

SUMMER '71
RESEARCH ASSEMBLY
PLENARY ADDRESS
JWM
7/18/71

2675

In the eighty-first psalm the psalmist is making a mighty fine speech about what the people ought to be about, and God moves in and takes the seat away from him and never gives it back to him.

Sing out in praise of God our refuge,
acclaim the God of Jacob,
Take pipe and tabor,
take tuneful harp and lute.
Blow the horn for the new month,
for the full moon on the day of our pilgrim-feast.
This is a law for Israel,
an ordinance of the God of Jacob,
laid as a solemn charge on Joseph
when he came out of Egypt.

(and then, the Lord moves in)

When I lifted the load from his shoulders,
his hands let go the builder's basket.
When you cried to me in distress, I rescued you;
unseen, I answered you in thunder.
I tested you at the waters of Meribah,
where I opened your mouths and filled them.
I fed Israel with the finest wheat flour,
and satisfied him with honey from the rocks.
Listen, my people, while I give you a solemn charge--
do but listen to me, O Israel:
you shall have no strange god;
nor bow down to any foreign god;
I am the Lord your God
who brought you up from Egypt.
But my people did not listen to my words
and Israel would have none of me;
so I sent them off, stubborn as they were,
to follow their own devices.

If my people would but listen to me,
if Israel would only conform to my ways,
I would soon bring their enemies to their knees,
and lay a heavy hand upon their persecutors.
Let those who hate them come cringing to them,
and meet with everlasting troubles.

The Lord is silent. I spend most of my time these days wondering what's going on in that room E. I sense, though, there's a great spirit of confidence. They in room E thoroughly believe you people know what you're doing. You'd be surprised the peace of mind that creates in room E--that somebody here knows what we're doing.

I had a dream last night. Well, I did! I dreamed that a whole bunch of people had built a rather gorgeous computer whose nature it was that when you pushed the button it would tell you just what to do to bring into being a new kind of world. And so having finished, they assembled themselves together and pushed the button. There was something like four or five steps came out. The first one: if you bury a dead turtle, under the sixth layer of rock at the largest Buddhist shrine in the world in the island of Bali,

the cabbies in London will immediately go on strike, which occasions Chairman Mao to sell his Russian Wolfhound, the effects of which will cause the Paramount Chief of the Labut people in the Congo to take the sixth wife which will necessitate that you immediately depart for Antarctica to shake hands with a penguin. Now when I woke up I had some thinking to do. I figured out that in the broad picture, these people were right on their computer. But there were just a few little wheels down in there that got mixed up. And this may very well happen.

This next week is what I want to talk about. We're going to discover whether dreams can be interpreted sociologically in our times. The important thing at this stage of the game is that you go on and finish the machine. If you go back and try to find those little wheels now, I mean we're all lost. And it would be sort of fun if that machine coughed out something like I just said. As a matter of fact, it undoubtedly is going to do precisely that, which means that our work as a movement for the next year is carved out for us. I had thought that this next year the movement could start the task of building the tactics. Now mark you, these proposals don't tell you how to do anything. They tell you that if you want X to happen, that has to be done, but it doesn't tell you how. The movement has got to build a tactical model which will be far more complex than the one that you built last summer relative to the reformulation or the reconstruction of the local congregation. I suspect that may even have to be postponed for a year, for it's going to take some hard work on the part of you all spread across this continent and the globe to get the bugs out of the machine.

The thing that struck me this week with power in the midst of (I tell you, I've wanted to have a heart attack frequently, but I wanted to do it with a kind of dignity. I sure wanted to get out of this.)--but I became aware that (I don't ask you to agree with me) you were moving in the right direction, but there were all kinds of little places in our work that were wrong, wrong, wrong. But we have to go on, then come back and clean those up afterwards.

A figure that's been in my head for many years really came from Keynes when he said that in the economic arena you could grasp how the machinery operated and know exactly how it would move. There was just one thing lacking, and that was the goals. The economic processes could not produce the goals. If somebody else produced the goals, the economic processes would tell you how to realize those. That's exactly what you have here on the board. This is an analysis, and let's say for a moment it's a good one, of the dynamic of society. If this isn't a good one, it doesn't do any good for people like us to sit back and throw hand-grenades at it. You have to go out and build it. That's got to be done.

Now way up in the top, you drop in a little capsule. That little capsule is the goal. The goal is not in here. It's in the capsule. You've already dropped the capsule in it; you know what it is. ALL THE EARTH BELONGS TO ALL THE PEOPLE. And when you get that capsule dropped in, you've got these colors. Do you understand that? You've got these colors. It's not that capsule itself that does this, it's the machinery that's filled with that capsule.

I've been saying to a lot of my colleagues that where I've been pushed the hardest philosophically is: How you hold together essentialistic thinking and existentialistic thinking. Do you see the problem? The moment that you build a dynamic such as this social process, you are doing essentialistic thinking. When you put the capsule in, you are doing existentialistic thinking. I don't know precisely how this will hold together. I think if I were going

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to work on a doctor's degree today in the area of philosophy, I would make this my subject: how in your day these two strains of thinking come back together in a practical sense. You are fooling with that kind of a radical, philosophical problem as you build this kind of system.

Now let me rehearse again before I go to next week, in a sentence, what Gene said. I was excited about that. I was finding out a lot of what I've been thinking about all week as I listened to him. George West pointed out to me the other day that every futuristic trend, if that isn't redundant, is occasioned by concern for innocent suffering. Now you listen to that. Maybe you're going to get back into the heart of society, as well as the heart of individual humanness, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is concern for unnecessary suffering that occasions the move toward the future. Now there's a certain kind of move which is to secure yourself within the given structures. I call that patching up the given. That's not a trend. But the trend toward the future is where you're concerned that somebody is left out of the ministry of the social process itself. And as Gene said, when there comes a coagulation of these kinds of concerns manifest in trends, you begin to get toward the fundamental social contradiction between the new and the old. And that's the only contradiction there is. When you have to do something about that contradiction, then you have to begin to break that contradiction down in its component parts in such a fashion that the new can effectively become the dominant force in the fundamental, or basic, contradiction between the old and the new. And the matrices of contradiction that you have been moving toward, which now are articulated in paragraph 7 in what you've been struggling to write--God, that must have been terrible struggle--which are now articulated there, is what you've been after now for two weeks. It's the reason why you did this. It's the reason why you began to think in terms of malfunctions, in terms of trends, in terms of that capsule that you stick at the top, so that you could begin to get a diagram of the means whereby you could overcome the basic contradiction, that is, the old standing in the way of the dominancy of the new in the tension between the old and the new.

Now you have before you a chart if you look at it, which is filled full of what you have on the board. I don't suppose you people way back there can even see it. The matrices of contradiction are primary. That is this major circle right here, with four other circles upon it. It's made up of the secondary contradiction, which is the medium sized circle. The tertiary matrices of contradiction are the smallest circles up there. This diagram also shows their interrelatedness. The structure on this chart tells you when you push a button here, what you can expect to happen in the social processes at other places. You notice that using this in the singular, you have something like 64 tertiary contradictions. I can alter that a bit. And then you have something like 16 of the secondary, then a smaller number of the primary, and right in the middle is the paramount contradiction which points concretely to the old being a block to the new, whose capsule inside itself says: All the earth belongs to all the people. That's what you have.

The important thing in this kind of construct is the grasping that you never have--you never operate--in one contradiction. You always operate with matrices of contradictions, if you're going to get anywhere. The pseudo-revolutionaries never get anywhere, they've just got their little isolated thing. I think that's probably pretty clear to you, and therefore they peter off like a skyrocket running out of smoke. When you begin to shoot the contradictions, you never shoot here, you always shoot here because this is the configuration of contradictions, or a matrix. However, if I shoot here,

then you've got to put on here (I think it ought to be in orange)--you've got to color this a little and color this a little. You've got to go down one more level and get some matrices there. It's crucial, it seems to me, that you understand that.

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Now, and I don't want to take very long, this next week you'll be struggling through this. You've got a second chart. Pull that out and look at it. The exciting thing about this chart is that it is dealing with proposals, or with the matrices of proposals, if you can use that kind of a word. You arrive at that by taking this universe that you've created--a matrices of contradiction--and like a sock, you reach into it, get hold of the toe, and pull it right back out. That's what this chart is. This is taking this system which you have here, reaching into the toe of it, and pulling it back out. When you redraw it, it looks like this chart. Now, a little simpler, you can see the board, what you do if you're going to, say, shoot here, and you got something else going on here, actually you're shooting here, but if you shoot here at this little green dot, then you hold your finger there and you draw, actually you ought to put it as it starts into that green, you draw your finger around to the last green one there, then bring it down to the center. Then you take that line and unroll it and bring it around so that this is at the center of your universe.

Now in the first diagram that you have, this big diamond is this big circle in the contradiction chart. Now at the center of it all is this little button right here--final judgment. Do you see that? You've done the impossible job of taking a universe and twisting back around one little spot on the periphery. Now what you're doing there, is to be sure you're not off in some abstract platonic kind of a universe which finally pulls all these problems up here, so that the only problem in society is there. So you see the joke of that? Why, you ought to shoot yourself for having come here this summer. That kind of silly abstractionism can happen while you have your feet up on the stove at home. That's daydreaming. But when you shoot, you've got to shoot and aim at the small circle, not the large circle. And that means that where you shoot becomes the center of the universe. And it's this system that enables you to, when you shoot here, also be doing something here that does something in the large circle. But this small circle has to be the center of the universe.

I don't know much about this kind of mathematics; I have to depend upon my colleagues, who assure me that wherever you're standing in an Einsteinian conception of the universe, the universe is going around that point where you stand. So that if you stood on another planet, which from here seems to be going around you, this would be going around that. Or, in an Einsteinian universe, you can just as well operate with a concept that the sun is going around the earth as that the earth is going around the sun. This is the kind of thing that happens. But if you hadn't built this universe that pointed to the contradiction, it would have been impossible to begin to build the universe of proposals.

The complexity, of course, outdoes the complexity of this week. But, well, what you've done the groundwork for. If all of us knew now, knew a week ago what we know now, this last week could have been a lot easier, but this is what a research assembly is. The thing that's given me some great courage, when I felt stupid day after day, hour after hour, was that save you had a body of people shoving the bottom out of this area, you don't get clarity. It only comes by being engaged. Or, to use the spirit charts that we have, there isn't such a thing as detachment save there is radical engagement. You don't go around here and detach yourself and then run out here and engage-- oh, no. Save you're utterly engaged, what that means by detachment is impossible. It doesn't even exist. Well, so with this kind of a thing, I don't know how to get this said, but we are trying to operate as post-modern men, not medieval Platonists. I suppose, and I've thought of this in the last couple of days, that we could have maybe used better poetry, and maybe could have, maybe we should have kept more to the electric grid, but even so, that poetry is built into this. This means to be thinking in terms of the post-modern world. Now I have a lot of things I want to say, but maybe that's just about enough.

Next week may bleed over into the next week, like it bled over this week, but that's what our research assembly is about. If you know everything that's going to happen, no use having the assembly. As a matter of fact, some of you pushed to allow this contradiction to bleed another day, and some pushed to let it bleed through till Wednesday. Well, these people's intuition is in the right direction, because if you do now a thorough job on what you're in the midst of writing, that is going to make the contradictions seem easy to you. And you're enough caught up in the mathematics of it now to grasp what I just said about inverting your universe, after having gone through what you went through this week. Anyway, what is planned is by Thursday night to have done the basic job of writing the proposals. Now if it goes on longer, that's fine, but you've got to hold yourself at the beginning to such a deadline. You'll not finish what you're doing until Monday night. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, we've got to write the proposals. You could very well write just 16 proposals. Now they're complex. They would at least be 3 and maybe 4 series of 5 highly complex paragraphs and you might have to write 5 paragraphs to get that one paragraph. So there's hard work at it. You could have 64 or you could have 16. That would tell you, in principle, how you overcome the fundamental contradictions of the old interfering with the new becoming dominant in the tension between the new and the old. That's what you're after.

Now I forget where I was. It doesn't make any difference. We've got a lot of other jobs to do. We've got some cleaning up of documents, which you know about. Then, we can not lose the methodology that you people have forged. Therefore we may very well, if it's pleasing to you, set aside Tuesday morning in which you as groups, either colleges or teams or sodalities or whatever, draw together the fruit of your wisdom. We think that maybe you could do it most quickly if we as a body would write a glossary. Think through what you meant by trend, what you meant by matrix, what you meant by contradiction. It isn't as if somebody had this wrapped up before you came. All of us have been scratching to find out the content. Then maybe set aside 6 of you to bring that common wisdom into some kind of a statement. It may be that this next weekend that we ought to have 24 who would write out a document of the underlying philosophy of this whole thing. I think you could do it. I believe you could do it with those glossaries, the combination of them. Anyway, some way, we've got to get our common creativity relative to the method itself, because either this is going to be a colossal bust or the rest of your life is going to be spent talking about it.

Now this thing you're writing now at the moment, and that's going to be substantial, that has to be edited by a group of you and brought together as a document. The proposal has to be brought together in a document. That first document you did, which people have been editing, is one of the major documents you're going to come up with. A group this weekend has been refining the one you wrote on the ideology--all the earth. That's the second document. This one that identifies contradictions. Then the one that lays out the complex of proposals, those will probably be the four major things you'll come up with. When the rest of the council arrives here the week after next, all we've done has got to be shortened into a kind of brief terseness, that would be something like a manifesto for the movement.

We touched the last week on how all we're doing here is not only crucial in terms of all of our concerns with society but in next July the local congregation experiment moves into the downbeat on the pole of the parish. Without this you have nothing to do. This is crucial to us. Without that local church experiment across the globe, you might as well not come here. This kind of thing is not done without forces. Some of you longhairs--who think that two or three or five or six of you going out doing your own thing are going to change the world--you might as well cut your hair. It's going to take troops and you don't care whether they're like you or not like you, as long as they're going to move. Well, at the moment in history I don't see any other latent idealists en masse sitting around except in those who are still left and circulating around the perimeter of the church. If you see some, you go get them. I don't.

Then there's another little switch in this. The church is sick today. All of us who are the church are sick. But I tell you the church is on the move. When the church becomes what it is, this is her job. Not to do this, but to see that it's done. And those of you who are wallowing around in some kind of individualistic sentimental love, I'd like to knock your head up against a post. You want a love--there it is. There it is. Only one little catch in it. The catch is that costs you your life.

And you lost a little bit of it this week, didn't you? Well, I can hardly wait. Even if it's all bad. I can hardly wait for this time next week.