philosophically and with some resignation his unacceptance by the "becoming" person. Obviously, none of us are all "being" or all "becoming", but it seems to me that we are usually predominantly one or the other.

Teachers are part of the credential society and, I feel, are usually selected on their ability to get along with their professional colleagues and superiors rather than on their ability to relate effectively to those who will be in their care. Over the years I have watched education departments at various colleges systematically "de-select" those who could probably relate best with those who later become our educational failures, who are, incidentally, a numerical majority in most Appalachian counties.

One of the facts of life that young Appalachian children have to become adapted to is the disjunctiveness between the experiences they have at home and those portrayed in their readers at school. Jim Wayne Miller, a college classmate of mine who is from near my home community, has written of the problem in this way:

The students already attending West Madison when we came from Newfound were like those I had read about in the graded readers. They ate hot lunches in the school cafeteria, had book bags, pencil and crayon boxes, overshoes, raincoats, and little umbrellas. Because they had all these things, I imagined that they lived in the water-color world of the graded readers. The fathers of these story children had dark wavy hair and wore suits. The pretty blond mothers

smiled and baked cookies. The boys flew kites. The girls rolled hoops along the sidewalk. Every little girl had a cat named Fluff; her brother had a dog named Muff. At Thanksgiving the whole family went to the farm, where grandmother lived and baked pies. And if the children were ever ill, they stayed home and watched the birds eat suet, while the children themselves ate junket -- whatever that was.

Of course, no one living on Newfound creek fitted into this world. We were queer: my father in his overalls and denim jacket; my mother, who wore resin-colored combs in her straight black hair; my little brother Eugene, with his large brown eyes, skinny arms and long face like a colt's. We lived at the end of a gravel road, far back where the creek was so small you stopped building bridges and just drove through it. There were few cars, anyway. The mailman came to the row of boxes at the turning place, and my father had a pick-up truck, but in the summer weeds grew out of the gravel in the center of the road, there were so few cars. On Thanksgiving day, my father and grandfather slaughtered hogs, if it was cold enough, or else they went pheasant hunting.⁷²

Jim is currently a German professor at Western Kentucky University and pursues an active interest in developing Appalachian Studies, also. We had not seen each other or communicated in any way for fourteen years

until recently when we each happened upon the other's article. The articles appeared in different magazines, but were published within a short time of each other.

At the same time Jim was writing the above passage, I had told of some similar experiences:

After drifting through two years of Dick and Jane, their dog, Spot, and their fashionably thin mother and father who lived in a fashionable house surrounded by a picket fence, I became very excited about a story in my reader which depicted a life style similar to that which I was exposed to in my community and of which I was a living part. It mattered little to me that the story concerned a Laplander family in Finland. I had found a story with which I could identify, and I read it and re-read it until the pages were ready to fall out. ⁷³

The problems to which Jim and I refer are much the same whether one is talking of the first grade or graduate level. If a person's symbolic expressions are systematically degraded, either by acts of omission or commission, unless he has developed an unusually strong sense of self-worth, he is likely to succumb to the institutional pressures brought to bear upon him and either give up pursuit of his particular goal or prostitute himself with the hope that the ends will be worth the means necessary to achieve them. If a person's symbols are considered inferior, it is quite easy to infer that one must, indeed, be inferior.

The solution to the problem encountered by the elementary school child appears to be quite easy, but its apparent easiness is deceptive. Would the Appalachian child not learn faster, easier and with more receptiveness to his educational experiences if his curriculum materials mirrored his cultural experiences? This does not mean that at the same time he could not be learning about other cultures as well. Presently, he only sees his own culture reflected when he is studying about cultures in other countries, and, when he identifies, must identify as a foreigner.

Though considerable ruckus has been raised by different minority groups in order to try to get more culturally appropriate materials introduced into the classroom, I can find no evidence that we have moved far from the "melting pot" philosophy of education into what, to me, should be a "fruit cake" or "salad bowl" philosophy. We in Appalachia have a harder problem than other ethnic groups because we are scattered over a wide geographic area and have not developed highly visible spokesmen who could serve to present our cause to the larger public. The missionaries who have defined us and spoken for us so long are still speaking for us, though with less certainty than that exhibited in the past. It is still too easy for the "seven day wonder" to travel through the region, discovering Appalachia and get published in the New York Times, while the native who could serve the region and culture as poet or prophet, finds his unpublished manuscripts languishing in special collections in libraries and unavailable to the general public.

Therefore, relative and reflective curriculum materials are scarce in most places and non-existent in many of the others. However, we need not sit back and allow this disadvantage to become our excuse for not beginning a change. There are some things we can begin doing until such materials are published and become available.

Appalachians have a natural tendency to be shy and reserved in the midst of strangers and/or in a strange place, and will continue to remain so -- to the point of seeming unfriendly and unwilling -- until a natural bond, some vital point of contact, is established. Most teachers fail to establish this point of contact and thus open the way to failure for many children.

As I mentioned before, it is important that an atmosphere of acceptance must exist so that a child does not begin to feel inadequate right from the start. It seems to me that such an unconditional acceptance can be the natural bond or point of contact on which to base a relationship, for children, young people and adults alike feel a need to be at least accepted and respected as a person, even if not liked. Acceptance and/or rejection are quickly recognized and behavior is patterned accordingly.

When I was visiting different school principals during the spring of 1965 to solicit their moral support and help in recruiting their dropouts and potential dropouts for a special dropout program which I was to direct, I was met with quite mixed reactions. Some school principals said they would cooperate since this would physically remove some of their "problems" from their communities. Some, a minority, felt that we could offer services that they were simply

not equipped to offer and were willing to help in order to gain assistance for some of their students and former students. One asked me to leave his office because he didn't wish to associate with anyone "willing to work with trash", his euphemism for his dropouts.

With or without the help of those officially charged with the responsibility for the education of the students referred to above, within ten days we had recruited well over our goal of 200, many who had already dropped out of school and others on the verge of dropping out. In keeping with the mandate given by Congress to the Office of Economic Opportunity, our project, funded by O.E.O., was an attempt to somehow assist these young people in becoming economically self sufficient individuals. Therefore our program included activities which are usually considered basic education and others which are usually considered vocational education.

The program was originally conceived by some faculty members and administrators who were concerned with Appalachia's high drop-out rate, both from the standpoint of the students failing to successfully negotiate the school system, and from the point of the school system failing to educate their students. None of us could really articulate what we felt to be the major problems with educational institutions and personnel, but all of us knew that some fundamental changes in attitude and structure were in order. So we approached the project with an open spirit and chose staff members who were characterized by their beliefs in the potential of all people. Most of our staff members were college students who were

of the same ethnic backgrounds as those of the students. The college teachers chosen to work in the program were those who had demonstrated an accepting attitude toward students, in addition to being able to deal effectively with subject matter.

This accepting attitude paid real dividends in our work with these students. Some who had had emotional blocks toward many learning skills for years, suddenly found themselves enjoying learning for the first time. One sixteen year old boy went from a second grade reading level to the eleventh level in seven weeks. Others made similar, though less dramatic, gains.

The greatest surprises to the staff came in the creative arena. Students who had never participated in extracurricular activities, either because their "grades were too low" or because they were of the wrong color, suddenly blossomed in drama, music, art, industrial arts, student government, and many other areas. Youths, who had never sung, danced, or acted before, gave a highly professional production of "Oklahoma". Students who had never used tools became highly proficient and creative in woodwork and in other areas of art. They worked at their own model small-town government with a rare perseverance and determination to prove that they could make it work.

Our project was funded for two summers. The second summer, several staff members (college students) and students wrote an original musical which mirrored the cultures of our students. This production turned out to be just as good as "Oklahoma" had the previous summer.

To the surprise of many people, and I might mention, to the shame of some, as well, we found these students, who for years had struggled

under such labels as "misfit", "dropout", "sorry", "unmotivated", etc., to be not only very creative, but generally highly intelligent and extremely sensitive. Perhaps it was just this combination of traits that made it so hard for them to succeed in school where these traits are rarely valued, neither singularly nor collectively.

Six years after the first summer's efforts, we did a follow-up study to determine to what degree the students had succeeded in accomplishing the original purpose of the project. We found that the vast majority of the students involved were either engaged in work enabling them to be self sufficient or still in some type of educational venture. Not very many, about ten percent, ended up in college. Most of the boys spent some time in one of the service branches and three were killed in Vietnam. One boy, who had no prior drama experience, later played a lead role in "The Stephen Foster Story" and still later played in "Pearlie" on Broadway. Another became a song writer.

Practically all, better than 98%, of the participants in our project felt that it had helped them clarify and pursue their goals in life. I am neither surprised nor disappointed that most of them chose not to pursue a college education. I am glad to see them productive by their own standards.

I have told of these experiences for two reasons: First, to show some of the things that can happen when people are encountered on the basis of non-institutionalized assumptions, and second, to tell of some of the experiences that initiated a seven year process of personal growth that has culminated in one way with the development of this essay the reader is about to complete.

The project which began my From Existence to Essence analysis

was called "Project Torchlight", but it probably could have more appropriately been called "Project Midwife" since that is the effect that it had on me and many others as well. Who knows? It might have been an important project for all of us who call Appalachia our home.

Over the years, while we have patiently waited for midwives to bring themselves into our midst, we have instead been sent a research technician, diagnosticians, and pharmacists.

The research technician found we were ill and predicted our death some time ago: "The modern Appalachian...has failed to hold his ground and has gone downhill in a most disconcerting fashion" and presents a "melancholy spectacle of a people who have acquired civilization and then lost it."

Diagnosticians came forth abundantly to determine the nature of our disease. They announced that they had found at least two disease-bearing organisms -- individualisticitis and independentitis, causing maladies which, we are told, almost always prove fatal in the technological state. But there was still hope.

Using the prescriptions of distinguished outside doctors, the pharmacists attacked their task of distributing the medication with full vigor. But for the most part it proved ineffective. Death seemed so sure that we were subsequently referred to in past tense (Yesterday's People).

Jim Comstock, editor of The West Virginia Hillbilly, explains the effect of all this activity on the people of Appalachia:

We have eaten of the fruit that Eve did, served by the same caterer, and learned of our nakedness. We didn't

know...until we were told, and we took to our
beds from the shock of it....⁷⁴

But now is the time to take up our beds and walk again.

Now is the time for us to be reborn, not as imitation middle class individuals, but as individuals reclaiming our own birthright and liferight, wearing our own pap's coat of arms which says, "Mountaineer, pioneer, farmer, forever". Our crown remains a holey hat, and it shall be worn with pride and dignity.

Notes

1

The most recent reference to this influence comes from Hawk Littlejohn, a Cherokee Indian activist presently involved in saving Cherokee historical sites. He recently told me of his belief that Cherokee culture has had a profound impact upon what is present day Appalachian culture. He is especially impressed with the similarities of non-verbal behavioral patterns and expressed beliefs of the older Cherokee and older Mountaineers.

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