



Toward Personal and World Evolution: Addressing Our Double Crisis

Bernard Phillips^{1*}, Thomas J. Savage², Andy Plotkin³, Sergio M. Sanseverino⁴, Neil S. Weiss⁵

Professor, Dept. of Sociology, Boston University.

*Corresponding Author Bernard Phillips

Professor, Dept. of
Sociology, Boston
University.

Article History

Received: 14.05.2024

Accepted: 21.05.2024

Published: 05.06.2024

Abstract: Our focus is on the double crisis confronting contemporary societies: The first crisis asks us: “How can we hope to live a truly meaningful life before our deaths? Is it possible for us to experience a life full of understanding, joy and personal fulfillment?” The second crisis asks us: “How can the human race possibly survive? Are we all doomed to an actual death delivered by threatening yet unsolved problems?” Solving the first one yields the basis for solving the second one. It is the further development of the individual that is the basis for the continued evolution of society. This paper has an introduction followed by three sections. The first, Our Double Crisis, describes the nature of our two fundamental problems, derived from our bureaucratic way of life. This is followed by Learning to Play the Game of Life, focused on the first crisis. It emphasizes the East-West strategy, an approach anyone and everyone can learn to use, but requiring considerable time and effort to learn. It yields continuing personal development or evolution, building on the Buddha’s problem-solving procedures coupled with an interdisciplinary science of human behavior. We conclude with a section centered on the second crisis called Constructing the Future. It is based on studies of the most successful social movements that have occurred throughout Western history. Our overall approach emphasizes an interdisciplinary science of human behavior, with its initial presentation in *Creating Life Before Death: Before Disaster Strikes the Ship of State, 2nd edition*. We focus on an extremely general or paradigmatic approach to understanding the way of life of contemporary societies, and pointing toward solving personal and world problems.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, paradigm, sociology, crisis, interdisciplinary, game, evolution.

Cite this article:

Phillips, B., Savage, T. J., Plotkin, A., Sanseverino, S. M., Weiss, N. S., (2024). Toward Personal and World Evolution: Addressing Our Double Crisis. *ISAR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(6), 1-10.

Introduction

We see the fundamental problem of the human race at this time in history as the double crisis stated on page 1 of our just-published book at Amazon: *Creating Life Before Death: Before Disaster Strikes the Ship of State*, 2nd ed.

The first crisis asks us: How can we hope to live a truly meaningful life before our deaths? Is it possible for us to experience a life full of understanding, joy and personal fulfillment?

The second crisis asks us: How can the human race possibly survive? Are we all doomed to an actual death delivered by threatening yet unsolved problems?

Granting the incredible depth of these problems, we are absolutely convinced that we human beings can solve them. Our direction for a solution is stated on page 3:

Addressing our double crisis, people have failed to understand that a direction for resolving the first one, achieving a meaningful life, can yield a solution for the second one, solving our escalating problems. It is the further development of the individual that is the basis for the continued evolution of society. Attention must be paid to the individual’s awesome possibilities for continuing to

grow intellectually, emotionally, and in problem-solving abilities throughout life.

This is a solution that has been ignored throughout the academic world as well as by the mass media and the self-help movement. Yet it is the focus of this paper.

We intend to sketch just how any and all individuals can achieve continuing intellectual, emotional and problem-solving evolution throughout their lives. Equally, we will outline how such development will succeed in addressing world problems. And we will back up these ideas with both an extremely wide range of published knowledge as well as an equally wide range of personal experiences ranging far beyond ourselves. Some of these works will be referenced in this paper, with most appearing in our 2nd edition.

We plan to use the ideas in this paper as a basis for initiating nothing less than a worldwide evolutionary social movement. We’re using the metaphors of “head,” “heart” and “hand” to help explain the full range of the individual’s potentials. We will be working to place in the hands of ever more individuals these tools: an interdisciplinary science of human behavior (“head”), a technology for applying that knowledge to make progress on the mundane problems of everyday life (“hand”), and a clear direction for achieving emotional development (“heart”). Our website,

sociological imaginationpublishing.com, will become a free international school.

An ancient Japanese proverb suggests our overall approach to addressing the double crisis: “Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare.” This suggests our own new proverb: “Vision with action yields personal and world evolution.” Phillips provides an illustration:

As a pre-med student at Columbia University, a fellow varsity tennis team member suggested that I check out a course being given by a new faculty member of the Sociology Department by the name of C. Wright Mills.

I arrived in his classroom on the second floor of Hamilton Hall, where his students were looking out the windows awaiting his arrival. Soon we heard the roar of a motorcycle, and there he was, a big man wearing a coonskin cap with its tail waving in the breeze.

I was a youngster with East-European immigrant parents who were unable to prepare me for growing up in America. I was bullied in schoolyards, was largely unsuccessful in my social relationships, was ignorant of contemporary culture, and had little self-confidence. I was also conforming to my Jewish mother’s wishes that I become a doctor.

I was completely taken by Mills, for he was by far the most impressive teacher I’d ever had. In place of the measured and gentle speech of a professor, he came across to me more like a kick-ass Marine drill sergeant. Intellectually, he carried forward the broad vision, disciplined approach and problem-solving orientation of sociology’s founders. This contrasted sharply with the narrow specialization and helplessness about contemporary problems of his colleagues, a situation that has continued to worsen since Mills’ time. Indeed, I see it as nothing less than a betrayal of the wonderful ideals of Comte, Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Simmel, the founders of sociology.

As a result of his influence I became another kind of doctor, attempting to cure not biological ills but the crises of society. My mother would later say, ‘Well, he’s not a real doctor?’

Yet it was one thing for me to admire Mills’ confidence and quite another thing for me to gain the confidence that I admired. Over a decade afterwards, when I found myself on the same plane with Mills, I was too shy to introduce myself. This should be a lesson for all of us about the difficulty of moving toward a more confident self-image.

What I also admired was Mills’ interdisciplinary antidote for the mindless narrow and ever narrower specialization I saw throughout sociology. Shortly after that plane episode, Mills published *The Sociological Imagination* (1959). This book was later rated by the International Sociological Association as the second most influential book for sociologists that appeared during the entire 20th century, with the first written by Max Weber, a founder of the discipline. Its broad reach is illustrated by this quote: “The sociological imagination . . . is the capacity to shift from one perspective to another—from the political to the

psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world.”

Over the years we have been working to build on Mills’ vision of an interdisciplinary approach to understanding human behavior in the hands of the individual, by contrast with contemporary trends. Equally, we have centered on the commitment by Mills and sociology’s founders to actively move toward helping to solve local and world problems. In this article we present our own approach. We will now follow our own proverb: “Vision with action yields personal and world evolution.”

Up to now we have neither done more than touch on the nature of our double crisis, nor have we done more than introduce our approach to solutions. We shall now proceed to elaborate on both our problems and how we propose to solve them.

Holding together the threads of our overall approach will be the long-term experiences of Bernard Phillips. Yet what he encountered throughout his life mirrors what the rest of us experience from one day to the next. Just as he managed to emerge from personal and world problems to both envision and actuate movement toward an evolutionary way of life, so can the rest of us learn to do the same.

Our Double Crisis

Our first crisis suggests that, unless there are basic changes in the individual, we all will die while having fulfilled no more than a fraction of our capabilities. Einstein, FDR and Shakespeare do not get a free pass here, granting all their accomplishments, for they join the rest of us in having been limited by the same way of life we all encounter.

This idea of unfulfilled potentials was captured in the song, “Is that all there Is?”, made famous by Peggy Lee, which includes this stanza:

Is that all there is

Is that all there is?

If that's all there is my friends

Then let's keep dancing

Let's break out the booze and have a ball

If that's all there is

A new world of continuing personal fulfillment awaits every single one of us. But we must begin by coming to understand the forces keeping us in an “iron cage,” the idea coined by the sociologist Max Weber in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1958).

Most of us are at least dimly aware of **the second crisis, which is nothing less than the end of the human race, whether as the result of World War III with nuclear weapons, disastrous climate change which continues to be largely uncontrolled, biological warfare which could wipe out entire populations, or some other catastrophe.** Yet few of us pay serious attention to these possibilities, perhaps because our leaders have failed to develop effective strategies for avoiding impending disaster.

However, we can turn to the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* for a realistic assessment of the dangers we all currently face. It

was founded in 1945 by the University of Chicago scientists who had helped develop the first nuclear weapons in the Manhattan Project.

The Doomsday Clock is a metaphor for how close humanity is to self-annihilation. Ever since 1947 it has been set every year by the 22 members of the Bulletin's Science and Security Board in consultation with its Board of Sponsors, which includes 11 Nobel laureates.

As for the position of the clock in 2024, on January 23rd it was set at 90 seconds to Midnight, the metaphorical end of our species, the same time as the setting for 2023. The Board took into consideration "multiple global threats, including the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the Russia-Ukraine war, the Israel-Hamas war, bio threats, the continued climate crisis, and state sponsored disinformation campaigns."

The Board was deeply concerned with how advances in artificial intelligence could create chaos and make it harder to prevent disasters:

AI has great potential to magnify disinformation and corrupt the information environment on which democracy depends. AI-enabled disinformation efforts could be a factor that prevents the world from dealing effectively with nuclear risks, pandemics, and climate change.

This reminds us of a story Woody Allen tells about his never having had a positive relationship with machines. In one particular case, he purchased a television set with a seemingly independent mind. Right in the middle of a favorite program, the TV switched channels. In a moment of uncontrollable frustration, he grabbed a baseball bat and smashed the independent-minded TV into tiny pieces.

Now, Mr. Allen is in an apartment building which had modernized to the extent that all elevators had been automated. You simply told the elevator verbally where you wanted to go, and you were taken to the right floor. But the morning after the incident in his apartment, the elevator asked, "Are you the guy that beat up the TV?" Before Mr. Allen could even respond, the knowing elevator began to take him for a shake-and-bake up-and-down ride, finally tossing him out into the lobby.

Given the fact that world leaders have failed to move the Doomsday Clock back from its position at 90 seconds to Midnight over the past year, and that they've allowed the clock to move this close to our demise, we may assume that they have no real ability to solve world problems. Apparently, then, it is just a matter of time before that minute hand moves to number 12. And we should all be realistic about the coming end of our species.

However, let us recall this sentence from page 1 of this article: "It is the further development of the individual that is the basis for the continued evolution of society." Here is a new and absolutely unique idea. It is neither to be found in the media or the social science literature, nor in any literature that we are aware of.

Is it really possible that we all hold in our hands the potential to change the world? Absolutely! Then why are we not proceeding to solve the world's problems? Because we have developed a bureaucratic way of life, as discussed by Max Weber, C. Wright Mills, and many other sociologists. We have learned from the get-go to see ourselves as insignificant creatures crawling on the

surface of the planet, paying homage to the movers and shakers of the world.

To illustrate further this all-encompassing pattern of behavior, we turn to an experience Tom Savage had at age 7, quoted from pages 3-4 of *Creating Life Before Death*:

A volunteer Sunday school teacher had just told his class the story of the Israelites' escape from Egypt. At the Red Sea, Moses had parted the waters, and the Jews all went safely through. But when Pharaoh with his army and chariots followed in hot pursuit, Moses closed the waters over them.

At that point, Tom jumped up and yelled, "What happened to the horses? Surely God didn't drown the horses!" The poor teacher, sputtering, could offer no defense. Tom would not calm down, for he believed in an all-powerful and all-righteous God, and he would not tolerate a teacher who dared to stray from those beliefs. The result, however, was that Tom became perhaps the first kid ever to be kicked out of Sunday school.

Tom had uncovered three key components of our bureaucratic way of life: Patterns of (1) persisting hierarchy, (2) personal conformity to the powers that be, and (3) narrow specialization without integrating knowledge.

What Tom also achieved with his outburst was nothing less than illustrating how to confront effectively that way of life: He dared to (1) question authority, (2) develop his own understanding, and (3) move beyond the simplicity or narrowness of the ideas of authorities, as illustrated by the good-evil biblical story.

Let us clearly note that individuals in all societies are more like those Sunday school students who remained in their seats, by contrast with Tom. We all have conformed throughout our entire lives to patterns of hierarchy coupled with very narrow specialization, illustrated by the specialized occupations we have chosen for our patterns of work.

And it is these bureaucratic patterns of behavior that have placed us all in the iron cage Weber discussed, where we fail to open up to our incredible potentials as human beings. As for just how this can yield the devastating world problems we're all now experiencing, we turn once again to our book for some illustrations:

Recall the 9/11 disaster at the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Specialized knowledge about the potential for that catastrophe was learned by the CIA, FBI, State Department and NSA. Yet there was no sharing among those organizations, which had developed patterns of isolation from one another.

We had the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger due to an O-ring failure. In all likelihood, the O-ring would have been fixed if employees in different departments had pooled their knowledge with one another. Also, employees might well have notified management of the O-ring problem if hierarchical relationships had not severely limited such communication. . . . (p. 7).

We in the U.S. like to think that we are the shining city on a hill, an example of a great democracy that the world can admire and emulate. Yet the most recent decade has shown just how bureaucratic we are along with the rest of the world. Of course, we are more democratic than China, Russia, Cuba, Venezuela, Hungary, North Korea, and many other places, but we are still basically bureaucratic.

The eminent sociological theorist Jonathan H. Turner—who wrote the foreword to the first edition of *Creating Life Before Death*—examined the origins of our bureaucratic way of life in his recent book, *On Human Nature: The Biology and Sociology of What Made Us Human*. When our ape ancestors were forced to come down from the trees in Africa because of their eroding foliage, their two-legged bodies were no match for the power and speed of four-legged predators. They learned over time to band together to form groups which succeeded in protecting themselves, and the result would eventually be understood as a bureaucratic way of life.

Bureaucracy points us outward rather than inward, resulting in our becoming invisible to ourselves. As a result, we lose any direction for fulfilling our own potentials. For us, loving others is a fundamental value we have, versus loving both self and others. The result is that we fail to understand our true potentials, and we fail to work toward developing them into actualities.

It is this very outward orientation that has led to what the Buddha saw, some 2500 years ago, as being the central problem of the human race. Gautama Siddhartha Sakyamuni, the Buddha, was one of the greatest social scientists who ever lived. He saw our basic problem as the frustration linked to the divide between what we want and are actually able to get, or between our goals and ability to fulfill them. Such frustration not only leads to unhappiness: it also ends in aggression.

If the negative feelings linked to this gap were indeed society's basic problem in the Buddha's time, there is substantial evidence that it is increasing in our own time. Phillips' book with Louis Johnston, *The Invisible Crisis of Contemporary Society* (2007), surveyed the work of seventeen authors from the fields of sociology, literature, education, philosophy, psychiatry, law and mass media. The conclusion of sixteen of these authors? "The gap between aspirations and their fulfillment is in fact increasing in contemporary society."

This increasing aspirations-fulfillment gap of people throughout the modern world is the key basis for understanding why societies have recently moved away from democracy toward authoritarianism, for such increasing frustration leads to increasing aggression. Because of its invisibility and interdisciplinary nature, this analysis is completely absent from the academic world or the mass media.

Phillips' doctoral student at Boston University, Jack Levin, illustrated this process in the experiment which was the basis for his dissertation. He deeply frustrated his experimental subjects, who were his students in Introductory Sociology, by failing all of them in a phony aptitude test for graduate school. The result was that most students increased their prejudice against a minority group, based on before-and-after measurements on a standard test.

As for the cause of this invisible crisis, it appears to be the continuing technological developments of contemporary society, as

documented in our book. For example, technology is yielding ever more products that people are learning to desire as the result of advertising, which is also based on new technologies. The historian David Boorstin has described the result:

We expect the contradictory and the impossible. We expect compact cars which are spacious; luxurious cars which are economical. We expect to be rich and charitable, powerful and merciful, active and reflective, kind and competitive. We expect to be inspired by mediocre appeals for "excellence," ...to eat and stay thin, to be constantly on the move and ever more neighborly...to revere God and to be God. Never...have a people felt more deceived and disappointed. For never has a people expected so much more than the world could offer. (1961: pp. 3-4, 6)

Reader, you might wonder how Phillips managed to succeed in uncovering the nature of our bureaucratic way of life as a basis for developing an alternative evolutionary way of life., granting its invisible nature. Here is his response:

My focus on our bureaucratic way of life by contrast with an evolutionary **paradigm** or pattern of behavior has to do with my beginning to learn just how human languages work. The importance of language is well illustrated by the difference between an Air Force officer's using the words "lunch" and "launch."

I was alerted to learning more about language by a passage in C. Wright Mills' *The Sociological Imagination*: "every self-conscious thinker must at all times be aware of—and hence be able to control—the levels of abstraction on which he is working. The capacity to shuttle between levels of abstraction, with ease and with clarity, is a signal mark of the imaginative and systematic thinker" (p. 34).

I took Mills' approach a step further by moving up language's "levels of abstraction" as far as possible until I finally reached the extremely abstract or **paradigmatic** idea of bureaucratic versus evolutionary ways of life. For these ideas are sufficiently general or abstract so as to include the full range of human behavior. Further, when we move down the levels or "ladder" of abstraction, we can include specific aspects of general ideas, e.g., moving from patterns of hierarchy to prejudice against blacks.

I might add that Andy Plotkin, my doctoral student at Boston University, did his doctoral dissertation, "**Toward the Measurement of Paradigms**," on language's extremely abstract ideas or paradigms. By so doing, he made visible what is almost invariably invisible, namely, our way of life.

It is the above abstract analysis of our bureaucratic way of life which helps us to understand how to move toward an alternative way of life, which is the focus of the next section, centering on the first crisis, and the section to follow, focusing on the second crisis. And it is the work of C. Wright Mills once again that will help us to make this journey.

Learning to Play the Game of Life

The development of one's "head," "heart" and "hand" are all required for one to make progress on the first crisis, namely: **How can we hope to live a truly meaningful life before**

our deaths? Is it possible for us to experience a life full of understanding, joy and personal fulfillment?

As for “heart” or one’s emotions, you must be genuinely committed to the idea that you are presently fulfilling no more than a fraction of your potentials, and that you can gain the potential for reversing this situation. In other words, the above section of this article on our double crisis must not be thrust in the background, but must be an active motivation for your momentary behavior.

However, there is absolutely no way you can accomplish this deeply negative yet realistic view of the future without developing optimism about the possibility of changing that future. Thus, you must begin to buy into not only your own potential for continuing personal development but also the potential for you and others helping societies move that minute hand of the Doomsday Clock backward.

Concerning “head” or one’s intellect, the key to gaining this required optimism is your learning what does not presently exist: an incredibly powerful interdisciplinary science of human behavior. *Creating Life Before Death* takes a big step in the direction of presenting that science, and this article presents the core of those ideas.

With respect to “hand” or actions, it is your moment-to-moment behavior that can and must release your astounding potentials, just as your authors are presently experiencing. For a very brief example, Phillips has recorded in a notebook he carries these illustrations of personal evolution: “cutting my own toenails rather than arranging for a pedicure; recording these instances of my development; feeling satisfaction about my mundane achievements; closer relationship with family members illustrated by long phone calls; holding my watering can more vertically so that I water our plants in a shorter time; resting when I feel tired, versus slow actions based on tiredness; driving more slowly so that I can smell the roses as well as avoid accidents; drinking more water on a regular basis; making only one copy of many documents rather than two, for that second one gets in the way of making use of documents; asking guests to pick up their own food from the dining room rather than me doing it for them, etc.”

Reading the material in this article will by no means enable you to solve the first crisis, for that will take a great deal of effort over a substantial period of time. Bear in mind that we’ve all spent a lifetime learning how limited we are. Yet it may motivate you to make the efforts required, as outlined in this article, to address the first crisis successfully.

To help you learn an interdisciplinary science of human behavior and gain the basis for personal evolution, recall the Levin experiment, very briefly discussed a few pages above. Most of the students who were frustrated acted aggressively. But some did not. What prevented them from doing so? By learning that, we will also begin to learn how to address the first crisis.

Near the beginning of a course in Introductory Sociology, Levin’s students were given a standard questionnaire measuring their degree of prejudice against Puerto Ricans. They also indicated whether they compared their grades with those of other students by contrast with their own previous grades.

Much later, after they’d forgotten what they’d previously written on those questionnaires, they were severely frustrated by

failing a phony aptitude test for graduate school. Very soon after, they were given the same questionnaire on their attitudes toward Puerto Ricans. Most of the students, who compared their grades with others, increased their degree of prejudice. Students comparing their grades to their own previous grades did not.

We can assume that the latter students were more deeply committed to personal development than the former students. They had taken a step toward personal evolution with a focus on their own personal improvement. And this is exactly what you can learn to do in ever more situations.

Contemporary culture teaches all of us that loving others is “the answer,” the solution to the world’s problems. What we are teaching is that loving self no less than others is absolutely essential for the individual and society as a whole if we are to solve personal and world problems.

Rabbi Hillel wrote, “If you are not for yourself, who will be?” Our present bureaucratic way of life teaches us, instead, to largely ignore the self and look outward what is supposedly important in life. As a result, we become invisible to ourselves and neglect the fulfillment of our own potential for continuing personal evolution.

It’s time now to move beyond the general idea of personal evolution into “how to do it.” **The best example of what we have in mind focuses on the individual’s continuing intellectual development (“head”) rather than one’s overall development, which must include emotional (“heart”) and action or problem-solving evolution (“hand”) as well.**

You might have guessed that it was none other than C. Wright Mills who developed procedures for one’s continuing development of the mind. His approach was recorded in the Appendix to *The Sociological Imagination*. Although his focus was on graduate students of sociology, his ideas can apply as well to the rest of us. His focus on the development of the individual is the same as our own approach in *Creating Life Before Death*. Here are the key aspects of his approach in his own words:

The most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community . . . do not split their work from their lives . . . they want to use each for the enrichment of the other. Of course, such a split is the prevailing convention among men in general . . . Scholarship is a choice of how to live as well as career . . . the intellectual workman forms his own self as he works toward the perfection of his craft . . .

But how can you do this? One answer is: you must set up a file . . . Many creative writers keep journals, the sociologist’s need for systematic reflection demands it . . . One of the very worst things that happens to social scientists is that they feel the need to write of their plans on only one occasion: when they are going to ask for money for a specific piece of research . . . A practicing social scientist ought periodically to review ‘the state of my problems and plans.’ . . .

A widespread, informal interchange of such reviews of ‘the state of my problems’ among working social scientists is . . . the only basis for an adequate statement of ‘the leading problems of social sciences.’ . . . In such a community . . . Three kinds of interludes . . . about future work . . . on **problems [heart], methods [hand], theory [head]**—

ought to come out of the work of social scientists [195-198].

Mills' Appendix points squarely toward progress on our double crisis. For example, he indicates in the first quoted paragraph above that the split between one's work and life is "the prevailing convention among men in general." Lying behind that sentence is his very deep critique of our present way of life, developed over his entire life. A similar profound criticism was the focus of the previous section of this article, "Our Double Crisis."

Mills' advice is based on his having developed such a perspective, which he gained after a lifetime of experiences. In our view it would be quite difficult for readers to follow his advice without undergoing similar personal experiences over a long period of time. This is exactly why we've stated that simply reading this article generally will not enable the reader to follow our advice, but it can motivate you to work over a period of time to undergo experiences similar to this of your authors.

As a follow-up to the present article, see our website, sociologicalimaginationpublishing.com, for a workshop in Sarasota, Florida, to begin in early January, 2025, linked to YouTube, and continuing once a week for fourteen weeks. Readers can interact with what they see by sending their comments to bernie@behavioral-scientists.com. We will do our best to respond the following week to as many of these comments as possible.

Mills continues his profound critique of contemporary social scientists when he claims that they write of their plans only when they apply for grants. Yet, from his and our perspective, they should all be planning on a continuing basis. What Mills points toward is nothing less than one's own continuing development. Although his focus is on sociology students, we take his ideas a step further by including the rest of humanity.

Note, in Mills' third quoted paragraph, his focus on the importance of one's work on **problems [heart]**, **theory [head]**, and **methods [hand]**. **Mills hit the jackpot with that approach, which is exactly what we see as the game of life we can all learn to play to move in a continuing evolutionary direction. It invokes the full range of actions we all engage in from one moment to the next throughout our everyday lives.**

For example, the problem **[heart]** I'm now addressing as I write this is not only how to write an article outlining how anyone and everyone can solve the double crisis. At the very same time I'm writing this in the context of a world that is 90 seconds to midnight, where readers generally either repress that situation or else are quite pessimistic about the future of the human race.

Yet my game of life includes my momentary mundane activities as well. For example, included in my breakfast this morning were two glasses of water. Once again, people generally would see that activity as of no general significance. By contrast, the game of life motivates me to see all of my mundane behavior as extremely significant, given a world situation heading all of us toward the very end of our species.

As for theory **[head]**, I saw drinking all that water not only as an aid to my entire digestive system, but also as my movement in an evolutionary direction. Further, I saw that behavior as helping me develop the habit of linking my momentary behavior to a process of personal evolution. And I haven't forgotten that such a

habit will be within the context of worldwide pessimism about the future.

Finally, we come to methods **[hand]**. Taking into account my approach to both heart and head, I actually proceed to drink that water. As I do so, I'm aware of taking one small step in the direction of personal evolution, yet a giant step toward the evolution of mankind.

Of course, all this must appear to readers that I'm splitting hairs, and that drinking that water cannot possibly be of much significance, contrasting with this focus on my playing the game of life. However, let us not forget, for example, the Levin experiment. My approach parallels the inward-outward orientation of the minority of students who did not increase their prejudice against Puerto Ricans after they were frustrated by failing a phony aptitude test for graduate school.

We are now in a position to go back to the future, returning to our earlier discussions in the section of this article on our double crisis and, in particular, to our analysis of (1) bureaucratic versus evolutionary patterns of behavior, (2) the Buddha's approach coupled with the book, *The Invisible Crisis of Contemporary Society*. We will show how these two approaches point squarely toward a heart-head-hand direction which can enable the individual to make progress on the double crisis.

Our earlier discussion of bureaucratic versus evolutionary patterns of behavior can help us understand more fully why we begin our game of life with a focus of heart or emotions. That discussion brought up to the surface, from its unconscious depth, our deep commitment to a way of life that makes us invisible to ourselves. As a result, we are deprived of emotional depth in our behavior, which is absolutely essential for our learning to fulfill our potentials.

However, when we succeed in gaining insight into our bureaucratic way of life, we can become aware of the enormous dangers we all are in, as summarized by the Doomsday Clock. This can become a fundamental basis for motivating our everyday momentary behavior. For what is at stake from one moment to the next is not just our situational goal, but also the future of the human race.

We cannot stress enough both the importance of this insight as well as the near-universal ignorance of its nature. As a result, our motivation throughout our everyday lives becomes sharply limited. A story in *Creating Life Before Death*, experienced by Tom Savage, can help us here:

We turn now to our own story regarding the unanticipated performance of Charles "The Great." Charles Collins was physically a Greek god, and he knew it. But this was the early 60s with its biases and prejudices. And Charles was hampered by two inescapable realities: he was a black man and a rather effeminate gay male. Coupled with this were his rather theatrical delusions of grandeur, and, well, you get the picture.

When a traveling opera company came to present Aida, they needed extras, and Charles, of course, was the first to sign up. The painful yet hilarious episode that followed just has to be told. Student volunteers were to be paid ten dollars a performance for carrying a spear. And a poor

student could have a pretty good meal for ten dollars in the early 60s.

In the Triumphal March scene, Charles could just see how magnificent he would look carrying his spear behind Aida. But, because of his race and color, he was cast as an Ethiopian slave. Charles was not just offended, he was outraged.

Once on stage, however, he took advantage of his big unscripted moment. He had been told to lay prostrate, depicting a slave's subjugation. Instead, Charles rose to his knees, and with hands tightly clasped, his whole upper body dramatically weaving back and forth, Charles began a silent pantomime of a Southern black slave, pleading with Master Jack not to whip him anymore.

The attention of the whole audience was now on Charles, despite the best efforts of the singers who were trying to keep the focus on their own major roles. Charles' antics became so disruptive that the stage manager sent in two Egyptian guards to grab Charles and drag his black ass, as any sixties white Southern sheriff would have called it, off the stage.

At the end of Act II, the lead singers, Aida, Radames and Amneris, came out to take their respective bows, and were greeted with polite applause. Suddenly, out from the side curtain of the stage, burst Charles, who began dancing and prancing about, taking huge and exaggerated bows while at the same time blowing kisses to an audience now on its feet, cheering "Bravo" and "Go, man, go!"

The three lead singers, trying to maintain smiles, exited, but backstage they became furious over the outrage. Who in the hell was this nobody black slave taking away from what should have been their due?

Charles, however, now in his glory, continued to milk the moment, teasing and pleasing his audience for a full five minutes. Charles had thrived in those minutes, and he certainly knew now what it meant to be . . . somebody.

Those cheers illustrate the idea that we are all very much like Charles. We crave the belief that our lives are genuinely meaningful, that we deserve praise for who we are and what we have done. Granting that we do not have the opportunity to milk an audience for applause, those cheers were meant not only for Charles but also for the selves that the audience would have liked to be had they not succumbed to conformity.

Days later, the opera had pretty much been forgotten. But Charles' performance will be remembered forever.

Who among us would have, could have, dared to be so bold? Who has not sought to grasp the brass ring, or capture a moment in time to enjoy such celebrity? Who, except pop artist of Campbell's-soup-can fame, Andy Warhol, will challenge us to embrace our own much-deserved fifteen minutes of fame and glory? Thank you, Charles, for reminding us that when the world demands our obedience and conformity, instead of acting like lost sheep we can rise up to roar like lions (pp. 49-50).

It was not only Charles who seized the moment for emotional expression but also the entire audience, who were on their feet in a rare display of formerly repressed feelings. Think of the concerts we all attend and then follow the norm of sitting quietly with hands folded while the music of a Beethoven or Tchaikovsky envelops the concert hall. Our resulting lack of emotional evolution sharply limits the depths of our motivation for working toward our own development.

What can work toward reversing this situation over time is the development and usage, long enough to develop habits, of what we've called The East-West Strategy throughout one's everyday life, as hinted at in (2) above. It follows the sequence of one's expressing heart, head and hand throughout one's everyday life.

Recall the Buddha's Eastern strategy of reducing one's aspirations-fulfillment gap, and thus limiting one's frustrations throughout one's life. Now we can add a Western strategy of making full use of the time saved to eliminate wasted time in order to fulfill one's incredible capacities as a human being. The result is the East-West strategy.

The Eastern strategy is crucial here for learning to let go of the trappings of our Bureaucratic Way of Life which encompasses our behavior and leaves little time for the personal development that can be achieved with the Western strategy. It is there that we make full use of that time to apply an interdisciplinary science of human behavior to our double crisis: the fundamental problems of self and world.

But there's the rub, for as yet what we have is ever narrower specialization throughout the social sciences, moving ever further away from that interdisciplinary science of human behavior. It is such limited understanding that is much of the basis for our own limited personal development along with a Doomsday Clock moving ever closer to Midnight. Social scientists should be appalled at their betrayal of the visions of the founders of their disciplines to actually solve world problems.

Yet we remain optimistic about our ability to reverse this situation, based on our new book, which is a step toward a science of human behavior.

In sum, how do we begin to learn to play the game of life, making full use of the heart-head-hand approach?

First, learn to have in mind both belief in our present double crisis and an understanding of your ability to continue to improve your behavior throughout your everyday life. This will yield your motivation (heart) to actually move in that evolutionary direction.

Second, for whatever you are presently engaged in accomplishing, apply that idea of belief in your general ability to improve to that particular task (head). For example, for ourselves in this moment it is our ability to communicate more effectively these ideas. But we can envision our improving any of our behaviors whatsoever.

Third, follow through on your motivation (heart) and understanding (head) with action that actually succeeds in that improvement (hand). Use the Eastern strategy to eliminate time wasted on activities that take time away from the time you need for your own personal development. Use the Western strategy to achieve that development.

But we don't stop there, for our approach requires continuing improvement if we are to address successfully our double crisis. For our future behavior, we would apply this three-step approach to ever more of our behavior. Over time we would learn to no longer think of three distinct steps, but simply focus on makings improvements, without consciously being aware of our motivation and beliefs.

The metaphor of an actual sport, such as tennis, can help us explain this approach. Watching tennis tournaments on television, we have become aware not only of the complete involvement of players in doing their very best in their efforts to win every point. Very often they claim at the end of a match their desire to improve their game.

Our approach is simply to continue those efforts, applying them to the full range of our behavior.

Another metaphor which can also help us convey this idea of continuing personal development or evolution has to do with what happened in Japan after World War II, as outlined in *Creating Life Before Death*:

We have an example of such personal evolution from the rapid reconstruction of German and Japanese industry following World War II, financed by America's Marshall Plan. Focusing in particular on Japan, what developed throughout their companies was a culture of continuous improvement, where all employees no less than management were actively involved.

They developed the idea of "kaizen" or "continuous improvement." The idea of *kaizen* was accompanied by both emotional commitment to this idea as well as actual improvement. This approach was by no means limited to long-term projects. An improvement could take place within a few hours or a day. *Kaizen* includes both the reorganization of an entire area of production as well as the improvement by an individual of his or her own work.

Crucial to the achievement of *kaizen* was the use of the scientific method by workers and administrators, and not just by professional scientists. A central figure in helping the Japanese make use of that method throughout the workday was William Edwards Deming, an American engineer, statistician, professor, author, lecturer, and management consultant with a background in mathematical physics.

As a result, Japanese products experienced a metamorphosis from cheap throwaways to extremely high quality, as illustrated by the worldwide purchases of Toyota cars. The Emperor of Japan awarded Deming the Order of the Sacred Treasure in 1960, and an annual Deming Prize was set up. In the U.S., President Ronald Reagan honored him with the National Medal of Technology, and the National Academy of Sciences presented him with the Distinguished Career in Science award (p. 13).

Employing the *kaizen* idea to Japanese industry proved to be extremely important in helping to yield an economic recovery. It demonstrated people's abilities to make substantial improvements at work.

Our own approach carries forward this idea of continuing improvement to the full range of one's behavior throughout one's everyday life. The result will be nothing less than addressing the first crisis we all face. We turn now to our second crisis: "How can the human race possibly survive? Are we all doomed to an actual death delivered by threatening yet unsolved problems?"

Constructing the Future

Our focus is on an article by Lawrence Busch (1976) which was summarized in Bernard Phillips' *The Invisible Crisis of Contemporary Society*, 2007. Its title: "A Tentative Guide to Constructing the Future." The article was based on Busch's doctoral dissertation (1974), which in turn centered on the 2-volume book (1961) by the Dutch sociologist and futurist, Fred L. Polak, followed by a 1-volume translation (1973). Busch later became President of America's Rural Sociological Society.

Polak, a well-known futurist, had unearthed the characteristics of successful social movements throughout the entire history of Western society. His efforts, based on a lifetime of study, emphasized an interdisciplinary approach to understanding basic changes in society as a whole.

Busch states a precondition for a successful image of the future: "A crisis must be widely perceived in the existing order," for the crisis is the felt problem that an alternative image of the future is put forward to solve, just as the scientific method starts with a problem and then is oriented to solving it. Here, then, is Busch's list of his 7 characteristics of a successful image of the future:

- 1. An image of the future must be holistic if it is to achieve wide-spread acceptance**
- 2. A successful image of the future must provide the promise of the resolution of the anomalies and contradictions of the existing order**
- 3. The future must be constructed in the present, not the future**
- 4. A successful image of the future must provide an escape from the existing order, but it must find that escape within the existing order itself**
- 5. A successful image of the future must provide an operationalizable methodology for the individual**
- 6. All successful images of the future are structured**
- 7. A meaningful image of the future must involve the mundane**

From our perspective, given the rise of autocracies throughout the world and the threats to democracy in the United States, I believe that we in this country are indeed in a state of crisis. Recall for example our discussion of the Doomsday Clock reading 90 seconds to Midnight. Recall as well the wars in the Ukraine and Israel, as well as the threats from North Korea and the commitment of mainland China to invade Japan.

Busch's first criterion for a successful image of the future is this: **"1. An image of the future must be holistic if it is to achieve widespread acceptance."** Given the fact that our overall approach includes the development of an interdisciplinary science

of human behavior, following the lead of sociology's founders as well as Mills, our approach satisfies this condition.

A Taoist story can illustrate the limitations of narrow specialization and the importance of integrating knowledge of human behavior. A group of blind men hear of a strange animal, called an elephant, which has been brought into their town. They are curious about the nature of this animal, and so they begin to look for it.

When they finally find the elephant, they all use their hands to grope about it. One of them, whose hands land on the trunk, says, "This being is like a thick snake." Another, who touches the elephant's ear, claims that the animal is like a fan. As for another, who touches its leg, claims that the elephant is like a tree-trunk. The blind man who places his hand on the elephant's side, says, "The elephant is a wall." Yet another who feels its tail describes the elephant as a rope. The last one feels its tusk and states, "The animal is like a spear."

Each of the six blind men was completely correct on the basis of what he experienced, yet none of their conclusions came close to describing what an elephant really looks like.

This is much the same as what specialized social scientists experience, given their failure to integrate their knowledge. The result of their failure is a matter of life and death for the rest of us. For if such investigations fail to help us understand the nature of our highly threatening and increasing problems, then those problems will do us in. Yet by integrating knowledge, we avoid the problem encountered by the blind men.

Let us now examine Busch's 2nd criterion: **"2. A successful image of the future must provide the promise of the resolution of the anomalies and contradictions of the existing order."**

We now recall our statement on page 3 of *Creating Life Before Death*: "Addressing our double crisis, people have failed to understand that a direction for resolving the first one, achieving a meaningful life, can yield a solution for the second one, solving our escalating problems. It is the further development of the individual that is the basis for the continued evolution of society.

"Attention must be paid to the individual's awesome possibilities for continuing to grow intellectually, emotionally, and in problem-solving abilities throughout life. Each one of us, and not just professional scientists, has the possibility of learning to make use of the full power of the scientific method. Each one of us, and not just English professors, can learn to fully harness the enormous powers of language."

We now consider Busch's third requirement for a successful image of the future: **"3. The future must be constructed in the present, not the future."** Our approach can be illustrated by "Catspaw," a science fiction episode from the original Star Trek series, presented in James Blish's *The Star Trek Reader* (1976).

When Captain Kirk, Spock and McCoy beam down to a planet that is supposedly in trouble, they are met by a being in the shape of a woman who appears to be all-powerful, including possessing the ability to destroy the Starship Enterprise. Yet Kirk manages to destroy her wand, and suddenly her appearance changes to that of a helpless worm.

This story illustrates the fact that our momentary perceptions shape our behavior. And we can change those perceptions, destroying the wand of blind commitment to a bureaucratic way of life, and freeing ourselves to envision and move toward an evolutionary way of life.

Here is Busch's fourth requirement: **"4. A successful image of the future must provide an escape from the existing order, but it must find that escape within the existing order itself."** This is exactly what our East-West strategy requires: a focus on what we all do now, at this very moment, to move toward an evolutionary way of life.

We must first become realistic and reduce the gap between what we want and are actually able to obtain. Here is the Eastern strategy advocated by the Buddha. The focus in this approach is on the small everyday commitments we've all made that take up all our time every single day. Somehow we must find ways to sharply reduce the time spent on them.

That will free us for the Western strategy involving the big picture of the basic meaning of our lives. Why are we existing if not to fulfill our incredible potentials? It is here that the painter learns to move toward painting the masterpieces that he or she dreamed might well emerge from his or her paintbrush. It is here that the politician works toward solving the biggest and most threatening problems of the world. It is here that the social scientist works toward fulfilling the dream of developing an incredible science of human behavior.

Yet even beyond these specialized activities, it is here that the ordinary individual works toward becoming, with the aid of an interdisciplinary science of human behavior, the Renaissance man or woman that is the birthright of every single human being who walks the planet. In this way the individual will continue to raise both aspirations and their fulfillment, moving far behind the achievements we've all dreamed of but thought were impossible.

Another story from the original Star Trek television series can illustrate this process. The episode, "Where No Man Has Gone Before," presented in *The Star Trek Reader* (1976), has the Starship Enterprise moving out of our galaxy and, as a result, experiencing a violent electronic storm that temporarily disables the ship. At the same time Visiting Lieutenant Commander Gary Mitchell is seized by the storm, falls to the ground with his eyes turning silver, and then is reborn as the most powerful being in the galaxy. Intellectually, emotionally, and in his ability to solve problems, he increases his performance from one moment to the next. This is what we believe is possible for every single one of us, although perhaps not at the rate achieved by Mitchell.

As a result, he becomes an increasing threat to the Enterprise, for he follows our bureaucratic way of life by moving toward dictatorship, just as movements presently occurring around our own world. When he uses his power to strike Captain Kirk but is finally contained temporarily with a hypogun, he shouts, "Fools! Soon I will squash you all like crawling insects." Of course, Kirk finally manages to kill him before he takes over the Enterprise and moves out to bring the galaxy to its knees.

Readers might know of this quote from Lord Acton: "All power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Yet that quote comes directly from the playbook of our present way of life,

as is well illustrated by the dictators in Russia, Cuba, Hungary, China and Venezuela.

The Star Trek story would be quite different in the increasingly democratic world we have envisioned, a world where Lord Acton's quote would be recognized as totally false. For Gary Mitchell would be using his new powers to teach the 430-member crew of the Enterprise to develop their own powers just as he continues to evolve. And that would be a prelude for their doing the same for everyone else in the galaxy.

Busch's fifth requirement is this: **"5. A successful image of the future must provide an operationalizable methodology for the individual."** This is exactly the nature of the East-West strategy. Another way of understanding it centers on the three key elements of every human being: **heart, head, and hand**. Of course, learning to make full use of it is quite difficult, given one's lifetime of conforming to a way of life teaching us our limitations. However, we once come to understand this situation, we can overcome it.

Creating Life Before Death is a tool we're using to move in this direction. And a three-month workshop Phillips is planning, with this tool as its text, will help participants abandon their limited self-images and create an equivalent of those silver eyes of Lieutenant Commander Gary Mitchell, but with an evolutionary way of life in mind.

We examine now his sixth criterion for a successful image of the future: **"6. All successful images of the future are structured."** While the social sciences have succeeded in making a big deal of the power and importance of structures, they've failed to understand that structures are no more than habits at the level of the individual. This is completely understandable, since they've almost completely failed to pay attention to the potential powers of the individual.

What this suggests is that we must change our habits if we intend to move away from bureaucratic to evolutionary ones. Those new habits must range widely over our intellect emotions, and problem-solving actions.

Busch's seventh and final criterion for a successful image of the future is this: **"7. A meaningful image of the future must involve the mundane."** This is exactly what the Eastern strategy calls for: the elimination of time wasted on activities that take the place of our fulfilling our incredible potential as human beings. Recall the very concrete examples Phillips presented above, such as holding his watering can more vertically so that the watering would take less time. We can laugh at its triviality, yet Phillips is not laughing when he gains the time to contribute to this article.

Readers might wish to ask him why he is optimistic about his ability within his planned 3-month workshop to succeed in moving part of his audience to join him on the path toward continuing personal evolution. Here is his response:

My optimism is based on my conviction that I'm presently succeeding in playing the game of life. I'm Lieutenant Gary Mitchell with eyes of silver. But instead of following

Lord Acton, I'm following Confucius, who believed that "It is man who can make the Way great, and not the Way that can make man great." I'm following Francis Bacon, who stated, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province." I'm following Newton's belief: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

References

1. Blish, J. (1976) "Catspaw" and "Where No Man Has Gone Before," *The Star Trek Reader*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 276-322.
2. Boorstin, D. J. (1961). *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. New York: Harper & Row, 3-4, 6.
3. Busch, L. M. (1974). *Macrosocial Change in Historical Perspective: An Analysis of Epochs*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University,
4. Busch, L. (1976). "A Tentative Guide to Constructing the Future: Self-conscious Millenarianism," *Sociological Practice* 1 (Spring 1976), 27-39.
5. Levin, J. (1968). *The Influence of Social Frame of Reference for Goal Fulfillment on Social Aggression*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston, Mass.: Boston University.
6. Mills, C. W. (1959/2000). *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
7. Phillips, B., Savage, T. J., Plotkin, A., Weiss, N. S., Spitzer, M. O., Sanseverino, S. M., & Porter, R., (2024). *Creating Life Before Death: Before Disaster Strikes the Ship of State*, 2nd ed. Sarasota, Florida: Sociological Imagination Publishing.
8. Phillips, B., & Johnston, L. C. (2007). *The Invisible Crisis of Contemporary Society: Reconstructing Sociology's Fundamental Assumptions*. Boulder, Colorado: Paradigm Publishers.
9. Plotkin, A. (1977). "Toward the Measurement of Paradigms." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston: Boston University.
10. Polak, F. (1973). *The Image of the Future*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
11. Polak, F. (1961). *The Image of the Future* (2 vols.). Trans. Elise Boulding. Leiden, The Netherlands: Sythoff.
12. Turner, J. H. (2021). *On Human Nature: The Biology and Sociology of What Made Us Human*. London and New York: Routledge.
13. Weber, M. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons..