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JUNE 27, 1971

THE CULTURAL TRIANGLES

In the staging of the psalms, I think of the mystery up above the arena in the pitch darkness and when the mystery speaks, for me, it always comes out of that pitch darkness. Yet I've been overwhelmed with the increasing awareness that in the cyclorama, where all of these images flash on and off, volcanos explode, masses of people cross over the Red Sea, Jerusalem stands with its golden domes and man is present in all of his wonder and ugliness, I've been impressed that in one sense you don't even see these. I've played with the fact that you know you see them, but when you look, they aren't there. All you have is nothing. All you have is mystery. Then I have been tremored in a realization that it's not the psalmists cyclorama but my cyclorama through which I

see the psalmist's cyclorama and, that my cyclorama is many, many fold more complex

than his. I don't really see these things I see but I see a nothing. And to play my little game, when this array of goings-on happens, and I behold them and I stop

to look at them, they aren't there. Just I am there with what is going on. Or I behold the mystery. That is to say my own web of images that are elicited by what the psalmist is doing become transparent in such a fashion that I behold the mystery. Now, sure

that voice is up there in the darkness and the awareness of that when attention is called by either the psalmist addressing that darkness or the darkness itself speaking, awe is called forth within me. But my point, in what I just got through saying, is, I become aware that the awe is called forth in me through the cyclorama. And since

awe is only called forth in relationship to the mystery, then here is the source within our construct of that which finally envelops me, consumes me - we call the awe.

Now you can't give up in thinking of the psalms relative to categorizing them, the state of being. I think that that's probably the only valid way to categorize them, though you can put those in objective rational language which I call themes, if you have spotted the state of being first. If not, you are probably going to get all mixed up. But the objective content of the images of the panorama = just listen to these. Nature = it's cruel fang and it's overwhelming wonder = both in here. History - the marvelous happening and the wrath. And then, it's a funny thing, I don't think this is dealt too much with directly, but mankind - and in the few times that it's come at head-on -- man is capable of eliciting wonder in man. Most of the time it's quite the flip flop of man that he is dealing with and very rarely does he grasp mankind as a whole. I fool with this and think it's probably because of his grasp after history or like we say in our day - I never met a man, I just met this man and this man and this man. Even though my mind is capable of manufacturing man and wondering. Anyway, you don't have much of that. An amazing amount of time is with that objectivity the people of God. Oh, Oh those psalms on Jerusalem, those psalms on Zion. It's pretty obvious that here is a master category that the psalmist uses. He also uses, as you know, what he calls the Law and he uses this far more than he does the category man. What is the Law? Well, the given structures of society, I like to think, without which there is no man. This has to do with what we're doing this summer. But the interesting thing in all of these is you feel the psalmist never really sees or cares about nature, he never really sees or cares about history - about Jerusalem, - about man. But it is the Divine Presence. Maybe that's a bad term for you, but it's the awe in the midst of it.

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Now in this psalm, this objective thing is Jerusalem. Maybe that's why the young one chose this to be read at his marriage. Are you in position? The psalmist begins by talking to God about himself, but then in a way he talks to God about God, and then he feels called upon to cut off his conversation with the Lord while he makes a speech to mankind - and then returns again to talk to God.

Now, I want to finish up the culture. Have out in front of you the master sheet and the submaster sheets and then you need out in front of you the full set that takes you down to the sixth level. I'll not be of much help at all if you cannot see the boxes.

To locate ourselves in our master triangle and to get ahold of the inner relationships, I'd like to think of the economic as brought together in the term life, and this is that without which you can't even talk about power nor can you talk about consciousness. And then I think all of us are going to be fooling hard in this area and I have been working but no great light has come. It's pretty clear that this triangle (economic) provides that without which these are not, but I think that we probably have to get much clearer. Sometimes, I think that the economic necessitates the political. Just necessitates. And that relative to consciousness, that it provides the raw material, or it is that sustaining force that allows the dynamic of consciousness to operate. And then in terms of the power - the power is that which limits, controls this process fundamentally, and I've used the word defend or you could use the word defended both ways. This is very interesting in terms of unveiling certain perversions in our times - the separation of religion and state is more and more impressing me. And in terms of this dynamic, the only reason that it exists is to protect the symbol system, the educational procedures and the communal existence of people. This comes as a shock to me. The economic process does not set goals, The goals had to be set someplace else and the economic process was capable of realizing them. This is what culture does. It really gives the organizing principle or the goal or the objective or the stuff out of which goals and objectives are forged by the economic process. I call that illumination. And it's pretty clear without going over everything that you don't have resources save there is a purpose for a certain material or whatever else. Only then does it become a resource. Otherwise it's some thing-a-ma-jig.

And then I use somewhat the same word here but this always orients the political. This tells the political what it is doing. And you can see in both cases that the triangle here is the crucial place where it impacts. Over here it's well-being. But wellbeing - the principle of wellbeing - is defined in the culture and given to the political. So it gives direction. In the economic, very obviously, it's through the distribution, which is the way it informs the resources and the production. So the upper triangle here is related to these two triangles most directly and is the means through which it is related this way. You can begin to see the inter-relationship so that you have one dynamic that we call the social process.

Now, I'm going to talk on culture and I'm going to get the big picture out and try to do something like the same thing there in culture. You have the educational process, the social - the communal process - I think I will call it, and the symbolic process. Or images, style, and symbol. And more and more clarity is coming as I study the work of many people here on this. The symbolic has to do more with the sacred relative to a community. Sometimes when I've been trying to fool with the dynamic here - that is this pole and I put up here symbol and I want to get the word sacred here in a moment and then over here the word signs and then over here the word - and I don't like this but I'm going to call it taboos (there's better words than that). When you come down this way, what the symbol dimension in this dynamic does is to provide what I want to call the spirit of the community without which there is no community.

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And when I say spirit I mean something like you mean when you talk about the spirit of communism, or the spirit of the United States of America or the spirit of Ada Ohio. Each one very unique and I don't want to go into pluralism there.

Now down here where you are dealing with style, I sometimes put style here, and mores here and custom here. I don't want to push this, but as you work this summer be alert to this. I think there's something going on with this. Now the relationship of this to this is that the symbolic dimension of life is embodied or it is manifested here within the communal or the style. It/s enfleshed and when I come back to that and describe it in detail you'll see that perhaps a little better. Now, boy oh, this one has been jarred loose for me far more than I had anticipated. Sometimes I use images here and I'm not sure of the order, and concepts here and constructs here. And the difference between this is that this is practical and this is sheer rationality and this is pre-rationality (images). Now this in relationship to this provides rationalization in the creative sense of that word not the negative. It rationalizes this - it's almost as if there is no rationality in this at all - this is beyond the rational. This is the irrational and the systematization of this that makes it rational is done by this dynamic here which has shoved this way down the road. And the relationship here is transmission. It transmits that which is the embodiment of that from one generation to the next. I think I've overemphasized that. Now Luther, as I've often times quoted, said that reason is a whore. It will serve any master. Well, this is that whereby you get your beginning point without which your mind cannot work. It provides the ground of the rational process. This is the demonstration of that, I mean it to be somewhat related here, but this which is made up of natural community demonstrated the practicality of this rationalizing process. And I need to do a great deal more thinking in this area. Now one other I've got to do. I did language, I did art, I didn't do symbol. I need to draw the same kind of a triangle inside this.

This is the top triangle which we call symbol and the top of that is the religious symbols and this is the social art and this is the common language. Let's see if I can't find the dynamic. The top triangle of religion is the sacred. The whole of culture is the world view. The Weltanschauung, the Weltbild. And yet the core of the world view is the symbol dynamic and the core of the symbol dynamic is the religious dynamic or this. And here you're moving over against stark naked irrationality minus an infinitesimal distance this side of it. That's the sacred in terms of culture. How shall I put it - sheer mystery is not the sacred. The primal embodiment as they image it is the sacred for a particular society. You and I can grasp beyond that as other people but this is the sheer sacred. This deals with human consciousness and this deals with what I want to refer to without talking much about it, as humanness. This is the sacred, this is consciousness and this is humanness. And clarity is coming to me on the arts slowly at that point.

Now I want to say that the relationship of the religious here also is ground or if you like, vocation. Rose keeps pushing that we've got to do the Ur images this summer. You understand I believe that she's right. I'm against any silly liberalism that suggests that you try to get ahold of every culture in the world. As I said to you before, that's patch-up. You've got to push this way down. But when you go this way you hit the Urs of the world. Do you understand that? I believe that she is thoroughly right. I don't know about your lectures on Ur images but the first thing I say is that consciousness comes only when man is over against the sacred. Only in the experience of awe did the first ahhhhh come. This is what I mean by the occasion or the ground. And this is constantly the awakening of consciousness, constantly the awakening. Anyway, that's that function as I see it. Then what happens backwards here that language enables the experience of the sacred to understand itself. Now in terms of the relation of the religious to the human, the sacred is after embodiment

and finds it in art. Now this is extremely difficult for me to get ahold of. But Tillich, you remember, said that good art is good art and good art enables man to experience transparency. Well, it's like art is the means whereby the sacred becomes my flesh and my blood. I'm going to have a criticism of what we did up there. I mean it gets in to the concretions of my particular life. It's almost like up on this round, this never finds concretion; it is mediated through art. Or you might say this is the mediation of the sacred into the practical aspects of my being which we talked about somewhat yesterday. Moving this way to language, again language enables art to understand itself, to grasp itself. Art enables language to be concretized. I almost want to use the word existentialist. To be concretized existentially. This is what we mean by imaginal education. That's it not somebody up here standing spewing words that finally communicates. It's art forms that that person is that takes it out of the intellectual for you and puts it down in your guts. And it doesn't have to be a person, it can be any kind of art form. Now I hope you'll forgive the inadequacy of that. And I think that I'm on the right track. And this business of building the dynamic. It's going to be fun this summer - but by golly it is going to be an extremely difficult job. The first two things that occur to you are very likely wrong and maybe the first 211. It's going to be a sweating match to get at it. But even I suspect with my inadequacy in delineating this, you can see that this job of dynamics has to be done or this whole thing doesn't breathe. So we've got to sweat it through.

Let's start with the sheet of paper on the sixth level chart that deals with symbol. The communal symbols. It says at the top = common religion. One of the things that bothers me is that we're talking about icons, rites, and myths. But you must not think of optics. These are terms that are pointing to dynamics and not objects. You have to be clear about that. I'm even wondering if one day we ought to do this more like the people who did the art. You would be doing the same thing but you would not be using object language you would be using a different kind of language. But this does not make any difference. This first one is the unifying icons. The icons - that's the glue. And when you think of culture as that dynamic which is the cement. The sheet we are dealing with is the cement of the cement of the cement of the cement. And I think that in the lower left hand corner of the triangles on this page you begin with icons. And these are classified as those which relate to natural mysteries, which mediate natural mysteries. And then sacred sociality and then finally cosmic reality.

Sacred icons point to sacred objects. This is where I'm so taken with Ebenezers these days. You know the rock or whatever they put up where if you killed somebody's brother the law required that the brother kill you but if you could outrun him and touch an Ebenezer, a rock, then he wouldn't dare kill you and that gave time for some judge to come along and decide whether or not there weren't some other circumstances which ought to be taken into consideration. You can jolly well guess why it was sacred. And it was always sent by the Lord. As a matter of fact, where they put them is where something unusual happened. Something like a miracle happened, that's what made them sacred. If within your household, you had a replica of that rock, that reminded you of the divine economy, that's one of the kind of things that you would mean. The second one is defined space and time. I would like to say myself that these are objects, icons, that point to events but I like this. An object that points to the way that your space is defined is an icon and you found frequently objects that were built that represented the four corners of the people's land or the four corners of the earth. That would be that which really indicates the holiness of your internal space or your internal time. The church year would be an icon that talks about the way that your interior being is timed. Or the Aztec calendar. And then the third category there, called awesome power. Like the power of the cyclones. You remember the day we were having the wedding and Theresa roughed us up a bit there. She in a way has become an icon to me. I feel it was Theresa that did that at that wedding. It didn't

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happen over here, it didn't happen over there - only through Theresa. In that sense Theresa points to awesome powers for me. So sacred sociality. These are icons that point fundamentally to the fact that we are a group. A flag could very well indicate this kind of an icon. And then icons point to the cherished values that a community constructs. Like justice you know - blind and a woman, to boot. And then a critical happening or intrusion and this would not point to the powers, but if one of these powers, Vesuvius overflowing and then no city any more. Then you might have an icon that would always remind you of that kind of an intrusion into the order of the community, into the glue of the community. And then cosmic reality. I have a little bit of a difficult time on ultimate knowledge. I interpret that in terms of the given. If you can find Steve Allen later, you might ask him more directly. Just the sheer given of what is given. And then icons that represent your final destiny, like in China. It was very clear that it was their destiny to be the center of all culture and civilization and they had all kinds of icons that pointed to that. I'll not use ourselves there, you can fill that in.

And then of the utterly transparent meanings of life. It might very well be that you have an icon of the basic story that is behind myth, which I'll come to in a moment - a story behind your whole body of people. If you think this whole dynamic is preserving commonness, I think you can see how your icon does that in terms of the depth of a people's life. The next is common rights. We can speed up here a little bit. The first ones are rights of passage. Those three categories have taken the eight or 20 rights of passage or 50 and put them under rights of getting started in life and rights of getting ended in life and then in between - the rights of growing up, the rights of marriage, the kinds of passage rights and there are thousands of them, I suppose. And the next one has to do with community authenticity. Or the ongoingness of the community and one is the sustaining rituals. You would even put in this category, rain rituals, to get into the past, or any kind of rituals that simply sustain you into the future. And then transactional rehearsals. I have a problem upon that one. Steve what would you say about that in a loud voice?

Steve: Those are talking about how it is that the eternal ongoingnesses of life get rehearsed. In the very mundane you talk about how it is that a whole class of people get graduated from college, a social rehearsal as well as an individual right of passage.

JWM: Alright, ho- about the next one, intensification ceremonies?

Steve: Those are talking about those things which come into being over against final crises. They would be dances to ward off the evil spirits on Vesuvius Rock.

JWM: The next category is ultimate encounter. What does final covenant point to, Steve?

Steve: I would think that here you're talking about the rehearsal. I can only go religious at this point, and talk about how it is that we rehearse the final covenant we stand before.

JWM: Alright, I used to participate in the fourth of July celebrations. Go on.

What's the next one life decision.

Steve: Life decision has to do with the final rehearsals of what life is finally about.

JWM: Alright, and what's absurd depth mean?

Steve: Absurd depth is how it is you rehearse your community stance over against the final, the final, the final reality of life itself. It pours back through how it is when you're rehearsing a funeral you're rehearsing the life and death of all men.

JWM: The next is the area of myth. Foundational origins. These are classified by Anthropologists. These are the myths of origins, natural explanation. This is how certain things came to be. How sex came to be. How a male and female came to be.

Validated beliefs - why we think the way we do. That on three days after the full moon

you're supposed to plant carrots. Now you have a mythology that tells you why you have to do this. And cosmic beginnings - that means how the whole thing of this people got started or how the whole universe or world got started. I think those are pretty easy. And then, social paradigms - civic principles where the particular operating customs by which we relate to one another come from. The global mission - how our nation grasps itself as having a mission to bring what we call democracy - freedom in that sense, to the world. It's how this mission came to be ours. And then destinal rebirth. I have that as continuation. Any society that is concerned with sustaining itself both in terms of keeping alive now and preserving itself in history. The destinal rebirth would deal with that kind of a future. The primal archetypes, the mysteries relative to the foundational principles of the way people ought to act. How you relate to children, how you relate to kings - I mean why you relate how you relate to kings. And then the heroic redemptions, which is your heroic figures through which your values came. The stories relating to that. And then one of the most crucial forms of myth has to be - it's the myth behind all myth - it's what is the meaning of this whole system. You have to have mythologies that tell you that.

Now, this summer, this is going to be extremely difficult, because we have not spent the necessary effort to delineate precisely what these myths are in our time. And the reason why all men have avoided doing this job is that we have pretended that the mythologies have gone away and that you only have science. This is what makes it extremely difficult. Whatever group of you get assigned to this are going to have one hell of a job on your hands. Now don't forget the important things. The world view under the world view underneath the world view underneath the world view of any people is not in their thinking--it is in their icons. And where are yours? How many you got out in front of you right now? They're in your rituals--what are they? Which ones are you going through now? They're your mythology. Which ones are unconsciously controlling your being right now. That is the underneath of the universe out of which you operate in every dimension of your life. That is the universe that is rationalized by your intellectual processes and by the organization of the intellectual processes of society which brings us to education. And it's that world view that is manifest in the particular social forms that define any people, any society. And I want to turn now to the social forms. And I think we can do that pretty rapidly. This is under style and if you will turn back to the cyclical roles (communal styles). Now in what is called communal styles, in this corner is the cyclical roles. I call them the life phases, and the community structures, and then appropriated schemes. Now I want to pause a moment. In this triangle of economic, political and cultural, what I'm talking about now is in the lower right, the whole thing. For a long time, several years, I was worried about what was down here that we call the political dynamic in relationship to family. But it has become very clear to me that when you see this as a dynamic, you're talking about natural community which is not to be grasped as this person, that person, and that person. This dynamic is to be grasped as the web of relationships to which this person is before this person, and both of us before God. It's almost as this whole thing is artificial--the political--relative to this. Now that's not too well put, but what you are talking about in this whole piece here, is the organizing system to which people are present in flesh and blood to one another. You could very well term this the dynamic of mores. But they organize, and there are three ways in which they organize, so the anthropologist digs out. And one is to divide people in terms of life phases. And you notice that there are three divisions there: the emerging generation, the established generation, and the elder generation. Every society has this. There are those who are young, and those who are old. In India, along with the caste system, you have the child, you have the trainee, you have the family man, you have the servant of the state or the broader community, and finally you have the religious. That's in terms of the age levels. In our society, we have generally thought of children, youth,

adults, and older people. It is crucial in terms of the way that society is manifest and operates. And, you see, most of the time we are not even aware of this. We know it, but we don't think about it, until you have a fantastic eruption in this such as we have had in our age. The youth culture is nothing more and nothing less than a violent disturbance of the phase cycles. A violent disturbance of it. And the funny thing is that it has happened world-wide, of course. Now the emerging generation is the dynamic of the trainee. As a trainee, he is caught in tradition instruction. This has got nothing to do with going to school, or anything else. This is just wherever he gets it: on the street, in the home, he's engaged in it. And what that consists of, as you notice on the page that says cyclical roles, are the basic social stories. That's basic stories of his society. And, then, secondly, the basic value systems of his society, and thirdly, the common hopes of his society. These are instilled in him like water flows through a fish, (if it does). The second one, the second thing he learns, is the discipline of his society. There is not a society without discipline. And you are born with that--you are grown into it, so to speak, and that consists of manipulated deportment. That means "get off of that chair with your dirty feet"..... That's what you mean by manipulated deportment. And whether you say that in a soft voice, or you haven't guts enough to say it, this is said in society. If you don't believe it, you test out the police or that mean next-door neighbor you got, who doesn't have the sentimentality relative to child-rearing that you have. And the second is emulated conduct. This is when they see that Charles Moore is a fine man, they start walking like Charles Moore. And so on and so on. And then, self-initiated demeanor. This is when a child comes, not knowing what he's doing, saying "Mommy, I brought you this lizard as a gift." Mommy, who is scared to death of lizards, says "thank you." Then the practical experiences. And that next box should be limited engagement. That is to say, when the little one comes out to cook, you allow her to be limitedly engaged, to begin with. But that's a step on the way. And secondly, protected participation. You let them do a bit more, but you are there to see that they don't burn the soup. And then, finally, supported involvement. Every society, like a bird, finally casts them out of the nest, and if they fly fine, and if they don't, then momma is supposed to fly down, pick them up, put them in the nest, and throw them out again. This is what you mean by supported involvement. And very obviously, this has a great deal to do with our youth problems today. Creative problems, I mean by that.

Next is your established adult. Where your emerging generation is the trainee, your established generation are the servants. They are the ones upon whose shoulders the basic responsibility to see that this whole thing operates. That's their broad function in society. I suppose you can see that it's their job to see that there's unbroken posterity. And very obviously that is a crucial part of finally living to be an adult. Existing structures--that is seeing that they are supported and seeing that the community values are embodied. That they are maintained in that sense.

Then the elder of the community--a repository. That's concerned with conserving the social heritage. Secondly, auxiliary services. The elders have particular jobs that need to be done in the society, and this is one of the tragedies in ours. As you know, there aren't even any supportive structures in which they can serve. And last, that they embody the transocial symbol--I think that's important. It's in and through the old that the young, without even knowing it, see what it means to be human. You see, when you have a struck face like Ken Ellison, how in the wide world can you communicate humanness? But, by golly, when Ellison gets to be 70 years old, you are going to discover whether he was one colossal slob, or not. Have you ever noticed that in the elderly? They have a fantastic function there. That is why they are hard to be around.

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They are hard to be around if they are great, and they are hard to be around if they have been slobbs all their life. I could make a speech. Then, they stand for the communal journey. I will not mention old Lodge Skins, who is a symbol of the road these people have decided to move. It showed on him. "My heart soars like a hawk." And finally, human finitude. As I grow old, I don't like that too much. But by golly, the wear and the tear shows, and then one day they aren't around anymore. I suppose the reason you don't go to funerals anymore is that you can't stand that kind of throwing up against finitude. That is a very important role of the elders.

Now the next is appropriated scheme. The first is sexual framework. Isn't that something? Anyway, the sexual images. Personal conceptions--social--mythological--I think that is easy for you. Cultural differentiations--primal distinctions--the functional delineations and the social differentials. This is a society's way of finally delineating between man and woman in terms of roles and overall functions. This is their basic philosophy of male and female which is there. The behavioral standards, the childhood rules, the puberty regulations and the adult precepts. You can understand you don't have a society without those, at all. The question is what they are going to be, not whether. The marriage institutions, the preparation procedures. This is how you select mates. That is always determined by society, one way or another. The courtship customs--that's pretty good. And the overall social restrictions, about the preparations for marriage. Formal covenant. The legal contract--this is really the community's authorization. And then the community's way of symbolizing it, and then always it is related to the ongoing society. The parents are related to the children, that is, do you live in a spanking period or a permissive period. Then preadult associations--actual societies--the blood, the friendship, and the subcultures that are within a community. And then there are the vocational ones--occupation, professional, and the service groups. And this is true in very primitive societies, too. And then you have voluntary societies, such as social clubs and action groups, and friendship and the like. Now that about covers that, and I had better stop.

Just in case I never get back on this, if you will turn to the education, I will walk that through in the broadest. You will notice that in education you have the technical, and the humanities and the final meanings of society. Now the technical, I think, where it talks about useful skills, I think that will be pretty clear to you. That society transmits this--refines it and transmits it. You are not talking about where this is done, but you have no society if there is not a highly intentional dynamic to pass on knowledge relative to usefulness. And then in the part on accumulated knowledge, that is simply our curriculum. I think you see that. On the final meanings, what we are saying, that the problem in education today is that the final meanings is no more there. In England, when they taught men to be English gentlemen, they were giving them a reason to know science and to know history. When we stopped that, and you're not saying whether that was good or bad, but you taught them what it meant to be a human being. In the 19th century, before most of us were born, they had the McGuffey's reader--did you ever read any of that? Or they had moral philosophy which told you, in terms of your educational structure, what it meant to be a human being. And when you look at this, it is a highly secularized picture of RSI. And RSI, in this sense, is not a course. RSI is a 20th century interpretation of what it means to be a human being. And in secular language, that's it. We think that if any school is going to be a school that it has to have that dynamic within it or it's not a school. And that would be my approach to writing any massive proposal in this area.

Now, we have got to get this kind of thing done in the political and economic. And it looks like we are going to sweat.