

Philosophy that is Mindful

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I have tried to expose over these months layers of questions which are the dynamic operators of cultural growth. The core of all such questions are the questions, Who am I? Who are we? That core should be deeply operative in the questioning of any of the orders or the disorders of a nation's movement. There is, however, a further question to be raised regarding that questioning which I would like to raise here: What is the distribution of labour involved in its pursuit?

There is the more evident division of labour among individuals, a division that can be more conveniently and inclusively done in so far as there is present in the group some heuristic grasp of the differentiations and interrelations of man's activities. Such a heuristic grasp would enable a group, for instance, to consider adequately and in a creative manner the need for a long-term transformation of the structures of education. There are centuries of deficient human meaning and feeling in those present structures. The creative effort required to bring forth alternate structures, at present deeply beyond conception, is one which needs desperately to be made, centrally within the theory and methodology of education. And this brings me to the real problem of division of labour: the division of labour, or rather of life, of the individual.

There is a pressure at present on the individual to be practical in the face of human problems. "Something is wrong; something ought to be done about it." One does not so

often hear, "Something ought to be thought about it," and when indeed there is a delay in action, it is normally for discussion, dialogue, rather than for personally transforming thought. Moreover, when thoughtfulness occurs, it tends to be the deficient thoughtfulness of applying categories of the past problems to the present and solutions of the future.

My criticism of contemporary cultural dynamics goes deep. I recall a quotation from a lecture on art by Bernard Lonergan: "What I want to communicate in this talk on art is the notion that art is relevant to concrete living, that it is an exploration of the potentialities of concrete living, that it is extremely important in our age when philosophers for at least two centuries, through doctrines on economics, politics and education, have been trying to remake man and have done not a little to make human life unlivable." There is a centuries-old sickness in our common meaning, national and international. But it cannot be appreciated, diagnosed, felt, without a type of lengthy reflection which that sickness itself excludes. The growth of our living human minds is almost universally frustrated by a culture of informationality even on the level of scholarship. What to do? Practically? With an obviousness which is questionable there is obvious need for discussion. "It is a particular problem today that young people, influenced by I do not know what pattern of togetherness, or by journalism, or by television panel discussions, think that problems are solved by sitting around a table in conference, when it seems to me that the fundamental intellectual problems after the stimulus of discussion, are solved by going to your room and working them out

in solitude with the classic books and the great thinkers." (F.E. Crowe, *A Time of Change*, p. 155.) It is a problem too for those who are no longer young. Dialogue with a tonality of instant communication is the order of the day, and the ivory tower of reflectivity has become a monument. In an age which is the potentiality of noospherical life, man seems to rejoice most in his loco-motion – something less than biospherical – and the fluidity of television is preferred to the static challenge of thought-filled print or the silent quiet of contemplation.

I speak here of a need of non-information-gleaning reflectivity in the life of any man or woman who would wish to live adequately and contribute more than superficially to the life of the nation. But there is also the nation's need for the support and tolerance and cultivation of a reflectivity which is only distantly relevant. As Carl Jung remarked, "the man whom we can with justice call 'modern' is solitary." Marx's solitude in the British Museum a century ago has transformed half the globe. The transformation and adequate humanisation of the emergent technopolitan society of the next century is a reflectivity problem of our century. Is that question with us now, in a context of the entire human group as question, a tonality of our lesser thoughts? On its dynamic presence rests the deeper hope of the nation.