

CULTURAL DISCOURSE

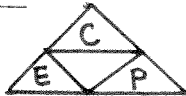
INTRO

I would like to tell you a story about myself. I am Mary. I was born 5 million years ago. Before the rocks broke apart and became grains of sand upon the beach I was Mary. But it was many thousands of years before I became conscious I was Mary. Then, later on I became conscious of the fact that I was conscious. And I knew who I was. Then, I was able to create memories and anticipate the future. That has been my journey as Mary through history, and that journey has been intensified in the 20th century. For now all over again I'm bursting through a new consciousness. Well, that is a way for me to say in a different kind of poetry what we have said all weekend; that the age in which we live has been an explosion of consciousness such as man has seen only once or twice in his whole existence. What has happened in our time is that we have discovered that we ARE the evolutionary process. The upheavals in the world in which we find ourselves today are finally upheavals relative to who it is we are, or what it means to be a human being. Man's search for meaning has gone on since the first man-ape grasped himself as different from the other creatures. The incredible fact of the new dimension of that search for meaning is that it is universal....it is global.....and it is foundational. Every corner of the globe is experiencing the same reality at the same time. Another way to put that in terms of the future is that every decision you and I make is crucial.....is critical.....because we are deciding the kind of human being there will be for the next 1000 or 2000 years. That is both a fright-filling and fascinating statement to make. It is as though there is a bend in the road of history. Mankind is going to decide, in our time, which way it will go. You have been experiencing the frustration and difficulty of making decisions for the future. If we could take back tomorrow the decisions we make today, after we have tested them, there would be much less risk in what has to be decided. But the pace and complexity of the world do not allow us that luxury. The question is , what kind of a future are we going to build? That question is finally at the bottom of what effective living is all about. This weekend, we have been raising that question from many directions. We have talked about the Resurgence that is bursting forth around the globe, and tonight I want to deal with the last elements or dimensions of that resurgence in four ways:

- The CulturalProcess and its situation in our world today
- The Axiological Crisis, or meaning void of our time
- The ontological Rationality, or man's search to make sense of his world

And finally, I'd like to talk about happiness, or what it means to live a fulfilled life.

(COURSE OVERVIEW ON THE BOARD)



First of all, let's identify culture a bit further. Culture is that which sets man off from other animals. Culture is that which enables man to self-consciously relate to his world. Culture, then, in terms of that kind of statement is that without which we humans do not have the economic or the political. This dynamic we call culture is that which brings humanness to the economic and political realms. That is what is meant by saying the cultural dimension is the illuminating or signification factor to both of these poles.

In the cultural triangle, Wisdom is the dynamic of transmitting the world view that man has. It is the dynamic of crystallizing the world view and passing it on. Within the wisdom triangle is found Useful Skills, the prowess and expertise that man employs to get things done in the world. That is to say, people are taught proficiency at this thing or that thing in order to perform adequately in the world. Accumulated Knowledge is the handing down of what man knows about his world to the next generation, the passing on of what man has learned about being human and the methods he employs to analyze his world and the vision of the future, either in formal or informal education. Final Meanings is the pole of the Wisdom dynamic which significates it. That is the Philosophy, the images of integrity and morality and issues of ultimate concern that a society or civilization holds dear.

The Style triangle is the communal triangle of the Cultural dimension. That is, all society is, has been, and always will be a journey through life through the stages of life, which we have called cyclical roles. And the whole arena of the phases falls here. Then, there is the dimension of creating the next generation, as each society must always do. Not because people necessarily wanted families in the first place..... but to insure the future of its people society invented the family. And into the Procreative Schemes falls the sexual framework of a society, the institutions of marriage or whatever a society calls the covenants taken, and the whole arena of the nuclear family. Social Structures spell out the units of society, what they are and what their roles are and how communities are grouped.

Now, let's take a look at the Symbol triangle, for it is the unconscious holder together of, or I like to say, the glue of the whole process. It is through symbols that, finally, the transmission of the culture or the world view is accomplished. And the symbolic dimension of life is primarily on the unconscious level. And, it is hard to dig out of our twentieth century pragmatism the cruciality that this dimension holds for man.

LANGUAGE SOCIAL ART RELIGION icons/rites/myths (2 words on each!!)

DYNAMICAL RELATIONSHIPS

We have talked this weekend about the imbalance that is always present in the social process. Let's take a look again at the imbalance within the cultural triangle. WISDOM.....pushed style and collapsed symbol
We are dealing here with the collapsed pole of the whole process, remember. And where now have we been pointing to with that collapse? The crisis in education and its irrelevance.....Breakdown of family and community.....Heroless age.....Symbol void.....What has happened as the great advance of

3.
technology has taken hold is that man all over the globe has surrendered the values that were once held in the symbolic dimension of life to the economic. And the acquisitive lifestyle has become so dominant in our lives that materialism has taken on the proportions that those symbols have held.

COLUMN II

How we have also said before in this weekend that the social situation, or just being in the world around us as it is makes us, or allows us to see that what goes on in the society affects the individual. That is to say, because man does not live in a vacuum but is a social creature, he is going to be a part of the social experience. I like to say it this way. (Picture of man in middle with sociological and existential arrows coming at him.) These bombard him and in our day in the arena of the cultural man is experiencing a crisis or malaise -- just an incredible loss of meaning -- hollow place in his middle. First of all the structures that you have thought would hold life together have lost their foundations. No nation is like it once was in the time of its nation building. Every single nation around the globe is experiencing the impingement of the rest of the world, and no nation can hold itself sacred and apart anymore. That is, the global community is a reality in our time, and nations must now mold themselves to be a part of the community of the globe or find themselves floundering out of the mainstream of the 20th century. Story nations have had not adequate. And that has not just happened because one nation or another would wish it. It has become necessity if for no other reason than to hold the earth together.

The community as you and I experienced it, maybe, in our childhood is gone forever. It was probably gone before you and I were born, but the remnants of it still existed when I was growing up. Today, you create community where you show up. Let's take the family community. In the 20 years I have been married, we have moved nine times, and that number probably sounds small to some of you. My family is dispersed across the globe. One child is in California, one child in Germany, my husband travels all the time, my mother lives in Kentucky, and my sister in Switzerland. And here I am away from home for eight weeks. The family today is experiencing this crisis perhaps more than any other social unit. Almost every magazine you pick up these days has an article on the fragility of this unit we have called the nuclear family. What has happened in our time? Well, the family has participated in the same reaction that society has...pain in turning outward because no guidelines for living in a new age...that is, it has so turned in upon itself that it has forgotten that not until this century did the family exist for itself. The family as a sociological unit has always had a role to play in history, but it has been precisely that, a sociological role. Now the question of what is that role has been raised. But in our century we have perverted the intent of the family and have made it a psychological unit, one in which we have thought the meaning of life is found. We have so distorted the axiom "Charity begins at home", to make that mean that we are more responsible for our own children than for the world's children. Of course, we are responsible for our children...Pacific Islands, responsible for your (brother's) children. (And we have destroyed and smothered children, wives, husbands until the family itself has become a rootless, alienated entity.) Families have forgotten to ask the question of why they are a family in history. What is the role of the family today? And so the alienation of society has become most intense and most focussed on the smallest unit of society, and finally entraps the individual in either open rebellion or quiet surrender. Children leave home....husbands find places in work. It has been said that man never moves until the pain becomes so intense, that he has to move, and we are alive in a time when the pain or emptiness is becoming just that,

too intense. And all across the globe there are significant signs that point to the beginnings of a recreated context. The mobility of man today has resulted in the exchange of style unparalleled in history, and we must never forget that it is primarily because of the gifts of technology that this is possible. I remember in Hong Kong going to a nightclub where a Korean combo was playing the songs from "Hair"... "Let the Sunshine In"... in English. Perhaps see it more in youth than any other place. And the very fact that people are alerted to the crisis of the family today gives an opportunity to begin to look afresh and what the family can be in the future. Man is beginning to seriously deal with social renewal in a way he never has. And perhaps most important, man is searching for a way to articulate the meaning of life... what his life is all about, anyway.

There are today hundreds of things to read, or courses to take that are after the answer to those same questions. At any rate one could say that there are concerned people all over the world who are grappling with the deep issues of our time in a brand new way.

COLUMN III

Now, in the midst of this vacuum or crisis and this of loss of meaning, and this quest for new significant life is disclosed at the ontological or foundational level, the deep propensity in man to grasp and make sense out of his world. This reality which lies deep in us all is what we call rationality. Man is a rational animal like he is a social, contingent, that is, he dies, and sexual animal. This means that he builds a secondary environment for himself or a culture. This building of a society is rationality. It is manifest as the whole three fold dynamic of the social process. More particularly human rationality is the cultural dynamic, images, styles, and symbols which significate the other two paramount dynamics. It is his story-building methodology. The point is that rationality is culture building -- it is society building. There is deep fear and fascination at finding meaning in life.

Part of the refilling of the value vacuum in our time with this propensity to make sense out of our world is the propensity to relate all the experience you and I have into the total fabric of our lives. To do this man must have a perspective beyond reason, and you begin to see the duality of rationality, for rationality and arationality are two sides of the same coin. What you and I have experienced as products of the age of reason is being cut off from the awe and mystery of life. The science minded 19th century men who sneered at myths as superstitious nonsense were guilty of a scientific superstition themselves. The belief that reason could explain all human motives. They were looking for a world in which one could measure, touch, see or explain objective reality. But to do that is to want a static world which is the most irrational thing in the world....for the world can never be static. If man is cut off from the mystery of life, or that which he is constantly trying to explain through his rationality, he begins to create and participate in the very vacuum we have been talking about. He is cut off from time, and he is cut off from space....the interior space that creates your universe.

(This paragraph and the preceding paragraph could be switched around)

Perversions in rationality: reduce to rationalism --deal with chaos/

...individualism--only can invent meaning of life for me --life as 5.
common experienceDefiance - refusal to see the absurdity --try to
build a different kind of universe. At this point the function of the story
or myth becomes clear. It is the collective bridge between the arational
and the rational enabling rationality to operate. The story allows man to
make sense out of the absurdity that life, and it is the story out of which
he lives that gives his whole life meaning. Joseph Campbell's 4 things ...
poetry-music-art-religion-Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring".

COLUMN IV

And what is it that man is looking for, striving for, seeking???? What
gives whole life meaning? Most of us would answer, Happiness.....a life
that is fulfilled. The recovered satisfaction that comes in the midst of
life's moments that bring pain and joy at the same time. The way I have
come to tell myself about happiness is this: I have no personal prob-
lems.....can you grasp that? I cannot think of a single thing that I
would call a personal problem. Now, I don't mean that I live in some
Never-Never land, or that the same things in life that make you glad or
sad don't have the same effect upon me, but I can say I have no personal
problems. And how that awareness has come to me is this. For me it has
been at those moments in life when something I wanted so desperately I
could not have. Life has said NO to that which I longed for more than
anything else. What you and I do not want to believe in those moments is
is that life is not given to us on our own terms. We want to be in charge.
And that is precisely when we learn we are not in charge, that we do not have
life on our terms. What we do have is the freedom to create ourselves
within the situation we are given. You take marriage and the mundane happen-
ings within it... We mark happiness by the great moments of our lives as
when we have had life on our terms, and forget the paradox of happiness in
the midst of pain and sorrow. That is not to say that unhappiness is not
a reality. Poets have had many ways to point to that pain --perhaps
most vividly, that of a broken heart. Every decision we make cuts off for-
ever the options that were open a moment before. And we are therefore con-
tinually creating our own destiny. The escapes we have are ligion. We
keep fighting. We can pretend that we can have life on our own terms. Or
we beat ourselves for what we have done. Or we blame others. To we beat o
selves for what we have done. Or we blame others. To be happy means to find
the meaning in every moment of life. Walk down the street... the wonder
that our time is...It is like a Sea, and I call that the Sea of Tran-
quility. Sometimes it is a glassy sea, and other times it is a raging,
foaming sea. But that is my happiness. Happiness is not defined by any
situation, circumstance or any person I will ever know. No, none of those
define my happiness, I define my happiness... When you didn't get the life
that you had hoped for? When you didn't get the job or the promotion
you thought you deserved? When you didn't find that marriage is what you
thought it would be? When you didn't get the perfect children you wanted?
None of those defines your happiness. And that's not stoicism, not
passivism.... that's another way to talk about the indicative or dealing
with the given that is life. There is nothing you or I can do about the "no's"
that are said to us by life. And once you grasp that fact about life, you
find that happiness is possible all the time. And what is this happiness?
Awefilling pain, burned out . Then, you know the secret that man has
always searched for and few have ever found. This kind of happiness is no
laughing matter. And you discover that down deep inside of you is a
dance, a dance that is filled with vibrant appreciation for every thing

6.
that ever happens to you. That does not mean that the moments of tragedy that come to all of us will not knock us down. What it does mean is that nothing can finally define me but myself. Camus, in "A Happy Death", put it this way, "I am going to be the experiment of my life." And happiness is filling full every moment of life. Fulfillment is not filling me full. It is filling gull the world with my creativity. Suddenly, the joy and the secret colors of life are found, and that is not just a possibility for me or a few people on the face of this earth. It is a possibility for every man. And when you and I grasp that our destiny as human beings is to fill full the earth then we will begin to see that the crushing responsibility for the earth is as light as a feather--like waltzing on water. That the question of my integrity is whether or not I am able to fill full the possibility of every man to participate in the social process.

What the world today needs are real men and real women, who are willing to take hold of a world that is crying for help and fill it full. A new style of family ...stories and myths to live by...rebalance the social process... find the practical tools...a new family that exists to build the earth. That is how happiness comes to life. History will not remember you or me, probably, You and I decide alone the sorty we will live out of, and how we will be it. This is a glorious legacy for us to leave. And I can think of no greater legacy to leave to all the Mary's who will ever live.

40 minutes
(Mary Warren Moffett)