

1. ... As Darwin was doing his work he had gone through a long process of struggle to the point where he had become aware of the situation he was in, aware of the world around him, and all those years, the three billion years up through the 19th century. All Darwin thought he was doing was just discovering a little bit more sophisticatedly the way it was till up to our day. For me it is with Einstein that mankind became aware that being aware of the world was no longer going to give him his significance. No longer could you derive the meaning of life out of looking around with perception and keen insight and seeing what was there. What Einstein delivered unto us was the reality that there wasn't anything there, unless you decided there was something there. It is like three billion years of consciousness in 40 years, 60 years, 70 years of consciousness of consciousness--awareness that what it means to be a human being is to be aware of your awareness of the way life is. What it means to find the meaning of your life, to deal with the question of illuminating all of life, is not any longer the question of discovering something that heretofore had been obscured, that man had not been sharp enough to uncover. Now the question of meaning or value or significance or rationality or illumination was a question of inventing these, taking into account all the things that came in upon you as the way life was. But none of those things came in upon you as the way life was, had an answer for you. So in our day we have a whole new universe on our hands.

2. This is the day of the Cultural Revolution. It is the day of something brand new in man's awareness. It is the day of consciousness of consciousness. And I don't know how it strikes you, but I suspect if you are anything like me, it comes as terror, as frightfulness, almost as horror. What has happened to us as a society is that in the midst of that new reality we have not had a way of holding that all together. Yeats said it something like this:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.

The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

3. What we have been about this weekend is looking at that rough beast, looking at the features of the great resurgence, the new birth of humanness itself. Where we have looked is sort of setting the context or talking a bit about what it would mean for us to come to terms with a happening in our day of universal sociality. Then we have dealt so far with two arenas of the great resurgence: what it means to come to terms with just the fact that you and I care, the issue of what it means to be a responsible human being in the midst of a global civilization; and what it means to be authentically creative, or the issue at the bottom of my integrity. Integrity here is not in the sense of being a good man, or honest man, a man of principle, for part of what has happened with consciousness of consciousness of consciousness is that we are aware that we invent our honesty, we invent our principles. It is deeper than that. It is a question of the invention of humanness for all mankind, creativity which creates the very face of man. What we are going to talk about tonight is what it means in this brand new universe to struggle with authentic fulfillment, with authentic happiness, with a peace, with a joy.

4. We are going to come at it as we have so far today by talking about resurgence. For me, resurgence as we have been spinning on it for a short while tonight is something like this. Resurgence in our day is the reinvigoration of the cultural dynamic of human society. Resurgence in our day is coming to terms with, becoming aware of, the value crisis of our day. Resurgence is re-embracing human rationality in our day, going on where you and I can see it. And resurgence in our day is the rebirth of an authentic fulfillment, life filled full, happiness maybe, happiness, a new kind of happiness.

5. Well, let's begin. Resurgence has to do with the cultural dimension of human society. You remember that we talked about the social dynamic as a process, one dimension of which has to do with sustaining. We call that the economic, just sustaining human life; another process of which has to do with ordering or interrelating structuring, ordering--that is the political dynamic. And then one dimension of society is now and always has been, always will be, illuminating the whole of the social process itself, giving meaning to why it is one would bother to sustain and why it is one would bother to order. That is the cultural dimension of society. The social processes have to do with commonness, have to do with seeing to it that society is one society, and so the cultural processes have to do with giving the communal meaning to life, the agreed upon significance of human life.

6. That has always come first of all through the knowledge that a community has and transmits to its members--first of all as skills--American Indian tribes have an old hunter go out and teach the young boys how to make arrows, how to stalk buffalos; second of all as the accumulated knowledge, the communal wisdom, the images, the pictures, the way of relating to just life itself which has been transmitted through what in our day we would know as the formal disciplines, but they have always been there. It has always been the case that every people in every part of the globe have been concerned with how you talk about your relationship to the world around you. Every society has had a natural science. Every society has been concerned with relationships between groups of people. And every society has been concerned about how you finally put down in some kind of common form the ultimate wisdom you have--every society has had theological science, illuminating the whole process. Where you see this dynamic of foundational, that without which, and communal, that which interrelates, and rational, that which illuminates, that dynamic happens at every level of these triangles. That which illuminates the accumulated knowledge has to do with the final meanings, of what it really means at the bottom of humanness to live authentically, the final meaning of life.

7. And then every society has not only been concerned with giving shape or pattern or form to meaningfulness in terms of knowing but also in terms of doing, patterning the style of the community. Here what has been talked about as the parameters of the style of community has first of all to do with the generations, the relationships between the youth and the elders and the adults. These are the cyclical roles, cyclical because they keep coming up over and over again when any given individual passes from one to the other, to the other, to the other, and then goes out of being--having to do with how it is. This is very practical, how it is you make sure that there is another generation, the scheme or pattern by which propagation takes place in a social context. We call that Procreative Schemes, or the nuclear family. You might call that the patterns of family-ness that a society finds itself being compelled to invent. Third is the social structures, just the ways in which people in a society are related to the whole on-going social process, how they are given or assigned particular roles in society, how they are in a pattern of groupings, how they belong to a particular class within society. For example, how do the particularities that create being in the United States in terms of watching them and seeing the way their life is illuminate for them that there is something different on their hands than a tribe of monkeys? How does the pattern or the way in which the people in a society act commonly illuminate that society.

8. And finally, language illuminates, gives final illumination, finally gives meaning to the whole rational process. This has to do with the symbolic dimension of life, with the fact that in human society there is a common language, and language is absolutely crucial if you think about it for a minute. If you only have 3 ways of talking about the phenomenon of life which has to do with water which usually comes down from the sky wet, coming down cold and hard and white, you have a

different way of talking about what life is than if you have, as some Laplander tribes have, 27 different words to talk about snow. Your whole universe is imaginally created in your language.

9. And then our art, the way in which a society allows its members to appropriate the depth of reality of which it stands before, the way in which it is able to deal with the phenomenon of historical change. When you stop drawing pictures of bison and yourself which look like this, and begin drawing them like this, you know that a new



reality has happened. That is to say, the society has a new relationship to bison when it draws pictures differently--a way of interiorizing the happenings that are happening in historical change.

10. Every society has had at the bottom, including our own incidentally, a communal religion. No society exists unless it has a set of common symbols or icons which point for it to reality. For example, the Badlands of the Dakotas pointed to the ancestral resting place for many American tribes of the great plains. Every society also has rituals, in which you can symbolically dramatize the significance of life. You can point, for example, to such things as the fact that someone is no longer a little kid; he is now an adult. Those rites are called rites of passage. You can rehearse the fact that "Four score and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the principle that all men are created equal." You realize that every Fourth of July when we say that, we are participating in a rite, a rehearsal of our society. And finally every society has stories which hold beyond rationality itself of what it finally means to talk about where it is that human beings came from ultimately, where it is we are going ultimately, and what it means to be alive in the middle of that. And so the cultural process has to do with all of these roles of giving meaning to every dimension of life.

11. You have to realize that when the cultural process is authentically standing on its own, it contexts every decision that a society makes. It gives a validation to the deliberations of a congress, for example. And you know that when you see the congress fighting among itself, about 9 times out of 10 what they are fighting about is the fact that they do not participate in a common meaning context. Where the cultural is functioning authentically, what it does is give an answer to the question of why we scrabble around making a living.

12. In the social process at large there is an imbalance where the economic has over-extended itself. The political has been rendered impotent and the cultural has collapsed. So too in this collapsed cultural process there is also a collapse, and it looks something like this. In our day the processes of knowing, the processes of being

lucid, have been expanding to the point where there is not a 3 year old on the North American continent who is not lucid. I mean we are lucid. What has collapsed utterly in the midst of that is our sense of communal symbols. Remember the last time you really felt like you could sing the "Star Spangled Banner"? I think for me it was in the third grade. It is something like that. Now that is not beating yourself over the head. It is simply saying that in our day what has happened is that the knowledge process has over-extended itself, rendering the style process impotent, or making it extremely difficult for us to authentically do anything. It has also collapsed the symbol structure. That is not too difficult to understand in the evolution of Western culture and because the Western breakloose of the technological age has economically captured the globe. It is not too difficult to understand.

13. You see, what has happened is that down here at the bottom of society sits this ogre, this great economic ogre. And he is a great ogre. But what he does is to say all the wisdom of society, all the knowledge that somebody needs to know is how to produce, how to make it in a job, how to see to it that the Gross National Product does not collapse.

14. I remember that when I first went to school I went into engineering. The only reason I went into engineering is that when I was in high school Sputnik happened. All across the United States a cry went up that we needed more engineers. We needed more engineers so that we could make our technology more sophisticated so that we could produce a more effective mechanism to deal with this challenge to our situation in the world. And I lasted in engineering about a semester and a half, partly because my story about why I was in engineering was straight out of the economic set of values, and in some way I had gotten clear enough in my own head that that finally was not what humanness was all about. That is not to say that there is anything wrong with those of you who went on and became engineers, or that you were not as perceptive as I was. The other reason I didn't finish in engineering was I could never draw all those lines in graphics. When I got them straight they were not thin enough. You have to draw thin lines in engineering drafting.

15. What has happened in the cultural is that wisdom has basically become utterly subservient to technology. Look at the universities. There are 3 foundations established by the federal government. One is the National Science Foundation, one is the National Social Science Foundation, and one is the National Humanities Foundation. How many would know we have those other two? The last time I saw the reports the National Science Foundation got something like 75% of all the allocations, the National Social Science Foundation got something like 20%, and the National Humanities Foundation got about 5%, and they had to really scramble to get any at all. I mean they didn't have much of a chance to start with.

16. Well, anyway, this kind of imbalance going on in the midst of the cultural has all kinds of consequences. For example, my family has been defined around my technological expertise through the media of the kind of jobs that sustain. The quality of my family life as I experience it is something like this: if we can afford it, we do it. It's like, any smart guy is going to marry a gal who can move in a higher economic echelon than he can, and any smart gal is going to marry a guy who can move in a higher economic echelon than she can move in.

17. ... We have not realized that the family in our day is no longer primarily an economic unit. We have not begun to get clear that we do not need to have a lot of kids any more so we can send them out to the factory and make more money; but we used to have to have a lot of kids. That is why we have sort of come full circle in our day and kids are once again.... You live in a time in between the time of agricultural happening where they became an economic asset, and our time where they are no longer an economic asset, so we do not really know what to do with them.

18. When this happens, when the meaning-giving context, the illuminating context in society, is collapsed, there is no place to stand in terms of establishing a context for the decisions that society makes. Witness the kind of global social agony of the involvement of the United States in Vietnam. There is no context out of which to make decisions. What tends to happen also is that you get this wildly effective dynamic of economics without any kind of check upon it, without any sort of molding sense, either in terms of the decisions of society or in terms of the meaning of society. It is sort of like when there is a collapse in culture, a void is created in the interior deeps of mankind which neither of these any longer in history will rush to fill. In our moment of history they rush to fill the economic, so we live out of stories about the economic significance of life, stories which were necessary 100 years ago, stories of rugged individualism, of man over against the frontier, but which in our day are simply obsolete. This is not naughty, not wrong, but just not effective.

19. Well, when that happens, where the structures of society themselves, the structures designed, intended, and in one sense demanded to give meaning to our life, do not in fact do that in an authentic way, the social form perpetuates that.

20. In the Stranger in a Strange Land, that science fiction book, for me it was not so much a story about what the Australians might do to someone who just showed up there from Mars. It was the story of my experience, showing up here from here. I mean, where is humanness these days? You know the kind of emptiness of our symbols? It's not that when the cultural dimension collapses there are no more symbols. It is that the symbols that you and I get bombarded with are empty. "You've come a long ways baby. You've come a long ways baby." So you smoke an advanced cigarette. That is to reduce the meaning. "Okay, guys,

what you need to do is get on your horse and ride out to Marlboro country. That is to be a real man." "Okay, you families, happy families,..." And there is one that says, "A family ... together so they can stay together."

21. ...What I experienced in the first instance was that I had failed. You know, it is sort of exciting to walk in at the beginning of a semester, and see all those 130 people in your classes, so open and so willing. And you start to struggle with what it means to live a whole human life in our day, and what comes back is what it meant to live a whole human life yesterday. I always used to start out the semester by saying, "Your first assignment is to write an essay about 1000 words on anything at all." After one semester I qualified that a bit. I said, "Your assignment is to write an essay on anything at all except, 'How I spent my summer vacation,'" because when people wrote on "How I spent my summer vacation," what they wrote about is "How my great great grandfather might have spent his summer vacation." What happened was that they had that kind of experience of getting back to nature--things like hunting and fishing, like going out and camping with the family--only one weekend out of the whole summer, and they spent the whole rest of the summer dealing with the city, going to movies, going to shows, going to plays, in effect. But even if that was what the whole summer was about, they invariably wrote about "The 2 days I spent in the Maine woods." It is great to be able to appropriate the 2 days you spend in the Maine woods, but how about dealing with the 363 days you did not spend in the Maine woods? You have a sense of failure. But it is not my failure, in the first instance. It is our failure. It is like we have failed to give any significance to the actual life we are living. The experience is something like dryness. It is something like day after day after day going back into that classroom, and back into that classroom, and back into that classroom, and after about 2 weeks you stop hoping for any signs of life. And again it is not because you are not an authentic human being struggling to bring forth life. It is simply because we have held no common illuminating dynamic in society.

22. ...The possibilities there in the foreseeable future, the possibilities with the experimentation with style, the possibilities of trying to form new images of what it means to be in community, are beginning to be actualized. Now, grant you, many of those that we have actually seen have said something like, "It is impossible to have authentic community in the midst of the situation we have at hand; we'll form some artificial situation." Woodstock is an example of that. You know that if it had not been for the pro-establishment dropping food to Woodstock, it would have collapsed after the first day. You know that kind of artificial body cannot sustain itself. Yet the struggle of the youth, and the black man and the third world to work out an authentic style is an exciting possibility. In any case, it signals an awareness of the crisis we are in. The struggle here and there to forge out what it means to be a family which is not bound by the past images of economic or political power units of the family,

but based on being creators of the future, creators of the meaning which is going to make sense out of life. But the kind of wasteland that is portrayed, the kind of images, the kind of symbols you present--that is a sign of resurgence, I would say. The kind of fantastic happenings beginning to happen, for example, in the educational structures point to this, even though on the other hand the new structures do not seem to be any more concerned with the ultimate meaning of life than the outmoded structures which are being said no to. Nevertheless, that awareness of the deep agony of mankind to find meaning for his life is simply present.

23. What is at the bottom of all this for me, both at the bottom of the cultural dimension and the bottom of the value crisis, has to do with ontological rationality. What I mean there is a propensity to make sense out of the way life is. You and I are gifted and perhaps cursed by the fact that when we bump against life our response is to make sense out of it, to make some kind of meaning out of it. And we are lucid enough in our day to understand that no longer is it a question of finding the meaning, of finding the significance, but rather it is recreating it. For example, I walk along one day, and all of a sudden I trip over an innocent fire hydrant, and my universe now has to account for the fact that fire hydrants run around the streets tripping people up. That is not something I am supposed to do. Whether or not I am supposed to do it, I do it. I mean, it is not that we always ought to find ways of giving significance to our lives. We just do it. It is what it means to be a human being. What that means in the largest social context is to invent myth. It is to create the inclusive stories about the way life has always been, always will be, and is now.

24. The way we say things and the way we portray things are ways of accounting for the actual facts of our existence. It is like I always watch the artists. I do not always trust the artists, but I watch them. What I watch them for is that I have always suspected that whether they can articulate the inclusive myth or not, they have a way of embodying it. You know, what has happened to us in our singing in the last day or so is something much deeper than any one of us could talk about in what we might call a rational form. Something has just happened. Watch these things. When a paradigm is invented, when a myth, a picture of the world is invented, a breakloose happens in language, in art, in wisdom and in style--the way people dress, the way people operate with one another, and in the kind of decisions they make and in the sort of posture in which they stand. For example, the Renaissance came out with a whole new inclusive picture of what it is to be a human being. It was something like this: Man is at the center of the universe; man is an incredible creation. All of a sudden, as soon as people got broken loose, you had the flowering of poetry, of songs, of commerce, of empire, all happening at once. It is as if when you touch a myth of a people, you touch their heartbeat. Beyond whether we could talk about it as rational, it is something like the basic human reality of man's propensity to give order--that when

he gives order to the whole of his experience, it spills over into every dimension of his existence. His life is changed. Social existence is altered.

25. For me it is the poets who, in the act of articulating in imagery, in rhythm, in rhyme, in pattern, concretely allow society to bridge the gap between the not unrational and that which it comes up against. My rationality is a human phenomenon where I am always out to make sense, even if that does not make life so simple, even if it does not make rational sense. Poetry which is authentic poetry always rehearses the myth, which is the authentic myth. Space and time are the parameters of social being, and poetry accounts to both of those in an extraordinary way. Let me read you something: "Daisies and barley. The poets are the ones who sing in their chains." It is something like, humanness, human beings are those who sing in their chains, go bang up against the givenness of the way life is and relate to it, I mean, just take a relation to it, whap! take a second relation to it, invent that relationship. Dylan Thomas decided that what it meant to be a human being was to sing in his chains. In our day that is an option for you and me as it has never been before.

26. The first perversion of rationality is to reduce rationality into rationalism. That is something like saying, "It is true if I can measure it; if I cannot measure it it is absurd." It is sort of like saying, "If I can look out into whatever I mean by objective reality and I can see something going on, it has authenticity; if what I have to deal with is my interior response to the way life is, it probably is not quite so authentic." That is a perversion. It has always been a perversion. Aristotle, the genius of rationality in the West, underscores the fact that rationality has to do with illumination. It has to do with dealing with the chaos. The way we deal with it in a reduced way is to narrowly define rationality. But that leaves a huge gap in life that can only be dealt with through art, through symbols, through style.

27. The second of these perversions is what I call individualism. What I mean by that is the decision that since all meaning is invented meaning, the only person I can invent meaning for is me, and the only thing I can do in relationship to other people which has any authenticity about it is to tell them to invent their meaning; and I cannot assume that there is any commonness that this is not--commonness in terms of the way you interpret the meaning, but commonness in the happening that is the happening of my life. Yet the happenings which are the happenings in the lives of every person across the face of the globe in the 20th century are virtually identical. But individually, individualism says a kind of no to that. Now, you see, the problem there is not whether or not you ought to be an individual. The problem is something like this. If it is really the case that my experience of life is radically different from yours, we have no such thing as society. And any human being that claims that man is not a social being in the 20th century is an idiot. That is not a moral term. That is sheer

descriptiveness. The people who really believe that one's experience is different than everyone else's are either the suicides or the schizophrenics. There is the universe which is radically unique and individual.

28. The third perversion of our day is a kind of defiance, a kind of refusal to use the propensities of give meaning in the context of the actual happenings of my life. Back in the 18th and 19th centuries in Russia there was a most confused character. I think his name was Petroffkin, I'm not sure. He was the Prime Minister of Catherine the Great. Now Catherine the Great was very proud of the fact that under her illuminated rule Russia had become a modern society. And she needed to clinch that fact and to make sure to look at the modern society she had created. And Petroffkin knew that that modern society she had created existed mostly only in her own head and also knew that if you were Prime Minister to an empress who understood that she had created a modern society, you saw to it that she had created a modern society. So he got Catherine the Great on a barge going down the rivers of Russia and they would come around the corner and here was a magnificent town with fortifications and temples and cathedrals and people busily riding boats back and forth. And then they would go around the river and here was another fantastic town, and town after town after town along the riverbank. The only problem was, all the towns were facades. What Petroffkin had done was to create Hollywood movie sets along the banks of the river, and get people, while the barge was going by, to bustle about very busily so the Empress Catherine the Great would think that her screen of reality was confirmed by the way reality really was. And there are thousands and thousands of Catherine the Great's these days. And there are thousands and thousands of Petroffkins also who run around telling people that their screen of illusory reality is the way reality actually is. And I suppose that a refusal to be your rationality is what finally results in schizophrenia, the refusal to make sense out of life, the pretense that sense out of life is going to come if you just wait for it to happen.

29. And I figure that is what the whole drug culture is about finally. It is not an intensification of consciousness. I do not know a single person in the 20th century, in the age of awareness, that did not have that awareness 3 months before birth. That is not the issue. Consciousness abounds. ... In terms of the sort of internal quest for happiness or the eternal quest for meaning, resurgence is the beginning of reappropriating our rationality, reinventing art in different ways.

30. I once got a jigsaw puzzle and I had 4 or 5 pieces in it to go. I liked jigsaw puzzles, you know. You can put them together, such a form and accomplishment. But I used to hide the last piece so that I would always have something to go. Well, the jigsaw puzzle I got 3 or 4 Christmasses ago was an array of color, utterly random, utter chaos--you know, the way Jackson Polluck painted that thing. It was as if he took a blotch or handful of paint or something and went scprrrreeeiich--a sort of utter non-sense-making-ness.

31. Something is beginning to happen in art. Something is beginning to happen in rock music. It is as if Dylan's external social consciousness has gone the next step beyond and the next step beyond to something like an interior feeling sorry for yourself. When you have gone beyond that, the next step is something like say in the Magician, the dynamics of despair and hope. A song came out some months ago, "Bye, Bye, Miss American Pie," which talked about all the symbols being gone. Yet the very act of writing a song about the fact that all the symbols are gone is a sign of resurgence. When you have enough distance on your situation to be able to say, "This is something to sing about," that is a sign of resurgence.

32. We have to realize I think in the very first instance that in the midst of the human reality you and I care. That means that the whole world is on our shoulders and there is no one in the whole universe other than ourselves who is going to tell us what it means to be all by yourself in the midst of that. That is to say, there is no one in the whole world who knows what it means until you and I invent it. Well, when you and I invent what it means to be man and woman, to be phase I, II, III, or IV, to be a myth-making animal, in the context of having the whole weight of the world on your back, in the context of having to embrace what you have, that is slavery to the world, total engagement of forever caring for the world. ...

--Steve Allen