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# The Meaning of Wellness

The concept of wellness is relatively new to the practice of medicine because the emphasis has always been placed on the symptom. The idea of prevention of disease is, of course, not new, but the contradiction between prevention and treatment has never been resolved so as to allow unity of these two themes. Prevention has been relegated to community enterprises whereas treatment has been isolated in physiology. The concept of wellness must sooner or later emerge to define the state of a person in reference to self, society and nature. Wellness may be a useful term since efforts are being made nowadays to turn prevention and treatment into a unified process. Eventually the main emphasis will not be on preventing illness or on treating it, but rather on knowing how to consciously *plan a setting* where a person can discover his potential for wellness.

The practice of medicine, because of the need to mitigate the effects of some sort of catastrophe on the human frame was, in the beginning, confronted with nothing but the complications of unwellness. These complications were given names and the treatment of these visible expressions of unwellness, the symptoms, continued as the preoccupation of medicine. In early times, the source of the unwellness was not consciously considered. Unconsciously, however *the source*, through magic and social considerations, dominated treatment. While consciously attempting to treat symptoms without the necessary tools or knowledge, primitive man in fact was unconsciously treating the source of the unwellness. The history of medicine neglected the source and became concerned with the development of the implements required to examine parts of the body where symptoms seemed to reside. As the implements of medical care proliferated the body was studied in terms of its parts, the parts became smaller and smaller particles. Physiology moved toward physics instead of promoting the promise of biology, namely that of lighting the way towards *social* conditions of a more life-positive culture.

This has contributed to a state of affairs where the social conditions of each age have been taken as a 'fixed' unchanging stage for the human drama; whereas society should be considered as a part of the cast. Each age either ignores society or merely describes it as a murky background to the consideration of man's well-being. It is as though society has no intrinsic relation to the state of man's wellness and there is still not much indication that sociology has evolved beyond this pre-scientific, purely descriptive stage.

We describe the pathological fragments of our society; the poverty, pollution, crime, etc. Attempts are made to modify each fragment, but an attitude of helpless concern is expressed as to the basic nature of the fragmentation. The policy makers of each epoch never consider the idea that the social framework within which they find themselves may have outlined its usefulness. They refuse to hasten its demise and write its obituary so that a social rebirth can be planned in a form which satisfies human needs more efficiently. As long as society has the appearance of stability the decay is

denied despite the evidence of history that a given society will run its course and then fail.

Likewise, in medicine when a person of ripe old age goes to hospital to die, the procedure becomes one of describing the failures of the various parts: heart, lungs, etc., the inference being, that if each system can be supported, death can be denied. It is just as though a person were no more than a sum of a number of parts. It is a fact that both societies and humans die, but various forms of denial of this render the whole dying process undignified to say the least.

Society originates with man's extension of himself through his implements. As new knowledge of nature accumulates, so do new more adequate implements, i.e., new extensions of man into the rest of nature so that a point is reached where man himself must change. He finds however, that through habitual ways of doing things, he has organized within himself a pattern of body mechanics constituting a resistance to any change. The organization of his implements, internal and external i.e. organization of his habits of body motion combined with the social organization of the use of those habits in a given mode of production make the resistance to change'. To put it another way and use Reich's term 'armor' (4), the armor of society and the armor of man combine to resist change in a process where both man and society are being compelled to change through their constant interaction. One explosive situation follows another and will continue to do so until man moves towards becoming man by recognizing the need for change before change is forced upon him. Until then, revolutions bring about in some degree a new improved adaptation—progress— but exact a very high price in human suffering while sowing the seed of the next breakdown.

The Russian revolution failed because it considered only part of the armor, the armor of society and ignored the fact that man confronted the new society with his old habits of motion. His biological armor remained intact, consistent with the old society. Our so-called free world is sinking into decay and drifting toward a revolution for the opposite reason, because the armor of entrenched social institutions is taken as a permanent background, not to be probed. It is wrong to assume that feelings released through body movement can sustain a therapeutic value when abstracted from the particular mode of production in society -- The biosocial-armor must be considered as a whole.

*Society becomes organized as a general part of nature rather than as a special part of man. Man now confronts society as an animal confronts its natural environment—with a loss of self-awareness. He loses himself before he has a chance to find himself. This is a form of castration and thus we have the spectacle of creatures in the shape of man whose purposes are his illusions of power and control and whose feelings are left floating freely, to attach wherever they man alight, causing him to be inappropriately sentimental rather than concerned.*

Man is unique among animals in that he can learn to turn around and look at himself in relation to his environment and from the sensory awareness of this relationship, stimulate a reaction in his head, i.e., imagine how things might be, thus constructing a

theory, which generalizes his past experience and indicates likely possibilities for the future. His theory does not have to be the most ideal to be of service, but he does have to have one so that thoughts can sooner or later be applied by testing in practice. This modifies his practice to form a new interaction with society. (2)

Man has applied this process to gadgets—to technology, but not to sociology. To do the latter would mean becoming aware of the necessity of social change. He would then have to be aware of his biologic armor and hence the contradictions of his own biologic development. From a standpoint of applying science to society, he remains fixated at a period that existed prior to the first ice age—about 400,000 years ago and from an emotional standpoint fixated in the problems of survival that occurred during infancy. Just as in the case of primitive man, the prime social preoccupation of modern man is still food, clothing and shelter and his emotional preoccupation is the search for the breast of which he has been deprived by his ignorance of society. Somewhere, sometime, man must consciously let his scientific method evolve to *include his feelings* or else be suffocated by his expanding technology.

It is useful to assume that parents of an infant are *its* implements, extensions of itself which it uses to satisfy its needs. Ideally these implements would facilitate the (pleasure—unpleasure) contradiction which drives the infant toward growth and selfhood; but the clan or family or whatever the setting, becomes an organized force which thwarts this development bending it to parental expectations. The authentic feelings of the infant and child are distributed through the tensions in its body while through incorporation and identification the child's head is taken over, with performance being substituted for self. The child reaches a point where it does not realize that what it wants is only what it seems to want and that an alien force has taken over. The extensions of itself, (its implements) become the socially organized family unit with parents as the executive. The take over is disguised in the tensions consolidating themselves in the muscle-armor and energy-blocking mechanisms within its body.

Collectively man is but a unique part of nature; a part that has been linked dialectically with the rest of nature by his extensions of self (his implements) as he seeks to satisfy his needs. Through economic and political organization, his implements become a Frankenstein monster dominating his affairs; a monster now functioning according to its intrinsic laws and not necessarily in the satisfaction of man's needs. The armor of society - this monster made up of economic and political institutions imposes a habitual way of functioning on man which is continually reinforcing the takeover by the parental executive of the family until performance replaces self in varying degrees. I wish to be sure of making the point that *two* monsters combine to expropriate the body motion of man (his implements). The engulfment by parental controls on one hand and that of the political and economic institutions on the other. The two monsters are merely, in my opinion, two aspects of the same thing.

In the story of Frankenstein, the monster developed a will of its own, independently of the will of its creator. Also, society in its organized state has its own developmental process independent of the will of man. The implements which started out in the

service of man in primitive society and which raised man above animal level have turned man into the victim of his own ingenuity. The combined armor of man and society, one augmenting the other, resists fundamental change and at the same time disguises the nature of the change that is constantly taking place.

As a matter of present-day logic, the whole interaction of man and nature is nothing but the obvious—a matter of determining how nature operates so we can behave according to natural laws. Why then don't we apply this logic, if it is just a matter of the here and now? We have done it in physics, the oldest of the sciences, but when it comes to letting biology evolve into psychology and sociology, we fear the discovery of the bio-social armouring process. It involves a fear of finding a self and a fear we won't. It makes us refuse to invest science with feeling so the result is that art develops as a mental phenomenon and science remains mechanical in nature, always struggling to advance beyond mere metrics. Consequently, the split between man's creative energy and his body mechanics keeps on being consolidated. His whole being is reduced to the mechanical materialist level he hoped to avoid through a denial of the structural features of the body which truly are machine like. *It is ironic that man's contempt for himself as a machine turns him into one whenever he is not in some ethereal state.* Although the fusion of cultural values with science is considered here and there the idea remains well sequestered from man's practical affairs. (Fig.1)

The rationalization for this seems to be that science would be less useful if feeling introduced an element of indeterminateness. Though not widely advertised, at least not in popular works on the philosophy of science, physics the most mechanistic of the sciences in the natural course of its development has come upon an indeterminate element which corresponds to an emotional value. The interaction of emotional and mechanical values as the scientific method evolves is a fact, but to recognize this and apply the method to the study of society would threaten the bio-social armor with dissolution.

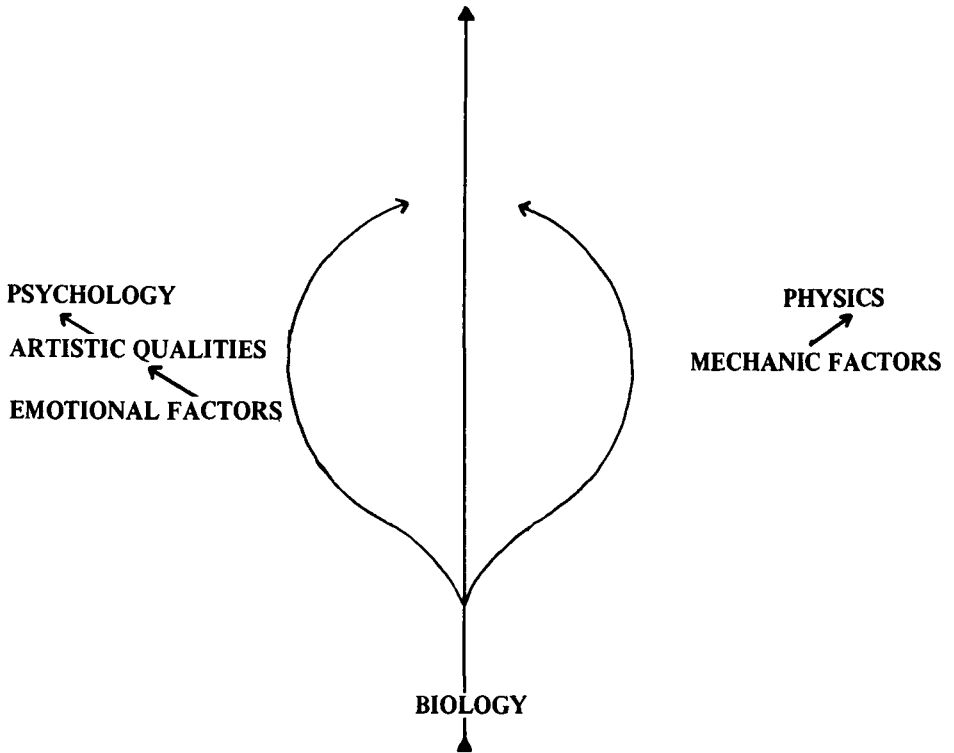
Applied to history, the scientific method would produce sociology; We would take a present day social problem and go back in time, to understand the past social experience incorporated in it. Past experience would be understood and unloaded from the present and in the process we would become conscious of the direction to be taken in future actions.

We don't of course operate this way. Mankind is not yet ready to see how society operates and the laws governing its change. We still dip into the past like into a grab bag selecting events, classifying them according to the whim or prejudice of the historian, ignoring the dynamic relation to the process of social change. For all the good this exercise does, we might as well take a trip to the movies.

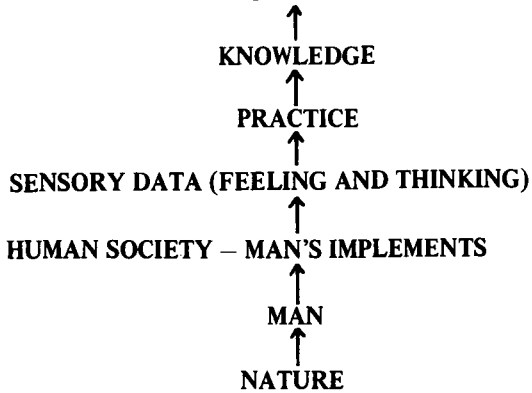
As long as the connection between history and social change does not seem to be obvious, the scientific method can be applied. For example, consider appendicitis, which is not apparently related to social change. Man experiences pain in the lower abdomen leading to a search for the site of trouble through dissection of the human body. The developmental history of the appendix is then investigated and the hypothesis emerges that the appendix is an organ that can be safely removed and this

**FIG. I**

**SOCIOLOGY**



**Scientific method of knowing how we know**



is tested in practice and found to be true. This is a truth representing knowledge at a particular level. Further present-day examination of the appendix leads to more questions such as the meaning of its lymphoid tissue. This directs the scientists' attention with fresh purposes back into the past. The answers to the new questions lead to new theory and practice with avenues to knowledge in new directions, for example, toward immunology.

In this example of the appendix we can apply the scientific method to history because we think we have detached the investigation from social values. We can define situations where your appendix is removed no matter how you feel about it. We can even remove the appendix as a means of disregarding the meaning of the lower abdominal pain, when we unconsciously wish to help the patient deny its real meaning. But chickens have a way of coming home to roost. The appendix leads to immunology, the latter to the problem of emotional stress and this could indicate unwellness as an expression of the way man is forced to live in a society armored against change. What I want to emphasize is that you cannot separate science from society without introducing artificial pressures.

Man's head is lost to the expectations of others and the body performs according to the rules and regulations of society. The resentment against performing is concealed in the muscle tensions. The neurotic need of the individual is now to preserve this split between mind and body and this is accomplished by means of the common bio-social armor against change. The conflict between individual and society is thus obscured by this artificial state. The irony is that in defending the social status quo, man is defending his neurosis and when he says he is unwell he feels quite natural in looking only as far as himself for the answers. He is lost in his own bodily strain configuration remaining unaware of its social counterpart. He now suffers the guilt for what he is made to feel he has done to himself. He can even be grateful to society for patching him up so that instead of a critical examination of his plight, he once more subjects himself to the social situation that sickened him and discharges any overflow of rage into random complaints, known as griping.

Man's implements, which originally held the promise of extending his powers, become expropriated by economic and political institutions and his own self is expropriated by parental factors implicit in the social form of compulsive marriage. These two expropriative forces combine as one to separate man from himself and from the rest of nature. Now being fully expropriated, he denies it by his illusion of power, by believing that nature in some way obeys his will, that his thinking can of itself make events come to pass. (3) the compulsion to perform and the resentment against performing locks the body in the expectations. The common bio-social armor preserves the *illusion of power* which man comes to regard as his free will. It is believed that world events must obey this will if only men can be persuaded to think reasonably. *This myth of power taken collectively as the will of the people is vested in the will of the politician and called democracy.* Man struggles but remains in one disaster area after another, always blocking the path of natural evolution. He starts on the road toward realizing his potential but finds himself unable to accept his different quality as an animal yet is at the same time contemptuous of other species of animals.

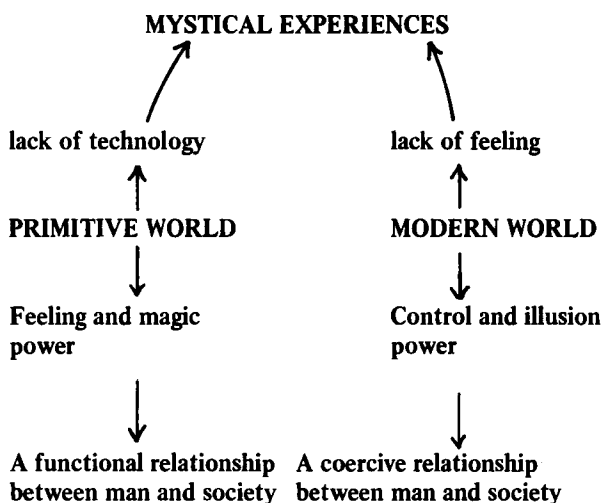
Science has been thwarted by man's inability to contemplate the necessity of social change. By stripping biology of feeling we get physics at the level of simple measurement which develops into mechanics. Then when we try to reconcile feeling with mechanics without considering the dynamic relation of the contradiction between man and society, we get mysticism. The mysticism in the mind becomes a defense against recognizing the bio-social armor invested in the body.

The feelings of exhilaration that came with the ability to control were substituted for the feelings of love.

The development of the practice of medicine further illustrates the problem of applying science to society and throws light on the problem of wellness. In the world of primitive man, implements were few and magic was a means of organizing the rudimentary knowledge of nature. There was, if one goes back far enough, a *functional relationship* between the feelings of man and the organization of society. There were no wonder drugs: so when a man was unwell, the representative of society held his hand so to speak, allowing him to participate in the power and security of the tribe. In this way, the *source* of the unwellness was being treated, but at an unconscious prescientific level. This mode of treatment has persisted and is practiced to-day, but still unconsciously for the most part. (Fig. II)

**FIG. II**

**The mystic bridge between ancient and modern worlds**



As time went by from one epoch to another, social institutions were exerting increasing power over the behaviour of man and technical advances made it possible for the doctor to consider the specific nature of individual parts of the body and this focussed attention more and more on the complications of the state of unwellness. The doctor developed various kinds of 'screwdrivers' and with increasing ingenuity started tinkering and patching this part of the body or that. Feelings of social solidarity gave way to a scramble for power. The feelings of exhilaration that came with the ability to control was substituted for the feelings of love. Man in increasing degree relied for survival on defiance, propitiation and endurance, under the sway of powerful social and economic institutions. He kept these attitudes suppressed by pride in performance because by this time the powerful institutions and the powerful parents were undifferentiated. Challenging the institutions of society would carry the same fear as that experienced by an infant when threatened abandonment by parents.

The modern witch doctor, i.e., the psychiatrist (4) translates the patient's unwellness into a pseudo-scientific jargon. He evokes the power of the word in his ability to name and describe the patient's condition in much the same way as his primitive counterpart uses invocation, but unlike him, he has no power to reinstate the patient in the tribe and restore security by this means. He can only help the patient deaden his sensibilities to the point where once again with reinforced body armor he faces the society responsible for his unwellness. The practice of medicine to-day is losing the patient by default. The doctor can open the patient, rearrange his parts, package him nicely, neatly, deaden his sensibilities or watch his organs fail scientifically. One way or another the patient is enabled to perform again for the social institutions that control him. From primitive times to the present, the doctor has moved from feeling with unconscious control to conscious control without feeling. There is one more alternative before there is no recourse, but to apply scientific method to social dynamics and that is feeling with no control—just set the patient adrift.

In the past ten to fifteen years, treatment of symptoms related to feeling has been taken over by the new non-treatment which calls itself psychologic education. Sometimes this includes any techniques that can manipulate human emotion under the heading of the human potential movement. Both the primitive and the modern are rejected; the former where emotional factors loom large in a functional set of individual-social relationships, but without the technical factors; the latter where social institutions dominate the individual; abstract technology, mechanical performance and the illusion of power substituting for fellow feeling.

The new movement claims to be guided by authentic feeling. It says, in effect, a plague on both your houses, ancient and modern and so feeling is abstracted from society altogether. One is invited to worship at the altar of the 'here and now'. Like Henry Ford, the disciples say in so many words 'history is bunk'. They bounce like billiard balls off one experience to another without asking the nature of the table or who operates the cue. Feeling, divorced from society is mysticism and mystical feelings can at times be pleasurable. The tensions are allowed to escape from the muscles and float upwards. The head, rather than accept the historical meaning of these tensions, floats off into space, its 'gears' spin gently, weaving pleasurable fantasies—no drive shaft to consider. The body temporarily free from the tyrant in the head pulsates without



interference bathed in its vegetative currents. In such a state, the head may under certain conditions perceive the pleasurable motion in the body but without any burden of responsibility for it. I call this the 'kissy-pissy' state. It is similar to the reaction of a new born infant that takes the warm milk in above and pees it out below defining an axis of pleasurable total body motion. In some cases, you might have to go further back in emotional time to find it, to the fetus: wafted gently in the amniotic fluid as from time to time it peeks out through the mother's belly button. Drugs, meditation techniques, misconceptions about the nature of the orgasm are ways of artificially intensifying this state which could be referred to as that of the psychological guillotine. The body removed from the head -- floats.

'Shape up or ship out'. I don't know the origin of the old English admonition, but it can be applied here as a very succinct description of man's condition. The message says in effect, take the form into which society molds you and shut up about it or separate from the body you cannot accept. So 'normal man' substitutes for himself either *performance or mysticism*, or shifts between these in order to avoid the pool of fear and hate, the tensions which dominate the centre of the body. The idea of losing the fear and hate brings a worse threat—that of emptiness followed finally by the terror of experiencing the life feeling. According to the mind that man pathologically acquires, acceptance of life means fear of the acceptance of the genital apparatus. The exposure of the genital makes it known and it seems as though to make it known is to lose it. One will sometimes choose actual physical death rather than experience the fear of the life for which one longs.

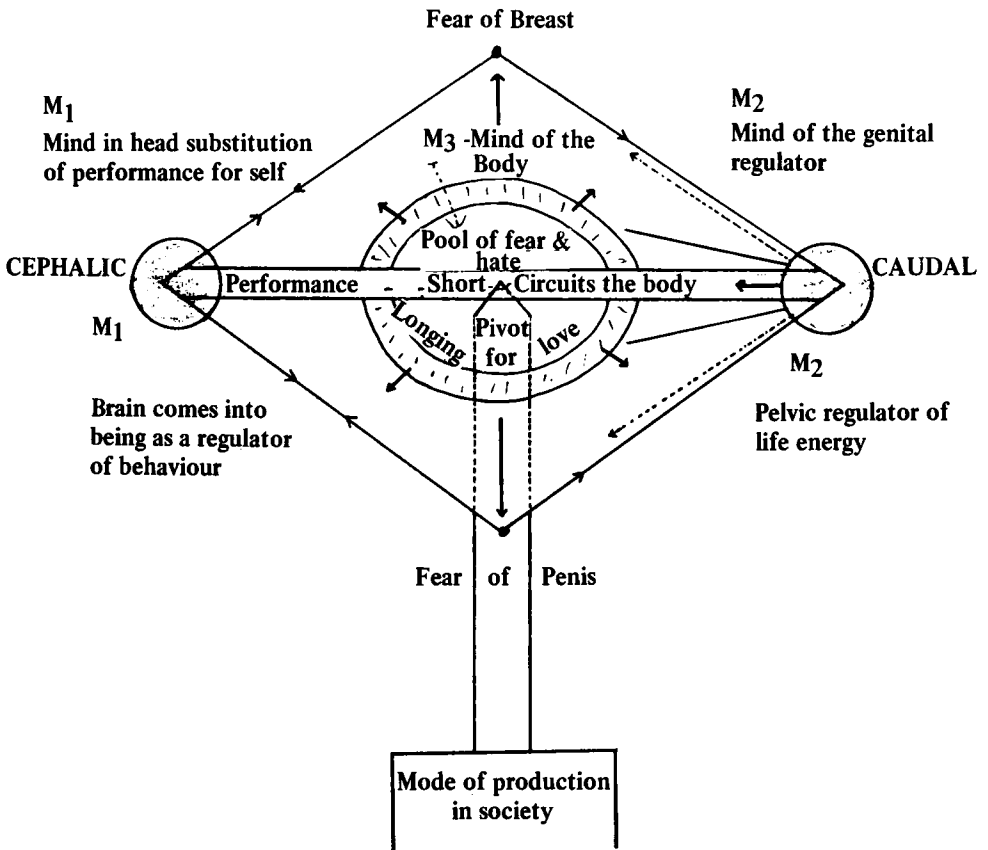
The earliest recognizable purpose in any form of life is a flow of energy peculiar to life along an axis. The direction of flow is cephalad or more correctly in the direction of the future head, because the process starts as soon as there is need for any purposeful motion and this is even before nerve fibres link segments, let alone before the central nervous system is called into being. (5) It is a need for a more accurate expression of the purpose of the body (sustaining itself and living) that generates the brain. At any rate, one can say that the brain arises as an implement of the body. The brain increases the efficiency of satisfying the body's needs. One could then say the body no longer experiences the outer world directly but through that society it has evolved in its head. The society of the individual body, i.e., the brain, now confronts the collective society of man—not dialectically as would be compatible with health—but it splits. One part of the brain being more or less taken over as a servant of the outer society, while the other part is still trying to serve the body's inner needs. It is enough to produce a splitting headache. The collective society which like the brain began as an implement of man, comes more to dominate man's relation to nature. The head, now split, must serve the need for change on the part of developing man and at the same time preserve the status quo in a society which for its own developmental reasons resists change. It is enough to give a person a still bigger headache. Meantime, down at the lower end, the life force keeps driving upward: the genital apparatus attempts as best it can to assert its function of giving direction and regulation to the life force. The pathology just described may be illustrated diagrammatically (Fig. III). This complex of organismic pathology in the shape of man now has three minds—one in the Brain M1, one in the pelvis M2, and the authentic mind of the organism in the body M3, the latter being the headquarters of tensions which represent the true feeling state. Living had to be

relinquished in favour of survival in what became an alien society both inside and out. The problem is for M1 to accept and 'work through' the fear and hate if it once again is to join with M3 as the servant of the body. This cannot occur without at the same time M1 revealing society as a tyranny which has been keeping the body dancing to the old inappropriate tunes.

**FIG. III**

**Organismic Pathology – The Three minds of man**

Performance defends against fear of breast and penis through compulsive work or by discharging the genital with eroticism in the mind defending against the fear and hate in the body.



(This geometric figure may be more useful if thought of as being balanced in a horizontal plane.)

When the performance forced on the body by M1 fails to represent adequate rewards in the quest for love, as it does periodically, the fear of breast and/or penis is translated into a sexual performance. The illusion of social power is now temporarily transferred to the illusion of sexual power as the genital is forced to act out the fear and the rage connected with the idea of injury. M1 disguises this in a kind of compulsive eroticism (fear of anal injury) or by going into the kissy-pissy state (oral-urethral organization of energy) with the head in contemplation rather than contact.

This balancing act between M1 (head dominated) performance to fulfill the expectations of others and M2 which periodically gives the head relief by forcing the sexual apparatus into a frantic kill or be killed response, pivots on the homosexual character which is typical of this society. The pivot marked in the diagram (Fig. III) represents a kind of safety island between the two fears—breast and penis. The anatomical man or woman unconsciously puts a breast or a penis on the homosexual partner to suit the needs of the state in which the M's (1, 2 & 3) are balanced at the time. This is at least part of the reason why sexual relationships in general are notoriously unstable despite formidable pressure of the rules and regulations imposed by social institutions.

The outcome of the struggle of man to balance the 3 minds which are the focal points of his unwellness, will finally depend on whether or not his bio-social development can be considered researchable by means of the scientific method. The distortion caused by the substitution of performance for self and the consequent denial of genital organization is summarized in abnormal muscular tensions and therefore in the habits of motion used by man as he engages in the social labour process. The social organization in turn consolidates the distorted habits. The bio-social armor is thus unconsciously sustained to resist change in a world where change in both man and society is inevitable.

*To be continued next month*

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*I shall shed tears  
so I say now*

*I shall shed tears  
hanging on the necks of my long-lost loved ones*

*weep for my childhood pain  
search for its happiness*

*howl while the unsevered cord  
strangles all humanity*

*pick my way on tenterhooks  
through the debris that is structures*

*I shall weep, laugh, dance with joy  
as I have painstakingly learnt to do*

*so I say now  
so I say now*

*yet each time I confront you  
oh my maker*

*I become what you made me  
a man, alas, a man*

*joyless, leaden-footed  
unable to give you my sadness*

*which you so well deserve  
which you so well deserve*

*Martin Sivad*