

THE ECONOMIC PROCESSES AND INDIVIDUAL VOCATION

(Maureen Jenkins)

To give you a picture of the weekend would be something like this. Last night we raised the issue of how it is in our day you come at . . . social change. What kind of visions of the future do you have? relative to just the way human beings are. I was in a biology class at the end of last quarter and people started talking about biological revolutions. It's wild when you think about genes coming out of test tubes, electronic brains, to human brains; and we had to come back at the end of that particular session and ask what it was about humanness that you could tell when some sort of electronic and wired up thing was a human being and when it was some wild creation. You are clear when you look at the way society is shifting around, the way technology is shifting around, it is almost like you need to come back and say, "What do I mean by man that would be the one around whom is the social change, that would be the one around whom my whole 20th century, and 21st century is evolving."

The way that David raised that last night was with the question of human nature, the four pillars,--the ~~relationship~~ tension of male/female, sociality with the different triangles, the different age phases that you find yourself in the midst of, and just the way people tend to be able to stand apart from their situation and look at it, evaluate it.

Today we are going to talk about the issue of man and society. Having talked some about what we mean by man, how do we talk about man as he operates in a group. This morning we want to talk about the issue of vocation and how it relates to the economic world. Where you ~~make~~ lay down your life in terms of vocation tends to relate to just your basic sustenance, tends to relate to not only your bread and meat, but just keeping society in being. Maybe the kind of question you raise there is, "What will the future be?" The way it comes to me is, "What is my future to be?" Then we will raise the question this afternoon of responsibility. How do I go about making decisions in the midst of this wildly changing world? It comes probably most frequently in the area of the political processes in society, where wild shifts are going on, and you just find yourself asking in the midst of abortion and in the midst of the black revolution, in the light of the Chicano revolution, in the light of the youth revolution, and the economic revolution around the world, "How do I be responsible for this society? What is the future of society to be?" As that comes to me, What is my relationship to society to be? What kind of stance will I be able to take in the midst of all this chaos?" Then this evening we will deal with the issue of style, or the cultural processes. We'll ask the question, "What is the future meant to be?" "How do I participate in the future of humanness itself?" What is my relationship to man, in the broad?" --even evolution, if you want to talk about that. Symbol, or destiny, will be the category that we will use for Sunday. On the other side of human nature, or humanness, and society today, Sunday we want to take a look at how that process of society gets focus, or how it gets ~~today~~

talked about and held in being, and how might it be held in being as we face the kind of future ahead of us. The issue in the social process is that of symbol. I'm not sure how to come at that, but something like, "What does the new world require?" "How would I come at the creation of the new world in such a way that I could participate in the richness of that, in such a way, in fact, that there would be a new world?" A lot of people have very serious question about whether that is ever going to happen, whether there will be a way for that sort of thing to come off.

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I suppose that at every point those sociological or social questions about the future. But we also want to raise at the same time how it is as an individual that I struggle-and-approach-that-particular approach and struggle with that particular social issue. and we will kind of be going back and forth between how the social comes and how that comes at me individually.

This morning we are here with just the issue of vocation, or how is the future going to be. How is my future going to be, my next 5 years, my next 10 years, next 20 years. I guess for me that comes particularly in the area of job and the area of school. Once you have covered those two, you have covered the way the individual comes at that question. For me, to begin with a little tale. I first began to come to consciousness of the question of vocation sometime when I was a freshman in college, which just goes to show how slow I am. I showed up at Berkeley in the fall of '64. I was supposed to go on a library tour where they take you all around the library and show you where all the books are, and show you how to get books out, and I got half way through the library tour, where Scraggle Hall was, and which was right at the front part of the campus, it was my first big day at the university, and I was excited about all this stuff and thinking about all the groups I could get involved in, and I got as far as Scraggle Hall, and there was this mob of people, and they were yelling about free speech movement, and they were getting all these songs together, to go march and hold a rally to make other students aware of the fact that education had collapsed at the university. It was sort of like the day I walked in, people had decided that things had collapsed already. I went to the library tour, and they weren't holding it because there was this wild stuff going on. Nobody was interested in going to the library because everything had collapsed. I felt sort of cheated at first, but I had wanted to participate in the library bit a while before things collapsed, but I no sooner got there but things started folding. We spent that whole year--I never figured out how to get into the free speech movement,--people who could talk really well were talking about political stuff, and I always sat on the edges of the rallies and tried to figure out what was going on. and try to keep my grades up. I decided by the end of the year, that so far as I could see, they were right. Education, as far as anything I could find that was helpful to me, had pretty well collapsed. I could not find a way to raise issues even in a place like Berkeley in classes, and certainly I had thought that would be the best place. I couldn't find a place where issues that spoke to life itself got raised. People were concerned about how classes had to do with the Marxist revolution back in the 1840's, whether we were using tactics parallel to those of the Marxist revolution, in some desert plain in the 1840's. And you'd sit and try to figure out what that had to do with just going to schools every day.

What that had to do with anything I was every going to do in the future. So I decided that what I would do while I was going to school was to get myself a job down in West Oakland. I went down and got a playground director job through the Oakland ~~recreation~~ recreation department, and they had this great playground which was fantastic. It was in the ghetto in West Oakland. The previous two playground directors the children had run off the playground. They said, "We need somebody in here who can real offer possibilities to these kids. ~~ix~~ Who the kids won't run off the playground. We need someone who can set up the kind of ~~the~~ program that the kids will be excited about, set up things that will give them a way to enrich the kind of public school education they are getting." And I thought that was a great possibility. I went there every day and 3:00 and opened up the playground, and started my program, and they would steal my materials. and put them in the trash can. And when I'd close they'd say, "We can't find the basketballs today. We can't find any of the paper you put out for the art thing. We can't find this, that, and the other thing." ~~And, things were so bad that I had to~~ And I'd close the playground and go back on the bus, and they would get everything out of the trash cans. and take them home.

The other job I had at the playground was trying to keep the 9 and 10 year olds from ~~standing up and taking~~ sniffing glue behind the portables. And it struck me after about three weeks at that job, that somehow, trying to get any kind of excitement, any kind of creativity at that playground, was more than I could figure out how to do. I showed up one day and I sent one guy home. "You are going to be responsible to your peers on this playground, namely, you are going to quit beating up on the other kid, or you are not going to come to the playground." In about half an hour Mama and the kid come back and Mama pulls a knife on the kid because I had sent him home. And it dawned on me that I was not interested in sending too many more kids home if that was what was going to happen. I wasn't too sure whether she was going to pull a knife on the kid or on me. and I wasn't sure what was worse.

It seemed to me that even the possibilities for having a creative job had somehow folded before I got there. just like school had.

That summer I had a chance to go to Chicago for some convention, that a Christian student group was holding, and they sent me this letter that said they wanted me to come because I was from Berkeley. That that was an exciting place to come from. And I didn't know what they had in mind, until I got there. And when I got there they were so excited to have somebody from California. It was just such a fantastic thing. The third day, somebody, one of the leaders of the conference, sat me down and said, ~~the~~ "One of the reasons we wanted you to come was that you were from Berkeley where the FSM was. You were out there in California where a lot of stuff has been going on with blacks. We'd like you to give a talk to tell us what things need to be like in the future, because back here there haven't been any changes in the campuses, there haven't been that many changes in the ghettos, and since you have been engaged in all that stuff, you could tell us how to move, because we are clear that nothing is going to change in our campuses in the midwest unless someone tells us how to operate."

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I'll tell you, I was terrified. All of a sudden it struck me that those people were stupid enough to think that I knew something. They were so dumb thinking that just because I was at Berkeley-- 30,000 students--that I knew something about how to do that. I had never done anything except stand at the side of some of those rallies. and try to look like I knew what people were talking about. All I had ever done in the ghetto was try to ~~keep~~ figure out how to keep the kids from stealing basketballs. They said, "We want you to tell us what things are like in California so that we can know what to do."

At the same time as getting scared, it dawned on me that if I didn't say something to them about what was going on, things probably never would change on their campus, things probably never would ~~begin~~ begin to break loose, because nobody would have the kind of visions that somebody, before I ever had showed up, had had. They would never understand what I ~~wasn't~~ had learned in the ghetto.

I guess for me, that was the question: "Well, was I in FSM or not?" and finally, you see, it was a decision. I could have said, "Well, yes I was there at the rallies, but I don't know what was going on." Or I could have said, "As far as I can see, this is what was going on, and this is what it means for you." It was just a decision. It struck me that that decision was more than just giving a speech. That decision ~~was~~ had to do with my whole life. They were asking me to say who I was. ~~They~~ and that was a decision. They were asking me to say what needed to happen, and that was a decision.

I'd say that the struggle with the economic, the struggle with vocation comes at that point, that behind my schooling, behind my job, behind struggling with things ~~collapsing~~ collapsing, was that question. Maybe it comes as, "What is my future to be? What is the future to be?" Just that question.

There is a fellow named Kazantzakis, that I think wrote rather an interesting little blurb of poetry about that sort of thing, that goes like this: "For you are not only a slave. . . ." I suppose it's something like that that when I finally gave that talk, ~~There was a time when I was a slave to the system~~ for those--it still comes to me as sort of stupid--for those characters in Chicago.

The question was, where in all that social process, where in all those changes at Berkeley, where in all that ghetto, is Maureen? Where is my particular self-hood in the midst of that kind of struggles that I find? Or what will there be because Maureen was there rather than Mary, or somebody else? That kind of struggle.

Well, you see that that particular question is raised in a whole number of different arenas. In the midst of the social process there is economic, political and cultural. It comes as just a struggle that every man has every day, with how we participate in the social process? Getting out my particular uniqueness isn't some kind of

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thing that I go out and do on Saturday night. That's a matter of how I get on the bus in the morning, whether I drink coffee, tea, or chocolate, or whatever, cool-aid, for breakfast, That is just everyday kind of decisions. And those decisions show up first of all as economic, foundational kinds of things. How do I sustain myself? How do I stay alive? How do I have enough clothes on so I don't freeze to a death? They are in every society. Corporations in this society do the same job that I do when I decide to have a cup of coffee in the morning. That is, they just keep life going. If there weren't somebody to grind up coffee, we wouldn't have it in the morning. If there weren't somebody to butcher meat, we wouldn't have it. The economic process is the foundational one in every society.

Then the struggle comes in the arena of the political--the communal dynamic in society, just to struggle with how we get organized. We can all be eating, but if we cannot make decisions in a social group, or in a family, or even in this room, we just have no way to move, we are just boggled. People tend to wipe each other out, right and left. That kind of struggle is always there.

Then there is the arena of the cultural. or I guess you could talk about this as <sup>an</sup> illuminating, that is putting light upon, dynamic. Or just the kind of art, the kind of language, the kind of literature, the kind of stories, the kind of images that the culture operates out of. It's almost as if if I don't have these kinds of ~~sorts~~ stories, I don't even bother to eat. I don't have any reason to. I don't bother to make decisions. I don't have any reason to. do that. It's almost like here, are the ~~same~~ sort of pictures, the sort of tales that keep me going. My father, who used to say, "Always remember who you are and what you represent. You are a Raptor." I'm not anymore, but --he had definite things in mind when he said this is what it means to be a Raptor, out of which everything I do in terms of economic, everything I do in terms of political goes on.

And you know how society does that. We are the people that stand before individuality, and freedom, rather than something else. That kind of dynamic is always there.

We want to look today at each of these, but this morning particularly at the economic pole, ~~and the~~ The economic, is, I suppose, the arena in which life itself is sustained. It is that without which there would be no reason for society to be, there would be no(unifying) (?) at all. There would be no life. The economic also has a foundational dynamic, the resources, or just the different things without no economic process would be able to go on. Here are trees out of which you make houses and furniture. Here are groceries out of which you make cakes and cookies. Here are natural gas, without which you don't have that kind of power. --That sort of just basic stuff out of which life gets created. Then there is production, or the pulling together of that basic stuff into useful forms. My mother gets together some flour and sugar and eggs and milk and gets my sister and I into the kitchen and says, "We are now going to make cookies." Without the resources you couldn't make cookies, but if you didn't have some troops in there, working with the stuff, you would never end up with cookies.

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Then there is the issue of -- and probably this is the key one today-- of ~~minibuting~~ distribution, or, you have the cookies there, and who gets them? You get a certain gross national product coming out of a nation, who gets it? ~~Yes~~ There is a certain amount of wheat in the world, who gets to eat it, and who doesn't? And on what basis do you make those kinds of decisions. It is in the economic sphere that many ~~minibutions~~ of the kind of struggles that you see in the world today originate. Like, perhaps the greatest struggle is how to come to terms with the economic process at a time when it has come off, magnificently. One thing you can say about the U.S. is that we ~~have~~ can manage to do most anything, economically. And that's no mean thing to sniff at. People always used to say to me, "Two-thirds of the people in the world are starving to death. They go to bed hungry every night." That's a horrifying kind of thing to think about. It struck me the other day that relative to the sweep of history, there has never been a time in history when one ~~minibution~~ ~~minibutions~~ large group of the people in the world didn't go to bed hungry every night, up until about the last 50 years. The military industrial complex, or whatever you want to call it, for all of its--the way we talk about it as being wicked, or something, nevertheless manages to keep one-third of the people in the world from going to bed hungry every night. That kind of thing is just a wonder.

Or you think about in ancient China it took ~~nine peasants~~   
 ~~was~~ nine peasants working literally their lives away--most of them   
 were dead before they were 30--working to support one guy dealing   
 with the culture. All of the art, all of the wild stories out of   
 China, all of the literature, all of the fantastic paintings and   
 vases and statues, came out of this one guy, who could never even   
 have the time to do that if it weren't for the fact that he lived   
 off 9 peasants supporting him.

In our culture it is sort of like, two people can work to enable  
 8 to deal with the culture. It only takes me 20% of my total  
 life in order to produce what I need in order to live for the whole.

You look at the kind of focus in ~~the~~ terms of the future, relative to leisure. People talk about a four day week, a ~~four day week~~ six hour day, a four hour day, rotating years,---these kinds of possibilities are already being broken loose, because the economic dimension has gotten the kind of power that it has. And yet, that old economic, because we have worked so hard on it, the focus of the whole social process.

Or, I experience education as just completely meaningless. I was interested in what Jean was saying last night about finding yourself in school with this stuff shoved on you that is not particularly engaging. I had a student who was in a class with me the other day say, "The thing about school that gets you is that you think, somehow, that you ought to be motivated. You ought to care about it. Somehow they ought to present stuff that interests me, that motivates me. And yet, I show up, and all that is getting out is things that I can use relative to filling a place somewhere. in this sort of social process."

Or I find myself being confronted with the possibility of vocational training, or I can go on to college. I can get a skill, or I can get some kind of wisdom. And once I show up in college I find out that even this talking about wisdom becomes in itself a kind of skill. Just sit in English class and try to raise an issue that is not in the general run of thinking about a particular play or poem. I tried to do that one day and it was completely ridiculous. I had the whole class in stitches because they couldn't make sense out of why anybody would want to raise an issue that some critic ~~hadn't~~ hadn't raised before, why anybody ~~would~~ would raise an issue about what a play had ~~to~~ do with just your own decision-making. ~~Plays~~ Plays are not for that, you know, plays are for enjoying, like eating chocolates. You go to plays and you taste a little one over here and you taste another over there, and then you know about plays so you can sound like any ~~born~~ born cultured sort of a person. You find yourself in situations like that and encounter again somehow, even in the midst of the educational process itself, that the economic tyrannizes.

~~Where~~ Where did you go to school? In the inner city, or the suburbs? If you went to school in the suburbs you have about an 85% better chance ~~of~~ of being able to read, than anybody who went to school ~~in~~ in the inner city. As far as they can tell, that doesn't have anything to do with your race, that doesn't have anything to do with your intelligence. That doesn't have anything to do with who your parents are. All that has ~~to~~ do with is that there is a whole lot more money, interest, fascination, and experimentation put into suburban schools than are put into inner city schools. That is just the way it is. How do you talk about allowing education to go on in a way that can free up society when you find yourself just in the midst of every day being one who is being trained to participate in this sort of malaise. And indeed, you do find yourself participating in this ~~sort~~ sort of malaise. It is like I find sitting in classes probably the best thing I can do is either decide to get a good grade and achieve, ~~in order to succeed~~, or I can say, ~~"I'll have nothing to do with it."~~ "I'll have nothing to do with it. I won't be victimized by that kind of system." But in either way I am being victimized, whether I say yes or whether I say no. I just find myself reacting to that grading system.

The absurdity comes, I suppose, when I find ~~that~~ that trying to take new experiments ~~here~~ here has become sort of a patchwork ~~little thing~~ little thing. "We have a fantastic liberating structure at my school to do away with this ~~horrible~~ horrifying stratification of the university. by allowing people to take one pass/fail course every ~~year~~ quarter." Somehow, one lousy pass/fail course where you worry whether you are going to pass or not, is going to counteract the whole society's propensity to find out whether you got good grades or not. It is some little bitty band-aid ~~a~~ tacked onto a social problem that is much deeper than the university itself. Or: "We are going to have discussion groups in this sociology class, and all these other classes you sit down there and they lecture you, and you have to read books. In our class we are going to sit in little groups and talk." And so I get in a little group and sit down and ~~a~~ talk, and the fellow across from me said, "What shall we talk about?" I've never been in a group where we had to talk before. In fact, I don't know if I even like it. It is much easier when we could sit in a big lecture and ~~just~~ take notes and sleep. This is kind of a pain."

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How do you begin to struggle with, or begin to get ~~makmak~~ a handle on a change there that might have some depth to it? Something more than, "We'll fix it up a little bit over here, a little bubble gum on the collapsed pipes over there, and a little glue over there, and hope that maybe ~~that~~ things will work better. ~~That's~~ ~~that's~~

That kind of trouble comes in just my own relationship to the social process that I find myself in the midst of. Then when I find myself becoming clear about that collapse, it begins to focus. You find that the whole happy tendency was this, that I am going to talk about. You ~~may~~ find that you want to say, "Well, see if I am going to put up with that." The way I will just talk about my self-hood will be as one who just says, NO to this struggle with ~~a~~ being in the economic. I'll just say ~~that~~ No to being the one ~~k~~ who finds himself living out of, being trained in, this tyrant, the economic. Why, in fact, I'll just drop out of school. That will fix them. And if I drop out of school, I won't have to participate. And then instead of being in school, I try to find some other little thing that I can focus on. For my sister, what she decided was that what she would do was to make macromain. Somehow, there was something significant in doing artwork, that would be helpful. And I visited her apartment about six months ago, and there was Marilyn ~~in~~ the ~~2nd~~ floor, making macromay (?). On the wall there were wallhangings, round wall hangings, square wall hangings, some with rocks in them, some with wood in them. She is making room dividers out of macromain. She has little flower pots covered with the stuff, belts, purses, anything you could possibly want, and she just sits there in the middle of the room, making macromain. Somehow, she says, "This is the most boring thing ~~a~~ I have ever done with my time, but at least I don't have to ~~face~~ deal with being somehow stuck in school or in a job. I just sit here and make macromain, ~~and~~ and try to make ends meet. The absurdity, just trying to decide to get out of that. And even then, old Marilyn has got to figure out a way to feed herself, so she works as a waitress.

How do you begin to get a way of taking a relationship to your participation in this tyrant that has some kind of depth to it, that has some sort of life in it. I have friends, ~~that~~ from my younger days, who were in the free speech movement. They said, "What we are going to do with our lives is be revolutionaries. We are not going to participate in this system," ~~and~~ One guy had a masters degree in economics from Harvard. He said, "No, I could go into the university, but that is a destructive system. I could go into business, but that is an even more destructive system. So what I will do is create my own style." And he works at Safeway as a checker, and he has the fastest cash register in the Safeway on Garry in San Francisco. You look, and you say, there has to be something more authentic than just being that kind of--for me, Al is a zombie. He just sort of walks around dead, saying, "No, I won't see it, I won't participate in it. All I'll do is run my cash register faster than anybody else." in the whole world, and get these people in and out of the supermarket." How can I get, somehow, life in to that struggle, more than just wearing a conservative suit ~~and~~ every day somewhere in business. or being a do-goody student, or just being a zombie? What else is there? in terms of possibility?

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At that point you just find yourself frantically around, moving to commuex, up in Marine County somewhere, friends that took off into god-awful places, like Nevada, to go experiment out there in the desert with how they are going to live. How do you get a way of holding authenticity in response to that question of what will the future be, and how will I be in the future?

I have friends who decided, "Well, if nothing else, I can ~~try~~ find a little ~~a~~ ~~jag~~ job somewhere that is kind of special, that will kind of resreate some little thing. Like, if I ~~would~~ get retarded ~~black~~ black children from this particular part of East Palo Alto and work with them--20 of them--somehow working with those 20 kids will have something to do with the future." And you just find ~~workings~~ somebody pouring their whole life, this massive ~~force~~ ~~forcesman~~ ~~admission~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~kids~~, creative force on these poor 20 little kids that can't even soak it all up. That struggle becomes a burning kind of question. "What will my future be?" What is the future of this tyranny, of this educational structure which forces one into the tyranny, of this response? What is the future of this response to be? ~~What~~ The only way I can come at that is, what is my response to be?

One way in which that comes is, that finally you have nothing but that question. Finally you have nothing but the struggle with how will I be? It is almost like, those educational structures, until you ask them a question, they don't have anything to answer but this. (board?) That job, until you demand of it a response, doesn't have anything to answer but this. All of the structures of style, all the ways of being in the future, have no answer for you but this, either a zombie of some sort, or some kind of establishment of some sort. But that you have a new question for them. You have a new demand for them. It is almost as if the only demand that is authentic any more, I suppose, is something like: All I have is the struggle to decide what is needed in the future. Or, I'll be the one who will stand in that chaos and as the one who knows that the future will be created out of what goes on there. Or the one who is clear enough about that struggle to point to the demand that it be solved, Or the one whose very presence there is demand that newness come into being. I guess, in a way, that is sort of the end of the road. There is no possibility of some kind of great new thing that I am going ~~hoping~~ to plug into this struggle. There is no possibility of just the future expected of coming from just saying no to it. How is it that with all of my cultural question I stand in there as one who is able to keep those questions at the service of this struggle, or willing to see that those questions get raised in a way that has to do with the bottom of peoples lives. It is almost like I never got over a book by Jean-Jacques Ravel, that I read this summer, called The New American Revolution. Ravel said, "Anywhere you look in the world today, there are wild revolutions going on. You look in the third world, there are revolutions. You look at the women, there are revolutions. You look at the Western world, there are revolutions. youth revolution, men are changing all their style. There are changes in education, there are changes in economics, there are changes every where you look. But," says Ravel. "I'd point to the United States and particularly the revolutions in youth, women and the ~~minority groups~~; minority groups, as the place where the revolutions that will change the world in our time is going on." And I about went out of my tree when I read that. First of all ~~because~~ because I was so

completely angry that anybody would say something that came to me as so absolutely ridiculous. I closed the book and said to my husband, "That is the most ~~stupid~~ assinine thing that I have read in my life. No place are things more collapsing than in the U.S. No place are things in more chaos than in the U.S. No place is the economic tyranny of life destroying human life to the extent as in the U.S." And finally I got back to that book after I had got done screaming about it, and Ravel said the reason he would point to this particular people as the ones who have the most helpful possibility of dealing with the future is that they are the ones who have confronted the collapse of all of their visions most profoundly. Anywhere you look in the west, ~~and~~ outside the U.S., people don't know that the white man is the tyrant over the black man. They have not had that ground into them for ten years. Any place else you look, people have not struggled in the depths that Americans have struggled with in terms of youth, in terms of women, in terms of education collapsing, in terms of jobs collapsing. He says, it's people who have seen all of their future collapse who are the ones that have the best possibility of seeing what is needed, because they know all the things that won't wash, they know the depths, the bottom, the authentic human bottom of the struggle ~~that~~ with those issues. You see, I know more about what needs to happen in education than probably most people who went to school before or since September 20, 1964, which was the day I showed up, because the day I showed up, my whole school ~~was~~ collapsed, and there was no way to avoid it. My sister has spent five years at San Francisco State and woke up one day and said, "You know, I think education is not as helpful as it once was."

I knew that the first day I walked in because I watched it fold around my feet. That is a fantastical kind of possibility to have. And I suppose that is a kind of possibility that no other generation has had before, no other generation in history has seen the bottom of social stories go out of being. No other generation has seen that happen. No other generation has had a way to talk about the fact that unless you recreate that bottom, you never get the structures recreated. No other generation has seen that happen or has that gift. You can talk about that as a horrible thing to have happen to you. To be honest with you, I still don't know how to make my way through a library. I probably will. I never have had the chance to learn decent English. and likely I won't. I never have had the chance to just sit down and learn, you know, classical Greek, stuff in school. Probably I never will. Now maybe in 50 years people will again. But in the structures in which I find myself, that is just not the case. It is my particular moment that has the possibility of being recreated from the very bottom. And it's almost as if you find yourself walking around school every day, deciding, well, ~~in~~ will those students in 50 years need to study English, or not? Will those students in 50 years need-- will the university be required to have some other foreign language or no? Today you walk around, and all those things are there, and they are there just hanging on for dear life. But the question that is just sort of that far under the surface of them is, what is going to happen to us. You walk into an English ~~class~~ class and the guy says, "We are ~~and~~ doing an experiment here. We are going to try this and this and this." Or you go to the language department and say, "I ~~want~~ don't want to take these requirements. They are ridiculous." And they say, "We know that, but we don't have any idea what else we are going to do. It says here in the book,--everyone must have <sup>two</sup> years of language requirements." And you say, "Why does it say that?" And they say, "I don't know, but it just says here on page 36. 'All students must have two years of language requirements.'" It is almost as if if you gave them a reason

why they should have an arithmetic requirement instead, THEY would probably say, "Fine, put that on page 36." That kind of possibility, day by day. (Participant question: Wasn't there a reason for having that language requirement there?) I wasn't ever told one. I am sure there was one when there was--e- it was created. And there may well be one today. My question is, out of what reason would I want to have a language requirement or not. As I encounter the school, unless I give them a reason--like, well, it seems to me that if we are going to live in a global world, as we do (this would be one), maybe everybody has to have five years of language. just to be able to communicate with what is going on. Two years isn't enough. But as it sits in the catalogue, ~~as~~ it's like, it says here in the catalogue ~~that~~ on page 36, that that is what we have to have. (Participant: the people that you ask, why should I take this course, why is it required, they say, I don't know, because they are not the ones who decide. They are the ones who administer.) Who decides? (Participant: I don't know, I suppose the president of the college, or, I'm not sure, but, the board or whatever, but they are not going to just say it would be nice to have a language, they are going to have a reason. The reason is, like you say, all through Europe they require two languages, or something like that, because when you are talking to people and you can't understand them then . . . .)

That, I guess is one kind of illustration. You ~~might~~ could take any kind of requirement in high school. For instance, you have to go to four years of high school, in the law--no, until age 16. That is in the same kind of arena. People may have reasons, but until I have a way myself of saying ~~in~~, what the reason is for my participating, in the every day, some ---reason that got wumped up 40 years ago, it isn't going to wash. (Partic: That's not up to you to decide whether to have a couple of years of language, because by the time you decide you need a couple of years of language, you are going to be too busy trying to survive or something like that to have time to go out ~~and~~ and study another language, and the best time for learning is . . . so that is why they require things. Maybe they don't understand ~~what~~ why they are required; there are reasons behind it. They don't just say, let's have it.)

Well, that is always, I suppose, a struggle. I guess what I am pointing to there is not whether or not some great ~~some~~ mystic structure has reasons, ~~but~~ because finally, unless those are communicated into every student's life, they are not active in the midst of the university. How do I get hold of, for instance, that word given,--- 50 years or 100 years ago--for any particular part of the ~~university~~ educational structure, and then recreate it in the midst of today. Maybe today European languages are not enough. Maybe it is today that high school until age 16 is not enough. Or maybe it is too much. Maybe you want to put people four hours a day experimenting with some job and four hours a day in school. All of those kinds of possibilities are there. And the question is, which ones need to take place? Which ones need to go on, so that my colleagues in school, so that my peers on the street, so that those people who haven't even showed up in the university yet have a way of participating in it by which it is exciting again, by which there is the possibility of life going on there again in a way in which I, at least, have never experienced. It is kind of like, today I walk around Circle, The University of Illinois, and ~~my~~ my colleagues--there is a phenomenon at Circle which is very strange, which is, Do not put ~~a~~ trash in the garbage cans; put trash on the floor. And so, you get into a classroom about this size of class, and the professor walks ~~in~~ up to the

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board, like this, pushing all the garbage aside. You go to your seat and take the left over garbage, and coffee cups, and cigarette cups off the desk, and you sit down to have this class, and before the class has started, it's like we have all decided that we are in the trash heap. And somehow it struck me that none of us ~~have~~ decided-that-that-class- understand that class to be anything more than sitting in the middle of garbage, or noone would be placing garbage in the classroom. It is sort of like, well, why don't I throw garbage around, since that is all that is going on?

What would be the new kind of possibility in which people would decide that there was something going on there that was more than throwing garbage all around the room? ~~Anything~~  
... offer new possibilities for life to go on in the midst of those schools. What would it be like ~~to~~ for there to be people, for instance, who saw that classes came off--so everybody is sitting there, everybody is about ready to die of boredom, the guy is lecturing on something, and you are all say, "My God, when can we get out of here?" What would it be like if somebody just went to those classes

It is very very dubious in terms of the richness, ~~the~~ in terms of life coming into it. I guess that is where I would talk about the question of what is my future to be, what is the future of society to be.