Alienation As An Aspectual Concept

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Abstract

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This project is a sincere effort to illustrate alienation in ways not typical or formally represented. Drawing upon respected insights, initial interests have matured into a venture intent on crafting a composite, conceptual place for alienation, to consider holistically pathways where it manages to thrive as a stereotypic feature of human existence. The reason an aggregate, wholesale perspective proves necessary is because fundamental characteristics of alienation (paradoxically) incorporate images of both dependence as well as social disconnection. These are quite dissimilar orientations from which to consolidate a single idea. One's preferred stance or insight may appear justifiable while, given this ambiguous base, conceptual arrangements often conflict, favored positions become troublesome to defend, leaving many still groping for credible explanation and clarification. Two primary points of emphasis are necessary. One is to present a convincing picture of how extensive, pervasive and enduring forces that drive conformity are. Another is to fashion a case for the _self,_ to sketch a portrait for its potential growth, and, most significantly, to advance a proposal for how and why self-development (through independent initiative) appears the most befitting asset for both recognizing as well as challenging illusive, alienating restraints.

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Chapter I

Alienation's Immense Foundation

Introduction

Alienation is an indisputably vogue idea within sociological as well as mainstream circles. It is a motif with a long history through which varied and distinctive interpretations get projected. Semantic representations are both broad and loose. For purposes of this presentation a number of widely recognized applications will be considered, drawing upon historically impacting as well as more contemporary understandings. A more essential objective, nonetheless, will be to propose a set of representative aspects of alienation, less as an inventory of manifestations or effects, but more closely as an outline featuring characteristics of its course. It is an effort to explore its rudimentary makeup—that which bespeaks of separation in its varied spectrum of forms.

While this premise is both wide-reaching and crude it, in any case, provides the glue in supporting the thematic foundation for wedding the array of interpretations generally accepted. As a central idea *division* marks the essential axis whereby a multitude of possible meanings claim their base. And from this homogeneous beginning at least one common assumption can be retained: that given this—separation as a point of understanding—there had existed a condition of "non-alienation," a fundamental integrity or deep-seated inclusion preceding the actual division. The general consensus is that "Most usages of 'alienation' share the assumption that some relationship or connection that once existed, that is 'natural,' desirable, or good, has been lost." (Keniston, 1965, p. 452). Alienation then, is not a term useful for depicting pure or ever-present absence, for it presumes the existence of an earlier association, a linkage not incidental but that cardinal, critical and essentially meaningful.

As a touchstone this semantic base is always available, but there emanate strikingly diverse interpretations hinging on this common platform. For this subject invites a variety of depictions, some that seem not even remotely related, which together still manage to consecrate around this single formulation—alienation. With universal pertinence there spring numerous possibilities to guide interpretation, vast conceptual area for approaching consistency, and shifting targets for securing definition.

Noteworthy as these limitations may be, not to be overlooked is the appreciable slack available for crafting a perspective; with fragile certainty and great range for application there is gained better leverage for questioning. With considerable ambiguity

there is also broader opportunity for a more complete conception of—with low concordance the rule—why this most basic idea (severance) so thoroughly splinters off into various interpretations. As will be explored much has to do with the ubiquity of alienation itself, of how it manages to characterize or otherwise impact, in illusive and unpredictable ways, the essence of every living human being. And if this seems inflated or excessive consider Johnson's (1973) Biblical analogy where he observes "...Man is driven from Eden...Alienation is his chronic mortal state..." (p. 6). Given such a formidable prologue strivings for predictability cannot easily escape obstacle. This is not simply a declaration of low optimism, only stark recognition that the space allowable for prospective truth is so vast it forces obscurity through an omnipresence great enough overwhelm.

Alienation, being a vogue concept, tends to get tied with and generate strong emotion; there seems a natural impulse to "select-out" certain features emphasizing passion over objective clarity; this personal, affective, dimension is most instrumental inspiring and solidifying its broad appeal. If one happened to side with a familiar sociological interpretation that social isolation, for example, was a distinct quality of alienation, support for this outlook is not justified merely by objective evidence alone. Rather, relevance is drawn almost wholly through subjective impression. Most would never even recognize a weak social foundation as something intrinsically alienating unless the loneliness and despair so closely associated with it gets experienced directly. Irrespective of any sociological standard, therefore, isolation might become distinguishable *as alienation* only inasmuch as it can reveal concerns of emotional significance.

In a move toward greater certainty, over the last century, sociological researchers have created criteria for tangible, interpersonal estrangements to be fitted within subjectively "customized" contexts. Subjectivity retains relevance, but only through generalization, sharing the spotlight with objectively static definitions. "The effect is that 'social isolation' can thus be construed both in the sense of the absence of positive interpersonal relationships, and in the sense of dissociation from norms, values and culture of one's society." (Schacht, 1970, p. 157). It seems that by not drawing a clear distinction—by allowing for an all-inclusive semantic valuation—the significance of

subjective impression is left to depreciate. Concerns born via affect, contributing abundantly to alienation's initial interest, are given a back seat to more objective conceptions that may or may not retain any psychological relevance, the cost being that inner (estranging) perceptions get systematically dissociated from available constructs.

There are several additional conceptual (sociological) standards which, seen in collective, are intended as a composite representation for alienation. Descriptors receiving greatest attention—anomie, meaninglessness, normlessness and powerlessness—however, impart an ambiguity equal in magnitude, where pessimism, for example, might get equated with meaninglessness as presumptuously as loneliness does with isolation. Weak discrimination invites an inevitable leap-of-faith whereby it becomes admissible..."to describe internal psychological states as well as objective social phenomena…interchangeably…"(Johnson, 1973, p. 16) with identical conceptual premises. Having to draw upon a vocabulary not equipped to distinguish clarity of intent, the utility these descriptors contribute for marking subjective as well as objective relevance with consistent discretion is decidedly poor and open for scrutiny.

Expanding upon the initial example, it is certainly conceivable that one could be physically isolated while, the whole time, never shouldering a conscious burden, nor revealing a fleeting inclination that such circumstance be regarded negatively. "An individual who tries unsuccessfully to establish meaningful contact with others is in a different situation from one who *chooses* to live alone, in order (for example) to achieve some special purpose.…the fact that his isolation is of his own choosing gives his alienation a quality that sets it apart from that of one whose isolation is not chosen." (Schacht, 1970, p. 157).

Another point of ambiguity to consider is that alienating circumstances can result in a "clouding of awareness," driving inner obscurities such as is typical of romantic ideation. Detachment in this sense might get highlighted by suspense or frenzy more than pessimism, (when intentions are to portray "meaninglessness" or one of the other terms favored for classifying personal debasement). While frustration may certainly be a standing feature of infatuation there is also, not to be ignored, a restless apperception and involvement corresponding with, conceivably driving, one's bewilderment. Uncertainty and discouragement can take active as much as passive forms; personal impressions are

qualities specific to, and must get gauged in accordance with one's unique discontinuity, so that affective experiences are always subjective matters for clarification.

These general observations are not intended to suggest sociological models lack importance, only that inner attribution (with its wide array of inference) can get capriciously compartmentalized or standardized unjustly. In the quest for inclusive categories, despite convenience of arrangement, characterizations are not allowed to pivot effectively enough on personal insights. Whatever the shortcoming of subjective impression, illusive particularities that impede clarity of intent are not conveniently circumvented by virtue of more semantically conveyable devices. Alienation's breadth, its historically grounded base, will not permit any simple overshadowing or thematic envelopment by sociological generalization at the expense of intrinsic relevance.

As indicated, poor semantic resolution is an outgrowth of the smooth, often undetectable, allowances made where intentions are freely juggled between subject and object. This stealth interchangeability permits depictions of alienation to elude the realm of reality, condoning composite images, those attempting to include both the actual individual as well as the "relative individual," pictured against an omniscient socio-cultural backdrop. Magnifying complexity are alienation's metaphysical inferences, crucial considerations, the inclusion of which ensure the blurring of subject and object remains even more plausible.

To locate the roots of this great dilemma, retaining an historical perspective, it was Hegel's position, in his groundbreaking work *the phenomenology of spirit* (1806), that alienation be intrinsically purposeful and still retain universally significant application. His idyllic image required inclusion of both objective as well as subjective relevance at its core, a designation held essential to support the construct's breadth. Most fundamentally, he saw need to retain subjectivity for the sake of "...man's capacity to perceive 'the other' as discrete from himself..." (Johnson, 1973, pp. 30-1). From this premise the framework was set in place which allowed for subjective attributions of objectively tangible (conceivably measurable) phenomena. Upon these spacious beginnings it became possible for alienation to include matters benign as the transfer of property, to consignments of human consciousness, those pointing to concerns grave as psychotic divisions within the self.

With a foundation this expansive and potentially flexible, objectivity and subjectivity gain leeway to sustain or, with poor basis, prematurely validate one another. Personal perspectives, when this happens, get impulsively "fitted" into objectively crafted categories, a consequence that can effectively squelch authentic subjectivity. For one who believes to be alienated (in whatever possible sense) there is very likely to co-exist a parallel impulse attempting to justify such beliefs. What often unfolds is a circumstance where personally held insecurities seek-out tangible relevance; more specifically, evidence which (apart from its reliability) becomes an effective "validator" prompting unique impressions to mushroom into objective *alienating* truths. Any neatly construed, "universally appropriate" operational definition, therefore, will always in certain ways manage to misshape meaning, to slant or curtail intrinsic pertinence considering the countless, divergent inferences spinning off this single theme. It is no surprise then that Johnson borrowed Hardin's concept "panchreston" for alienation, a fitting catch-phrase for terms which, in attempting to explain everything, (not withstanding their popularity) end up in the end, signifying nothing at all (pp. 3-4).

This introductory overview, critical in exposition, is not an endeavor to undermine prevailing, seminally grounded interpretations of estrangement; nor is it an attempt to delimit the idea as something that will forever escape tangibility—to render it "unknowable," or not deserving of effort toward a useful explanation. The background is simply a sincere initiative to enlighten the reader that speaking of alienation as it is formally recognized carries inherent limitations. In order for intrinsic meaning to surface specific characterizations (one's personal version, degree and quality of separation) need to be accounted for. This means that points-of-view be respected for their subjective significance, in spite of clarification shortfalls. It calls for an appeal where personal disposition gets, not simply allowed, but taken seriously; that uniqueness is not denied a context nor position to sustain, so that intuition might generate cause to propose original discriminations.

This emphasis, moreover, is in no way to be mistaken as a plea to unequivocally personalize and, in effect, jeopardize the semantic integrity of alienation by embracing subjectivity alone. Alienation's proclivity for broad application is mostly justifiable and largely unavoidable. But it cannot automatically follow that personal impressions are

merely esoteric truths, matters hopelessly ambiguous, those to be left blindly unsubstantiated. *Self*-justifications need not be elaborate or sophisticated, only clearly defensible through consistent and carefully chosen vocabulary. And while there is no absolute way to delimit individual aberration, it is guarded receptivity that seems the greatest obstacle. The suggestion is subjectivity's relevance next to objectivity may not be the fundamental issue. Rather, it could be the naïve, deceptive manner in which subjective impression gets embedded proving most obscuring, the tendency to assign permanent meaning to not yet ripe beliefs requiring more sincere scrutiny. Often personal (alienating) insecurities get coupled with early lags in confidence and, after much external sway, get single-handedly "verified" as "certifiable" constitutional deficiencies. Here it remains unclear whether intrinsic disposition or societal expectation impacts as the primary culprit. However the subjugation arises, nonetheless, the consequences are often indistinguishable—a character disposition where choice range is stifled; featured by attitudinal barriers that limit opportunities for exercising free will.

An abbreviated range of choice means scarcity option, this has obvious implication when considering political and economic variations on estrangement. Needless to say, there are some convincing arguments (particularly by Marx) how manipulation through capitalist imposition might narrow the spectrum of *true* choice. The allusion is to popular ideals, their insistent lure, how they seduce or otherwise impart influence where significant intuitions get imprudently ignored; relationships steeped in dependence hinge upon such sacrificial conditions (Fromm, 1947, pp. 36-7, 70-1). Having personal liberty swindled through unwitting sacrifice is no less evidence of alienation than any overt, directive subjugation—the impetus of which, in the later case, is to take advantage, where insecurity detected in another translates into "opportunity" to control and create an alienating effect. While relinquishment of sovereignty is often attributed to personal choice, actual motives driving compromise are not always so clear. Incentives bound to obligations toward duty, however self-denying, get routinely rationalized as one's investment in "love," or simply a belief that forfeiture of will is in one's ultimate best interest.

This observation is not applicable merely to those viewed neurotically estranged or found incapacitated in a clinical sense. Relinquishments noted are indicative of

alienation in a more fundamental way—as encompassing, often imperceptible features of everyday life. Even when acknowledged, alienation's under-appreciated dimension tends to get overshadowed by more conventional depictions of separation—most evidently, estrangements associated with race, class or ability. These considerations, while certainly real, function as effective (objective) scapegoats for deflecting emphasis from less revealing, more thoroughly interwoven faucets of alienation.

While it would be presumptuous to insist a flexible base for interpretation guarantees inconsistency, it is at least fair to say that multifarious designations unique to alienation's etymology coincide with varied images that parallel its slack for application. Given the open ontological groundwork it is rather difficult not to allow for vague attributions. Historical breadth along with the current sociological intrigue for a many-layered "umbrella concept" assure not only wide semantic inclusion but, just as well, the difficulty *not* to include, the problem of justifying that something could actually escape alienation's semantic "all-encompassment."

The biggest challenge given a vast base for application is in making certain comprehensiveness not overshadow intrinsic relevance, that inductive impression secures value an essential ingredient to carve out meaningful demarcations. This emphasis appears indispensable for supporting a proposal that recognizes how any given stretch of (alienating) propositions might be seen as patterned—knitted together—into a multiform definition with relevant concepts in dynamic transition. This image is distinct from most sociological representations which tend to project alienation as a set of exclusive components based on vaguely related terms, where "…the general tendency...is to draw on one rather than on all...sources." (Barakat, 1969, p. 2).

Difficulty arriving at a reliable base for understanding is not entirely a reflection on the sole individual; alienation can just as likely pertain to whole communities or have group applicability that goes beyond personal indicators and most sociological models. A competitive capitalistic culture as ours creates a slant or "alienation personality" through a collection of features markedly distinguishable from, yet no less alienating than, variations on estrangement for less industrialized, more integrated cultures. To pose a simple yet useful illustration, given a western world standard, discrepancies generally perceived between desire and achievement get shouldered as personal burdens,

while such discontinuities within more "functionally interdependent societies" tend to be addressed and endured collectively (Sennett, 1979, pp. 115-16; Singer, 1983, pp. 34-5). Given this difference, while not earth shattering news, it is important to note that each case example manages to signify distinct division, unique expressions of alienation (or at least shortcomings of self-realization) peculiar to a culturally relevant estranging reality.

Naturally, defiance and challenge always find ways to upset patterns formal and risky to scrutinize, ideals supported by long held assumptions. If an inner sense of independence happens to collide with one's familiar environment layered in uniformity, a simmering (life quality) disaffection is the likely consequence. But shifts away from usual patterns create a more noticeable division, where alienation is something directly conscionable and immediately relevant, clearly discernible from an estrangement routinely tolerated within a climate of naive obedience. If alienation is to be addressable as a composite concept however it is necessary to include both individualistic as well as social barriers. Face-value biases from either position require sincere questioning, where judgements are arrived at only after being critically contemplated. While subjective paths for meaning must certainly be distinguished from more collective characterizations, one's preferred base of bias does not contribute sufficient evidence (by itself) to accurately consolidate estrangement in any holistic sense.

This brief outline is likely to offer a fair indication of the difficulty involved settling on a convenient "operationally prepared" package. There simply does not exist any neat semantic arrangement for carrying this load. Respecting inherent ambiguities, there appears little reason to defend any existing models toward an integrated definition; there seems no need to narrow down—and ultimately widen—the way in which alienation is formally conceived. Emphasis instead will be to steer away from bounded, objectively static interpretations. And while to substantiate a premise, respecting how alienation is currently understood will prove necessary, the primary effort is not to isolate syndromes but to delineate alienation as a multifaceted, fluid, inevitability of human existence. Researching this topic, what gets appreciated most keenly are the enormous complexities involved attempting to weigh fundamentals of human nature, those controvertible hurdles of life as significant personally as they are collectively real.

Circumstances open opportunity to propose something of an extended model for alienation, enabling an ability less to centralize, but more categorically to construe, size and meaningfully arrange some of its fundamental attributes. More specifically this is an effort to view alienation *as a phenomenon*—displacement—unfolding with sequential relevance, where it is possible to align faucets, temporal and developmental categories that highlight a dynamic process. While this project is intended to be comprehensive it is not a valiant attempt to be all-inclusive. It is simply an effort to locate and situate meanings intrinsic to "separation as a projective course."

From the point that marks one's most rudimentary "self-awareness" to the most complete "interpersonal dispersion" conceivable, respective meanings and features of alienation will be contemplated. Subsequent to this, alienation as it relates to dependence will be more carefully weighed against a more overt picture of estrangement, that generally associated with social distancing. Because of the latitude of this endeavor, before considering alienation as a fundamental process of human development can be attempted, it will first be necessary to "pin down" this (aspectual) vision by picturing how estrangement might appear at each of these dissimilar ends. The essential aim here is to better anticipate the problem of how one could even begin to conceive an interwoven reality, or relate on the other hand with the opposing image, where familiar and relentless influences are tellingly absent.

Ethical world interdependence

At its seminal extreme, particularly with infants, before it is even possible to consider alienation proper, humans are critically unreflective beings. This is generally viewed one's "being" prior to "person-hood," an existence oblivious to valuations connected with personal identity. Short of transcending this all-inclusive realm the individual (sometimes the whole community) is fundamentally restricted, not as in initiative, but by whatever collective attitude or composite circumstance happens to prevail. That which can secure focus most thoroughly is what ends up characterizing behavior, so understanding remains situation dependent, getting wholly delimited by matters of group or role relevance. In a very real way introspective possibility is hampered, again, not from insincerity of drive but in having one's essentiality affixed, bound up by a fundamental impenetrable given—total and immediate togetherness. This

notion of a harmonious protective unity incorporates an obvious theological premise, but it was a theme Hegel carried over and secured a distinct philosophical application. Hegel's ethical world is in an unmistakable way analogous to the Biblical Garden of Eden. Before the symbolic fruit triggering an awareness of good and evil is bitten (perspective transcended) existence, while metaphysically whole, endures as a state devoid of *self*-consciousness (Schacht, 1970, pp.19-25).

While it may be difficult for someone to imagine where a clear sense of self has surfaced, there are many cases of those (including adults) who never arrive at that insight, that perceptually tangible place where it becomes possible to recognize one-self as a distinct and unique "person." In various instances for reasons not wholly understood, some simply never see beyond their most primary (contextual) awareness and live out entire lives oblivious to prospects for questioning their most immediate, provided of understandings. With enmeshments secure roots are retained, where participation in roles is something reflexive and usual expectations get taken fully for granted (Singer, 1983, pp.37-43). Assuming this restrictive consciousness persists, a person may certainly become "aware" of pain, joy, anger and so forth, these are undoubtedly intrinsic human characteristics. But they are also qualities which can exist (and often thrive more passionately) without having to appreciate a primary source, an origin of affect, the incipient context of which they are still a part; there can be an energy emanating fully without first having to isolate or appropriately discriminate.

This standing dependency, its resilience, is no reflection on the intelligence of persons, or their aptitude in composite, as much as evidence of how heavily culture can weigh-in to curb and channel inner evaluations. Shame and humiliation for example, (with the possible exception of exile from the ethical realm) might never be a consideration outside the collective point-of-view. In a parallel way it could be said, social vs. singular burdens are blurred to such a degree that any notion of "persons as distinct entities," even if not recognized unimportant, remain points of concern essentially irrelevant, at least against the gravity of one's immediate group. This backdrop is helpful for picturing a possibility where even if self-initiative is "in the air," so to speak, there will always be those (via the fortitude of convention) for whom culture interferes with one's capacity to "behold" any inner-outer distinction, ensuring self-relevance will be

roundly dismissed. Given this boundary, even when drawing on a contemporary (westernized) template, it is imaginable how ubiquitous influence might infringe with parallel resolve—suppressing similarly if only less comprehensively—to cloud awareness essential for pursuits in self-discovery.

Beyond ethical world reality

With a closer look at Hegel, his conviction was unequivocal that a "true self" would be realized only "in aggregate," given a socially integrated context. But with comparable emphasis he found need to recognize an essential individuality (through separation) in order to make possible this broader universal self, one purportedly more self-enlightening than any lone pursuit could manage. The stark implication was that only upon realizing a distinct (and complete) individual nature would one then know the greater implications possible for universal completeness—or more tellingly, the measure to which it remains woefully absent. As paradoxical as it may first appear, solely through interpersonal departure (the perspective it enables) is the greater value of socio-cultural connection genuinely understood. Not until discretion gets "held to the light," showing the full implications of first connection, separation, and then the ultimate importance behind one's reemerging, does the broader advantage of wholeness surface and take a conscious shape. If understanding one's collective essential nature was ever to be a credible pursuit, first recognizing, following along, and ultimately enclosing this ontological loop was considered unavoidable (Schacht, 1970, pp. 50-2).

With this image societies' members could be (metaphorically) characterized as "representative organs," constituent elements comprising an essential organic whole. This grand-cohesive vision (group as the greater person) was for Hegel an irreducible spiritual individual, the sole, genuine representation of ourselves (p. 21). It can easily follow therefore that estrangement from this pure relatedness (Hegel's true self) must represent a kind of *self*-alienation—coupled with or amplified through social alienation. (This however is a deeper indication of self-alienation than is common—depicting self as a collective whole—so, for purposes of clarification, self in this sense will be avoided). What Hegel's holistic view captures best is the immense cost of departure from interconnectedness. While bifurcation from a composite realm has many possible

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implications, what stands out most meaningfully are the sublime revelations when meeting a world where there are, suddenly to be accounted for, features that distinguish self from social object. Appearing at once are engagements to be incessantly weighed; greater awareness pays the price of greater responsibility, that inescapable consequence of one's newfound perception.

In gathering Hegel's characterization, it is crucial to note that ethical world emergence is the point where self-alienation as well as social alienation both (strangely) sprout their embryonic roots. The captivating effects of perceiving a self, it seems, have diverse and far-reaching effects. While predictability and cohesiveness may be stifling, the alternative, potentially liberating opportunity for "finding oneself" carries the unavoidable consequence of finding oneself separated.

Hegel, noted as the first contemporary to expand on this notion of bifurcation outside of religion, portrayed emergence of consciousness on an individual as well as historical, cultural-developmental level. With respect to the latter, the image of an emerging self-awareness from the depths of primal togetherness was looked upon as a relatively novel phenomenon; historically speaking, he branded ethical world unity to be rule more than exception. But at various times for reasons peculiar to social constituency some, at culturally relevant ages, get driven or otherwise stumble out of this interconnectedness. A newly found capacity to objectify social reality can be viewed as an "awakening" of sorts, varying according to circumstance, yet still implying a capricious development, where recognition of self is not catalyzed directly through initiative (Singer, 1983, pp. 9-23).

While there is no sure margin to anticipate or signify one's "challenging" primal understandings, factors surrounding self-emergence were not viewed entirely fortuitous. As alluded, likelihood was not to be understood outside of a culturally poised context, there were nonetheless distinct variations noted between cultures sharing historically parallel potentials (pp. 11-12). Hegel's famous disclaimer extolling "progress toward a consciousness of freedom," while touting clear historical relevance, was never absent of an essential personal component. As is true of cultural variation in spite of similar epoch, disparities might also be expected between individuals; in this case not as normal deviation but as consequences of contextual exception, where intuitive qualities are

exclusive enough to transcend one's fundamental communal consciousness. And while collective anomalies may arise for temporal parallels, as they are expected across historical epochs, the issue of *individual variation and emergence* is a more thematically relevant (and personally interesting) consideration. While many examples exist, Hughes (Quoted in Fromm, 1941, pp.27-8) provided a compelling account of how a seminal self-unfolding might actually appear:

And then an event did occur, to Emily, of considerable importance. She suddenly realized who she was. There is little reason that one can see why it should not have happened to her five years earlier, or even five years later; and none, why it should have come that particular afternoon…walking rather aimlessly aft, thinking vaguely about some bees and a fairy queen, when it suddenly flashed into her mind that she was *she.* She stopped dead, and began looking over all of her person which came within the range of her eyes...she moved an arm or a leg...with fresh amazement to find them obeying her so readily. Memory told her, of course, that they had always done so before: but before she had never realized how surprising this was. Once settled on her perch, she began examining the skin of her hands with the utmost care: for it was *hers.*

This simple scenario illustrates how after a transparent moment, recognition of oneself as distinct and unique might occur and endure, personal existence has suddenly become a point of contemplation. From a Hegelian perspective the social objectification made available by this emergence provides opportunity for a more enlightened reunion. But the benefit of this separation is essential in a less universal or metaphysically consequential way: it not only enables, it necessitates functioning where distinguishing inside from outside has become inevitable. Aside from desire there must be faced a world where one is not directly interlaced with the other. While this is not an unequivocally positive development it is an indisputably liberating one. For it permits faculties that question, those that might evaluate impartially and craft a will to challenge beliefs customarily taken-for-granted. Short of this perspective *why* can never be a question of relevance next to *what* and *how.*

For Hegel, this objectification of one's social reality, in spite of the individuality it potentially begets, is only a humbling stepping stone in light of the wholeness anticipated by way of surrender. And while self-awareness is essential for any *self*-renunciation ever to be a question, it alone is no sufficient indicator for growth in individualistic initiative. For most, well into adulthood but particularly at early ages, this unfolding or transition

(from social to self-determined reality) gets heavily inhibited, progress relentlessly dissuaded by a bombardment of cultural influences, those stirring anxieties featured by fears of disapproval and abandonment.

In the case of our own culture revelations in self-awareness tend to occur at relatively young ages. Along with this early emergence, illusions of freedom gain prominence while outer assurances for truth are compulsively sought, retaining strong significance and overshadowing inner fortitude. But because an awakening of self is so intoxicating youngsters exhibit an infallible exuberance to brave (often through innocent exploration) prevailing cultural assumptions. What commonly occurs is an ironic inclination to both appease (to effectively incorporate norms) all the while one refuses to relinquish a growing, self-propelled defiance.

This dichotomy lends testimony to the difficulty delimiting alienation, underscoring the importance of its being represented as an aspectual concept. As suggested, the painful distancing typical of social alienation along with the gullibility and eager dependence of self-alienation share a paradoxical connection with the point immediately following (Hegel's) ethical world emergence. So before alienation can be considered in-depth, the relevance of detachment (social alienation) at its unique extreme must first be granted comparable recognition. As Hegel's alter ego in Heidegger so vehemently emphasized, non-relational understanding has value, not simply as a means to another end, (as in unification) but as a pinnacle—signifying an "enlightenment" in-and-of-itself.

Self-direction through separation

In distinct contrast to Hegel, for Heidegger there was to be no groping toward a womb-like inclusion after a taste of self-directed initiative. The quest, instead, toward one's "potentiality-for-being" was geared as an exclusively one-way pursuit. Here, after conceptions of "person-hood" are recognized and subsequently amplified from the inside, any greater progress (in attempt to culminate one's growth) was to be catalyzed only by aiming toward the apex of this theme—interpersonal separation. For Heidegger there was no purpose in curving back, no glorious communal-like reunion was ever proposed. Social convention and expectation, rather than potential assets were considered

hindrances. Interpersonal involvement, outside its most essential requirement, was viewed the primary source of troublesome, formidable barriers, those heavily impinging upon one's non-relational potential. The indication was that a path toward truth-in-being never alludes sacrifice, it demands a will able to avoid presumptuous judgments that synthesize ways of society indiscriminately, ways which through condoned ignorance ensure understanding never transcends the conventional, inauthentic and superficial.

Heidegger was adamant pointing out the great discrepancy between pureness of "being" and its distinct opposite—an essence the product of (primarily impersonal) societal imposition. Seen as illusive mediums to subjugate, the most common social structures were associated with entrapment; familiarities generally overlooked as benign were for Heidegger virulent channels thwarting self-projective potency. Communal obligation was viewed constraining, not through outright insensitivity but for its tendency to distract, to divert energy toward trivialities and preoccupation's of the present. These "normal concerns" become opportunity-blocking impediments. What ordinarily might get dismissed as usual life-disruptions were, for Heidegger, matters that create misconstrued impressions, where even casual contacts allow potentiality-for-being to be hidden, "protected" from an awareness which might otherwise be discovered with decisiveness and, further, directed with intrinsic meaning (Schacht, 1970, pp. 200-4).

It is noteworthy that Heidegger's preference for the word "being" was emphasized deliberately as a verb; he appropriated this usage greater purpose than the more familiar (noun relevant) interpretation—being as a thing. Due largely to a western world monopoly the objective version, Heidegger considered the proposition "to be" as static, over done, and so advanced a compelling counter-emphasis more closely intended as "becoming." The advantage recognized was one is not standing there "formed," as a completed essence, but more fluidly *on their way to becoming* this or that (Barrett, 1962, pp. 210-13). For Heidegger, discovery of one's core existence was possible only through distancing, this was his unconditional prerequisite to know true being, to become what one is intrinsically meant to become, independently. His stance bolstered the argument that those who exhibit authentic agency gain a sharper perception of ambiguity in the other, discrepancies emanating that can more clearly reveal irksome restraints impending upon the self, compelling need for a more comprehensive, personalized picture of

freedom. Unification—contrary to being equated with metaphysical harmony as in Hegel's symbolic true self—got avowed a condition of "falleness," a flawed ideation where possibilities for realizing genuine being are left to atrophy, surrendered in effect, as bound and squandered resources. Heidegger branded mankind as overwhelmingly "swayed by the anonymous they," underscoring a great human propensity to get side-tracked, where most resign to drift through a world of commitments that center not upon matters self-relevant, but on paralleling or appeasing the motives of others (Macquarrie, 1970, p.315; Pappenheim, 1959, pp.121-22).

Banking upon a solitary means for self-realization naturally demands an emphasis on subjective process over-ruling reason and objective clarity currently in place; the message for Heidegger was away from any simple approbation for incorporating what already exists. This familiarity would only distract, to bottle-up potential and bind one more firmly to the caprices of the present. Rather, only by broadening an introspective orientation would "existence" or "being" move beyond itself (in present) in order to approach itself in truth. Only when one not only emerges from a unified reality, but extends as a person realized "from the inside" could individuals represent truly distinct points of view rather than expressions of roles; only where self-insight can be appreciated will self-relevance get prioritized (Barrett, 1962, pp. 213-16).

If self-striving receives full priority, any notion of being treated the instrument of another's purpose is unlikely to be taken as a matter of course, but rather to be considered intrusive and potentially intolerable. For those independently insightful enough, there presumably develops a keen ability to distinguish personally relevant endeavors from influence set to upend or lead astray. Matters of importance are addressable with "true choice" given a genuine self-aimed maturity where, with boundaries extended, self-projections willingly challenge parameters of set convention. (Heidegger however, did not focus upon *choice* as a key word indicative of authenticity. The most feasible explanation is that, while essential, it tends to imply deliberation between prevailing or prefabricated alternatives).

Pursuing this point further, life suggests few absolutes (with respect to discretion and volition) but a fine mixture of context-bound assertions along with those seemingly more self-determined. A certain implication is that one may with fortitude and assurance

denote a vibrant will, all the while the source of drive hinges upon set premises, most pointedly those never carefully scrutinized. While growth of choice undoubtedly aligns with heightened independence, it could also be simply indicating more selections, amounting to nothing more than a widened array of socially condoned expectations and attractions.

Any evidence of one's resolution to choose, nevertheless, attests to an amplified ambition or complexity of self, even if it falls short of providing irrefutable evidence of agency-in-action. The indication here is that *choice* ends up situated somewhere in-between Hegel's harmonious, naive ethical world and Heidegger's self-affirming pinnacle—with dissociation as its keystone. It seems in fact, most forms of separation or conditions of "being," with scattered exceptions, might just as easily fall somewhere within the illusive void created between these extreme (fundamentally opposing) images, each attempting to depict a unique apex of human development. From either end of the spectrum—inward—there seem potentially endless possibilities (a few to be explored) where revelations of the self are, in very ordinary and expected ways, sidetracked, dampened or otherwise disturbed from knowing truth, that of oneself as well as one's world. That's because unified, interwoven images as much as exclusive, non-social interpretations of reality are each overstated *ideals*, absolutes at extremes of a more true-to-life continuum which, with respect to alienation, has been markedly underrepresented.

The intention here is not to discredit or challenge these theoretical endpoints as farfetched, nor is it an attempt to convey a skepticism implying possibilities for their realization as impractical. Testing the boundaries of convention, the ultimate objective of this thesis is to open-mindedly explore just what it is which might actually comprise an "alienation phenomenon." It necessitates an openness challenge, to provide old ideas new niches and hopefully more suitable angles for understanding. This endeavor first begs the question of *why the attraction* to these polar determinants in the first place. And it seems the most sensible way for investigating what significance opposing ultimatums might allow is to best understand what lies in-between.

Before alienation as an aspectual concept is addressed directly, the next four chapters of this thesis will hopefully provide a useful interpretive backdrop for the aspects to be subsequently proposed. Each leads toward the problem of alienation as a

series of interrelated aspects. Each moreover is believed uniquely relevant to alienation in a less categorical, more global sense.

Chapter II

Individuality vs. Individualism

John Dewey's Critical Insight

The purpose of this chapter is to compare and contrast a couple of familiar ideas or conceptual positions generally considered synonymous. There is a critical differentiation to make; one essential for proposing a clear distinction between the philosopher John Dewey's depiction of *individuality* (closely paralleling Heidegger's characterization of self-directed potential) and the more stereotypical "westernized" conception of *individualism.* Because Dewey considered the later, more prominently accepted, "American Individualism" hinging upon criteria of times past, he recognized the established view of unitary initiative to be well at odds with existing conditions. His observation was of a society embracing a rugged, "romantically-charged" individualism insincerely. More precisely, he saw the contemporary version of individualism substantially different, being applied widely out of context, where older associations continued to color the term in ways quite dissimilar from modern manifestations. Much revered images continued while time-altered inconsistencies grew, interpretations long obsolete, in spite of dynamic changes, were not effectively discarded (Dewey, 1930, pp. 74-80).

These outdated ideals managed to persist, supported most by a lingering glorification of unbounded opportunity characteristic of Pioneering Early America. In times gone by when challenges were novel, often boundless, forces of influence were unmistakably physical and intricately tied with emotions channeled through love for adventure and conquest. Overcoming obstacles was rigorous; objectives were tangible and clear, while abilities depended only marginally on interpersonal savvy. But Dewey was convinced (early in the 20th century) that the climate where vigor in the wilderness was a critical attribute for success was no longer a viable reality. He did not witness loyalties continuing to be forged and supported upon this historically classic theme, now worn exhausted. What emerged instead in tradition's wake were values driven by logic of a proliferating economic machine. Here systems already in place determine the course of one's endeavors, courses depending primarily on obligation irrespective of intrinsic relevance (pp. 92-3). Dewey's impressions drew upon evidence suggesting that

technological age allegiance and opportunity rested on such superficial grounds the consequence was "…a confusion...the inability to find a secure and morally rewarding place in the economic scene." (p. 80).

Indications were that individuals of the modern era would find it virtually impossible to steer clear from imposing contingency, hard-pressed to avoid a vast network of interdependency, key features of pecuniary and technological encroachment. Given this inflection, any contemporary version of individualism becomes conveyable only where it gets subject to (and so inextricably linked with) a monetary motive. While modern "takes" on individualism may exist, Dewey recognized these as little more than illusions, dogmas retained by impressions of economic "independence" lying at the heart of most motives and aims. Upon this premise it was reasoned that even those at liberty to orchestrate a corporate machine were "free" only surreptitiously, imparting "decisiveness" at the expense of more genuine inner initiative (pp. 93-4). The indication was, morally unprepared for industrialization's onslaught—irrespective of one's position in life—older creeds, far from being abandoned were clung to ever more fervently. But this last ditch for certitude coincided with heightened gullibility, inflated eagerness to condone ideals and values while blissfully overlooking shifting foundations.

Dewey's critical stance pointed directly toward a cultural blind spot—drive for unbridled accommodation persisted because individualist ideals were heavily curbed. This meant *self*-control was held dear mostly by impression alone, while at the same time one naively surrendered, failing to awaken more sincere self-interests rendered dormant (p. 71). What all this boils down to is that individualistic sensitivities managed to linger on, while in reality it was conformity that actually prevailed. Dewey did not overlook convincing evidence that change more than stability had become a mainstay for our culture. But he comprehended these transitions to be fundamentally longitudinal, cultural attributes diversifying through cohesive waves, (when considering epochal cross-sections there was much greater group adhesion to be noted). Moreover, values associated with trend (newly emerging cultural ideas) were viewed as shallow, going "...far enough to effect suppression of original quality of thought but not far enough to achieve enduring unity." (p. 84).

Distinct from crafting a picture of "modern individualism," or a view contemporarily fitting, Dewey depicted a much-modified variation riding upon self-interests—those appeased most by attractions which allow initiative to pivot fundamentally upon greed. The "individualists," ironically, jump on the profit-motive bandwagon creating a "culturally worthy" justification to exploit. Interestingly, Dewey ended up singling out this feature of self-determination (driving appetites for wealth) as the sole remaining characteristic of the, still revered classical individualism. But this, now stereotypic, avarice was being extolled through conformist promotion, where uniform disposition manages well to masquerade as stoic inner-initiative.

While conformity's relevance with respect to alienation is a larger issue to be subsequently explored, it can at least be mentioned that for Dewey, this version or emphasis on alienation—estrangement colored by delusions of self-initiative—was something noteworthy. For it allowed alienation to be depicted as something broader than interpersonal exclusion alone proves relevant. Here *subtle absence* can be highlighted alongside more overt separation, that which indicates "an artificially induced uniformity of thought and sentiment...a symptom of an inner void." (p. 87). Excesses in sociability, rather than touted as assets, got instead scrutinized; seen as impetuous half-hearted attempts to fill a vacuum the passing of the older individualism had created. The only credible initiative where Dewey saw true *individuality* prevailing was in the letting go of culturally provoked, chimerical impressions of independence—those which ignore the fact that institutions have taken over persons as the functional repositories of rationality. For in his estimation proper paths for discovering individuality, without varnish, reside not in cherished ideologies but more intimately within the individual mind (Featherstone, 1979, p. 28).

Conventionalized Avenues toward "Liberty"

Of Fromm's (1962) remark: "The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person...."(p. 56), the primary message to draw is that internal estrangement automatically implies an accompanying external estrangement. In a spirit akin with Dewey, he recognized that surface inclusion (being with people without being wholly a part) contributes little more than a weak buffer for quelling uncertainty. Interaction often manages only as a "medication," of sorts, for making life endurable

instead of fostering meaningful connection. In this way, at least for Fromm, not simply self-alienation but social alienation persists where relation never transcends the superficial. It is this paradoxical "estranged dependence," moreover, which was believed a principle culprit thwarting individualistic initiative. This image is broad-based, backed by the conviction that it takes something beyond prosaic social contact to enable inner growth *as well as interpersonal possibility.*

Fromm's portrait was of a modern culture fundamentally inhibiting, character manipulating, one creating few viable avenues for escaping the monotony of custom. In a society where outlets are disperse and vague many settle for substandard, surrogate mediums, thereby broadening the range of possible bases, increasing available points from which to relate in an endless quest for security and personal meaning. "All this interest and fascination is not simply an expression of bad taste and sensationalism but a deep longing for a dramatization of the ultimate phenomena of human existence." (p. 72). These strivings for communal connection (in spite of their superficiality) tend to take shape in popular forums such as tabloid news, sports events, and most recently via the modern talk show outlet.

Such avenues (while not always clearly delineated) are not difficult to find. They get incorporated, digested so to speak, little differently than most other market consumables. Yet sincerity invested into these familiar venues is so unpredictable, so arbitrary, overall relevance ends up minimized. Involvement tends to be optional, or (being matters of preference) reduced to unnecessary. There is little criteria or standing obligation for attending one cultural recess over another. While social engagement being a necessity remains certain, tangible forms now popular have varied as much as the value they retain as cultural obligations has depreciated. Such dissonance fuels attitudes where a great number, for obvious reasons, grow apathetic; most are empty of good incentives to identify strongly with a particular niche, attesting to the poor odds any contribute a lasting (affective) value. The point must not be overlooked however; venues that on the surface seem trivial are not necessarily those—bases for alliance—any less important. Indeed, many adhere more desperately to association points admittedly limiting in purpose as lifelines, held dear as a "best alternative" next to nothing.

This gross arbitrariness characterizing socially condoned outlets for connection (or self-escape) calls to question if there are actually any reliable points of legitimacy and, more deeply, if any intrinsic benefit might possibly result. Even when freedom is something appreciated, voicing and committing to (actually backing) choices is always an unpredictable challenge, where sands shift readily. Irrespective of how strong one's admiration for freedom might be, even where room-to-maneuver is recognized more than criticized, the ball and chain of one's cultured character incessantly lingers, magnetically swaying the future relevance of inner expectation.

One's "freedom quest," (to loose or find oneself) with vast room for expression, might assume a benign shape, as a party mask, or possibly culminate in a full-blown "cult-like" crusade. In either case the subtle, festering effects of self-alienation get medicated while more visible, often demeaning, impacts of social alienation are ephemerally evaded. And while diversions and avenues to access vary widely, their impetus—the impulse for outlets as securities—remains at its core the same. Put simply, it is to lessen the burden of holding up too long with an image where appropriateness is delimited; an image obscured by concerns about falling outside confines, where confidence and patience to circumvent boundaries of cultural acceptance seems always in short supply.

As with anything sought meaningfully quests tend to be colored by strong impressions of independence, the effect of which (at least superficially) presents a broadening of possibilities. While extending boundaries may promote a liberating attitude, there is nothing fool proof for suggesting internal change will parallel (even valued) assertions or help open avenues for self-expression. Culturally condoned escapes can be genuinely judged only subsequent to finding out opportunities fall well short of personal longings and more far-sighted ideals.

With this broad ambiguity, one feature that cannot go overlooked is a cultural preference for "decisiveness" creating the stereotypic outline for the way individuality gets generally understood. The idea that when selecting something to select with certainty, not to mention efficiency. Here *resolve* gets prioritized over any incentive to r*ecognize* a full scope of choices. And even with non-intrusive conditions, when the selection spectrum actually broadens, standards it seems whimsically appear. If a favored

position happens to be vague, where assurances are few, something more absolute (oblivious to ramifications) gets earnestly sought. For even the most certain of fellows much unanticipated criteria must be sized and managed, self-imposed guidelines are not only consequences of context, but indicators that contextual draw is virtually inevitable.

Certainty is only possible in retrospect, after trial and error wherein uniqueness can be excavated. Apart from impression there is a very real way in which the *actual* number of choices gets illusively—and yet, without palpable intrusion—diminished. More personally relevant choices may exist in potential, but the point is they are not generally noticed. If this holds true it becomes possible to, quite bluntly, expect what has been dealt and still incorporate a sincere belief in freedom of choice. What the ego may first understand as certitude of liberty is, by way of introspective questioning, begging to be challenged.

Pseudo-Opportunities for Individuality

One of the most prevalent, culturally tolerated, outlets of today prospers via the modern-day talk show. While many programs might seem nothing beyond harmless entertainment most have evolved into havens for eccentricity, mediums of public ritual, where participants and viewers alike religiously turn. For many this seems a reliable forum for catharsis, a tolerated arena for unleashing pent-up inhibitions. But most shows never excel as effective platforms enabling unbridled initiative, nor do they allow credible opportunities for individuality to manifest. Opinions are certainly voiced, but it is another question entirely as to whether ideas are actually shared.

Most noteworthy of these performances—the marked time constraints, parameters that guarantee to attenuate fullness of expression. And while there is nothing uncommon about urgency in today's media-driven circus, there seems here something even more intensely stifling than "air efficiency" obstacles. This is a general discouragement that guests rely upon reflective potential as viable reservoirs for communicating. Emphasis in most cases gets routed away from introspectively sought, descriptively supportable considerations, so that dialogue is invited to succumb to ravings fostered by, or at least pivoting upon, emotional impulse. The bottom line it appears, is that because drama

captivates it must be pursued, even if all the while more thought provoking, tempo-disrupting (for television) penetration gets effectively denied.

When impulse is rewarded over foresight what becomes most clear is opinions get blurted out, not only without much contemplation, they also with equal flair, escape need for explanation. The point concerning the problem of choice is relevant here: any motion carrying an aura of resoluteness will outweigh a comparable one for securing applicability. These forums, at the very least, release one from obligation to concretize an argument only after reasonably supporting its significance. Defensiveness then, manages to overshadow open-mindedness, vehemently protecting an angle to save face, gains priority over relenting for the sake of considering a wider array of more practicable options.

Naturally, there is little point attempting to be sensible in an arena where sense gets routinely compromised. Admitting these limitations, in any case, provides no allowance to condone inauthentic, vile versatility—to defend oneself "as an equal"—by relinquishing personal values and integrity for the sake of a voice. For if reflective sensibility was one's actual aim, say, upon being invited as a guest on the Jerry Springer Show, there seems before the chaos has even begun, a compelling reason to never show up. It cannot be easily dismissed that aside from one's quality of character, and irrespective of any uniqueness or vulnerably, one will be expected to speak quick, loud and frankly, to become aggressive on cue, to pivot upon exposition that is succinct—stabbing—and presented without excess elaboration.

This is the kind of arena where equality of disclosure, as much as verity of description, secures no basis in fact. Settings are actually restrictive, at least in the sense that concern for "the person" generates a quality of compassion no better than the collective temperament expected at an exotic carnival attraction. These are environments that neither encourage nor reveal a capacity to expend effort and dignify through semantic advantage. Crucial energy instead is diverted to ensuring a forward demeanor, and accompanying conviction, capable of guaranteeing audience absorption. The payoff, talk TV's highest reward—approval—generates greater attention and apprehension than deeper, intrinsic beliefs can maintain relevance. This is a stage where the most dominant capture the best leverage in "justly" overshadowing evidence, at least the quality of its

integrity. As credible opinion grows increasingly relative, value diminished with each forthright voice, meaningful qualities are less effectively sought. Whether important or not, the relevance of topics gets undermined because veracity of opinion cannot secure a forefront in the absence of reputable dialogue. Fueled by impressions of genuine involvement, most nonetheless exaggerate confidence of being full participants in open parlance, remaining deluded that they are model representatives for freedom of expression.

A necessary question then, not to be avoided, is why this forum exists as it does—just what is it that creates, perpetuates, and ultimately permits this no-holds-barred mentality. To pose a backdrop, it would not be difficult gaining support for the idea that Americans tend to believe in each person's right to an opinion. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say most would rise quickly in defense of this proposal as a cherished liberty. While all this appears justifiably positive on the surface, what cannot go overlooked is something Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835 deemed an often obscure, but nonetheless ensuing, collective determinism enervating the essential democratic ideal. His fundamental proposal was that individuality, while revered, gets compromised since collective dependence hampers intuitive perspective to sincerely question (Paicheler, 1988, pp. 57, 109). An insight that holds just as true for the contemporary it seems; there appear few clear openings for pursuing an idiosyncratic will without risk of rejection.

While *genuine* democratic equality is only an ideal it seems never further from real when gripped by the zoo-like atmosphere most talk shows encourage. As a general observation there permeates an assurance (notwithstanding democracy's assuming everyone an equal) for equal opportunities to humiliate. Potential equals treating each other as potential threats have considerable incentive securing advantage, highlighted by drives to castigate irrespective of meaning or another's sincerity of intent. For as most have come to accept, generally with disdain, it is the loudest and least hesitant voices which supply the greatest punch. This is the cost of venerating those with enough audacity to secure high visibility, those who selfishly dictate the floor in spite of others. Unabashed offensive persistence forces unwarranted recognition. This, along with the perpetrator's substandard receptivity, fosters the snubbing of more meaningful inclusion, enabling aggression to monopolize and repress the integrity of democratic public opinion.

The main criticism of equality then, absent its realization, is by belief alone it invites conditions that (rather than contribute to actualize) manage to level opportunities for fullness of expression. It is hard to underestimate the magnitude by which distortions in tenet can create tangible, lasting interpersonal barriers. Expectation of consistent opportunity (not consistency itself) is sufficient to encourage a windfall of false assumptions. Presuming that one's belief in equality remains, but is painfully absent or inconsistent in truth, there is a strong suspicion that shortcomings will arrive as burdens to be endured with an *internal* locus for shame (Sennett, 1979, pp. 121-2).

The point is that matters of cultural relevance are not only held important, the entire burden for identification weighs squarely upon one's own shoulders. Deservedly or not responsibility gets "taken on," tested by uncertainty, tempered by pesky distractions, preoccupations seemingly benign as posture, dialect or fashion. And these are more than just cute trivialities accepting that much time, effort and energy goes into establishing and maintaining an image, one defended with greater determination than could ever be justified intrinsically relevant. Rightly or not these things impact awareness. When intuition contrasts with expectation, details that might otherwise be considered personally revealing have a way of getting conveniently omitted, the prime impetus driving influence often magically escapes.

Whether or not the talk show mentality is having far-reaching effects by transcending its viewer-ship perimeter is not easily discernible. But tragically its likeness or personification—the incessant groping for a deceptive front as a communication crutch—persists as a typical feature of the modern American learning environment. Students may certainly portray assertive involvement, but this alone is no sufficient indicator for inquisitive insight and interest. In too many cases participation gets channeled, evaluated insincerely by criteria focusing almost exclusively on precision and efficiency, approaches which (when accentuated at the expense of all others) elbow out reflective depth. Allowing a moment to gather thought without interruption is a luxury subtly discouraged, often something unheard of in places where five seconds of silence is considered an eternity.

Teachers, of course, are guilty as anyone for assuring that participation gets streamlined, kept within "reasonable" boundaries and essentially minimized in quality.

When the instructor does happen to inquire "are there any questions," everyone sees that small window of opportunity to act rather than the (necessary) freedom required for comprehensive reflection. Even when a gripping assertion seems in order, after that window has passed and the instructor moves out of range, intuitions get prematurely purged of relevance. Commonly they fade, blurring back into safe recesses, going without recognition or challenge. Incentive for securing one's point of view gets mysteriously lost, along with optimism and necessary energy for it to ever carry an impact.

The strongest impression is this stunting of initiative is largely consequence of being mesmerized, stifled by preoccupations over eliciting "group relevant" responses. For students it is only common sense that when sharing penetrating insights, particularly if convention is being challenged, there exists the very real likelihood of ending up on a hot seat. There await a room full of reasons for making sure responses are quick, decisive and not too far out of bounds. With this urgency for "correctness" there emanates a slanted performance, a "subjective sharing" of beliefs teeming with incredulity. Because if there is one thing the voluntary participant knows for sure, final judgments are matters left to the mercy of an audience (or class)—not simply to interpret but weigh, parenthesize, and otherwise punctuate one's fate as well.

Since sharing information seems to depend upon skewed initiative, at least as much as raw spontaneity, talk shows along with classrooms stop considerably of functioning as vibrant forums for individualistic expression. Toward the question of authenticity more specifically, it seems that if abrasive, controlling communication were true-to-life indicators of individuality, assertive parallels would be signature features in life beyond the stage, infiltrating employment and similar public venues. In other words, if fast-paced, dominating, poor-listening, outspoken characteristics really did underscore essential qualities of individualistic initiative, why wouldn't these features be fervently embraced, more roundly internalized. But, it seems truthfully, when culturally condoned opportunities for "stepping out of character" are absent—once the show is over—pseudo-individualistic attributes quickly dry up. Unadulterated apprehensions are never far off, messaging to the assertive "heroic" character front (where usefulness sways with context) that it is time to vanish.

To consider another example, movie violence is familiar venue or outlet where directive character attributes generate for many a magnetic attraction. Aggression, revenge and independence are well-noted qualities getting routinely glorified. These are regular cultural staples, well-engrained genres that make it lucrative to invest in hunger for power; where vulnerabilities are fed by media relentless to secure and cash-in-on a faithful, lucrative following. And while it is true that certain viewers press beyond mere emulation—duplicating forceful resolve and violence exhibited upon the screen—most do not. Formidable inner-will comparable to that for which movie characters get sententiously extolled rarely see real-world parallels. Those who revere unwavering, *vociferous* qualities projected on the screen are often the very ones not assertive enough to request a stranger to keep a respectful voice (low) in the library. Touted ideals, no matter how well admired are pursuable, sustainable and defendable only through principled action, for matters that are relevant, and only after meeting difficulties beyond virtual contexts—overtly, directly and authentically.

Chapter III

The Ubiquity of Tacit Convention

Introduction

From a socio-centric perspective, with respect to human learning, only a small part of knowledge is contrived internally. For the greater portion aptitude develops through unified constructs, toward ends fashioned along customary channels in typical situations. Conceding just such a position were some respected social theorists—most notably Emile Durkheim, and Lev Vygotsky—who shared the opinion that understanding gets established overwhelmingly within interpersonal constructs. Guiding these external boundaries for curbing human awareness was believed a distinct familiarity, an enduring base of expressive consensus that dominantly colors and, so, fundamentally unifies the social realm.

The effect this positioning has for understanding is that socially carved parameters sustain relevance (justifiably or not) as encompassing certainties in life. Schultz (1967) noted that most sociologists view predictable structure and function as "factual occurrence"—where familiar patterns accrue along channels corresponding with culturally embedded vernacular. With social immersion this absolute (where verbal, behavior and intuitive attributes can thoroughly merge) impulse for impressions extending beyond immediate contexts suppresses into nonexistence.

It is well known that sociologists favor an empirical orientation, committing their energy toward elevating only measurable "truths" in a fervent quest to weigh the world within highly expectant boundaries. Such standards buttress uniformity not only within venues for justifying practical (science relevant) knowledge but even in the most prosaic, common-sense contexts. Schultz considered such embedded regularity evidence of a "world known in common and taken for granted." He further stated....

It is, first, structurally socialized...that if I were to change places with my fellow-man I would experience the same sector of the world in substantially the same perspective as he does, our particular biographical circumstances becoming for all practical purposes at hand irrelevant. I propose to call this idealization that of the reciprocity of perspectives (p, 19).

The notion that fundamental ways of knowing are primarily interchangeable may at first seem farfetched, but evidence for stock-patterns and predictability within cultural

confines receives credible support. Such proposals coincide with psychosocial phenomena Ross (1908) coined as "conventionality" where, outside any natural contextual impediments, an inability to escape majority influence is a cost assumed without the need for direct oppression. Instead an illusive ideological imperative ensues, replete in its virulence, imparting as a pervasive and reflexively incorporated "moral force"(p.191). Uniformity from this vantage point is both prerequisite and consequence of consensual accord, where character disposition merging with communal pattern becomes, imposing beyond matters of choice, internalized as a native (as well as naive) impulse.

Cultural coherence may be dismissed as essentially harmless (possibly viewed beneficial) in a world so interdependent. If an actual asset, however, it is one where distinctions between self and outer reality retain a blur, no matter what one's "good sense" may be convinced otherwise. As Fromm (1941) understood, to simply say "I think" or "I feel" is insufficient information by itself. The primary concern is not one's degree of conviction, or even whether personal beliefs (often rationalizations) correspond closely to facts. What is instead crucial is the criteria by which those insights are founded, and whether authenticity—upon which initiative and spontaneity are bound—has opportunity to emerge.

The decisive point is not *what* is thought but *how* it is thought. The thought that is the result of active thinking is always new and original; original, not necessarily in the sense that others have not thought it before, but always in the sense that the person who thinks, has used thinking as a tool to discover something new... (p. 195).

Capriciously affirming the most accepted patterns as givens, on the other hand, only serves to narrow and sentence schemes for interpretation to standardization. Interpersonal associations structured and operating upon common ground remain just that—common. Normal encounters "naturally" unfolding slip into general expectation categories, doing nothing past what they already have in store. Beneath the stereotypical veil of autonomy, at their center, adjustments are often deceptively core-*less*.

Even if it is actually possible to appreciate the pervasiveness of cultured uniformity, such vision does not automatically clear a path for alternatives, or indicate foundations where regularities arise. More specifically, acknowledging a limitation does not equate to discovering ways in which things could be otherwise. Primarily through

over-reliance upon scientific verification most (researchers as well as lay people) become "purged of bias"(Whyte, 1956, p.28). With rigidity paralleling that typical in the natural sciences purveyors of (quantifiable) social insight seek closure. Their primary mission is for a tight-knit, consistent formula that aims at resolution—preferably something fool proof. The result is that, in a manner paralleling empirically established disciplines, micro-theories get justified within discrete, esoteric areas of knowing; coasting behind an aura of expertise, social researchers secure autonomy utilizing comparably objective criteria. They establish a niche that for the greater population, capacity to question stays well out of reach.

Sociological authority that effectively categorizes humanity can attenuate natural curiosity, blocking incentives for exploring into less-outlined ways of knowing. Mass consensus amounts to over-extension, premature aggrandizement, and ultimately exaggerated faith in a composite external truth. Cues this contextually closed serve as pretenses for possibility. With expectations firmly grounded there are created incomplete focal points, well-dressed barriers to genuine understanding. Where only stock patterns seem to spur interest and win credibility intuitively held beliefs become vulnerable to compromise. Spontaneous inquiry, essential to initiate a choice-spectrum where incentives for challenge might surface gets well contained. By such prospects arrive contingencies for knowing, bases where established assumptions elude impartial scrutiny.

With constricted precepts awareness is lured into a combination of self-delusion and interpersonal fabrication. Drawn from the need to *know*, in either case, affirmations are too readily resigned to. Any sincere quest to *know with conviction,* then, gets overshadowed by impulse to simply *know what to expect*. The result is avenues for understanding lack intricacy, with insights suppressed or otherwise buried parameters remain underdeveloped, unappreciated and underutilized.

Freudian and Marxian Perspectives on The Human Condition

The notion of being subsumed by powers more ominous than our selves—more specifically, being oppressed by dynamics without reliable bases for acknowledgment—was a theme emphasized tenaciously by Sigmund Freud, and (presenting a broader socio-political image) through Karl Marx. Both managed to highlight the ubiquity of human

deception, accepting that motivations do not correspond directly with either conscious intent or overt behavior. Each were inspired by images of unconscious influences; this then esoteric idea that hidden energies are persistently working to undermine the legitimacy of subjective will or socio-cultural pretension. Both fashioned models whereby obscure forces, energies limiting recognition of broader motives, can stymie the credibility of heartfelt beliefs. Yet, even while visions of a false consciousness were mutual, cases presented were pivoting upon thoroughly divergent premises (Fromm, 1962, pp.104-113).

For Freud the social realm came second to physiology or biology. He recognized society "influencing" only by either enabling or further debilitating whatever *innate* features happen to be present or revealing. The most important inference to draw from this is that human character quality gets seen more a product of inner complexity than outer exigency. Every social dilemma for Freud had a central impetus, and was viewed an ultimate consequence of manifestations occurring from within. Bondage or neurotic oppression, for example, becomes surmountable only inasmuch as intrinsic, libidinal repression surfaces or gets consciously revealed. Freud formulated this proposal theoretically, and presented convincing evidence through psychotherapy how readily misconception dominates consciousness. What his sessions demonstrated strongest was that most of what is real escapes recognition, while most of what gets commonly acknowledged is often deceptive—arriving consciously as distorted rationalizations of the truth (pp. 89-96).

Drawing on a much wider historical-economic foundation Marx held that independent existence, in fact consciousness itself, is an inescapably social occurrence. For purposes of *self*-potential there is little speculation outside an ideal *social* context; he felt that subjectivity was directly wedded to one's social roots, holding the implicit forms in place where intrinsic characteristics potentially emerge. Marx considered the plight of the sole individual a mere symptom (and ultimately consequence) of the greater problem, most notably a poorly designed socio-economic foundation. He did not consign to ideals where the complete, independent person ultimately "graduates," by growing distinct and apart from fundamental social complexes. In fact, he projected the wealth of one's very existence (potential as well as uniqueness) would hinge on how satisfactorily—the

quality of unification through participation—social structures are meaningfully attended. For Marx, "The eye has become a *human* eye when its *object* has become a *human social* object...the senses therefore become directly theoreticians in practice." (p.69).

Marx, with great emphasis on affiliation, amplified the essential importance of structural connection by making a strong case for social reform; he did not merely tout abstract principal alone. Human-to-human and human-to-object relations were key concerns, viewed critical for cooperation to prevail over exploitation. Such posture naturally demanded the uprooting of familiar structural edifices and replacing them so they properly feature an ideal "organic community." The vision was for a bold transformation, and it was one with an ontological premise that required, in effect, to hold-in-cultural-context whatever personal valuations transpire to benefit (White, W, 1961, p.198). Anything short of this still dodged the greater need for the human condition, where morals (to be justly weighed) depend on this composite perspective. The Marxian trademark "communism" is actually less a political ideology than a personal confession, a call for unification as an indispensable opportunity to realize one's pinnacle of human development. Social integrity for Marx was an essentially intrinsic attribute of human nature; any inner ideal therefore demanded a very definitive social pathway, so that the self might find completion only inasmuch as the social world is complete (Fromm, 1962, pp.68-70).

For Freud, with a conflicting impression, mankind has an intrinsic capability (with therapeutic assistance) of overcoming repression without need for social modifications. He recognized biological markers not only as predominant but embedded, primal and virulent forces overriding extraneous circumstance. Given this libido-driven pretext, social change was not a matter directly relevant to questions concerning personal growth. Nor would social stability necessarily "culture" or inspire an essential foundation for individualistic expression. For Freud a true individual—self-discovered beyond subconscious restraint—is realized only through self-reliance; grounding from early childhood experience (compiled internally) impacts more significantly on the psyche than any immediate, circumcised, social concern can influence.

Even if leaning toward a Freudian position, nonetheless, it remains difficult to shrug-off the virility by which social expectations infiltrate and modulate many actions.

One only need consider the extent to which youngsters grow up flooded with suggestions over what constitutes appropriate vs. improper behavior to recognize how indelibly social patterns are laid down. This, moreover, is not simply indicative of encumbrance beginning at the age when such structures need to be faced head on. Before any distinct roles are ever clear a prototypical social character—crafted through the psychic agency of the parents—gets patently manufactured without even having to leaving the house. By picturing a child's first school experience it becomes evident how well presumptions (for even the most hesitant children) over what will and won't pass as socially acceptable are already situated. No amount of stereotypic "kindergarten uncertainty" can overshadow the endless line of preconceptions, opinions and biases when the child first arrives. Concerns over what might be conceivable or attempt-worthy, vs. that more clearly prone to be discredited through reproof, brace most in advance for an irrepressible, shifting reality that wields strong judgment. Prohibitions most children carry for swearing seems only the most obvious example; even something arbitrary as how to hold a fork or where to put your elbows when eating are sure grounds for evaluation.

It is certain that children at this suggested age can and will modify behaviors quite readily when relevant cues change. But this by itself is no compelling evidence that contexts are arbitrary, easy to challenge, or readily surmountable; it only serves to strengthen the case for how dynamic the learning process actually is. Social orientation, with its vast potential for mutability appreciated, manages to maintain boundaries and "correct" digression by keeping expectations within fluid constraints, often in spite of both personal will and impulse. That's because "...The members of the society...behave in such a way as to be able to function in the sense required by the social system...it is the social character's function *to mold and channel human energy...for the purpose of the continued functioning of this society."* (pp.78-9).

The most fundamental idea to appreciate here is there are certain, socially relevant, criteria by which individuals and groups with few exceptions adhere. It matters little if communal structures are firmly in place or undergoing considerable transformation. When frameworks go vague the tendency is to seek them out and, by any conceivable means, restore socio-personal balance and regain interpersonal securities (Festinger, 1950, pp. 272-3). To consider a conglomerate of people without a social

structure is almost as unfathomable as postulating a communal structure without people. This magnetic inclination, pulling together to draw forth available precepts attests to the adaptability of the human condition. It also underscores the implicit urgency involved, revealing social applicability in ways hard to imagine at face value—punctuated by drives for relational assurance, not simply to appease attractions for integrity, but to keep intact boundaries that delineate one's very humanness.

This predisposition for social immersion can be considered to parallel, in a sense, the protective coloring many animals assume to create (naturally) an appearance of being invisible relative to their surroundings. People in a comparable way, are "better covered" when giving up uncertainties of sovereignty, more comfortably shielded from (a human version of) anxiety and doubt. Little is gained pursuing the problem of *why* self-abdication would be justifiable since most never shed the guarded impression that such lifestyle adjustments are intrinsic choices.

To appreciate why repression can be so absolute it is necessary to consider what happens when the means to keep a protective veil in place fades or is otherwise not available. Here discrepancies between oneself and an interpersonal reality become clear, with the displaced self now visible for the world to see. For the many denied acceptance longings for inclusion persist as powerful preoccupations. When estrangement translates to painful lifestyle limitation, exclusion does not generally unfold like some lonesome-hero scenario where solitary forces triumph, maintaining their ground against a wall of sanctioned resistance. What often happens in spite of their anomalous exterior, those on the margins seek each other out, reaching to find comfort and strength in each other's impotence. Sensing their own deficiencies for certainty and meaning they desperately create an affiliation base, an orientation touchstone, or risk drifting into madness. Some demonstrate this urgency with great resolve as when compulsion plays out in destructive impulse. Most disturbing is where the propulsion for inclusion, unrelenting, depreciates into sadomasochistic strivings (Fromm, 1941, pp. 179-83).

Appreciating the power and ubiquity of social forces a "thoroughly Freudian" viewpoint carries less weight. While biological determinants very likely effect human character, it is difficult to imagine them as sole forces overshadowing the complexities of the social known. In a similar respect, Marx's call for an extensive societal reevaluation

might fare well as a harmonious communal ideal, but any actual dismantling seems a Herculean task. This rings particularly true for the sole individual, one for whom dramatic cultural overhauls are not likely to emerge from any intuitive ideal into the tangible and real. Rather it seems more practical to appreciate social constraints as expansive, largely irreconcilable, albeit malleable, givens. Instead of being fundamentally re-designed or theoretically dismissed, social barriers to self-determination (not being directly conquerable) might rather be "confronted" by sidestep, to be "encountered" or dealt with without directive, by way of allusion.

While such a suggestion may appear little different than debunking or under-representing the fortitude of the social realm it is not the same; considering the problem evading social constraint, acknowledging its impenetrability might just as likely lend credence to its virility. Just as there are those plagued by compulsions for self-denial or complete enmeshment (as through duty) there is an opposing path—a less revered detraction from the securities of the social. For those who are in their most primary phases of self-development—a characterization with no strong correspondence with chronological age—extensive social debasement can be traumatizing and, therefore, experienced as a very profound self-threat; here one's semblance of self, one's very inner-permanence and grasp on existence is menaced. Yet, while social expulsion may induce certain (potentially lasting) harm, a void of interpersonal separation might also open unexpected havens of opportunity. As will be explored, personal transformation demands a degree of severance more elaborate than is generally popular or congenial.

Detour by Solitude

It may have been by circumstance or just as conceivably through initiative that the benefits of a life matured through severance came to be appreciated. Aside from origins, it is not difficult to consider notable examples of those (particularly philosophers and writers) who revere detachment, often touted as critical grounding for prolific insights ever to surface. Hegel for example, when speaking of the necessity of alienation, placed separation at the very heartbeat of life spirit, an orientation held essential for any subsequent authentic union ever to be possible. Heidegger, with notably greater emphasis on self-direction, felt there was no true essence beyond the personal or

potentially self-relevant. For humans he placed great importance on death, envisioning this *non-relational understanding* for existence as its pinnacle (Schacht, 1970, pp. 202-04). Aside from whatever intrinsic virtue such extreme perspective might bestow, stark dissociation is not a "condition for being" characteristically (at least overtly) sought. Any grand idyllic appraisal would undermine the more typical emphasis—primarily on the aloneness dimension of solitude—gauged culturally, rarely as a quality to embrace but more commonly an attribute of burden, to evade or eagerly erase.

Philosophical consensus, as a general impression, indicates that purposeful awareness include provisions for peace of mind. This means inner strength or assurance depend on (or at least runs consistent with) fundamental, tactile-relevant conditions for serenity. Repose, while cherished as essential for deep meaning to surface is, nonetheless, always at risk of eclipse by a world powered through imposing influence. For one staunch believer the benefits of solitude were obvious and hardly worth the effort to question, but Powys (1933) did provide terse insight into why avenues for a composed, unitary existence are so effectively derailed:

Vigorous, robust, expansive natures cannot refrain from overriding and overwhelming every other self that they approach. They mean no harm. They are not cruel or malicious. They are simply exuberant. Nevertheless in their innocence they are the worst enemy against which the...solitude of the soul has to be defended! (p. 57).

Allowing that we can recognize the impetuousness by which the world of attachment operates, the question of why solitude should receive such low quality appreciation (weighing-in this perspective) seems more addressable. One observation is that negatives are attributable directly to the stark consequence itself—dissociation. For Csikszentmihalyi (1990)"…the worst sanction that the community can issue is shunning." (p. 165). Such a dismal collective view of isolation will have ramifications whether circumstances indicate self-imposed seclusion, overt rejection, or anything in-between. Those who relish in or resolutely endorse solitude, the stigma suggests, are engaging in a style of self-shunning; consequence of the majority therefore, with their substantial emphasis on and partiality for affiliation, negative impressions fuel attitudes that amount to shunning all the same.

Given the stoic image portrayed by dissenting philosophers, it is understandable why many found cause to criticize introspective thinkers, most notably Nietzsche and

Kierkegaard, for delving too far inward in their searches for truth. In spite of well-rounded respect—for both, "ones own truth" was a virtue beyond which any universal truth could provide—they were plagued by inner torment which psychologically overwhelmed (debilitated) each toward the end of their short lives. In the case of Kierkegaard, for example, the issue of solitude as an essential lifestyle requisite was addressable only by answering questions with absolute decisiveness, solely through confrontation with (and retention of) stark certainties. There would be no collective appeasement (irrespective of potential suffering) in order to compromise; e*ither* solitude *or* sacrifice to the peculiarities of culture were the possibilities, no lesser position would yield the greatest understanding (Barrett, 1958, pp. 171, 181).

While providing distinct clarity, this determinism for meaning never avoids striking up an enormous divide for prospective evaluation. Uniqueness inquisitive and extreme, sometimes strange in demeanor, ends up obscuring assets more important for appreciating a stand in the name of severance. In the midst of Kierkegaard's immoderate posturing what gets underrepresented for solitude are the tangible advantages in separation, the illuminating *engagement of purpose* particularly unique to the experience. While incentives may not present themselves clearly, bulging at the seams, a low visibility "engagement" often equates with a silent, and yet substantial, connection to the real world.

With major discrepancies outlined, a more effective contrast is better conceived between two terms most closely tied to interpersonal estrangement—solitude and loneliness. While interpretations frequently overlap, with applications often being interchanged, there are earmark distinctions in need of recognition. Both terms, with little question, are compatible for representing some circumstance or impression of aloneness; either expression might also convey a clear-cut dissociation from familiar, interactive patterns of life. However, when matters of affect are afforded better focus these semantic homologues part ways, and quite dramatically at that.

Loneliness, put simply, denotes a resounding and enduring incompleteness. It indicates a plight-of-self punctuated by restlessness, compelling those afflicted to yearn and wander relentlessly in quest of its overcoming. Solitude conversely, portrays isolation highlighted by heartening reassurance; this underlined with a state of

confidence. Assets may not always manifest as pleasant but solitude triumphs even in the face of hardship, for here purpose endures, defining and unifying features which, for those plagued by loneliness are noticeably lacking.

The benefits of solitude, nonetheless, come with an imperative to strike a wedge between oneself and whatever forces of humanity—no matter how well meaning—create an opposition. Solitude, like virtually any other important lifestyle effort, is characterized by aspirations for yielding favorable results. But any sincere attempt requires sacrifice: disengagement from the barrage of contradictory cues (disruptions that confine "involvement" to the superficial by restricting it to the interpersonal). The deep disparity between self and society so commonly anticipated is one possible reason Richard Sennett (1980) resolved to describe solitude in a way that could easily be interchanged with virtually any other variation on estrangement. It may also have something to do with his associating the concept with matters of circumstance more than choice:

Solitude is an emotion of absence...a lack of connection and therefore a lack of constraint. But it can be so painful that people will blindly commit themselves to a marriage, a job, or a community, and yet find that in the midst of others they remain alone. (pp. 4, 10).

Sennett's general impression is of a profound, enduring self-alienation more than any stark isolation or loneliness per se; however, whatever his true intention, because this interpretation is bound with deficiency of purpose it is an insufficient depiction of solitude. When descriptors necessary for representing interpersonal separation jump (affective) contexts so easily semantic standards dissolve. This manages only to raise questions about the relevance of certain venues, creating doubts about where credible consensus might finally reside. With indiscriminant application, in a society that esteems affiliation over seclusion, linguistic imagery surrounding solitude gathers poor light for approval, and (given its marginal cultural pertinence) gets prematurely imbued with undesirable overtones.

While I believe that either loneliness or solitude might result from matters of circumstance (rather than choice) what is more critical to consider is the impact of any possible result. The less social disengagement is viewed a burden—as with individuality—the less likely it thrives as an inhibiting, preoccupying or disaffirming obstacle. For all practical purposes, the only way solitary existence can gain positive

(social) light is through a call of judgment. The greatest tendency however is to regard this state—likely without having fully experienced it—one to avoid, or more plainly a path devoid of desirability. But if detachment is this easily branded detestable, this impulsively reduced in purpose, it seems more sensible to stick with characterizations indisputably accepted as undesirable—inhibition, desolation, emptiness, etc. For solitude to go the way of familiar idioms projecting distinct negativity would be unfortunate; worst, it would condone a shallow semantic appraisal, the watering down of linguistic value where biased impression and generalization can imprudently overshadow intrinsic meaning.

Chapter IV

Self as a Dynamic Work-in-progress

Any representation of "self" as an organization of interdependent processes automatically implies that transition is at least as essential as stability. It recognizes that existing frameworks somehow allow for personal drive, these become integral foundations underlying potential elevation, serving as formed pretense, ingredients foreshadowing later developments in self-pursuit. Ira Gordon (1958, pp. 138-51) presented just such a perspective, where structure effects no sure stranglehold on function. He held that when matters of self are acknowledged as process, shifts away from familiar dogma result. Conversely, when structural parameters are emphasized at the expense of this elemental human dynamism, opportunities for uniqueness get compromised.

Gordon beheld the self as the psychological equivalent of the central nervous system, that biochemical core for sustaining integrity requiring no catalyzing influence or coordinating set of controls from without. This kind of portrayal for person-hood is both definitive (in the present) and continuous, a "self-system" stressing internal initiative while not blindly discounting inevitabilities of circumstance. It is a view capturing "quality of function" in a composite profile of sorts, with temporal and yet incisive positioning, stressing an intrinsically mutable and developmental, rather than static self-condition.

Favoring a singularly forward progression Gordon's self-system depicts self-growth as an exclusively one-way development. But this raises the question: how can initiatives that are purposeful be distinguished from self-efforts more clearly misdirected? While there is no absolute answer, there is something loosely recognizable with a heightening of intuition, a seasoned coherence increasingly difficult to shake throughout one's self-development. The indication is that a mounting conviction can emanate despite formidable (possibly unanimous) resistance, sincerity to defy opposition, with assurance guided by a durable internal compass.

Staying with this idea, if attempting to consider the likelihood of succumbing to baneful encroachment and deception, ultimately it is one's reflective potential, or self-system capacity situated as the most essential marker for self-evaluation—the center

where depth and sincerity parallel one's capability to respond maturely. When traveling along an ontologically relevant path there presumably appear unique, distinct milestones of self, which had here-to-fore been inconceivable. Moreover increments in cognitive wherewithal are not, by this model, transient qualities; those mysteriously lost or relinquished. Rather, the suggestion is that capacities gained create a foundation or essential medium upon which a more capable self-awareness secures possibility. With this view is portrayed (while sometimes appearing to wax and wane along this process) a propagation self-competence which is never subtracted in whole.

The significance for *self-hood* to be interpreted as a series of personal progressions is justified by its lexicality—it best denotes the antithesis of the *self-alienation* concept. *Self*-realization is, in a very straightforward sense the fundamental feature of *self*-alienation's overcoming. Self can also be understood in an instrumental way distinct from identity. While self, as depicted, reflects the current state of maturity for an existing self-system, identity is a more interpersonally wedded indicator, a concept incorporating affiliation-bound factors that recognize status not directly indicative of self-constitution in truth.

The semantic utility underscored draws from high visibility. It stems from the numerous associations by which this concept gets so readily employed: self-esteem, self-confidence, self-determination, self-concept, self-interest, etc; for better or worse "self" is the prevailing baseboard whereby a multitude of meanings access expressive value. Even discounting its prevalence within the social science literature, usage pervades into the most common exchanges. But it is just this very unfettered mutability—its eclectic and largely unbounded potential for application—that allows the essential flexibility for interpretation. The present idea is that *self* is potentially many different things. It seems a fitting concept therefore, appropriate for conveying a vision of something both transmutable as well as unidirectional; a formulation not rooted but properly suited for "beings-in-process," yet retaining relevance where exigency for pattern and organization are expected.

With such an eclectic premise it is important to recognize the self as entirely distinct from ego. Ego, at least its maturity, is an idea closely associated with inner ethic; its health is predicted by gauging aptitudes for warding off instinctual urges. Success for

its growth is an indication of one's ability to best channel "virility of character," withstand frustrations, control emotional tension and persist toward rational, socially delimited goals. The self, instead, demands a conceptualization which lends credence to one's dynamic human center; that seat of understanding where prevailing beliefs and fortitude of curiosity intersect and continually redefine cognition. Such a reaching interpretation manages to transcend virtually all contextual presumptions and conceivable categories for approaching value judgments.

For something so fundamental (self) to be considered as a matter of process, it is necessary to select the most telling semantic application, that which draws directly from its premise. Seemingly, the most compatible representation is to think (and speak) of not any set *self,* nor any multifaceted representation thereof, but of a progression of separate, situation-applicable, temporal-relevant *selves.* The greatest advantage with this view is the many possibilities for drawing an image, without having to discount or discredit the relevance of maneuverability. The breadth suggested here moreover is in no way intending to reduce self-continuity to something arbitrary or ephemeral; it only attempts to dispel static, one-dimensional preconceptions, to exemplify that there are very few ways of predicting and pigeonholing the self.

It must be mentioned, however, that not every pluralistic view of self need be thought of as commensurate with self-growth. The American Psychologist William James' (1890) representation of "multiple selves," while useful in displaying mutability of behavior across various scenarios, is not a fitting model for addressing issues of self-maturation. What he envisioned was a self which could (upon demand) divide into various images or versions compatible with situation and expectation. For James, "...there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares. He generally shows a different side of himself to each of these different groups...where one is afraid to let one set of his acquaintances know him as he is elsewhere"(p.296).

While such character variations certainly occur, they manage to say little—for James, are not intended to address—about any actual development of self-condition. Absent from this image is a place for self-authenticity. James' depiction underscores the inevitable self-appeasement paralleling circumstance and expectation. It shows that self-dispersal (rather than transformation) is more likely, more insidiously, indicative of self-

solicitation. This image of a divisible self—or mutual variations thereof—seems something closer to an identity reassurance quest, of being plagued by and reacting to incomplete accord from within, resorting to self-compromise as a cry for want of a meaningful, intrinsically relevant basis for understanding.

James presented a conceptual picture he coined *discordant splitting* to illustrate this lack of self-constancy. It is a portrayal of "self perpetually revising self," modifying in accordance with whatever social encounters are most favorably anticipated. In certain ways this—amending of behavior relative to scenario—might serve as a viable tool-kit or testing ground to decipher, and eventually endorse, whatever behaviors get weighed most advantageous. Yet such adaptive eclecticism could just as easily indicate an ongoing ambiguity, evidence that self-growth has actually stagnated.

Consistent with this suggested "stagnation," ironically, is something thriving that allows one to internalize, and more convincingly depict, a socially versatile image. Maneuverability becomes useful for compatibility and ease of adaptation; any clear signs of self-immobility go largely unnoticed amongst the clamor for self-dissemination. Convenience for accommodation is a weak platform to appreciate a stalwart self-presence and an equally poor one for catalyzing self-augmentation. Self-relevance underdeveloped, may be cause, effect, or a combination as such, of being plagued by impulse to acknowledge trend; concession to what ultimately amounts to situation appropriate conduct—this internal "correcting" according to expectation.

Most importantly—or of gravest concern for this discussion—adjusting disposition to serve the motives of another, while not always negative, manages to conceal self-alienating impositions. Responding competently, even to rapidly changing conditions, may indicate nothing beyond an artful aptitude for subjugation. No matter one's skill or poise, nor how aesthetically appealing or seemingly appropriate, slick social malleability falls short as a practical asset for approaching questions relevant to self-discovery.

Self-alienating conditions are not, nonetheless, inevitable indications of mere parroting the social dynamic. A sizable population certainly engage with defiance, challenging any or all notions of willful surrender society may dish out. While not

exactly centerpieces of the larger cultural framework, such cases deserve attention and will be subsequently considered in greater detail.

While following blindly is not to be accepted as universally commonplace, having to function within a prefabricated framework virtually is. Finding one's niche, moreover, by becoming part of the larger social configuration can be effective shelter for defective motive and action. While idealism may persist, impulse to deflect deeper intention can be unwitting and pervasive, even for those who don't appear to outright conform.

With relativity acknowledged, submission is not (by itself) exclusive evidence for inhibited self-awareness. Just as well, simply defying expectation is no good indicator of self-directed behavior. Letting others know where we stand with conviction may say nothing of introspective quality, propriety, and all the other factors relevant for gathering essential attributes necessary for self-certainty. Confidence, while never reprehensible by itself, may disclose no more than determination to allay fear by positioning oneself securely. No matter how fully voices get aired, what seems neglected most are the "situation-specific" boundaries so vehemently defended. Veracity is called to question, not for insincerity but the narrowness upon which positions get supported. Holding strong may reveal little beyond a capacity to position well, to effectively balance oneself against that of another. Here determination and deference blend in a sense, for individualistic strivings to get compromised cues only need be taken, assuredly and flatly, in-context.

Closely resembling the picture of discordant-splitting introduced by William James is Robert J. Lifton's "Protean man" (1969). This symbolic image was borrowed from "Proteus," an Ancient Greek Mythological Figure able to change shape and exhibit diverse functions with relative ease. Given this mutability Proteus found it uncomfortable, almost impossible, committing to a single form. While gifted as fluid and dynamic the character also suffers, delimited and unfastened by these persistent, multiple incarnations. Proteus is an appropriate mythic representation for the ideological hunger to know and to feel, matched by a painful, irreconcilable, division that endures between inner and outer worlds (pp.43-6).

This Protean Man Paradox has, in many ways, a distinctive contemporary parallel. Mankind today is genuinely burdened by what Lifton understood as "psycho-historical

dislocation" (p.54), when alluding to the fragmentation of cultural traditions and dissolution of symbols, cherished staples for ready connection with one's essential human roots—family, community, religion, etc. The break in association has tangible implications; take for example the flood of conflicting imagery swelling contemporary communication venues. The picture is of a whirling—mostly media driven—platform for securing meaning, ambiguous as much as it is ubiquitous, the effect of a relentless seductive force taking advantage of human compulsions for inclusion, inflating concerns where there can be found no holistic, meaningful theme. Where diversity reigns to such degree "reassurances" to be sought know no boundaries. Because images are encountered extensively and mutually, psychological processes are also shared but (against this backdrop) only partial and often vague meanings yield well for interpretation.

Weakly defined yet enduring cultural idioms distort both self-perception as well as the integrity of a self in process. This problem corresponds directly with what Erikson (1968, p. 131) referred to as identity diffusion (and accompanying confusion). Since delimiting identity calls for self-insight as well as mutual understanding (compatibility in relation) images of what constitutes dysfunction can be fragmented in a similar sense, with identity still fluid one's wherewithal of self can be just as tenuous. James' vision of (horizontally) variant selves may underscore adaptability, influence and resolve, but also a peculiar ability to function with marginal certainty and, as Lifton (1969) reveals, with a corresponding debasement in direction as well.

"Until relatively recently, no more than one major ideological shift was likely to occur in a lifetime, and that one would be long remembered as a very significant inner individual turning point accompanied by a profound soul-searching and conflict. But today, it is not so unusual to encounter several such shifts accomplished relatively painlessly within a year, or even a month...the rarity is the man who has gone through life holding firmly to a single ideological vision" (p, 53).

An enhanced ability to shift ideologically may seem to some, distinct from being a detriment, a mark of aptitude, clear evidence of social efficacy. Gaining an essential avenue to coincide might indicate an effective way of coming to terms with an indiscriminant, essentially formless reality, such allowances could even be revered as survivalist. It cannot be overlooked then, relying upon familial and cultural symbols for incorporating social meaning involves something beyond choice; wellsprings for

understanding are as fundamental as the social realm itself. When external dimensions are, for whatever reason, rendered meaningless the urge to manufacture them is nothing less than impulsive. When the field opens wide symbols get taken in—whether by choice or circumstance—but not do escape consideration all the same.

For the contemporary, needless to say, the most common instance is facing boundaries that are tenuous more than clear. The need to incorporate parameters, not being diminished, only becomes less exact. To arrive at a feasible culprit for driving and sustaining conformity demands a broad-spectrum consideration. Predictability suffers most when this blurring of boundaries is never challenged, when the shift away from familiar influence is never attempted, and uncertainties remain so well concealed that the growth of a self in all its genuineness can secure no basis for priority.

Chapter IV

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where depth and sincerity parallel one's capability to respond maturely. When traveling along an ontologically relevant path there presumably appear unique, distinct milestones of self, which had here-to-fore been inconceivable. Moreover increments in cognitive wherewithal are not, by this model, transient qualities; those mysteriously lost or relinquished. Rather, the suggestion is that capacities gained create a foundation or essential medium upon which a more capable self-awareness secures possibility. With this view is portrayed (while sometimes appearing to wax and wane along this process) a propagation self-competence which is never subtracted in whole.

The significance for *self-hood* to be interpreted as a series of personal progressions is justified by its lexicality—it best denotes the antithesis of the *self-*alienation concept. *Self*-realization is, in a very straightforward sense the fundamental feature of *self*-alienation's overcoming. Self can also be understood in an instrumental way distinct from identity. While self, as depicted, reflects the current state of maturity for an existing self-system, identity is a more interpersonally wedded indicator, a concept incorporating affiliation-bound factors that recognize status not directly indicative of self-constitution in truth.

The semantic utility underscored draws from high visibility. It stems from the numerous associations by which this concept gets so readily employed: self-esteem, self-confidence, self-determination, self-concept, self-interest, etc; for better or worse "self" is the prevailing baseboard whereby a multitude of meanings access expressive value. Even discounting its prevalence within the social science literature, usage pervades into the most common exchanges. But it is just this very unfettered mutability—its eclectic and largely unbounded potential for application—that allows the essential flexibility for interpretation. The present idea is that *self* is potentially many different things. It seems a fitting concept therefore, appropriate for conveying a vision of something both transmutable as well as unidirectional; a formulation not rooted but properly suited for "beings-in-process," yet retaining relevance where exigency for pattern and organization are expected.

With such an eclectic premise it is important to recognize the self as entirely distinct from ego. Ego, at least its maturity, is an idea closely associated with inner ethic; its health is predicted by gauging aptitudes for warding off instinctual urges. Success for

its growth is an indication of one's ability to best channel "virility of character," withstand frustrations, control emotional tension and persist toward rational, socially delimited goals. The self, instead, demands a conceptualization which lends credence to one's dynamic human center; that seat of understanding where prevailing beliefs and fortitude of curiosity intersect and continually redefine cognition. Such a reaching interpretation manages to transcend virtually all contextual presumptions and conceivable categories for approaching value judgments.

For something so fundamental (self) to be considered as a matter of process, it is necessary to select the most telling semantic application, that which draws directly from its premise. Seemingly, the most compatible representation is to think (and speak) of not any set *self,* nor any multifaceted representation thereof, but of a progression of separate, situation-applicable, temporal-relevant *selves.* The greatest advantage with this view is the many possibilities for drawing an image, without having to discount or discredit the relevance of maneuverability. The breadth suggested here moreover is in no way intending to reduce self-continuity to something arbitrary or ephemeral; it only attempts to dispel static, one-dimensional preconceptions, to exemplify that there are very few ways of predicting and pigeonholing the self.

It must be mentioned, however, that not every pluralistic view of self need be thought of as commensurate with self-growth. The American Psychologist William James' (1890) representation of "multiple selves," while useful in displaying mutability of behavior across various scenarios, is not a fitting model for addressing issues of self-maturation. What he envisioned was a self which could (upon demand) divide into various images or versions compatible with situation and expectation. For James, "...there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares. He generally shows a different side of himself to each of these different groups...where one is afraid to let one set of his acquaintances know him as he is elsewhere"(p.296).

While such character variations certainly occur, they manage to say little—for James, are not intended to address—about any actual development of self-condition. Absent from this image is a place for self-authenticity. James' depiction underscores the inevitable self-appeasement paralleling circumstance and expectation. It shows that self-dispersal (rather than transformation) is more likely, more insidiously, indicative of self-

solicitation. This image of a divisible self⸺or mutual variations thereof⸺seems something closer to an identity reassurance quest, of being plagued by and reacting to incomplete accord from within, resorting to self-compromise as a cry for want of a meaningful, intrinsically relevant basis for understanding.

James presented a conceptual picture he coined *discordant splitting* to illustrate this lack of self-constancy. It is a portrayal of "self perpetually revising self," modifying in accordance with whatever social encounters are most favorably anticipated. In certain ways this⸺amending of behavior relative to scenario⸺might serve as a viable tool-kit or testing ground to decipher, and eventually endorse, whatever behaviors get weighed most advantageous. Yet such adaptive eclecticism could just as easily indicate an ongoing ambiguity, evidence that self-growth has actually stagnated.

Consistent with this suggested "stagnation," ironically, is something thriving that allows one to internalize, and more convincingly depict, a socially versatile image. Maneuverability becomes useful for compatibility and ease of adaptation; any clear signs of self-immobility go largely unnoticed amongst the clamor for self-dissemination. Convenience for accommodation is a weak platform to appreciate a stalwart self-presence and an equally poor one for catalyzing self-augmentation. Self-relevance underdeveloped, may be cause, effect, or a combination as such, of being plagued by impulse to acknowledge trend; concession to what ultimately amounts to situation appropriate conduct⸺this internal "correcting" according to expectation.

Most importantly⸺or of gravest concern for this discussion⸺adjusting disposition to serve the motives of another, while not always negative, manages to conceal self-alienating impositions. Responding competently, even to rapidly changing conditions, may indicate nothing beyond an artful aptitude for subjugation. No matter one's skill or poise, nor how aesthetically appealing or seemingly appropriate, slick social malleability falls short as a practical asset for approaching questions relevant to self-discovery.

Self-alienating conditions are not, nonetheless, inevitable indications of mere parroting the social dynamic. A sizable population certainly engage with defiance, challenging any or all notions of willful surrender society may dish out. While not

exactly centerpieces of the larger cultural framework, such cases deserve attention and will be subsequently considered in greater detail.

While following blindly is not to be accepted as universally commonplace, having to function within a prefabricated framework virtually is. Finding one's niche, moreover, by becoming part of the larger social configuration can be effective shelter for defective motive and action. While idealism may persist, impulse to deflect deeper intention can be unwitting and pervasive, even for those who don't appear to outright conform.

With relativity acknowledged, submission is not (by itself) exclusive evidence for inhibited self-awareness. Just as well, simply defying expectation is no good indicator of self-directed behavior. Letting others know where we stand with conviction may say nothing of introspective quality, propriety, and all the other factors relevant for gathering essential attributes necessary for self-certainty. Confidence, while never reprehensible by itself, may disclose no more than determination to allay fear by positioning oneself securely. No matter how fully voices get aired, what seems neglected most are the "situation-specific" boundaries so vehemently defended. Veracity is called to question, not for insincerity but the narrowness upon which positions get supported. Holding strong may reveal little beyond a capacity to position well, to effectively balance oneself against that of another. Here determination and deference blend in a sense, for individualistic strivings to get compromised cues only need be taken, assuredly and flatly, in-context.

Closely resembling the picture of discordant-splitting introduced by William James is Robert J. Lifton's "Protean man" (1969). This symbolic image was borrowed from "Proteus," an Ancient Greek Mythological Figure able to change shape and exhibit diverse functions with relative ease. Given this mutability Proteus found it uncomfortable, almost impossible, committing to a single form. While gifted as fluid and dynamic the character also suffers, delimited and unfastened by these persistent, multiple incarnations. Proteus is an appropriate mythic representation for the ideological hunger to know and to feel, matched by a painful, irreconcilable, division that endures between inner and outer worlds (pp.43-6).

This Protean Man Paradox has, in many ways, a distinctive contemporary parallel. Mankind today is genuinely burdened by what Lifton understood as "psycho-historical

dislocation" (p.54), when alluding to the fragmentation of cultural traditions and dissolution of symbols, cherished staples for ready connection with one's essential human roots—family, community, religion, etc. The break in association has tangible implications; take for example the flood of conflicting imagery swelling contemporary communication venues. The picture is of a whirling—mostly media driven—platform for securing meaning, ambiguous as much as it is ubiquitous, the effect of a relentless seductive force taking advantage of human compulsions for inclusion, inflating concerns where there can be found no holistic, meaningful theme. Where diversity reigns to such degree "reassurances" to be sought know no boundaries. Because images are encountered extensively and mutually, psychological processes are also shared but (against this backdrop) only partial and often vague meanings yield well for interpretation.

Weakly defined yet enduring cultural idioms distort both self-perception as well as the integrity of a self in process. This problem corresponds directly with what Erikson (1968, p. 131) referred to as identity diffusion (and accompanying confusion). Since delimiting identity calls for self-insight as well as mutual understanding (compatibility in relation) images of what constitutes dysfunction can be fragmented in a similar sense, with identity still fluid one's wherewithal of self can be just as tenuous. James' vision of (horizontally) variant selves may underscore adaptability, influence and resolve, but also a peculiar ability to function with marginal certainty and, as Lifton (1969) reveals, with a corresponding debasement in direction as well.

"Until relatively recently, no more than one major ideological shift was likely to occur in a lifetime, and that one would be long remembered as a very significant inner individual turning point accompanied by a profound soul-searching and conflict. But today, it is not so unusual to encounter several such shifts accomplished relatively painlessly within a year, or even a month...the rarity is the man who has gone through life holding firmly to a single ideological vision" (p, 53).

An enhanced ability to shift ideologically may seem to some, distinct from being a detriment, a mark of aptitude, clear evidence of social efficacy. Gaining an essential avenue to coincide might indicate an effective way of coming to terms with an indiscriminant, essentially formless reality, such allowances could even be revered as survivalist. It cannot be overlooked then, relying upon familial and cultural symbols for incorporating social meaning involves something beyond choice; wellsprings for

understanding are as fundamental as the social realm itself. When external dimensions are, for whatever reason, rendered meaningless the urge to manufacture them is nothing less than impulsive. When the field opens wide symbols get taken in—whether by choice or circumstance—but not do escape consideration all the same.

For the contemporary, needless to say, the most common instance is facing boundaries that are tenuous more than clear. The need to incorporate parameters, not being diminished, only becomes less exact. To arrive at a feasible culprit for driving and sustaining conformity demands a broad-spectrum consideration. Predictability suffers most when this blurring of boundaries is never challenged, when the shift away from familiar influence is never attempted, and uncertainties remain so well concealed that the growth of a self in all its genuineness can secure no basis for priority.

Chapter V
Roots of Self-Alienation

A Personal Reflection

In 1969 after my 13 year-old cousin's family tragically died in a fire, our family suddenly became hers. The introduction of a new member was an exciting, yet quite traumatic change. Our close-knit group had been disrupted overnight in that we had new roles which none of us yet knew how to fill. A hard to describe, hard to address imbalance was immediately created; regular functions, specifically relations with one another, had been noticeably upended. Responsibility of such importance provoked an urgency to organize and redefine our infrastructure, to reevaluate what we usually took for granted, and finally to acknowledge what had previously gone to a large extent unquestioned: our usual expectations and familiar patterns of operation.

A pressing need was to figure out a reasonable means for her inclusion, the most accessible avenue into our distinct ways of knowing, the clearest opportunity for providing a niche where she could conveniently fit into our existing familial machinery. What occurred was a spontaneous pursuit on all our parts to best understand her, a concerted effort to explore possible venues to allow her identity to project convincingly forth. Yet we strove to know her not exclusively for her sake. An (at least) equally relevant motive was to better comprehend, and most effectively address, the changes we ourselves were undergoing.

After she had a job at a local bakery for a few weeks I was perplexed when it did not last. Even though I still hardly knew her, I somehow felt it was uncharacteristic for her to quit so soon, the job seemed a good environment for her. Not only had she (we) descended from a family of bakers, she seemed to love working around food and helping create meals. Most importantly I (virtually anyone who knew her) recognized her approachable, cheerful character that seemed intuitively a perfect fit for a service-oriented position. It was an ideal opportunity for genial attention: an occupation where pleasantries are freely exchanged with customers and high visibility is advantageous.

The anticipated (idyllic) connection, of course, was also an unmistakable way in which I could identify her. Her job became a useful channel to fuse mannerisms and

personal qualities to a specific role. In retrospect—I have come to understand—I viewed this as a necessary catalyst, a means for her character potential to secure a tangible basis, the choice inspirational path where those natural attributes could be best invested. All this, nonetheless, to turn her into an objective truth which could be understood on terms I projected appropriate for her. It was not that I wanted her to be anything she was not, yet I wished her to be comprehensible, one for whom there was a sound guidepost for understanding. My intuitive concern for her fit therefore took precedence, coming before any languishing she figure out the most appropriate way for herself. When she quit it seemed an abrupt and foolish move, when in truth I could not accurately recognize her as I had so impulsively expected.

Prior to ever revealing much maturity of choice, culture taught me that it was essential to place my cousin in a category from which I could predict a tangible, socially "relevant" identity. The weaker the manifest identity I experience of her however, the less I believe I am able to offer her. The less I can offer, the fewer clues I can provide that I am motivated or even concerned enough to get to know her. With this, the less I feel capable of getting to know her, the less it seems I am able to offer her of myself. Through cultural common sense, by placing someone in a static category I gain a more credible opportunity toward understanding, an indispensable medium where connection seems more plausible. Yet this greatly anticipated avenue has an inherent paradoxical quality. While it provides entrance into knowing, it simultaneously carries knowledge along a prefigured medium. Critical therefore must be the nature of inquiry, so that *knowing something about* can be distinguished from, and recognized with certainty to be something inferior to *knowing*. The most familiar means for understanding, while allowing ready access, also manages to overly focus, reduce and ultimately compartmentalize meanings.

Sincerity of motive, it seems, did not save me from obscuring and undermining my stark assumptions. Through an eagerness to categorize someone, albeit with good intentions, I also ended up placing a boundary around this person as well. To underscore this wayward logic it must be reemphasized that "getting to know" is not somehow automatically equivalent to getting to know matters of significance. My convictions were normal but presumptuous since (after sifting through personal particularities) I

mistakenly thought to have at my disposal a ready profile, exclusive evidence easily accessible, with a solid base for comparison.

<u>Forces That Craft Identity</u>

The futility of depending upon a fact-laden approach toward understanding identity is not always obvious; efforts toward an interpretation, rather than unearthing truth, often antithetic to motive, manage to invite barriers and close doors. With an imperative for certainty driving actions less obvious possibilities are assertively diminished, effectively avoided or reduced to superficial irrelevance. The consequence is for a forced gravitation toward the familiar when searching out each other's identities; insisting that inner beliefs pivot upon mutual ways of knowing, we are forever groping for similar structures upon which to relate. Rarely are we able to get acquainted with another without playing on the same field, yet, we are not really ourselves on this field which we so instrumentally resort, and so depend. Indeed, often we come to "know" others by relying upon fundamentally accepted rules for *not* being ourselves. These are some featured paradoxes supporting the ubiquitous foundation of self-alienation (Jourard, 1971, pp. 28-33).

Naturally however, to defy convention and explore unique ways into seeing the world is hardly a clear and never an easily definable pursuit, common ground is a feature commensurate with meaning itself. Identity, in fact one's very existence, generally hinges on whatever security interpersonal expectations can contribute. Social boundaries are, for the most part, intuitively suggested *givens,* with indispensability largely overlooked provided it goes unquestioned or otherwise is not used as a blatant focal point for discrimination.

Fromm (1962, pp. 94-6, 127) recognized identity to be distinct and demanding of a more elastic interpretation than self-determination alone could provide, his position moreover is compatible with Gordon's (1958) self-system. Identity incorporates characteristics of both social form and inner relevance, while one's "self-position" in the same respect conveys intrinsic as well as externally determined qualities; both *identity* and *self-system* ideas imply (human) hybridization, a merging of the social with the intrinsic. What remains less certain is to what degree each area influences a particular

person and contributes to, or detracts from, understanding. But it is safe to assume that choice can be obscured even when felt unquestionable, where assurances rest surprisingly well on illusion, and identity gains security in spite of much inner ambiguity.

Primarily for these reasons, "getting-to-know" and "new-ways-of-understanding," while sharing obvious surface similarity, must be recognized as explicit. For the latter suggests uniqueness in discovery indicating something beyond the conventional, indoctrination-style, i.e., tell-me-what-you-do inquiry. The former, conversely, projects a more one-dimensional way of forming judgements and is, in large part, indicative of modern societal materialism. Furthermore what one *has* represents, not simply valuables but knowledge and position in kind. Societal advantages become ultimate focal points for recognizing merit; cultivated as implicit truths, desired skills get paraded no less than the most glorified possessions.

Somehow work, the way our culture has come to perceive it, serves as a highly visible yardstick for telling us who we are. Combs (1958, pp. 212-13) drew attention to how occupational responsibility creates self-fulfilling effects and, moreover, how with respect to one's *self-concept,* quotas generally abided to provide little genuine connection with capability. Unbalanced emphasis on employment skews, contains, and relegates conceptions of identity to the economic. For many, much dissatisfaction suggests, jobs cannot easily (accurately) coincide with self-relevance, as if they magically blended with and characterized "tell tale" qualities of our intrinsic nature. Closer to the truth, even by popular opinion, jobs are often reduced to little more than narrowly appreciated obligations, unavoidable eventualities of life, "opportunities" which are in fact mandatory for managing an existence. Occupational relevance promises less any inherent goodness but more a built-in inevitability; distinct from underscoring an *essence* of existence, jobs might as likely be recognized as capriciously defined means toward impossible to defy, unavoidable, ends.

On the positive side though, any natural inclination for stability does provide comfort of predictability. When essential supports are in doubt (occupational or otherwise) even our most basic assurances get jeopardized. Rather than instilling strong incentive to endure through rugged individualism, social-identity threat, conversely, ignites a desperate pursuit to validate (whether legitimate or not) interpersonal relevance.

De-stability initiates overwhelming urgency for re-stability, familiarity is fundamental for certainty, for revealing when questionable bases appropriate upon which to relate.

Value afforded to security then, is not to be reduced to a lesser essential than self-realization. Needs are needs. They surface, upset and transform lives in complicated and unexpected ways. Some needs are naturally more clear and readily visible than others, similarly, the degree to which needs can be addressed directly vary substantially as well. It would be helpful if depth of concern corresponded directly with needs most intrinsically relevant, yet this is generally not the case. In fact meaning and urgency behind needs are often miscalculated, de-emphasized or unwittingly ignored; more than being conveniently put aside, in spite of their importance, they can be mysteriously cleared or detached from the conscious realm altogether. While concern over self-relevance may not normally appear a conscious preoccupation, the effect of it being obscured or ignored or persists—as vaguely definable ill will—surfacing through character ambiguity, anxiety, or voids of unspecified melancholy (Horney, 1950, pp. 155-75).

Considering deception's breadth, where justification rides on impulse provoked by caprices of circumstance, existing arrangements often foreshadow outcomes, predisposing personal choice. Overly magnified for most, employment (and the infrastructure so representative of it) tends to project possibilities that are ultimate. Incorporating fully and redirecting if necessary, it anticipates irrefutable lifelines to the social known; occupation instills something as fundamental as one's inclination for identity. When most are captivated by forces largely in flux, influences fueling this vehicle can evade effective scrutiny. Despite the ambiguity implicit with any identity-quest, its telling urgency, the propulsion for predictability—however misconstrued by cultural forces—refuses to cease.

<div align="center">Self-Alienation and the social known</div>

All this speculative emphasis naturally begs for a practical question that addresses unmet needs involving self-alienation. This is inherently difficult to do since self-alienation tends to fall conveniently into a category of normal, in that impositions are often so weakly recognizable. The usual assumptions, exaggerations, misunderstandings and deliberate distortions are not only common they are commonly tolerated. It is this

naive acceptance that best protects the deceptive barrier, maintaining situational-relevant obstacles impairing incentives for self-growth.

There is however an exception where self-alienation persists but manages to escape the interests of social influence. While I will explore this aspect more thoroughly in a later section, I wish to introduce it here to distinguish it from more benign conceptions of self-alienation. To make this point I refer to those who experience social alienation and self-alienation as coupled, or compounded into a single syndrome. While self-alienation alone may very well be *inter*personally inhibiting to various degrees, I prefer to distinguish specifically between self-alienation commensurate with interpersonal support, and self-alienation paired with interpersonal exclusion and its distinctive pain.

This latter, dualistic, version of alienation surfaces in ways much more revealing than self-alienation alone. At its widest extreme, *dual-form* alienation would be most clearly evident in cases of schizophrenia or acute psychotic delusion. Here there exists a sort of pseudo-independence coupled with marked detachment from meaningful social connection. This may be indicative of self-afflicted estrangement or consequences endured through outright rejection, results of a more imposing interpersonal division. Irrespective of origin, manifestations (unlike self-alienation alone) are put clearly on display; heightened visibility becomes something both externally evident as well as internally obvious. Dual-form alienation (featuring both inner and outer division) ironically takes on a discernable shape and provides a base for graphic, sometimes humiliating exposure. Alienation manifesting as a totality appears nothing like the stereotypical, more elusive, self-alienation that gets insidiously obscured by affiliation and identity securities, assurances embedded as essentials of the cultural infrastructure. This is not to suggest that self-alienation (alone) exists in an attenuated form. While certainly not clear of symptom self-alienation absent social estrangement, staying well within the psychological mainstream, remains less susceptible to diagnostic scrutiny.

Dual-form alienation can be distinguished from more purposeful division or separation from society given its trademark stagnation in self-growth. Those afflicted, by this description, are burdened with distinct *intra*personal responsibility without benefit of a suitable internal definition. Despite their blatant exclusions they remain (at least

indirectly) *inter*personally dependent—suffering through a paradoxical connection through protracted estrangement. Ill-prepared to rely on their own devices there is no choice but to allow for, at least, superficial involvement to cover for obvious self-insufficiencies. When genuine inclusion is repeatedly denied or otherwise unattainable self-obscurity often grows; a cost that obliterates fundamental opportunities for individualistic pursuits. The indication is that abandonment from social contexts can be catastrophic when this underpinning, *alienation-from-the-self*, has not been effectively surmounted.

While every case is unique and finely delineated categories offer convenience more than justification there exists, nonetheless, a distinction to be drawn. Discriminations are supportable by logic as well as intuition; the self-alienated vs. the self-alienated being socially rejected need to be considered separately. The defining quality they hold in common is a shortcoming of the *intra*personal, but how adequately one might manage given this fundamental deficit is an entirely different question. Self-alienation, generally speaking, suggests a lack of self-sufficiency led primarily by compulsions for self-escape, but a necessary related question is how accessible human resources are to buffer any given predicament. One image shows alienating characteristics products of strong affiliation detriments, while for the other, where social sanctification functions as a protective shield, impositions and hindrances are much less clear.

However beneficial this appears for the self-alienated remaining involved any privilege gained acts as a double-edged sword—supports do protect one's image, but it is this very advantage which invites a relinquishing of *self*-responsibility. Reliable affiliates are quite effective in helping provide an external foundation for identity reassurance. While consonant acceptance permits the indisputable advantage of belonging it simultaneously works to silence (actually suppress) symptoms of deficiency. Longings for self-insight can then afford to wane, to becoming non-concerns inasmuch as social relevance gets obviated. The indication is that the self can thereby afford to ignore itself (its growth) while camaraderie provides a safety net of emotional assuredness, that critical feature where identity can secure a sense of certitude.

Concerns over social connection vs. disjunction may in certain ways seem

completely removed from issues specific to inner well being. Yet, the point must be reiterated that social assurances very often contribute to an adulterated security, remaining woefully equipped to outline symptoms specifically relevant to one's self-condition. Good-natured advice, with its built-in imposition is never a sure remedy for quelling personal doubt; challenging self-alienation effectively is, in the final analysis, a personal responsibility. Relational supports, while emotionally essential, inspire little interest in possibilities transcending custom; even at their best they provide few incentives for opposing good-natured intrusion, ways that might help provoke a most self-relevant transformation.

Simply appreciating need for change moreover is no assurance for appropriate action. The only practical approach to address this malignancy is to attack it at its root, otherwise a difficult to evade lure will remain, fueled through false confidence, persisting with illusive permanence. Resilience lies in its invisibility, self-alienation strikes not at any periphery but more beguilingly at a less measurable core. To be deceived, as such, is to be sucked wholly into a picture as it currently exists and still remain unconcerned. Self-alienation is a social-borne enigma effectively perpetuated through blind acceptance from within; it is not an affliction with clearly definable remedies, no magical solutions exist. Instead it is a consequence of culture, a condition reflecting the potency through which condoned beliefs overshadow heuristic pursuits.

Self-alienation therefore cannot be successfully overcome without "confrontation" with the unfamiliar. While such a proposal may not seem profound, the problem lies in the difficulty securing means; it is less an issue concerning specific motive or intent. Yearning for the unfamiliar is nothing striking, yet self-alienation gets perpetuated through venues seemingly innocent as following instruction. Behaviors associated with simply "tuning-in" can appease one's sensibilities and undermine or exaggerate perceptions of self-certainty. Moreover, optioning outside known boundaries is generally uncomfortable; driving this insecurity is a fundamental fear of detachment. Trepidation draws not only from apprehension over rejection but more convincingly, it seems, from the formidable prospects of having to (without conventional buffers) first confront one's impending self-absence.

Self-alienation is therefore most resistant to frontal attack. Another way to imagine it is as something securing insidiously from deep recesses. It stifles breadth of purpose by binding to emotion; practical intuitions get persuasively undermined and placated. In such a way, as Marx recognized, it takes our potential essence away fiendishly behind our backs (Fromm, 1962, p. 109). This is the consequence of ignorance; implicitly it is also a consequence of sloth. The kernel for criticism is that opportunities to change are all around. "Successfully" obscuring paths toward freedom deserve less merit than productively paving ways and falling short. But even with self-initiative certain and sincerity favorable, the most purposeful direction for motives can still be difficult to recognize.

Self-alienation, this recondite human plight, from all indications requires a unique means of confrontation. It cries for idiosyncratic understanding, a marginal trust that might anticipate something beyond prefabricated or customary solutions. It seems feasible that "shared privacy," as a point of emphasis, would nurture greater potential, instill a quality of maturity more purposeful than conventional entanglements contribute—there is likely some merit for this image. Yet human nature shows that intentions will (to various degrees) be misinterpreted, guided, or inappropriately stereotyped. Unprovoked "inspiration" means seminal beliefs are (along with good intentions) easily run amuck, often in spite of good company. In the end intuition and initiative of pursuit—more than strength of support—contribute most effectively to an incontestable base for stability, that essential place where uniqueness can fuel life change. Put simply, the more resolutely one can unearth attractions outside cultural anticipation, the more completely barriers of self-alienation can be identified and, therefore, the more thoroughly familiar distortions can be distinguished from matters of self-relevance.

Self-Alienation as Learned Helplessness

With an emphasis that parallels the issue of "deficits in self-directed initiative," Selye, (1950) presented a convincing case that stress can generate noxious consequences, setting-in-action a *general adaptation syndrome*. What this model displays best is that resistance, outright, to upsetting properties of stress wane as the futility of applying such effort becomes increasingly self-obvious. Borrowing this backdrop, submitting to other-

directed ways of understanding—as adaptation—might in a similar sense be recognized as a succumbing to uncontrollable forces, providing evidence of a proliferating resignation taking hold. With respect to self-growth potential may be getting equally "arrested," where unique energies culminate in a broad-scale inner-relinquishment. More precisely, given such forfeiture, one is afflicted with a mounting conviction that things couldn't be otherwise. What this "settling-in" can potentially upset is personal "spirit-trite," or more plainly, vestiges of awareness that initiative requires reassessment, that inner virulence and depth of meaning are routinely attenuated, while the most fundamental obstacles go without challenge (Jourard, 1971, pp. 80-5).

In cases of chronic stress, as with adaptation through self-alienation, the essence of injury is either too far removed for solutions to be apprehended or buried too deep to be psychologically comprehensible. Yet variations as to what qualifies as stress or estrangement is always an open question. Nuances are, in other words, afflictive in ways that vary greatly between subjects as well as peculiarities of circumstance. This point is meant to emphasize the problem quantifying deprecation, the difficulty arriving at a true picture of oppression. Many relent to relatively weak forces while others endure in spite of the most bleak of outlooks. Discrepancies to be drawn, therefore, cannot simply be reflections on the severity of circumstance at hand but must include factors such as resiliency, hope, and intrinsic openness.

While learned helplessness as an analogy with impediments in self-growth is conceivable, these ideas are not thoroughly compatible; as limiting as self-alienating effects are, they remain illusive enough where stifling effects can be routinely overlooked or diminished. Even when clutched within its unyielding grip, one can be spared a conscious burden. Assaults upon the self are consequences of social seduction more than overt subjugation. Learned helplessness is most relevantly associated with self-alienation in that, in either case, concessions allowed create traps divorced from genuine inner initiative.

Because self-alienation is so invisible next to stress, where it concerns learned helplessness, comparisons are inexact. While stress induces a direct, immediate impact, growth of the self is not a pressing priority or preoccupation for most. Even if "life relevant" questions are not clearly dismissed, seldom are they focal points for everyday

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awareness. Self-sacrifice is rarely a preoccupation for those so enmeshed with others the identity they hold most substantial actually hinges upon them. If this is the case interpersonal departure gets reduced to negatives; displacement enables formally buried uncertainties associated with self-neglect to invade consciousness; concerns do not simply generate choices between set alternatives but trigger doubt-filled imperatives, insecure impasses that, when impossible to ignore, can only fuel a mysterious inner-emptiness.

Chapter VI

Alienation as an Aspectual Concept

The Alienation Phenomenon

To represent alienation "as a phenomenon" it is necessary to carry an argument that social estrangement and conformity be understood as conjoined; here alienation can be presented symbolically as (E/C), where each idea is shown distinct but still inseparably wedded. This captures the full meaning better than do loose, isolated applications. Social science, for the most part, depicts alienation through separate categories or sets of features, where each semantic image is considered unique, but all are still tied to this one sole concept (Barakett, 1969, p. 2).

Self-alienation, fundamentally speaking, signifies an abdication of personal rights—this is most evident when conformity (C) alone can create a tight interpersonal stranglehold. But alienation also has close associations with excommunication, irrational passions, peculiarity, pride, and other socially estranging (E) qualities that compel a distinct will to surface. Self-alienating qualities that are most indicative of illusive interdependence, get paradoxically coupled with features particular to relational exclusion, so that when either conceptual dimension of this *alienation composite* (no matter how contrasting) gets excluded, holistic meaning is not possible.

The ultimate purpose behind this preferred arrangement may not be at first obvious. Because alienation demands considerable breath for interpretation its subjective aspects must merge with (and be reconciled against) its more objective one's. Within these supra-concepts (E/C) are embedded sub or constituent elements, together which show alienation to be recognizable as a spectrum of distinguishable aspects. The great cost in any semantic quest is concept fragmentation, with value restored only in recapturing integrity. However uneven these supra-concepts first appear, sides deserve to be balanced; however anomalous and incongruous conformity and exclusion, each are intimately tied, bound within a psycho-social collage.

Conformity (C) can be divided into three broad components—*suggestion, internalization* and *identification*. *Compliance* is an aspect that forms a bridge, so to speak, from the world of conformity to a much more overtly impacting social alienation. Interpersonal estrangement is less clearly delineated since external separation carries many impressions and is rarely absolute. Briefly, *deviance* indicates a very objective social alienation but connections are reestablished in another venue. *Individuality and autonomy* assume varied forms, each conveying distinct affiliate estrangements accented by specific channels where interpersonal merging remains possible. Finally, *psychosis* is indicative of (E) at its greatest extreme, the most thorough kind of interpersonal alienation conceivable.

Part 1

Intrapersonal Aspects of Alienation

Illusions of Individuality

Authentic individuality is rarely witnessed in the middle of a staged spectacle; it is a character quality urging sufficient foresight and preparation. Its image, for instance, requires a vocabulary proficient enough to support intended positions. It must be defendable not simply by being meaningful but, as importantly, in being comprehensible. Individuality depends upon pliable criteria where respected opinions might be challenged. Inner positioning must be carefully balanced, so any given stance taken is not unwittingly derived from unseen premises. True individuality does not reject all supporting knowledge, it only demands option be afforded priority over permanence. Fundamental assumptions are subject to scrutiny for no more specific purpose than the sharpening critical perception. Needless to say this is not always the best prescription for making, much less keeping, an abundance of friends.

The greatest limitation for this outlook is that self-exploration, in comparison to advice and training, is not well accepted in our society, at least not where it regularly crosses boundaries from ideal into real. This is not an entirely negative commentary because a lingering belief or illusion of individuality generally persists, providing evidence that interest still endures. It is difficult to justify nonetheless, given its wide admiration and appeal, how individuality might get so distorted in truth. One useful analogy is to imagine the degree of personal control (impressions of freedom) commonly accepted within a dream state. In an underworld very much obscuring perceptions of choice, there develops an overwhelming tendency to be convinced of circumstances and events that, only upon awakening, are realized to hold no practicality or truth. Control so seeming real is resting upon premises less stable than a house of cards. Affirmed without the luxury of a reliable reflective will, dream concerns are responded to as they are encountered, by caprice. As everyone who dreams knows, false images have a way of prevailing over veracity, not only is ambiguity unavoidable, beliefs prior to waking are held to be irrefutable.

Clinging to illusion is not simply evidence of personal shortcoming; it is in some ways necessary for an intact, discernable identity. A key quality to note for the modern community is (given a strong underlying commonality) how character depicting it can be. Though varied characteristics do exist, attitudes generally gravitate around a fundamental base. The individual "surfaces," but also gets curbed and channeled through cultural contingencies, in this case, upon those drawing heavily on a social contract idea for society dating back to the 17th century.

Social Contact

For a believer in communal integrity social contract was viewed a *practical* avenue for relinquishing personal rights to a sovereign authority, a sacrifice justified for the "betterment of all." Personal growth, while valued theoretically, was also conditional, depending on provisions that quality cohesion be maintained. This proposition insisted on divestiture of liberty; characterized as voluntary it was equated with investment, positioned to pay off in very personal ways where"…each gives himself to all…without reservation" (Schacht, 1970, p. 11). The central idea was that each and everyone hand oneself over willingly for the sake of community survival. This theory has its original roots in property transfer. Only in this case the "products" being divested (transferred) are human beings, or more precisely their independence in exchange for a proposed security (pp. 8-13).

Social contract parallels the least detectable aspects of (self) alienation. Relinquishment of personal liberty for the good of another is largely an abstraction, escaping the realm of conscious depth and maturity. Some recognize nothing of inner sacrifice. Others may trivialize losses of liberty by mouthing sentiments for solidarity more than is warranted. Still others will be able to sense a void of injustice but be unable to target their concern. The Modern American Democracy is a, modified with time, variation on social contract. The ideal becomes most revealing with draws toward popular causes, where personal concerns get set aside for the greater good.

In the same way that Hegel's emphasis on unity included an important feature for surmounting interpersonal alienation through *surrender,* the contemporary version (surrender via social contract) gets lauded as no less essential. In the later case, nonetheless, relinquishments for a consensus cause are not likely to transpire as matters

of true choice. Culture, with its many paradoxes, can congeal only superficially so that the essential "payoff" (self-sacrifice in the name of communal integrity) still premature, falters incomplete.

It is worth mentioning that compromise of personal right for the whole accentuates—whether by belief alone or given reliable evidence—equality of condition. Equality carries significance in its associations with "coming back," where images having to do with the communal-other seem to matter again. This can be a pleasant consideration for many where "reunion" has chance to triumph over chaos, camaraderie the possibility to outshine coercion. For the general citizen the gain is also an avenue away from isolation, the most foreboding consequence of estrangement. In many cases "equal condition" spells nothing less than "identity haven," where wholeness is sanctified and self-assertion still seems (somehow) to remain an option.

As alluded, the naivete so characteristic of self-alienation shares some of the "good for everyone" qualities implicit in social contract. Because parallels are strong analogies are helpful, even though Hegel's metaphysical emphasis is not particularly relevant here. While Hegel was not a social contract theorist in the spirit of Hobbes or Locke he undoubtedly recognized this direction of thought. His attraction to unity was in large part a reaction to the skepticism for institutions so sweeping Europe during the Romantic Period. His philosophical solution to quell these turbulent conditions called for solidarity (pp. 48-50). While never denouncing individuality, given his intrigue with merging, Hegel helped pin down the credibility of ethical standards where unity could be elevated. Whatever his source intention, the effect of this emphasis helped for interdependence to overshadow individuality as a lasting virtue.

With Hegel in perspective, it is easier to recognize with social contract the likely fate for individuality; the unfortunate notion that many end-up essentially forfeiting their "individuality" before any credible relinquishment is warranted. This supposes the surrender "virtue" can precede good opportunities for individualistic initiative. For most, it seems, the likelihood choice will ever have full opportunity to mature is marginal, so that with assertions still well "in context," initiatives rarely penetrate convention. To the extent this remains true, any formal contractual agreement suggesting alienation-of-will

to be a noble idyllic relinquishment, is likely no more than an effective device to subjugate perpetuated by a climate ripe for conformity.

Sacrifice, to be a virtue, must involve something more than respect and concern over community integrity can explain; often forfeited prematurely is potential for understanding, compromised by abstract initiatives for communal harmony. Indeed, what must be factored-in is a premise for which *not* understanding might result in a more compatible constituency. To challenge structures one must be able to risk for, experience, and internally recognize opportunities for freedom. This is not possible when mobility toward a resolution is prematurely applied or poorly clarified. The ethical basis from which social contract was so skillfully proposed specified a *voluntary* deferment— this of course can be interpreted relatively. Sacrificing inner-liberty as a matter of "choice" can never be sincere when divestiture is fixed-in or viewed inevitable. While influence behind any communal ideal will vary, if extensive and complete enough it is sure to cloud one's ability clearly to discriminate heartfelt objectives from the pull of convention.

Social Filter

There is no way to conveniently anticipate what most closely composes hidden dimensions of humanity, keeping in mind limitations of context. No matter how seemingly benign, consciousness contained by culture illusively and effectively conceals alternative. Dependence is incompletely recognizable on a personal level, co-habitation an inevitable feature of life. Boundaries impacting the self are not simply imposing, but limiting because one's language is never adequate for carrying panoramic meaning. Perspective, its breadth, is intimately a product of semantic sufficiency. Certainty is always straddled, forever attenuated by linguistic approximation.

This contextual posturing, at least, reflects closely Fromm's (1962) representation of the social filter. This instrument, while underscoring similarity, obviously was not intended as a practicable semantic model pointing toward unity, cohesion and acceptance. What Fromm's social filter implies most fundamentally is that humans remain altogether unaware of experiences that have no corresponding cultural symbol. Without potential sign posts intuitions are afforded no worldly basis for recognition. Cultural repression, like that personal, means many things escape conscious preoccupation. Whatever gets

"filtered out" evades anticipation, appreciation and even avenues for influence (pp. 113-22).

Fromm's image manages to capture best society's built-in auto limiting mechanism. Perceptual barriers override faith and initiative; one's ability to focus is never completely divorced from realms of predictability. This nonetheless does not mean human drive for diversity must atrophy; efforts away from the familiar may never cease. Fromm's awareness filters only attempt to highlight what normal conditions already suggest—familiarity (being essential) is also a liability, an eventuality of life that elbows out prospective insights. Widespread inclusion coincides with an attrition of categories; character-transforming opportunities get passed by where capacities are forever wedded to social relevancy.

The filter, difficult to tangibly embrace, is best accepted as something that just is. Its prime message is that ways of seeing and knowing cannot be conveniently contested, simply because most alternatives are not recognizable; points for relevance stay in place since not acknowledging them would be inconceivable. For individualistic pursuit difficulty concerns something beyond social imposition. There is added the matter of, not only how willing, but how (insightfully) able one is to dissect convention and generate difference; this proposes responsibility beyond obvious choice. Potency must also include the margin of displacement one can trigger; structures have to be recognizable *as obstructions* before the burden for challenge becomes conceivable.

A typical cultural idiosyncrasy Fromm posed for illustration was an American (western) tendency to over-objectify reality, to emphasize heavily with language *having* over *being*. Given this perceptual bias nouns get awarded greater recognition than verbs. What arrives to awareness concerns things more than process and mutation. This emphasis on materiality and possession does carry an obvious advantage that allows for greater precision and clarity; intentions whether shortsighted or broad are afforded definition, whatever their ultimate value they gain a discernible point for contemplation. But along with this mindset less objective avenues are deemed, without genuine consideration, less credible, so that for those with attitudes well woven into the fabric of having, there is no other reality (p. 97).

Unconscious forces nonetheless are not necessarily benign. While not clear preoccupying concerns they persist as subtle life dissatisfactions, faint impressions that a wider-ranged understanding might be possible. Language highlights specific areas, and in so doing limits for others conscious acknowledgement. "Our language just does not give us the words which we need to describe many visceral experiences which do not fit our scheme of thought" (p.117). With fixed terms for exploring affective phenomena, impressions often are that nothing can be thought or felt which cannot also be explained. Psychoanalysis, for example, largely ignores art and poetry, but these are useful outlets for obviating emotions in ways traditional semantic channels cannot equal, indispensable tools that help fully characterize and congeal symbolic meaning. Through such venues consciousness can often transcend, perspective more fully shift, triggering opportunities for change.

Language then is both indispensable and inadequate to convey meaning. Semantic (contextual) utility gets accepted as cultural end, even when that uttered is much less important than what is intended. What underlies impression is only approximated through words. "The whole language contains an attitude of life...a frozen expression of experiencing life in a certain way" (P. 118).

Suggestion

With images closely paralleling Hegel's ethical world, Cooley (1902) postulated a similarly underdeveloped state of being, that of suggestion. Put simply, suggestion depicts an existence lacking any notable introspection; it features an awareness where fundamental truths are never afforded critical evaluation. Envisioned by Cooley was an interpersonal entanglement, a common human pool where all personal and social characteristics first emanate. He did not regard suggestion merely as a temporary condition to be wholly surmountable, rather it was felt to endure and permeate into most normal behaviors (pp. 51-8).

Given this perspective, a clear distinction or contrast seems necessary between suppression of will via suggestion and that particular to ethical world unity. The discrepancy to note is important because while Hegel viewed the ethical world as pure and absolute, Cooley conceived a very fine line (in fact, vague interchange) between "the

world of *suggestion"* and pure *choice*. Implied for each construct was a necessary overlap, with obscure demarcations each semantic tool, each term's usefulness for approaching genuine expressions of self, were viewed as approximations, particularities notwithstanding.

While in most respects similarities with Hegel's ethical world are clear, suggestion is less an idea to convey "awareness lain dormant" but more a natural property of human development, an essential platform from which all subsequent *self*-drive depends. Cooley for example included willful, not simply reflexive, action as a representative feature of suggestion. His reasoning was that in a world of inconsistencies this is necessary; finding oneself bombarded with opposing suggestions, a rudimentary decisiveness is essential in order to ever capture any value associated with choice (p. 54). Choice then becomes an asset to behold, with it one is better able to distinguish subjugation from free will. It is "arrived at," however, only after relentless contradicting suggestions batting for one's attention. With compatibility between these ideas strong, suggestions tend to foreshadow avenues that likely both characterize and color choice; given this semantic proximity, one might be able to recognize the roots of their own (suggestive) subjugation against prospects for free will uncovered through choice. Both symbolic constructs concern interpersonal connection, each involves a *real world* one must both adjust to and potentially transcend. Suggestion retains significance (next to choice) because its image can support a premise that composite uniformity might conceivably blossom into genuine inner-initiative.

The idea that a world of suggestion could actually permeate most reality, in any case, underscores the depth whereby suggestive standards stay resolutely in place at the expense of true choice. Most cultural indications are that "options" are well outlined, so that visions and ideals secure a conceivable basis only inasmuch they are acceptable. This lack of inner potency, not ordinarily preoccupations, grows most overtly (consciously) evident however in cases of bondage or slavery, when self-sacrifice is at it utmost. Under such circumstances direct authoritative force, much more than suggestive manipulation, becomes the preferred mechanism for suppressing the will of another.

Irrespective of one's predicament, stark subjugation never corresponds directly with slacks in initiative. Where actions are not ambivalent but have a square target,

suggestible people are often the most motivated ones, those most inspired through influences of the subjugator. One only need be reminded of the most successful hypnotists, the effect of their ability to instill zeal and commitment into suggestible subjects. In cases where behavior is thoroughly controllable there is "…the feeling that anything is possible while all scope of freedom is suppressed" (Paicheler, 1988, p. 204). The "anything is possible" posturing is most clearly apparent in the world of the occult, where devotion gets fueled through possessions or other suggestive absolutes.

Because hypnosis and possession are examples where criteria are narrow and devotion zealous, it is tempting to equate suggestion with sheep-like behavior. This however is not always true; next to Hegel's ideal unity, suggestion can imply a turbulent and unpredictable connection between the influence source and the influenced. If an intuitive void does persist, attributing deficits to an all-inclusive (ethical world) context at least becomes more difficult; while suggestion may not clearly reveal self-directed initiative it, in any event, conveys (symbolically) that a rudimentary sense of self has managed to emerge.

Internalization and Identification

As has been emphasized through previous examples, fewer possibilities for knowing stem from having fewer channels for inquiry. A limited base from which to project uniqueness equates with a narrowing of interests and decreased gravitation toward novelty in general. Enthusiasm may not be lost but incentive is often blocked by illusive obstacles suppressing need to question. Influence, nonetheless, does not depend on coercion or even a direct presence. *Conversion* is a concept useful for indicating cases where the effects of influence persist after all overt pressures to conform are removed (Blake and Mouton, 1961). Conversion signifies lasting intrinsic modifications where personal impulses to defy are buried or lost. One for whom i*dentification* ties are the stronger wishes to be like the source of influence, and so will be most pliable, easily shifting personal disposition to parallel alluring contextual opportunities. Those more prone to *internalize,* less effectively recognizing they are objects of influence, are more prone to cling steadfast to attitudes and customs well embedded and familiar (Kelman, 1958). While similarities are strong these later concepts are most alike in that, in either

case, *self-initiative is relinquished*—dismissed for attractions outside oneself or readily converted via context.

Conceding to expectations well in place, where self-alienation gets firmly established, is not generally perceived a burden. Illusions of freedom persist; willful acts for the most part are appreciated as voluntary, primarily because it feels right to be accepted. Agreement is simply a natural counterpart to security, where values stay clear and avenues for dissent remain largely invisible. Reassurances sealed through affiliation serve as deceptively effective buffers, obscuring evidence of weakness for not having fully matured. To highlight the resilience and latitude of these impressions one only need be reminded of the boredom and pain most adolescents experience when deprived of their most intimate peer connections. Only when reliable supports are gravely threatened will the incompleteness of a true inner base land as a forefront concern. Only when hope to retain the fragile source from which one's identity seems to hinge crumbles will the self, in all its superficiality, surface as overtly troubled.

Persona Mask

The persona is a provider, metaphorically speaking, of human characteristics closely associated with internalization and identification; its coinciding mask is not merely a mythical amusement to ponder since in many respects it is thought to embody or "become" the person. The persona is both a ubiquitous and essential boundary, it functions as an effective buffer for anxieties connected with social uncertainties. As a psychological tool it has evolutionary relevance, creating a base for understanding, compatibility, and so opportunities for human survival.

While enabling essential inclusion—with unspecified anxiety tied to most roles upon which one's existence hinges—all is not perfect with the persona. Communal arrangements structured where connections get defined are often unstable, rarely rational given the enormous appetite for human approval. One significant feature to note is any retreat behind a contemporary persona mask generally coincides with a release from fear. With impulse for a common point to connect no weaker than in less technologically developed societies, collective insecurity persists, propelling the drive toward a contemporary *mass identity.*

The persona's prime asset is it affirms a social seal-of-approval, an advantage encouraging of consistency. While blunting uncertainty, it also serves as an effective channel to promote visibility. Oftentimes when alone the mask can be dropped, but since social expectations can easily outweigh private confidence this is not a sure thing. Introspection may not always have an obvious *social directive,* but there may be little *personal incentive* to see otherwise. The point of course is that even in private the mask can stay stable. What appears to provide obvious gain from the outside (manners and etiquette, for example) is often settled-for on the inside. At its most extreme the self and the mask are indistinguishable; values and expectations are as personal as they are relational.

Given the great urgency in which most of the modern world operates, many "truths" must be accepted without critical evaluation. Too often unreliable explanations are invited or simply settled for. The modern mask, for these reasons, is (ironically) more enduring than that for cohesive cultures, more completely split-off and isolated from perpetual transition. For the contemporary, it has become quite difficult to discern where the ceremony begins or ends, whereas communally close, well-worn masks provide built-in distinctions. The persona for the modern, not being easily pinned-down, is not as reliably turned on or off at will. Cultural definition is neither clearly established nor readily discarded. The more demanding and unpredictable civilization becomes, the more varied and adaptable the contemporary persona is expected to be (Jacobi, 1976, pp. 33-58).

Conformity

How does conformity so roundly predominate? While there is no simple answer, it is first essential in contemplating this issue never to overlook an overwhelming human apprehension to "take-on" a public without the benefit of public support. Conformity, moreover, is not simply a logical response to better understand existing conditions, there need be no motive or hope that someone else holds better insights. Asch's (1952) experiments demonstrated clearly that conformity involves something beyond drive for certainty; longings to be "influenced" are not longings to find truth in any absolute sense. But there is nonetheless an unmistakable (seemingly universal) compulsion to quell

inner-doubt (pp. 468-72). When personal confidence is shaky, apprehension to reveal fragile impression outwardly is common; if "they" can never discover what it is I am unsure of, there is no revealing the potential magnitude of my ignorance.

Where majority influence is able to effectively fuel cultural cohesion, personal positioning will more comfortably parallel group perspective. What's more, by ducking contradiction most avoid public debasement; uncertainties and premature inclinations can then be conveniently attenuated. While this "contextual adjusting" may not threaten inner-belief directly, it does reduce opportunities for feedback. When social possibilities for self-evaluation are compromised self-confidence is well at risk. Seeing no viable avenue to overtly weigh inner beliefs against another's, one wonders whether personal intuitions were ever worth defending in the first place. Disappointed at prospects, uniqueness is diminished before having ever been shared. Not being valueless, but for lack of appreciation, value gets compromised; with no sure (trusting) outlet for venting tenuous concerns potential worth goes unaccounted for.

It seems however, no matter conformity's cost, its overall effect is not entirely negative; zeroing in on restrictive features alone would be biased. Baldwin (1911), for example, respected *social imitation* as an essential attribute of human development, a relational prerequisite necessary for any quality inner development ever to become possible. "By imitation he tries on the varied way of doing things and so learns his own capacities and limitations…"(p. 21). Allowing this premise, we must accept that over-defining aspects of conformity are not merely shortsighted crutches and pitfalls but necessary ingredients, precursors to eventual drives away from interpersonal domination. Uniformity, no matter how seemingly ironic, may be indispensable for any subsequent, more authentic inner orientations ever to crystallize. It might be said, then, that the barrier itself (conformity) is what makes possible one's very impetus to go beyond it.

But if socio-cultural constraints are in some sense necessary, alienation on the whole must be anything but smooth or free of ambivalence. On one side unity and predictability are critical for spotting moral incompatibilities and blind alleys; on the other cohesive energies can be trapping, invested into racism, for example, where polarized (negative) thinking might effectively carve out one's fate. Foucault (1977) was a modern visionary who recognized how cultural *normalization* can serve as a very

effective yardstick whereby individual variation is made more visible. With standards and beliefs firmly in place a base for all others to be compared is set. Aside from intention the net effect is to reveal specific gaps, the sharper exposure gained can then more effectively outline (often minute and not particularly relevant) personal differences. This is the signature cost (or consequence) of normalization: small differences are exaggerated while stagnant similarities get overlooked (p.184).

To consider a tangible (familiar) example, whites in our society often resort to an "open door" argument when comparing opportunities in life to those of minorities; many hone in on an attitude that anyone simply need take-in the enormous possibilities available in a free society. With less insight of belonging to a composite group whites are more apt to ignore their own similarities. With little collective concern pressing or apparent enough to ignite a quest for solidarity, "obvious" commonality fails to get recognized. As a majority, whites have considerable leverage consolidating difference in general, they overlook a strong propensity to weigh collective dimensions reflexively, single out aberrations, and normalize without conscious preoccupation. A dominant group is more prone to anticipate equal conditions because while subconsciously focusing on incidental differences, next to minorities, they underestimate their own overwhelming conglomerate privileges.

It often takes someone from a foreign land, the advantage of observing from afar, to point-out the magnitude consensus pervades for one's own culture. Along this very line of thinking can be appreciated Paicheler's (1988) image of "reciprocal concessions," (p.119) where illusive sacrifices for the sake of alikeness are regular, routine and, presumably, very standard (culturally specific) human impulses. But it is an entirely different question whether one can actually recognize, or is willing to face up to, the alikeness they so diligently adhere to. With subtle group nuances amplified over gross, deep, similarity even the smallest discrepancies preoccupy attention, least obvious are inconsistencies stemming from within.

The singling out of difference becomes most evident in a society's condemnation of a deviant. While removing an integral communal member may be rationalized for the good and safety of everyone, it is also an effective way of maintaining socio-personal balance. Equilibrium-seeking movements however do not require extreme triggers.

Regulation can be both broad and soft, where persons attach to norms without much concern or interest. With society well braced to anticipate aberrations, wayward actions are easily identified; given these biased boundaries scrutiny can establish a distinctive relation-relevant positioning. With only *public* eccentricities getting circumscribed, nonetheless, dissent that can be more effectively concealed will be less vulnerable to framing, less apt to be branded deviant.

Since social assignment to roles is not particularly inviting, it seems a wonder how the public-relevant face can be "made" so effectively against what feels more natural in private. If cultural imposition must be endured as somehow essential, but is also attenuated by an effective buffer, what is it? Often when conditions are "accepted" that continue to contrast with inner belief, a common identity with society nonetheless ensues. Source connections are often only vaguely recognizable, but one's mindset may very well be situated within Sennett's idea of a *mythical social reality* (in Paicheler, 1988, pp. 171-3). What this image demonstrates most plainly is that fundamental assumptions concerning one's communal world are based on general, holistic misperception.

A contemporary mythical social reality clearly thrives within the whirlwind of today's expanding information glut. With opinions to sift through unending most are never granted sincere reflection. An enormous division for one's attention may not seem oppressive outright, but it does propel incentive to legitimize another's position without bothering to validate it. Unchallenged, ideas poorly evaluated get nonetheless accepted; against a wall of ambiguity agreement more easily precedes certainty. Without the necessary means for paying regard many assumptions go uninvestigated, so that influence can congeal, prematurely to be taken for reality.

There is an analogy to draw here with Hegel's notion of essential connection, where individuality is something valued, but only as a means to the greater end, interdependence. For the modern, individual choice is certainly not irrelevant either, nonetheless, community pull is not likely removed enough from an original (ethical world) connection for conditions to be fully recognized constraining. Surrender is never a conscious care or obstacle within Hegel's (premature) idealistic world, and the same might as likely hold for Sennett's mythical social reality. For the contemporary, where

unity carries great usefulness, conformity will generally pass as a non-issue; benefits can then be resoundingly embraced while costs get blissfully discounted.

When comparing these models, Sennett's interpretation of conformity might be dismissed as a cheap substitute for the utopian *choice* toward unity Hegel envisioned. This inferior, but ever more typical "harmonious unity" has a dead-end. Not only does it stifle possibilities for broader individual choice, connections strengthened, through unwitting compromise, actually impede possibilities for genuine communal unity ever becoming a reality. Hegel's vision of reconnecting with social roots only after tasting the wisdom of true freedom through individuality gets substituted with a banal, unenlightened, interpersonal fusion.

Part 2
Interpersonal Aspects of Alienation:
Compliance, Deviance, Autonomous Authority, Individuality and Psychosis

Introduction

Conformity is less a consequence of direct pressure but more a matter of fact; no blatant agenda or devotion is necessary to maintain it. While conformity gets obliged more broad-brushed recognition, there are some distinct, objectively identifiable, dimensions and paths where non-conformity can be clearly delineated. The five categories above are notable because, for the emerging self with respect to society, there is a growing trend away from character dispositions as products of prevailing norms; evidence of independence more generally speaking is another matter. The most profoundly estranged, ill prepared for freedom, may succumb to the greatest dependency. Conversely, "participation" that parallels majority objectives may always correlate quite poorly with genuine involvement.

What most keenly distinguishes those grooved into a cultural niche from their contextually estranged counterparts is that multiple concessions underlie the demeanor of virtually all behaviors. With broadening fundamental divisions, however, there are decreased opportunities to align attitudes and conduct directly alongside socially relevant values. The five broad groups considered signify growing departure, a progressive

movement away from sincere connection, with each category (from left to right) a more thorough interpersonal separation is suggested.

This series of categories, however, is in no way indicating an arrangement of imperative stages the self must traverse toward its (non-sociological) realization. It is easy to recognize, for example, how those falling into psychosis might become more dependent than others maintaining compliantly. But the rationale for the general order remains. Relative to the psychotic, the compliant, while not fully accepted, better retain qualities for maintaining a collective "face." The psychotic conversely has few promising avenues or clear motive for inclusion; with division much more absolute intrinsic purpose woven into a world of belonging is less conceivable, or even recognizable.

Compliance

Why compliance? In all fairness with this particular term (as a co-component of interpersonal alienation) I risk misinterpretation. Compliance after all seems an inferior position, where inclusion denied continues to be sought, where appeasement to the will of another is commonplace. Those compliant brim with cognitive dissonance, and bear a striking resemblance to the mainstream conforming majority. Cognitive dissonance, however, while no strong feature of individuality, is a psychological signpost that inner and outer worlds are not well reconciled. At their greatest discord, when normal conformity is not an option, those compliant are forced into a "virtual exclusion" within their own culture. Ideals of acceptance may not depreciate in value but where inclusion seems futile, where options are few, *inner integrity* becomes a more critical concern, with attention to its fullness growing ever more critical.

While term ambiguity is expected, forcing some conceptual adjustments, distinctions from other versions of conformity (internalization and identification) cannot be ignored. Steeped in negativity this idea requires a more careful operational approach than aspects of alienation leaning clearly one direction or the other. Accepting that the compliant adhere well to norms is not enough, what must be factored in any interpretation is where one's sincerity lies. Compliance, never a content posture, is a middle ground for alienation—where social exclusion is still a very obvious concern but where new, introspective avenues for addressing uncertainties are allowed to open, so

that sources for meaning beckon from opposite (inner and outer) directions.

The compliant may always prefer full inclusion to the alternative, where rejection is blatantly noticeable. Attempts to blend in may be authentic, but they may also be basic survival tactics where relational positioning does not penetrate and satisfy any inner ideal. With little *actual* (rewarding) involvement there intensifies the clear dissonance between ones actions and the extent to which any action can be meaningfully influenced. With growing distance there thrive fewer and fewer incentives for relinquishing residual, aberrant inner beliefs. With this "subtle divide" appreciated it is possible to understand compliance in ways beyond the stereotypical subordination-of will image, because whatever the *interpersonal* sacrifice, it can secure little *personal* reward.

Compliance then requires a unique kind of interpretation; it can certainly project evidence of submission and weakness but what goes most unnoticed is the festering, subdued rebellion often paralleling this. "Compliance is conformity, but it is also a sly means of resisting influence…It is public acceptance of a behavior or system of values without any private commitment to them." (Paicheler, 1988, p.137). Since challenge is not directly sought when "going with the flow" there appear few positions necessary to defend. Here arise occasions for personal-points-of-view to incubate without being systematically refuted. Where prevailing attitudes are tolerated only superficially, more genuine impressions avoid getting cut down; peculiarity is less ruthlessly invaded by majority opinion. Compliance dissolves purpose for any lasting "inner-conformity" because subtle, *non-participatory positioning* has become an alternative.

For the compliant then, uniqueness need not be put out to slaughter. Not being in demand one simply has little base for being deplored; no credible public platform to be viewed a threat. Social instruments for curbing self-definition and inflicting direct psychological havoc grow weak. With sparse human proximity and a disinterested public forum ideas of "distinction" have chance to survive. Where peculiarities are not genuinely welcome they can only be internalized. This is the double-edged sword of compliance— while marginal acceptance is painful distance proves an effective shelter for idiosyncrasy to blossom without significant interference. When personal interests escape direct interpersonal invasions concerns can be addressed autobiographically.

All this opportunity for the compliant, however, does not escape the cost of settling for a more ambiguous identity, at least one less comforting than for those with a more tangible basis for *internalization* and *identification*. Concessions made in the social arena still run discordant with deeper concerns and desires; this is the case whether one can function without much disruption or gets clearly split-off from any true vestige of acceptance. Present in body but not humanly included many overtly "functional" members of society are fundamentally discarded. The "conformity" submitted to can little more than outline pseudo boundaries compliantly abided by for portraying a "self." It is not uniqueness perpetuating estrangement as much as estranging conditions containing good opportunities for expression. But when scrutinizing encounters are unavoidable, where variation can no longer be concealed, when through regular interactions aberrations stand out and become focal points for criticism, compliance is no longer a useful option.

Deviance

When the norm separates out idiosyncrasy it sparks a defensive stance in those displaced. A common response is to "separate-together" to create essential ground for defense. The foundation resulting provides a basis directly against the impenetrable conditions set up by the (more comfortably accepted) majority. The pariah group becomes, in consequence, *socially* alienated from those generally included. But because defiance, to prove useful, requires group effort conformity reappears and is often inescapable. When non-conformity becomes one's mission through solidarity with similar dissenters, a path toward individuality is not well paved, and not likely to be featured as a lasting solution for the problem of alienation.

It was Fromm's (1941) general impression that the most estranged exhibit the most destructiveness (pp.179-85). Those oppressed, so heavily saddled, have the greatest incentive to organize in order to gather strength; this is best illustrated with the early rise of Nazism. A telling irony to be noted—the most holistically *excluded* discover the greatest willingness to *conform* for a cause. What becomes most appealing is an opportunity to meld into yet another incomplete subjugating realm, a seemingly essential move to reap the retaliatory capacity only unity can provide. All conciliatory dialogue with the mainstream can be cut off; humiliating adjustments necessary to comply with the

majority are quickly abandoned. Nonetheless, *Self*-interests become matters overt more than introspective; where benefits are "collected" in public rather than in private. Visibility is gained best by identifying with a minority voice, a cohort capable of distancing one thoroughly from the most comprehensive or dominating reference group.

While there seems clear justification rejecting compliance as a worthy character crutch, stark "mainstream" disconnection can be just as unsettling. When experienced firsthand the strongest impulse is to reconnect, to align with alternative bases without the usual impediments and indifference. But every dissenting subculture brews up its own unique constraints. With new, typically inviting, supports to situate around self-definition remains well in danger of extinction. For the deviant particularly, cohering for a purpose can stifle uniqueness with great resolve. Excluded from the majority and enduring tremendous change, it becomes incredibly difficult to distinguish subservience from yearns for compatibility. Nor can be accurately weighed contentment vs. unease, simply by considering one's "freedom" to choose one defiant cohort standard over another. Only occasionally is an environment available where uniqueness can be unleashed without reservation, rarely is there an opportunity that is not subsequently muffled by a barrier.

Compliance is, just as well, something of a subdued rebellion or pseudo withdraw, sure debasement stemming from one's inability to unify. Overt, especially public, discrimination moreover, seems the surest way to "draw one out" of a compliance mode. When the cost of shielding one's shame is recognized greater than that to confront and reassess it, a critical point has been reached for the problem of alienation. When one crosses from communal self-estrangement, over to conditions where social exclusion becomes a pressing reality, there must be faced and endured a more visible disconnect.

While fundamental exclusion is a way of life for the compliant, in the case of the deviant clear opposition means separation will never be casual. Personal motivations that can cohere with others fuel one's sense of purpose, where one gets backed and can more comprehensively channel a target. This "advantage" of course increases visibility, there are sharper points a majority can stigmatize, resolve on one side only intensifies that on the other. If society could have one composite conviction it would be to reject, much like any other organism might, features it does not recognize as its own. Communal adjustments, given this perspective, become "natural consequences" transpiring without much regard for singular systems (persons). Morals, in general, then get extracted and

contained as matters to be weighed, only relative to the composite. Specific exclusions need not be graphic (nor even pressing) for norms to obscure and override individual wishes, norms for which even the most inconsequential standards pass as ultimate truths.

Individuality vs. Autonomy

The question of individuality and its relationship to autonomy deserves some attention. It seems plausible that one might intend similar degrees of freedom with either semantic application. But it is also possible to understand autonomy as a less evolved individuality, the suggestion that thought and action are afforded freedom of expression while breadth of choice remains narrow. Capacity to learn and adapt (never to be under emphasized) must in any case be understood as something separable from growth. Dominating, in order to reap rewards, for an autonomous person could very well be appreciated as a utility, an asset, rather than a moral obstacle to overcome. Influence created by autonomous persons might also (effectively) fill a heavy void left by—now less popular—authoritarian influences. The consequence then is many with autonomy, given our contemporary cultural development, have evolved an effective weapon against those who are without it. The leverage to exploit remains, nonetheless, a "respectable" basis for inflating yearns and accessing independence in spite of consequences on humanity, and whatever insults on it are necessary to maintain personal positioning.

Autonomous Authorities

It goes without saying that instead of most everybody being treated with dignity in life, many in various cultures are exploited, they get treated as little more than some means to someone else's end. Whether by arrogance, ignorance or a combination, there always seem to be a steady supply of those who attempt to arrange and settle people's lives for them. While this may seem a rarity (where inhumanity prevails over common sense) it is actually rather common that many do treat others as if they were *not* credible agents of their own actions. This is not a standard feature for all relationships, or even most encounters, but it is tellingly noticeable in the modern-day classroom; similar attitudes are, as well, engrained into most communities—largely through patterns that parallel familiar work environments. In certain contexts, particularly with those held

important, impressions are that "responsible influences" can demand respectful attention; deservedly or not, some are simply handed a *presence* of influence, a privilege that can effectively nullify another's possibilities for self-determination.

While subjugation of another need not be a prime initiative it is the consequence, or impact, that is most relevant for this point. Domination by exaggerating one's importance is often internally justified as righteous—rationalized as acts of "good will" for making certain others know just what to do, and, most especially, how to do it. Because it is generally accepted in today's competitive world that a firm directive attitude be commonplace, it is easier to imagine just how extensively points-of-view become points for manipulation. What gets deemed essential vs. insignificant are products of matters handed-down, cultural mores familiar and embedded, direct offspring of greed and hedonistic drive.

Autonomous Authorities benefit greatest from society by creating a respected substitute for individuality, on the cost side however they remain fundamentally dependent on their "subjects" to maintain this security. There is a distinct "advantage" consequently where Autonomous Authorities are in a class separate and set above the deviate: instead of finding themselves systematically rejected or sealed-off, this "counter-point" to individuality secures a firm niche in a consumption driven society. Their characteristics thrive where consumable demands continually redouble and needs always seem to outstrip supplies of experts (Sennett, 1980, p. 45).

If Autonomous Authorities actually *are* deviates this is more a moral attribution than cultural revulsion. Lauded for their expertise they get respected but rarely penetrated. The mysterious awe they aspire grants them freedom to suppress the will of another without worry of credible retaliation. Weakness compounded from an implicit embarrassment for lack of knowing, means assertions of "experts" get taken for granted. Moral indignation against those in higher positions of esteem (to retaliate) has a boomerang effect. Striking out openly can be equivalent to the proverbial shooting oneself in the foot, where repercussions carry in all directions, especially back on to oneself. In most contemporary (particularly westernized) venues experts have the final word, this underhanded way of suppressing another presents a peculiar hurdle for the problem of free will.

Where the Autonomous Authority image is strong subjugation is always a contrasting by-product; "collective individualizing" can then supercede the genuine collective in all its deceptive arrogance. While domination may be "expected" in a general sense, the question of what seems the most effective, *contemporarily preferred*, way to smother the will of another is the prime issue here. According to Sennett, it is **shame** that has most tellingly replaced outdated physical devices of discipline, now reigning as the most prolific vehicles of authority in a capitalist society. For the majority, with limited resources, attributes and behaviors systematically severed from desires unique assets tend to be shame-based. The vulnerability of not understanding has become the most powerful vehicle for controlling and extending influence, with a virulence more effective than physical threat can manage (pp. 91-7).

The welling up of shame is an affliction generally kept private; when its principle source is recognized but challenge is impossible, compliance or dual-form alienation is the likely result. Conversely, for those who can "negate" the impact, self-alienation remains while subjugating effects are either carelessly dismissed or too deeply buried for resentments to surface, for change shame must first be respected for what it is. When this is possible there can brew something palpable to spark a challenge, behind a consciousness capable of recognizing signs of domination implicit in shame-based attitudes and conduct.

The Autonomous Authority prospers against a backdrop where ways-of-operation can evade effective scrutiny. Seemingly "personalized" choice closely parallels a revered cultural identity, autonomy is clearly cherished but the question remains whether there are open viable avenues for most to actualize any "individualistic" ideal. In too many cases the idyllic end lingers attractive while egalitarian opportunities stay illusive. The general public may romanticize assertiveness and a strong ego, glorify self-sufficiency, while paths outlined *exclude more than provide* opportunity. Autonomous Authority character attributes, for example, never escape tunnel-vision drives to compare, where inner worth has to be weighed against another, and value is never considered something beyond what competitive positioning can provide.

American culture then clearly extols autonomous characteristics, carving the way for those most adept at actualizing an egocentric ideal, with visibility and influence is

bolstered interpersonal value. This image of authority (distinct from paternalistic) can be exploiting without being perceived so. Societal indicators underscore attributes for success that are not easily debunked nor evaded. When ideals impact powerfully enough they can project *self*-determination where only free-floating *selfish*-determination exists in truth. When common manipulative influence passes for self-assurance opportunities to dominate open up that manage to masquerade as leadership. This is not just a peculiarity of market dictates but general expectation. "The constant increase of needs…makes us dependent on these needs and on the people and institutions by whose help we attain them." (Fromm, 1962, p. 65).

Drawing on Fromm's insights what is most clear is that resources for securing inner constitution are social, every bit as much as self-appropriations. The entire cultural collective therefore might very well be getting led astray, where inimical character qualities can roundly penetrate, be condoned without a single individual for whom to assign blame. Approval can be supported by a culturally neurotic premise: worth rests more securely on acceptability than intrinsic value. Autonomous Authorities sensing their popular dominance can be rigid and uncompromising; expert influence, despite its subjugating virulence carries captivating meaning in the eyes of others not so fortunate. For "the rest" lacking their advantage, consumer culture creates conforming "subjects" with self-alienating vices; even if very little commercial leverage is actualized, relevance (still efficaciously commercialized) is not abandoned. Even if not instilled through direct personal relation attributes conveying such power are alluring, not simply as matters of personal preference, but as attitudes clearly products of strong socio-personal ties. To be *in* society means being subject to particularities *of* society, while stark transition might very often be inconceivable, roots are inescapable. To view to world with "market relevance" for the modern urbanite is never at first a choice. It is a character disposition consequence of circumstance, to be curbed or dismissed only after being introspectively comprehended.

Buffered by their notorious impersonality modern bureaucracies are effective facilitators of self-alienation. The market may not coerce outright but it still manages to outline available preferences; poor balance in decision-making (influence) is at the heart of the matter. "Concrete jungle" attitudes may vary incredibly but fundamental worth is

something already decided. Consumption mentality eclipses work relevance and so pervades all of life; economic strength carries a metaphysical flavor so that imbalances are dismissed as matters of fate more than challenges for change. The "invisible hand" of the market deals-out very tangible, critical human values, where moral appraisal gets confused with, or is considered only subsequent to, commercial significance. This, even for the Autonomous Authorities themselves is unfortunate because apprehensions commonly held about "giving away positioning" denies useful knowledge, that with potential to create a mutual benefit situation.

If cultural props manage to support assuredness more effectively than inner moral, confidence alone can be no good indicator of character virtue. High status and position, qualities afforded the most recognition, are those appropriated the greatest worth. An occupational setting where an autonomous type is likely to thrive well might be found, among other places, somewhere in the natural sciences. Here human expertise can outweigh, and often overshadow subject matter value itself. Meaningfulness is never without some principle requirement for precision. For any *why* to collect credibility it must first be viewed, and so reduced, into a context of *how*.

Most who find it is necessary to function within a world of expertise are however not themselves experts. We might consider a (modernly common) situation of someone being groomed for a position as a Microbiology Lab Assistant. Duties handed down are expected to be performed to perfection. Once executed with precision and consistency little else extraneous to the task is required. Along with one's training there is typically some explanation concerning utility and underlying purpose behind the function performed. There is also likely to be some rationale shared about the employer's fundamental endeavor or business objective.

While the ultimate worth or importance of specific duties is not the issue, considering the circumscribed expectation suggested, most companies (judging from their job descriptions) are not in the "business" of fostering human growth. By formulating and upholding a certain niche where function and purpose are already well arranged, one's role might be delimited with just a few words, i.e., "testing microbial populations for transplant recipients." To pinpoint meaning, while measuring responsibility "to a

science" seems rational, instruction suffers because exactness always supercedes human factors that depend on uncertainty.

If relevance must be unequivocally reduced to something precise and empirically formulated "understanding" cannot involve much more than interpretation. What gets rendered inappropriate is already decided. Any aberrations spinning off the familiar baseline are under immediate scrutiny. The greatest consequence of most behaving in ways directly expected of them is that experts can easily portray themselves as an exclusive group; moreover, they gain distinction without the lesser informed believing they have lost any choice to decide what they want. For those less qualified, despite the contextual hierarchy, an illusion of individuality is created within "tech" positions that stoke perceptions of self-importance.

Actual time spent with more qualified employees may not be the most significant consideration when attempting to estimate the level of sharing that occurs between unequal positions. Authorities clear in their intentions, but who expect little else, are venerated but still stay fundamentally estranged from subordinates. Against any technician's willingness to get clued-in must be weighed a respected scientist's *un*willingness to holistically enlighten.

What matters more, nonetheless, than the attitude of any superior are expectations concerning one's "place" in the overall order of things. Envy of the boss may linger while *status driving the resentment is being essentially handed over.* It is easier to fault oneself than those with more clout, particularly when it is "given" that both play on a field of equal opportunity. In the minds of the less fortunate one did not try hard enough, or had less God-given potential from the start. When there is no point clear enough for blame to be absorbed, felt inadequacies are more internalized, more completely transformed into matters personal (Sennett, 1980, pp. 84-8).

So how do Autonomous Authorities then manage to acquire and retain power without losing respect being depicted as exploiters? If it is acceptable that esteem is not always deserved we must assume it is somehow bequeathed. Those of lesser status let the more fortunate "have" knowledge and capability, projecting that it is theirs. Status established, alongside one's own want of it inspires awe, inasmuch as it does it is disillusioning on both sides. Subordination is certainly not pleasant but it is usual. It is

pseudo authentication of another's capability that diminishes hope for inner authenticity, particularly when those most revered remain largely devoid of reverence in kind for others.

Individuality

The meaning of individual freedom is as difficult to put into words as it is to teach others. No simple recipes are conveniently delineated, packaged and provided. Its most critical attribute calls for human escape from the boundaries of formula. Elusive to describe, its essence becomes recognizable through flashes of inspiration. Most idealized representations that mark its virtues evade opportunities for tangible experience. The old adage that anticipation and expectation rarely equal reality is applicable here. Keen impressions, offshoots of positive intention, are indispensable but alone insufficient. Sincerity of effort is too often overtaken where capacities get turned toward, and commit to, interests that can only contain.

For those genuinely aspiring, individuality dissolves the very significance of ego. Lust for emulation, aims to control or manipulate others to feed pride, is outside one's priority of concerns. The more thoroughly uniqueness can isolate selfish motives, the more effectively conformity's grasp can be measured and managed. The more complete one's self-integration, the weaker any potential compulsion to control others toward personal ends. The most liberated secure the greatest insight—harm spilling over on to others is not separable from negatives impacted upon oneself. Because fighting fire with fire is not a featured weapon of the freedom-seeker the most inimical obstacle is to be enveloped by another's ambitious rage, where exchange depreciates and reactivity becomes more valued ammunition than reflection. For those less eager to attack, problems are not necessarily avoided but they are less likely to dissolve into a stereotypical grudge match. Responding in-kind becomes inviting only inasmuch one is inclined to stoop to that level. For individuality complexity is not expendable, shortcuts to meaning are impossible. But by staying sincere, the rational impetus and relevance of one's positioning (from everyone else's perspective) is not always so clear.

Since meaningful intention requires considerable foresight, heartfelt moves that shatter prevailing views may be mistaken for insincerity, or a lack of commitment to

work toward visible goals. The collective reaction, a common one, is partly a product of guardedness, where for many there seem few conceivable ways to open up to novelty. For the majority, the amount of time "invested" in relations may be adequate, but where engagements are largely fixed, channels for reception remain narrow in consequence; with points for interaction well established, incentives tolerating variation get more repressed.

"Involvement" then must be recognized for its effectiveness to distance as well as cohere. The division aspect is largely tied to impulses built upon false assumptions. Believing in a purpose is necessary but alone insufficient if one is not willing to respect a given position. *Respect,* to make this point, needs to be viewed from two angles. While most tend to emphasize the devotion side, the etiology of the term also features a willingness to explore. Respect, for its more precise interpretation must include one's determination to "look again and again" (Fromm, 1947, p. 107). If p*rocess* is to be acknowledged essential in understanding, the payoff is a more comprehensive capacity to mentally (re)-focus. Acknowledging one has a certain desire and knowing the circumstance by which a desire thrive are two different things. Yearning for change and recognizing the most favorable path for results are exclusive, but each essential for exploring (respecting) possibilities with sincere impartiality. Involvement, time and energy invested can only be counterparts, never substitutes for such openness. For authenticity insights must carry phenomenological, not simply objective (prescriptive) significance, so that credibility gets appreciated outside of venues that are already well trampled.

Weak perspective, it must be noted, is not always attributable to an insufficient foundation; equally plausible can be a deficit of commitment. The value of novelty and challenge may be obvious all the while motivation remains arrested, where the core from which desire must spring gets lost in ambivalence. When significance and a broader purpose are sensed but still premature, inner drive and relevance can be arduous to realize. Because thought and action have such deterministic origins it is also difficult to know with clarity if efforts in the name of independence actually coincide with genuine moves. Initiatives, to be lasting require considerable uprooting. For anything short of this, yearns for transcendence may persist while workable means remains illusive. When

being stripped of comforting familiarities more complex assertions are in order, those that require more thorough a personal sacrifice.

Allure then is something separate and often obscuring of hardships necessary for actuality; to paraphrase the famous Buddhist principle—opportunities for everything become possible only when expecting nothing. Value can be fully anticipated only after transcendence allows adequate perspective for calculating worth. With social expectations panoramic and relentless, inner growth runs discordant with ensuring harmony with others as a foremost priority. The gem of freedom, its scope of understanding, will not escape interpersonal compromise. Even one of the most optimistic voices on the subject of inner freedom never lost sight of its essential sacrifices. Rogers' (1962) general impression was of a"...groping, ambivalent, confused and uncertain movement into a new territory" (p. 220). Seeing no shortcuts, Rogers could fully appreciate how valuable insights are recognized only after personal biases get challenged, are well dissected, and subsequently balanced with care.

Moustakas (1968) is another contemporary placing strong emphasis on authentic individuality. His "take" on human growth is as disrupting as it is enlightening. In supporting a premise, he openly shares the personal anguish involved cultivating his own, personal integrity of self; he portrays a quest set against influence relentlessly intent to dissuade. Through his trials, he has fashioned a quality of purpose that *personally appropriates* and challenges uninspired influence, a mindset committed to introspect in search of worth, a sense of self drawn to unfamiliar territories, places that can best lure and spark curiosity. For Moustakas new experience is an indispensable counterpart to learning. Novel perspective provides entry into a wholly dissimilar worlds, those separate from the familiar, but each always essential for any valuable contrast ever to be possible. Only through acknowledging opposition can one effectively underscore the great disparity between an emerging self and obstacles of convention (pp. 1-13).

Given the open attitudes of these two humanistic theorists, it seems reasonable to consider how discipline and individuality might be related. It is fair to assume that one's grounding of disciple will require sufficient supports, but paradoxically not the kind of character qualities that can be readily imposed; discipline, if ever to retain any semblance of inner relevance, can never be effectively unearthed and implanted on another.

Though quite dissimilar ways of looking at independence, discipline's most valuable assets still depend on individualistic insights; the rationale being that fundamental discipline might indirectly initiate improvement in *self*-discipline. Instead of a "molded" maturity that is something endured, character worth might more closely align with common sense, where one adheres to it *because* it makes sense. This implies, for the underdeveloped self, that a more satisfying *self*-disposition might actually be something thinkable. This positioning seems essential in order to *internalize* the importance of standing by a problematic or unpopular position. Intrinsic beliefs appreciated to contain intrinsic merit are interests worth defending; where this happens discipline can become the axis where individualistic initiative joins personal value.

Psychosis and Dual-Alienation

To simply say a condition of self-alienation happens to exist is alone too broad, significant meaning is arrived at only when clear discriminations are possible. Self-alienation varies depending on one's awareness and visceral experience of alienating effects, as well as on the degree of consensus or collective acknowledgement (estranging presence) more directly orchestrating one's fate. As any lack of belonging grows more noticeable effects directly on the self, as much as for one's social "standing," become more detrimental. This is recognized most clearly in the immediate social arena, but it is also increasingly obvious internally, particularly for those with no reliable identity backdrop for a fragile sense of self to be measured and balanced.

With defenses weak and outlets few, for the dually estranged, the "best" avenue to capture meaning is inward, as a sole alternative for security and self-assurance it is not often ideal. Because cognitive representations of the world are not satisfactorily developed separation is more a consequence of circumstance than choice; discriminations made are both impulsive and fragmented. Assurance is depleted not simply due to resentments over rejection but for the poor "sense of self" that so typically parallels social estrangement; rejection might be humiliating but dislocation of identity can be downright frightening.

Fear underlying insecurity, nonetheless, stems from an inner appearance of more than any actual threat; skewed perceptions cloud discretion, credible intent suffers along

with objective clarity. For the psychotic with phobias growing increasingly nonspecific only a diffuse discomfort remains. In the social arena surfacing strongest are misplaced fears. Inner triggers never transcending impulse drive character qualities that can address, at best, only partial truths. Threat connected with the interpersonal realm is both inflated and distorted, as one's guard remains securely in place even for the most common exchanges (Mc Neil, 1970, pp. 37-42).

The full extent of one's relational predicament is something to be considered only in retrospect; felt inadequacies are not merely situational, they get carried-over, unjustly coloring social situations that generally pass as non-threatening. But not all retreats are capricious; pulling away from normality is never a move made in vain. What cannot go imprudently overlooked is the blessed ground estranged and psychotic states share with individuality (Johnson, 1973, pp. 32, 72). Self-absorption, even when defensively provoked, has close association with keenness of insight. Obscurity can rhyme with innovation, particularly when novel impressions gain opportunity to become cognitive fixtures.

Productivity and growth nonetheless are more often attenuated, how directly depends upon the severity of one's social phobias. In too many cases one finds it necessary to exist *within* without having ways to quell strong fears over being *a part*. The most common preoccupation is that behavioral shields depended upon will get discovered as mere props, those held necessary to protect inner recesses from a scrutinizing invasion. With the most fearsome negative situation ruminated continually over, the worst possible (future) scenario gets cognitively magnified (pp. 75-6). Nervous concern becomes its own affliction; compulsively attended, idiosyncrasy graduates into strangeness, mounting stigma and labels retain cultural overtones getting effectively compounded within. The self-condition—short of individuality and devoid of relational supports—is a peculiar and disturbing estrangement where pain surrounding social rejection gets projected onto oneself; this is the epitome of dual-form alienation: not sufficiently prepared for independence one is left (without clout for escape) to the dictates of circumstance.

With a strong inner absence gnawing, the prospect of finding purpose through affiliation cannot be carelessly abandoned, even though avenues seem inaccessible.

When one's grasp on life is eroding the bitter experience of incompleteness demands some hope for inclusion remain. In spite of overwhelming trepidation (even with few opportunities for securing integrity) the world is not entirely dispensable. Fullness and quality of acceptance, in any case, is difficult to gauge. The schizoid character (a pre-psychotic type), for example, does not simply play roles well, it is something of a preoccupation. "The exquisitely schizoidal person becomes...an amateur sociologist studying his own operations...He sees himself as a puppet cued by social circumstances which exact ritualized performances from him."(Johnson, 1973, p. 69). There persists however, irrespective of how well one can blend through acting, an affective deficit; attention paid, no matter how skillfully crafted, contributes little beyond a superficial front. Encounters lack significance, not because they actually do, but because significance is not reachable; whatever the greater value, not being addressable, interpersonal assets can only be approximated, surfaces can be scratched but not penetrated.

When meaning proves illusive, delving inward is a natural human response. Cognitive realms are not merely mirrors of the world, they are critical foundations where meaning secures permission. External relevance is never conveniently detached but importance can only be appreciated, measured and decided upon internally. Understanding originates with commonality, but if roads for connection fragment or disappear longings for certainty still thrive; the less ground is common, therefore, the more "understanding" must depend on inner creation.

Moves away from credible social anchors for life, however, often amplify inner felt disjunction; this creates an increased vulnerability to lose one's very self-definition. Obliterating a basis for identity, particularly a weak one, is likely to be equated with death (p. 77). When one finds only a frail relational boundary to brace against, and inner integrity is seriously fractured, the threat of self-deprecation becomes as ominous as any other social stigma overtly imposed. The cost of being "noticed" when estranged from within and without is high. "Here…he concludes that his own intricate self is as different from others as if he were a separate species." (p. 76).

Syntony

What, if any, ultimate value holistic unity might carry over to an objective reality seems a reasonable question: is social alienation's overcoming (reemergence) a possibility, or will distinctive barriers, accepted ways of understanding always manage to thwart genuine attempts? Is a philosophical doctrine conceivable where individuality will never be denied but a totality for life continues to be earnestly sought? "Syntony evolves from a broad valuing of the totality of life...The term...applies to the resonant, non-conflicting perception of the infinite variety of all things that may relate to one's being." (Chenault, 1966, pp. 146-7). Along with a psychological emphasis that protects freedom and openness, behind this image there is a broad resolution to reduce conflicting perceptions, where it is held most beneficial to transcend idiosyncratic (dichotomous) bases, and fuse into a grand unity. This is a theoretical ideal advocating wholeness over division; one touting the virtues of *reentry* after absolute separation has been a genuine possibility (pp. 145-51).

By this model, it is presumable that those fully liberated from the chains of both social conformity and self-separation can contextually "regress," choosing to coexist within a less enlightened population, to commune and merge with those for whom comparable avenues remain largely blocked. The intimation is, of course, that the *liberated one* can somehow function and thrive uncorrupted within the bounded, manipulative realm of the *non-liberated*.

Liberation, for it to survive by this example, must be internal; any proposed societal liberation is never a comparable "solution" for an innermost one. Here, a special acuity is thought to mature where concerns might actualize (be shared) without enveloping and dissecting the direction of others. For instance, one who reenters by way of Syntony is not preoccupied with seducing another toward a parallel enlightenment. One's very "character example" where concern emanates naturally has no credible substitute. Opinions offered (when not motivated by desire) do not undergo metamorphic change, where, otherwise, "grand" ideals might get curbed willingly, compromised for benefit of creating a persuasive effect. What is in the end "for another's own good," in the mind of the individual who appreciates the scope of things, is never blatantly clear.

Piloted instruction is known to carry deterministic overtones, in spite of potential value recognized or one's sincerity of intent. Deceptive ploys to trap someone into specific channels of thought and action are known to result in unpredictable outcomes, the combination of factors and potential negative outcomes of which have yet to be imagined.

While "merging" is not beyond normal expectation (given human diversity) there is an important point where Syntony can be distinguished from most any other unlikely reunion, the best example—there is no value in playing the zealot; leadership obliged is not something egotistically propelled. The featured "restraint" of refusing to indulge in popularity is no personal sacrifice; individuality is nothing to be sold, cultured via indoctrination, not even received through grace as a gift. Only after enduring unique trials, those who have traveled a valuable enough path realize that nobody can find *the way* except by experiencing it personally; those this fortunate must be able to both lend support and sustain a reliable enough wisdom to leave "well enough" alone.

Underscoring the importance of reticence and ambiguity is in no way intending that authentic behavior can only have a pseudo influence. But because "those to behold" refuse to bend to another's wishes, they do not utilize a forceful communicative vehicle for any great purpose to be amplified. Genuine intentions are never one-dimensional in scope or inflexible in position; moves to engage cannot be, in the same, moves to convert. Involvement is neither covertly scheming nor overtly persuasive and indoctrinating; motives in fact, transcending desire, are not corrupted at all by external preoccupation. When the burden of primal interdependence is severed, there can be respected a quality of reflection where external inconsistencies are no longer internally intrusive. Here a special stamina thrives, where concern for others can be purposefully shared without (at the same time) being enlisting and directive.

Chapter VII

Alienation and Education

Introduction

Here are some indispensable questions for education—how does avoiding involvement impact student self-concept, is retreating from attention an effective escape from irrepressible scrutiny. How is "going visible" worth avoiding the alternative: outright rejection, or worse, public humiliation; when simply "surviving well" what sort of pedagogy might actually be taking place. Do students grow distant to teachers through influence similar to what is evidenced in highly structured, disciplined families. If social estrangement is a real and persistent fear, does preoccupation over favorable status override educational relevance?

It seems unquestionable that when holding back in a classroom, opinions go unrecognized; it remains an essential question though to what extent inner worth is diminished when students fall silent. Irrespective of whether inhibiting effects are pronounced or lasting, by not sharing students sacrifice possibilities to prevailing consensus, by not acting everything else can be dictated majority *class opinion*.

Considering pedagogical structures parallel the makeup of American culture, it is widely accepted that most are personally responsible for their educational status, achievements as much as shortcomings. This is not just a benign societal peculiarity but a point of vulnerability, where involvement is carefully screened to avoid potential shame for knowing less, where a blatant resignation often takes hold to shield one's actual competence against expectations of an academic standard. Much has to do with an irrepressible emphasis on expertise; one need not be convinced of another's superiority to be evasive, only uncertain.

Emile Durkheim (1956) was among the first to outline a strong parallel between societal aim and educational structure, leading the way toward a general acknowledgement that educational norms are manifestations of market ideology (pp. 113-34). Any dip in self-value therefore must also be recognizable against this backdrop: those least adaptable suffer communal, personal and educational (not simply commercial) value. General impressions draw upon commodity market images for securing meaning,

this makes educational and economic worlds essentially inseparable; one need only consider the capricious criteria students depend upon to justify choosing a major.

"Personal" choice, for example, is relentlessly probed for applicability before a student can even test the water, decisions are expected without the necessary exposure. The caliber of personal goals becomes the ultimate device for gauging just where another stands. While the issue itself is not irrelevant, it certainly seems the most common inquiry students are faced with, the small talk impulsive as bringing up the weather with a stranger—for students the modal conversation ice-breaker is, painfully, to find out another's major. And while this may appear grossly insignificant, as students generally tire of this question, rarely do they escape offering a response.

The point, naturally, underscores their readiness for having something to say. To take-on a position and affix it to one's identity before gaining the essential, informed, experience smacks of urgency. There is then placed a "responsibility" to gauge value prematurely, value afforded to clear-cut occupational positions, where impulses are (before *respecting* significance) to juxtapose the most publicly esteemed image against one's own.

If academic pursuits are toward science and technology prestige or usefulness is not readily scrutinized. For a host of other areas however (art, communications, psychology, for example) a common reaction, either verbal or implied is "what do you expect to do with that." Condescension surfaces, not simply where a field is felt not serious, but where current employment opportunities are deemed mediocre. Many feign well an understanding of curricular worth while carelessly leaving out key features and assets; others can better detect discrepancies between genuine attraction and market cultivated images; decisions with any student are sure to change but for those maturing, criteria supported are backed with sincerity.

Aside from specific goals and need for finding purpose in education, there are some general character dispositions that could apply to most any student. A quite common occurrence is the toning down, or under representing of effort invested into academic pursuits. The very student who puts so much emphasis on decisiveness with respect to curricular categories (their applicability) tends to be much less concerned about specifics, investment into study and unique projects. End rewards, being heavily

objectified, overshadow the means (learning experiences) behind grades and certificates. But, realistically, when means get compromised so does the value and credibility attached to effort. Ambition may manage to endure but the accompanying strain and commitment necessary for attaining results is, at least for most, kept under wraps.

Constructivism

The suspicion is...that knowledge and explanation might have more to do with the knower and the explainer, than what is being known or explained:" Parmenides, 5th century B. C. (Candy, 1991, p. 253).

Another way to interpret this insight is that *knowledge can never really be taught but must be constructed.* A prime goal here is to point out the strong (multiform) relationship between individuality, constructivism and self-directed education. This particular premise for education goes past the theoretical, aspectual model for representing alienation. Beyond the speculative arrangements there are some practical (conceivable) paths that point the way out of constraint, or toward, if you will, an authentic individuality.

Constructivism's significance for education lies primarily in its accent on individual perspectives and experiences; it never loses sight of the relativity of understanding, always impressing that what we learn, no matter the subject, gets assembled from within. This vision for education is an outgrowth of the empirical based philosophies of John Locke and Immanuel Kant. Both emphasized this inevitability for acquiring knowledge—it must first filter through sense-based perception. The essential argument was that limitations and inconsistencies of our human senses disallow both transmission and procurement of unequivocal knowledge.

To consider this philosophical premise for education seriously familiar attitudes and styles (the most fundamental presumptions held regarding transfer of knowledge from teacher to student) require re-framing. Even in very objective endeavors, with math or chemistry for example, learning becomes an exercise in discovery. Simply looking at answers and test scores does not generally contribute to any comprehension of *how* the knowledge was essentially constructed. For whatever is really "out there," the logic of mathematical understanding only occurs "within" cognitive structures. This thinking can be frightening for educators sensing their authority and expertise being challenged. The

now familiar "Rush Limbaugh logic" that students' minds are hands-full-of-mush, for perfection, only needing to be molded through strategic guidance is a position that, considering this innovative paradigm for education, becomes vulnerable to grave scrutiny.

Heightening its controversial complexion, constructivist strategies endorse a high degree of self-direction; this "personalized" emphasis on learning draws heavily from humanistic psychology. Humanism is that discipline within the field of psychology celebrating an inherent human drive toward spontaneity, natural environments and independent thought. Along with humanism, constructivist approaches for education have been criticized for focusing too heavily on the individual (even though this criticism grossly oversimplifies constructivism as a whole). With a broader platform than humanism attempts to encompass, the constructivist ideal emphasizes that knowledge must be, not only negotiated and weighed, but regarded as inseparable from historical and cultural contexts.

Over one hundred years ago it was Durkheim's (1956, pp. 64-6) respected opinion that, in their effort to construct knowledge, students never completely ignore *existing* knowledge bases already in place, and remain very much influenced by legacies established through earlier communal structures. Appreciating more completely history's prolific effect on learning, Durkheim parted company with the celebrated Lockean epistemology. It was Locke's contention was that, utilizing their tabla rasa—the metaphorical blank slate upon which knowledge supposedly incurs—students are uniquely accountable for the potential quality and viability of knowledge they can incur. Durkheim also recognized self-determination as vital but saw this epistemological attribute, when isolated, contextually naïve. Intellectual development even on a very personal level, he believed, effectively retains cultural characteristics, maxims inherited from previous generations "…existing realities he cannot create, or destroy, or transform at will. He can act on them only to the extent that he has learned to understand them..." (P. 166).

This "understanding" requires that students must somehow come face to face with historical-cultural barriers implicit in the *immediate* environment they are expected to learn in. Gaining insightful knowledge by exposing the core features that define it does

not pass easily as trivial. In most educational settings in-depth inquiry into historical, cultural and ultimately intrinsic sources—those investigating why we learn what we learn—is rarely encountered. This is unfortunate since such approaches ignite curiosity critical for unearthing seminal roots of meaning, thirst for inquiry necessary to *dissect* grounded knowledge generally expected simply to be "known." The notion of sparking an essential wherewithal in students to contemplate predicated meaning and fundamental constraint was a strong characteristic of Thomas Kuhn's (1981, pp. 354-57) model for anticipatory schemes. His strategy was to modify learning environments so students could *personally* design, develop and direct unique activities. It was within these environments that schema's—autonomous cognitive frameworks—came to be appreciated as natural tools for deciphering propositional (codified) contexts (Candy, 1991, p. 345).

By being better able to anticipate and uncover coded meanings students more effectively discriminate between (and evaluate the legitimacy of) various opinions—expert or otherwise. The art of questioning the validity and value of accepted interpretations for knowing (hermeneutics) goes beyond general ideas or familiar explanations of learning. Any "unraveling" of cultural and historic presumption also creates intricate, unanticipated avenues for more inclusively considering knowledge. If an intellectual quest can be formed with intrigue, learning blossoms into something beyond simply comprehension and acquisition of facts; epistemological critique (even within restrictive curriculums) can foster opportunity in self-direction, heightened enthusiasm, need for challenge, and a sense of indispensability that drives the fundamental learning experience.

Habermas' Learning Styles

Jurgen Habermas, in his "knowledge and human interests," (1971) explored this difficult issue regarding what kind of parameters actually constitute knowledge. Prior to his investigation this problem of delimiting epistemological foundations had been largely ignored in education (Candy, 1991, p.275). Habermas recognized three broad, separate, areas of knowledge signified by distinct domains of pedagogical experience:

Instrumental, communicative, and *emancipatory styles* of learning (Mezerow, 1991, pp.72-89).

The most familiar style for education is overwhelmingly instrumental. Within this domain learning strategies and methods of investigation are defined by means-end thinking guided by pre-set objectives. Toward the issue of school reform, any sort of "transformation" would be addressed and implemented by clearly defined proposals that seek high predictability. Instrumental learning borrows heavily from a "structuralist metanarrative" which contends that, with knowledge principally deductive, legitimacy depends upon set hypothesis, empirically tested, where credibility is secured through linear, cause-effect relationships. Characteristic of positivistic learning, the "act of acquiring" knowledge is systematic and repetitive by approach. Efforts are strategic and task oriented, where problem solving generally parallels clearly established criteria (Maxcey, 1991, pp. 13-14).

Rather than depicting an atmosphere dependent on technical rules and calculable conditions, communicative learning style is an epistemological pursuit squarely embedded in, and directly relevant to, inter-relational meaning. Intellectual growth is a by-product of consensual understanding; pedagogical value depends upon and emerges along lines of this dynamic premise. Ideally, students are never without opportunities to question or challenge the validity of existing presumptions through participatory discourse. Usual conceptions and commonly held beliefs are matters for negotiation, features that perpetually mutate along with the sharing of personal insights. Because communicative learning depends upon confrontation with the unfamiliar, intuition and imagination are valuable assets for catalyzing explorative channels of interaction. Educational progress becomes an outgrowth of challenging past assumptions against the feasibility of alternative perspectives. The likelihood of functioning well within communicative contexts depends on maintaining a keen external focus and persistent level of involvement.

In the case of emancipatory learning, Habermas recognized that through honest self-inquiry students are able to fundamentally challenge existing, underlying assumptions of knowledge. For this style the move is toward a critical, novel exploration straight into the learner's most rudimentary self-awareness. Implicitly, there must involve

a concerted effort to capture obscure insights that emanate only with genuine detachment from worldly biases. Moves to dissociate are not wholesale denials of external credibility. Distance, for perspective, is merely an attempt to approach taken-for-granted possibilities as new and original. When conceivable, this frees the self from familiar constraints, illusive barriers that characterize uniform cognitive states. Assuming a "de-centered perspective" (Piaget, in Mezerow, 1991, p.147) is vital to properly scrutinize socially situated biases, those persisting as external impediments to internal meaning.

The value in any unconventional approach toward learning is best recognized by its effectiveness to prompt insight, in how well it assists in reworking information so it can be inclusively understood. Elusive, nonstandard, states are best actualized through autobiographical expression, here critical inquiry secures a positioning that is not directly distractible. Even though *self*-report is likely based on *social* interactive encounters, importance has little to do with specific observations or isolated facts. Rather, the literary recount turns into a virtual recreation (more than replication). It is when language generated tells more than could have possibly been anticipated that autobiography serves best as an instrument for exploration. Creative written expression, generated in solitude, clarifies best how classroom discussion or textual material might be relevant on a personal level; life tangible learning experiences are not lost, but matters contemplated in private. The gift of writing sits at the very heart of the emancipatory movement, carving out an intense submergence into the unknown—exploration via self-inquiry—propelling the drive for knowing.

<div align="center">Sternberg's Cognitive Types</div>

The following categories represent cognitive learning types (which coincide very evenly with Habermas' learning styles); only now pedagogic variation is being viewed from a more personal, cognitively tangible perspective. With respect to educational reform, there will be little focus on instrumental approaches relative to the two other classifications. Intention is not to deny benefits associated with structured paths; in fact, there are many students who identify closely with and thrive well within environments where expectations are detailed and clearly forecasted. Robert Sternberg, (1990, pp.18-38) refers to this kind of learner as an *executive type* (metaphorically derived from the

executive branch of government). There are more than a few familiar occupations highlighted by executive type characteristics: police officers, surgeons, lawyers, etc. A common thread that runs through each of these jobs is the necessity to function well by an existing rule system. Within school settings, executive types generally excel given their affinity for facts and natural adaptability following set procedures. With respect to assignments they prefer explicit instruction to ambiguity, well-defined boundaries, and clearly outlined objectives.

For the most part, schools already insist upon this well-worn learning approach. Indeed, the greatest criticism of highly structured, instrumental styles is their exclusiveness and overrepresentation. This relentless drive for "certainty" (while benefits are not denied) overshadows the legitimacy of all other systems. A positivistic, truth-seeking epistemology exists, by its very nature, at the expense of both communicative and emancipatory learning. Schools of present characteristically craft executive type learners out of students who, otherwise, have no inherent inclination to embrace such an approach.

Judicial types (again, the government metaphor) have an ingenuous propensity to analyze existing structures and procedures; these are learners who operate best in an environment that features dialectic exploration. A natural inclination is to seek out meanings embedded in and relevant to interpersonal critique. They function most effectively when evaluating the legitimacy of ideas and activities that have well-developed and tangible forms; insights are most relevant, occupationally speaking, for a program evaluator, consultant or movie critic.

Finally, the *legislative type* portrays best those who prefer to define their own structures, those learning most effectively by creating personally relevant approaches. This flexible tendency is most evident in the very earliest school experiences. In later years a more conforming character generally replaces the spontaneous one. The legislative type, with attributes difficult to repress, seeks outlets for uniqueness through writing, policy-making, or possibly architecture, often in spite of cultural pressures to embrace a more predictable niche.

Ironically, many executive types with occupations requiring precision and orientation to detail—scientists, mechanics or engineers—tend to actually value

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legislative learning qualities. Inventiveness and creative problem solving skills are attributes often revered for fueling occupational innovation and advancement. But when schools are set-up to accommodate only executive type learners, other, poorly promoted, character qualities weaken or fail to fully mature (p. 34). Students often claim to have an aptitude for science and yet demonstrate little, if any, scientific intuition; there may not even be any pretension how to "experiment" without aid from a manual or pre-designed model to follow. The science fields do indeed attract a considerable number of executive types; however, intuitive, legislative qualities well resected beyond the "training phase" of school are rarely cultured or encouraged.

Attitudes in Self-Direction

Given the valuable insight gained by considering learning styles and learner types, it seems that students possess (naturally) unique characteristics where aptitudes and specific preferences must be gauged. Communicative and emancipatory learning, for example, cannot be afforded accurate definition using existing (instrumentally recognized) scales. The awareness of these styles, their significance emphasized by the existing curriculum, is too weak. Any commitment for school reform intent on marshaling improvements by implementing stricter standards onto existing systems is, at best, an oversimplified impulse-remedy for a complex, multifaceted problem. Anticipating inevitable complications, it is important to ponder at least a couple reasons why constructivist-oriented approaches deserve more rounded appreciation.

Because self-direction inherently implies greater freedom for students, concerned (skeptical) educators and administrators often debunk such learning approaches as "free-lance," equating virtually any proposal with "doing-your-own-thing." The prime fear is that letting go of the controls will terribly compromise program quality. A common vision is of the lazy instructor who gets manipulated by undisciplined students. Even less conservative voices tend to associate self-direction with non-conformity. The prediction is often that student actions will be unmanageable; that behavior will dissolve into apathy, or worse, outspoken resistance (Brockett, 1994, pp. 6-10).

While the basis for these concerns may not be completely unwarranted, in most schools there is a good chance that students are already resistant or apathetic in spite of

existing controls. The fact is much of the responsibility for fostering a successful self-directed learning atmosphere falls directly on the teacher. Research indicates that these environments enable students to bloom when effectively implemented. The key for instructors is to form "learning partnerships" with the class. Ideally, here, teachers will recognize the importance of building relationships and focus on the needs and progress of each pupil—rather than the more common, impersonal, style of attending (almost exclusively) to the class as a whole (p. 9).

An equally strong misrepresentation of self-directed learning is that it encourages isolation. It is true that any initiative to direct one's own course must necessarily carry room for disjunction. Self-discovery, to be insightful, actually depends upon non-social, inner-relevant "assertion." Nevertheless, self-direction has more to do with creating and subjectively evaluating than, simply and finally, immersing in virtues of solitude. While seeking inner-relevance may evoke some social distancing, unique traits do not mature divorced from shared experience. People can "succeed" in gaining freedom from others and yet show little behavioral evidence of independence (Candy, 1991, p. 277). Aside from whatever relational positioning one finally aspires, in order to gain any true sense of self-completion, need for reaction from others (be it positive or critical) is essential. Even when not directly sought, the mere expectation of future recognition serves as a convincing and powerful force to motivate.

Communicative Learning—Explored

Self-direction, therefore, aside from the necessary separation, retains distinct social relevance. With respect to education, in order to provide a comprehensive approach, interpersonal elements cannot be readily relinquished. In this way, self-direction gets well contrasted with rugged individualism, where separation becomes an essential end-in-itself. A significant advantage ensuring a bountiful social terrain—for mature independence—is the vast perspective for *idea sharing* it can enable. Success in self-direction depends on being able to select the most favorable, personally suited, avenue to embrace. This freedom, however, would be of marginal value if selection availability got reduced to a very narrow band of choices. A *best* choice can only be made from the broadest range of (life-tangible) alternatives.

Communicative features most vital always challenge arrangements where learning tends to be conveniently "fitted" within well-embedded educational structures. But most never see beyond a very familiar idealistic vision, so that one's expressive opportunities and likelihood of success depend upon (and get limited directly by) prevailing social patterns. Modern-day learning environments typically fall considerably short of acknowledging, much less promoting, constructivist ideals. Educational parameters not prepared for critical, pragmatic malleability likely ignore, in fact, often unwittingly encourage manipulation and interpersonal intrusion more than provide communicative opportunity.

From a young age negotiation is a necessary tool in the never-ending search for personal meaning. Psychosocial attractions are at first manifestations of a "collective monologue"—a pure state of undifferentiation from others—this, indicating social immersion at its most absolute. Collective monologue in children is often labeled as, and mistaken for, egocentric speech (Vygotsky, 1986, pp. 232-4). Reality here is established and verified through the experience of others. Ultimately, however, more exclusive aspirations arise (ironically) through social need, "It is the 'collision' of our thought with the thought of others that engenders doubt and calls for verification" (p.48). The point can be made from this, even after respecting the human impulse which sparks challenge; desires have been sociologically carved before ever recognizable on a personal level. Cultural triggers persist moreover; surviving considerably beyond proximal, familiar, exchanges generally equated with social pressure.

Social fixtures, while not avoidable, can nonetheless be quite vulnerable to challenge and reevaluation. To consider an example, the person who is "well read" has not simply internalized pre-digested constructs manufactured through outside sources. Comprehension of reading material is a *process* where personal interpretations and insights "transform" textual meaning (Brockett, 1991, pp. 135-37). For an insightful reader, conceivable avenues where self-relevant perspectives can be constructed are drawn-in through a variety of contexts. As a result, inner-complexity, or the examination base during (and after) "knowledge gathering," becomes more intricate and detailed for some. Becoming well in-tune with ideas concerning one's (sociological) world can help nurture a certain *intrinsic* confidence improving breath for personal choice. By

expanding contexts individual experience can be weighed against a greater variety of prospects, to better judge where the most valuable interpretations might finally lie.

When allowing a constructivist's perspective, it is important that knowledge not be mistaken for a deceptively controlling reality. Introspective decisions always run the risk of being *falsely* perceived as personal, since inner illusion can remain a strong characteristic of cultural conviction. When need for peer acceptance is amplified (most notably in school) personal assumptions get more deeply affixed to those getting publicly magnified. These complex socially wedded realities are then increasingly distanced from unvarnished spontaneity. Impulses for inclusion and involvement naturally parallel existing conditions, until everyday compromises become virtually imperceptible.

Student beliefs, padded by years, generally grow to parallel culturally prevailing trends and norms. The education setting in all likelihood perpetuates sacrifice of intrinsic motivation, squelching most behaviors deemed not acceptable. However it happens, it is important to recognize that conformity (in school or otherwise) is not simply a manifestation of passivity. Competitive individualism, like many communally acquired complexions, is a disposition regarded with great favor (Purpel, 1989). Academic environments routinely expound the virtues of competition—convictions held inevitably at the expense of (alternatively) inspiring a sense of community. This roundly instilled conformity ingredient cannot be overlooked when figuring-in the behavioral strength of hedonistic pursuit, that which students either unconsciously conceal or simply elect to condone. "This stress on individuality is by no means free of its conformist aspects— indeed the culture demands that individuals compete, that they strive for winning over and beating others; and that achievement in a broad but ultimately bounded realm constitutes success." (P, 31).

Since normal can only be defined publicly "pluralistic ignorance" is something commonplace. Consensus legitimacy gets exaggerated while personal insights are unfairly buried. Performance by this circumstance is reduced in complexity, narrowed to either typical or abnormal (Gusfield, 1979, P. 46). Behaviors displayed within the scholastic arena branded unacceptable are often those heavily laden with emotion. Displays of disagreement, enthusiasm, anger and other overt exchanges between classmates are for the most part strongly discouraged, even when essential in aiding

understanding. This seems particularly true during the middle years of schooling, when there is least evidence of a curriculum that tolerates dialectic and inner revelation as integral features of the pedagogy.

It would certainly be an oversimplification to say that since dynamic, direct exchanges are intrinsically confrontational, rich rewarding learning environments could never occur. But educators shy away from promoting demonstrative encounters in class, not only because they are difficult and unsettling, because self-regulating systems have inherently low predictability. Guided by impressions most familiar, school emphasizes very little dialectic exchange—exchange potentially critical for communicative style learning to ever occur. What characterizes these classroom experiences most is that students stay apathetic and uninvolved; allowing a personal perspective bias, with these conditions evidenced firsthand, school instilled a powerful sensation that something was fundamentally wrong.

This mass indifference in school remains, unfortunately, a common occurrence. Even when teachers appear enthusiastic, with the subject interesting, students remain distinctly unmoved; when a gregarious instructor pleads for participation, they pay lip service. Seeming to lack any sense of naturalness and spontaneity, understanding well their limited roles, they adhere to them with striking consistency. Something of course is terribly wrong with this all-too-common scenario. For instance, I do not believe that students can remain uninvolved without feeling out of place; from all appearances when they exhibit this familiar content-distance (an "excusable" strategy for playing dumb) classroom tension typically mounts. Students seem to brace themselves for fear of being called on; time goes painfully slow in a silent classroom.

Considering low participation is not likely comfortable for students, why do they persist with a stoic exterior? Any reactive, demeaning explanation—reasoning that students simply have nothing important to share—would be shortsighted. Students have no problem "sharing" insightful knowledge when it comes to take a test; at least, in most cases, there is a strong desire not to fail. So why can't they reveal themselves a fraction as well (verbally) for the class as in most other natural setting? More pointedly, why does there appear to be such a wide discrepancy in performance or aptitude between internally impressed and public expressions of knowledge?

In order to strike at the heart of this dilemma it becomes necessary to consider an essential question: why do American students care so little to reflect on (and decipher) the apparent knowledge they possess? Pondering this, I recalled a time when my niece built up the courage to read a poem written for a large group of relatives before thanksgiving dinner. She had always been quite shy and I was proud of her courage. She spoke well and everyone let her know what a great job she did. However, on my drive home I had the sensation that something important was missing. The poem shared was genuinely creative; she used metaphors for intuitions that had broad but tangible meanings. Why did nobody bother to pick-apart some of these insightful (revealing) representations? Why was there no sharing of interpretations from personal experiences? Simply telling her she did well was necessary but far from sufficient. What seemed to be missing was the "luxury" for her to sort through distinct, overt reactions in order to uncover what effect her inspiration *really* had on the group.

When students exhibit outstanding academic performance they get flooded with recognition, awe, and in some respects glorified. For those who excel it can be an undeniably rewarding experience; however, typically one short-lived. All the seemingly relevant questions: how and why—indicators of genuine interest—are rarely heard. What specifically about the paper stood out? How did the idea arise? What epistemological process was important to support the idea? Which features of the project were most meaningful and gratifying? Where are these kinds of questions in the classroom? Why do students (and teachers) rarely consider, or marginally attend, exploring with their class intricacies of the "final" product?

When a thorough inquiry is excluded from the formula, implications are that high grades and a few positive remarks serve as ample recognition. Quite honestly, the quality of this feedback may be sufficient for many students; but any felt reward and gratification at this level wholly misses the point. Without accompanying scrutiny, accomplishments are not separable from the source by which appreciation originates. To the extent this is the case, achievement gets "personalized" while deeper meaning, staying unchallenged, remains dormant. Creative processes cease once the evaluation and appending comments are received; the grade itself serves as the "final implement" which seals off any desire for further investigation or class examination.

Purpel (1989) feels that students have a responsibility to stand by their beliefs and oppose passive acceptance of established (final) standards. If for example we ask an opinion on a movie, we don't want someone to merely tell us if it was good or bad. When not provided an opportunity to discover *why* this view might be worth considering we have learned nothing (other than to rely on someone else's judgement). Unelaborated opinion is useless since information shared offers points-of-view extending no basis for weighing believability. In order to exercise meaningful independence over external circumstances, "It is critical that people be critical in order that they continue to be critical" (132).

Paulo Frerie, much more blunt on this issue, maintains that any institutionalized hindering of inquiry is an act of violence. He recognizes need for transforming psychological barriers and rectifying social misperception via unobtrusive, dialectic exchange. This kind of pedagogical approach naturally proposes an interactive commitment signified by a genuine awareness and concern for others. This appeal he believes is essential to construct a vital epistemological foundation—one where the significance of knowledge can be authentically (individually) interpreted. Obstructions that impede this human entitlement are firm attitudes which "changes students into objects," alienating them from their own adjudication process (Finkel, 1995, pp. 87-96). So, when students pose that familiar question, as they so commonly do—why am I learning this stuff—comprehensive explanations are indispensable, with benefits well overshadowing the usual, condescending, its-for-your-own-good type remark.

The message seems clear, a class atmosphere where shared experience and open inquiry are commonplace will best foster conditions where students can question "everydayness" and develop the ability to "possibilize" (Purpel, 1989, p.135). It goes without saying though, to contravene, students and teachers have considerable trouble adopting this rarefied and unpredictable approach to learning. Ideally, for this to become reality there can be little established method to work with, virtually no end result to conceive. Rather, personal interpretations are willingly shared and subsequently dissected; creative insight gets valued as a process more importantly than as a product. What this means for academic growth is that spontaneous involvement never be

minimized, that achievement be understandable and somehow weighed with significance outside of venues ruled by exams and "final product" assignments.

The Relevance of Conflict

Communicative learning would never be complete without accompanying conflict; but conflict need not be perceived as inherently destructive. Actually, it is often after such "consequence" where it first becomes possible, not simply for needs to get heard, but so that they become understandable in the first place. Conflict is a necessary impetus for change. In nature (thermodynamics) fluctuation is the norm; for social systems stability is an artificial creation. Only by allowing an unconstrained state to resume, encouraging expression and open evaluation of ideas, can a natural social state of equilibrium come to exist (Doll, 1987, p. 111).

Georg Simmel (1955, pp.15-19) was the first principle figure early in the twentieth century to underscore the virtues of conflict, believing personal identities are actually structured upon it. He reasoned such encounters evoke strong sensitivities creating conditions where insights and preferences can gain credibility, where uniqueness might emerge through tangible venues. Despite the turbulent and often uncomfortable bother surrounding confrontation, to be provoked is to be provided opportunity for notice. Brutal honesty may certainly spark retaliation, but these are also enabling annoyances. Better to be in school where expressing personal conviction is a risky, than to smother true feelings and endure the frustration of an unresponsive class.

When feelings are recognized publicly inner beliefs gain credibility; an environment is suddenly opened where impressions on stirring issues can be explored without reticence. It is sometimes a brief, but often meaningful, window where it becomes feasible to open honestly and disregard internalized socially biased constraints. Opposition is a critical ingredient to initiate this drive for self-definition, with it true personal characteristics surface; defensively inspired and inflamed, one finds incentive to assume a stance that protects the self from external imposition and its most formidable consequence—domination.

<u>Emancipatory learning—Explored</u>

Emancipatory learning is always a function of self-reflection, it calls for a pedagogic approach set clearly apart from role-relevance and technical boundaries associated with the other two types and styles. There are significant reasons why it is necessary to respect emancipatory learning as clearly separate from communicative educational contexts. One key distinction to make is that social (particularly peer) influences are pressing and durable; discursive learning environments improve skills by improving interaction. This may certainly be valuable for an ideal communicative context, but the lure for acceptance and other pressures that inspire conforming behaviors distract, lessening chance any dialectic ideal will ever become real. Self-reflection is an alternative to communication, managed successfully only through distancing. This is necessary for original insight into both past and existing social obstacles, so that well engrained interpersonal distortions embedded through faulty learning can be evaluated with clear impartiality.

Through the construction of autobiographical accounts, or what Brockett (1991, p.137) refers to as "intensive journals," useful strategies emerge where language can be utilized in ways dissociated from ordinary shared experience. In a sense, there occurs a concerted effort to disengage, the cost of which creates a sense of role-instability. It is a quest for meaning turned into a search for exposing the artificiality or fragility between words and things. Ultimate motive is to carve a unique perspective, to dissociate from embedded voices and biases. This idea is compatible to, and better conceived by, what Heron (in Mezerow, 1991, p.149) refers to as "bracketing" or, holding certain beliefs in check in order to project alternatives, this presumes a quality of wherewithal which can (at least temporarily) separate conflicting frames of reference.

Because self-reflective approaches for learning threaten the very legitimacy of established roles, a comprehensive appeal that goes to the heart of taken-for-granted presumptions is difficult. With any reflective search various paths must be considered; alternative thinking is personal but clearly draws upon relational experience. Ideally attended, this would lead to possibilities stock-full with poignant meaning. But becoming proficient in this way also requires questioning fundamentally held assumptions. The shift is best recognized in what Mezerow (pp. 93-4) regards as "transformational learning

experiences." Here introspective inquiry gets tapped as a resource for recreating salient, personally important scenarios; underlying impulses driving actions, once identifiable, are qualities to be reassessed, along with the many false preconceptions stemming from them.

There occurs, inevitably, with such development heightened inclusiveness; keeping this in mind the whole move toward emancipation may seem, rather than enlightening, instead, more like a plunge toward loneliness through introspection. Nevertheless, for emancipatory learning to even be possible it must remain (at least loosely) related with communicative learning. Ideally, there would be an active, ongoing comparison between personal and socially recognized meanings. This might work, unless of course interactive "sharing" turns into an exercise in sacrifice—acceptance through approval—inviting a distorted perception of self-directed pursuits. But since character qualities stem from many cultural perspectives, the greater the number of feasible views, more plentifully sprout opportunities to comprehend true intricacies of one's *own* behavior.

Even when engaged in solitary quests, social bearings are difficult to ignore. A key ingredient for any successful emancipatory learning experience depends on one's willingness, not so much to reconstruct, but to invent and record personally sentient reactions to significant events. Not yet anticipated problems of social importance can then go into a *process* of being endlessly discovered and intrinsically evaluated. The legitimacy of previously held beliefs need not be carelessly discounted. Whatever (embellished or objective) situations students choose to rework, for the possible scenarios to be considered, ideas will remain at least obscurely connected with cultural roots; both tacit and tangible inquires depend upon them.

Through autobiographical inquiry students become both subject and object of their work. This widened perspective helps deepen the relevance of personal observations, prompting the way to anticipate events as outside observers (teachers, classmates, etc.) might actually see the world (Grumet, 1992, pp. 33-6). Novel insights carry this depth and relevance only where sharing is possible. Communicative feedback on one's autobiographical exploration might conceivably fuel a paradoxical "shared

introspection" of truth; where from such vantage point, critical perspective gains potential to de-center egocentric impulse.

Realistically though, information is only as valuable as the source from which it emerges; recognizing this is crucial for appreciating that personal revelation does not evade the need to tap into emotional reserves. Rational approaches for "getting to the bottom of" issues may never be enlightening in a way that can penetrate embedded aesthetic roots. Trying to maintain critical awareness can be especially challenging when self-knowledge is sought through channels that are *exclusively communicative*. While interactive sources can catalyze successful self-directed functioning, social persuasion is never far off—pressures to "discover" within preconceived patterns or style. Any manipulation disguised as apprenticeship (possibly mentor/protege' relationships) might actually dissuade rather than contribute to an authentic emancipatory experience. Habermas, after all, (in Mezerow, 1991, p. 88) considers emancipatory learning to be completely incompatible with indoctrination. To the extent this is true, schools of present are likely modeled upon biased criteria, and elect to operate within naïve restraints.

Successful Reform—What Would It Take?

For any vision of school reform to actualize students need to have a comfortable environment to prosper. If not motivated to take greater responsibility, to become actively involved in the improvement process, reforms can only be superficial manipulations, measures estranged from the very heart of the pedagogical architecture. When existing systems are deemed inadequate, or break down entirely, those held most responsible scramble to assign blame; students in these predicaments become vulnerable scapegoats. The most familiar, knee-jerk reaction is to implement stricter controls.

Instituting "shake-ups," however, or some other quick fix "tightening of standards," will not isolate problems at their source. Stringent approaches inevitably mutate and unravel once the scare-tactic-effect subsides. When the basis for change is really only a subtle variation on an existing structure, how can students be expected to respond to (superficial) modifications as purposeful; why should they pretend to. Any "restructuring" patterned after traditional criteria will eventually be reabsorbed. Whatever politically motivated, get-tough reform is honored by educational bureaucrats, in the final *evaluation,* will be rejected through student ambivalence. The fundamental

truth so thoroughly (systematically) overlooked is students are more powerful victims than administrators are reformers.

Since school reform surfaces as a concern in the first place to benefit students, why isn't this obvious to the students themselves, why is it so problematic to involve them in carving out the nature of *their* reform? Again, this is not naive wishful thinking, or some proposal for a "hands off," do-your-own-thing kind of environment. The present circumstance however shows that school gets strongly associated with "requirement;" this perception likely stems from (both sensed and real) absence of power in the decision making process. When students are actually invited to shape standards, attitude shift can be dramatic; with responsibility shared, compulsory attendance measures intended to guard against low retention become non-issues. With voices noticed students can then step out of their restricting, other-defined, roles so that involvement gets appreciated beyond an obligatory mindset; with worthless shackles removed school might then become more than just a holding tank for playing a waiting game.

Acknowledging "school as requirement" something ubiquitous, let us again attend the question of why students are so apprehensive asserting themselves, typically resigning to be both uninvolved and uncomfortable. It must first be made clear that dialectic and autobiographical techniques are recondite modulation devices; they are not cute diversions or add-ons to more systematic, evaluation structures already in place. That's because the "instrument" they enable most particularly occurs at the human level. Neither are these prescriptive packages for reform; there is no neat formula to simply decipher and implement. Such approaches culminate in performance changes difficult to measure. Even though improvement on standardized tests may indeed result this is not the ultimate focus.

It is important when applying this perspective to appraise enthusiasm, determination and genuine involvement as valuable, tangible indicators of student progress. If we are intuitively certain that one is improving but test scores show no evidence of this, something is very likely inadequate about the test. Dialectic and autobiographical methods do not open avenues that can be orchestrated with precision and gauged conclusively. Importance exists, more appropriately, given their utility for combating the problem of self-alienation so prevalent in most classrooms.

In order to understand the effects of self-alienation with respect to school more intimately consider some abominable and, unfortunately, common attitudes students carry—school is an inevitability of life to get out of; work required is something to get done (or out of the way). When we study it's not *our* time. As long as we pass we won't "suffer" or be punished by getting held back. The less we need to study the smarter we are. Getting by means getting away from. Its only natural to dissociate from school*work* the same as we learned to detach in class, making sure to apply effort just short of, but never beyond that instructed? Who in their right mind would suggest these views characterize quality learning opportunities? Within most modern school settings if you ask students, at various grade levels, if they look forward to going to class don't count on a favorable reply. Rather, expect reactions that reduce educational obligations to "ordeals to endure"—something akin to jumping through a hoop, certainly there is something very troubling about this picture.

In spite of obvious negative attitudes, if students found incentive to envision, and orchestrate useful strategies for confronting feelings of detachment they would less likely resort to dropping out. If students could initiate *real* opportunities for freedom of expression they might no longer be trapped. Any good proposal intent on improving the humanness of class surroundings demands genuine consideration. Students are suffering because they are caught in a paradox: they intuitively understand the benefits of learning, while at the same time have strong impressions of school as constraining and oppressive. Most however, I believe, really are looking for something better in life, respectful of learning and genuinely longing for a forum where inner potential has chance to actualize.

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