



Beyond Bureaucracy

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Abstract: We argue that our bureaucratic way of life, with its focus on hierarchy, narrow specialization and personal conformity, is the basis for increasing personal and world problems that threaten the end of our species. Yet we see a direction for moving toward what we call an evolutionary way of life which promises to enable us to make continuing progress on our problems. That direction includes (1) an understanding of the nature of these two patterns of behavior; (2) movement toward developing an interdisciplinary science of human behavior, and placing it in the hands of the ordinary individual; (3) the spread of what we call an “East-West strategy” that points the individual toward continuing personal development; and (4) moving social structures in a gradational evolutionary direction, based largely on the published work of Fred Polak and Lawrence Busch. We see our ideas as a first step in the direction of such mammoth changes, and we look forward to the further development of these ideas on the basis of new evidence.

Keywords: bureaucracy, emotions, evolution, interdisciplinary, language, paradigm, science, self-image.

INTRODUCTION

Our focus in this article is on responding to the double crisis outlined on page 1 of our previous book, *Creating Life Before Death: Discover Your Amazing Self* (2020). We wrote:

Every single one of us is confronted by a double crisis. 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?

Our overall approach is on helping readers wake up to their own incredible personal capacities to solve problems. We’ve thought that it is only government, or the movers and shakers of the world, who are in possession of such abilities. But we have been wrong. The evidence for this is crystal clear, based on solid publications.

What is not at all obvious is that a solution for the first crisis is the basis for solving the second crisis.

Here we are following George C. Homans’s Presidential address to the ASA, “Bringing Men Back In” (1964). Given the present world situation, the time is long past due for us to become aware of just who we are and what we can and must do: learn how to transform our potentials into powers.

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General, outlined the nature of our problems in his state-of-the-world address on September 19, 2023: “Our world is becoming unhinged. Geopolitical tensions are rising. Global challenges are mounting. And we seem incapable of coming together and responding.”

Guterres went on to cite “dramatic technological disruptions” like Artificial Intelligence, a worsening climate emergency, escalating conflicts, a global cost-of-living crisis that is increasing hunger and poverty, the failure to guarantee the territorial integrity of the Ukraine, the inability to insure that every child gets a quality secondary education, gender inequality, failures to restore peace, and widespread indifference.

Does all this sound familiar? Today we can add to that list the barbaric attack by Gaza terrorists on Israeli civilians followed by the war in Gaza.

What is brand new about the 20th and 21st centuries is that, for the first time in human history, we have developed the power to destroy ourselves. Following the analysis of The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, their Doomsday Clock is now only 90 seconds before Midnight.

Chapter 1 of this article, From a Bureaucratic toward an Evolutionary Way of Life, presents the fundamental or paradigmatic assumptions which define basic alternative patterns of behavior. They yield a stark contrast between outward and inward outward orientations. These two perspectives are worlds apart in their ability to address our mammoth problems, for it is the latter that makes full use of the latent powers of the individual. Potentially we have the powers of Superman and Wonder Woman, but are stuck in the self-image of a Clark Kent or Lois Lane.

Chapter 2, A Science of Human Behavior, is about the extraordinary power of integrated knowledge of human behavior. It points the way toward integrating the thousands of bits and pieces of specialized knowledge. That integration must include one’s feelings or emotions no less than one’s intellect and actions. The biophysical sciences have succeeded in transforming our world, but at the cost of creating weapons of mass destruction. Yet we can

look to a science of human behavior for yielding the basic changes that will keep those weapons in check.

Chapter 3, The East-West Strategy, confronts the gap between people's aspirations and their ability to fulfill them. Some 2500 years ago the Buddha saw this gap as the central problem of the human race. His Eastern strategy was to achieve realism by reducing that gap. The Western strategy makes use of the full power of a science of human behavior in the hands of the individual. It will enable one to continue to raise aspirations and achieve their fulfillment. All this requires nothing less than a transformation of self and society, motivated by an understanding of its necessity.

Phillips's book with his colleague, Louis C. Johnson, *The Invisible Crisis of Contemporary Society* (2007), found the aspirations-fulfillment gap to be increasing in modern society. His two essays in *Contemporary Sociology* (July 2019 and May 2020) called on sociologists to no longer largely ignore the incredible potential powers of the individual. Social scientists can move in this direction by looking to their own potentials no less to those of others, just as Alvin W. Gouldner called for with his idea of a "reflexive sociology" (1970).

We conclude with Chapter 4, *Constructing the Future*. It is based on the Dutch futurist Fred Polak's life-long analysis of the social movements throughout the entire history of Western society (1961, 1973). This monumental work became the subject of the sociologist Lawrence Busch's doctoral dissertation (1974). It is summarized in Phillips's *The Invisible Crisis of Contemporary Society* (2007, 212-217).

Polak and Busch succeed in giving us the range of forces that can successfully move a society beyond a given way of life. Central to their vision is the enormous role played by the individual. One must transform one's mundane or everyday behavior by making full use of a vision of one's possibilities. This requires one to have a methodology promising to help solve the problems of self and society. When such individual development joins with social structures pointing toward the solution of society's problems, fundamental changes become possible.

The question might well be raised as to whether it is really possible to direct a change from an entire way of life by individuals who have been socialized or brainwashed throughout their lives to conform to those patterns of behavior. Phillips and Johnston have drawn this conclusion:

Here we can fall back on the optimism to be found within the history of biophysical science. Once a problem has been brought up to the light of day and been defined scientifically, history indicates that it almost invariably has been solved. That definition of a problem appears to be the most important step in the scientific method. For it motivates the investigator to come up with a solution, and the scientific method furnishes the tools required for moving toward that solution (69).

Beyond this abstract vision, we might do well to see ourselves as voyagers on the Titanic. It's up to us to help turn our ship around and completely change our course before it's too late.

Chapter 1 from a Bureaucratic toward an Evolutionary Way of Life

Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905/1958) saw the Protestant work ethic as creating an "iron cage" for the individual. The result was patterns of hierarchy, narrow specialization and personal conformity, granting many achievements. Such behavior was in no way a new development, but it reinforced and emphasized what had already been going on throughout history.

The Brazilian educator Paolo Freire illustrated this iron cage as it affects students in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970): "The teacher teaches and the students are taught, the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing, the teacher thinks and the students are thought about, the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly, the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined . . . the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the actions of the teacher, the teacher chooses the program content and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it" (59).

The repercussions of this kind of education, where students do not learn to think for themselves and open up to the realities of a given situation, can be absolutely disastrous. We might recall the 9/11 catastrophe at the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Limited knowledge of the impending danger was learned by the CIA, FBI, NSA and State Department, yet that information was not shared among these organizations, given their patterns of isolation.

The bureaucratic patterns of narrow specialization and personal conformity to the requirements of those in power were illustrated then and there, and continue to be the marching orders throughout society. For example, we might think of the limited and often distorted information offered by much of the mass media as once again illustrating what we experienced on 9/11. The poet T. S. Eliot's quote is relevant here: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

Our narrow specialization is well illustrated by our forgetting earlier historical achievements, as emphasized in Arnold Kraft Sherman's "Historical Amnesia: Creating a More Universal Origin Story and Saving Democracy" (2023). Sherman writes: "We damage ourselves by forgetting the wisdom that is our legacy. Our ancestors are not our inferiors."

Can anyone racing to class on a motorcycle wearing a coonskin cap with its tail waving in the breeze provide an alternative to our present way of life? Yes, especially if his name is C. Wright Mills. Mills's vision of developing one's "sociological imagination"—the title of his famous book (1959/2000)—has pointed the way toward empowering the individual with an amazing breadth of knowledge:

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; from the theological school to the military establishment; from considerations of an oil industry to studies of contemporary poetry (7).

It was Mills who convinced author Bernie Phillips to abandon his pre-medical major at Columbia in favor of sociology. It was Mills whose book was rated by the International Sociological Association as the second most influential book for sociologists published during the entire 20th century. And it is Mills who is

revered by sociologists to this very day for charting a path toward solving our problems.

Mills took us part way toward an understanding of the basic problems within present-day society with his interdisciplinary approach. He taught us the importance of integrating knowledge of the many facets of human behavior, given its complexity. Yet it was a philosopher and historian of science, Thomas S. Kuhn, whose *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), published three years after *The Sociological Imagination*, who was able to see more clearly the nature of our fundamental problems.

Kuhn centered on the question of how sciences achieve progress, such as the change from Newtonian to Einsteinian physics. He laid bare the importance of unearthing the basic assumptions or invisible “paradigms” behind a given science. Unless they themselves are challenged and alternative paradigms are advanced, no scientific revolution can occur.

Building on Kuhn’s work, we can move beyond scientific revolutions to changes in the basic structure of society, or cultural revolutions. We can take the next step from Weber’s understanding of the basis of bureaucratic organizations to the paradigm guiding our bureaucratic way of life.

Co-author Andy Plotkin’s doctoral dissertation, “Toward the Measurement of Paradigms” (1977), pointed us in this direction. Plotkin also succeeded in sketching the nature of a post-bureaucratic society (2016).

As a result, we were able to make full use of the combined work of Weber, Mills and Kuhn. This has led to our own analysis of the general forces behind our fundamental patterns of behavior: persisting hierarchy, narrow specialization, and personal conformity.

Up to this point we have outlined the nature of a bureaucratic way of life but have said very little about an evolutionary way of life. We do not pretend to have developed a clear and detailed vision of that alternative. But we do see this entire paper as suggesting a number of its key elements.

We start with a story appearing in *Creating Life Before Death* about co-author Tom Savage, whose background as a Minister and a Sheriff’s Lieutenant led him from pulpit to patrol car. Tom’s Sunday school experience at age 7 sets the stage for our analysis.

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 (3-4).

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.

His achievement made use of all three of the basic elements of human behavior: to illustrate an intellect, or “head” (developing his own understanding), emotions or “heart” (moving beyond a narrow perspective), and action or “hand” (questioning authority). His behavior contrasts with the bureaucratic focus on hierarchy, narrow specialization, and conformity.

We find this same focus on the basic elements of the individual in *The Wizard of Oz* characters of the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Lion. Within the original *Star Trek* TV series, we find it in the characters of Spock, McCoy and Captain Kirk. And we also find it in the work of Jane Addams, the philosopher who founded the discipline of social work. She penned these words in her *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902):

A conception of Democracy not merely as a sentiment which desires the well-being of all men, nor yet as a creed which believes in the essential dignity and equality of all men, but as that which affords a rule of living as well as a test of faith (6).

We can add to all of the above the organization of the six chapters of *Creating Life Before Death*: 1 and 2 center on “head,” 3 and 4 on “heart,” and 5 and 6 on “hand.”

While co-author Tom Savage has given us a young boy’s alternative to our present way of life, we might look to C. Wright Mills for a young man’s vision. He entered Texas A & M College, anticipating a career as an engineer. As a freshman he wrote a letter to the student newspaper protesting the mindless disciplinary oppression undergone by freshmen at the hands of upperclassmen. A rejoinder accused him of a lack of “guts,” to which Mills responded:

Just who are the men with guts? They are the men who have the ability and the brains to see this institution’s faults, who are brittle enough not to adapt themselves to its erroneous order—and plastic enough to change if they are already adapted; the men who have the imagination and the intelligence to formulate their own codes; the men who have the courage and the stamina to live their own lives in spite of social pressure and isolation. These, my friends, are the men with “guts” (Mills, 2000: 34).

We conclude that an evolutionary way of life, whatever its exact nature turns out to be, must yield the development of these three elements of the individual illustrated above.

Given the many kinds of aggression throughout present-day bureaucratic society—whether it be war, terrorism, mass shootings, racism, sexism, ageism, violent crime, domestic violence or bullying—we might wonder whether our vision of an evolutionary way of life points in the same direction. Is it really possible to move toward a different kind of world?

Jack Levin, a doctoral student working with Phillips at Boston University, has provided a tentative answer. We refer to his dissertation, “The Influence of Social Frame of Reference for Goal Fulfillment on Social Aggression” (1968), as “the Levin experiment” when summarized in *Creating Life Before Death* (114-116).

Levin's subjects were 180 freshmen and sophomores in two sections of introductory sociology at BU. At the beginning of the semester he gave them a questionnaire determining (1) whether they compared their grades with other students or with their own previous grades, and (2) their level of prejudice against a minority group, which he used as a measure of their degree of aggression.

Much later in the semester, after the students had long forgotten their responses to that questionnaire, he created an extremely frustrating experience for all the students. He gave them what they deeply believed was an aptitude test for success in graduate school. They had 12 minutes to complete a vocabulary test with 150 difficult words, many of which were fabricated, resulting in the failure of every student. Levin immediately followed up this supposed test with measuring once again the students' degree of prejudice against a minority group.

True to existing studies on the link between frustration and aggression, most of the students—who previously indicated that they compared their grades with those of other students—increased their level of prejudice. But not so the minority who compared their grades with their own previous performances. They illustrated a degree of inward orientation which is central to an evolutionary way of life. For it is that perspective which opens one up to one's own intellectual, emotional, and problem-solving development.

Of course, Levin's is no more than one study. Yet in our times of turmoil and despair, let us be free to dream of a different kind of world where we move away from the pessimism of our era. Looking beyond the individual to the organization of society as a whole, we can make use of images to gain a sense of the contrast between our present way of life and an alternative. We draw a contrast between a bureaucratic see-saw or teeter-totter and an evolutionary stairway.

Riding the see-saw, your focus is outward and narrow, not inward and outward as well as broad. Further, you are in a win-lose situation with another, rather than a scene where you both can be winners. Also, you can move up only so much, versus being able to continue to rise.

Let us now imagine steps that are wide enough for the entire human race. Further, it moves upward with no limit, and it does not become narrower as it climbs. Also, you can move across the steps and move upward from there, analogous to developing one's abilities in a variety of ways. Still further, you can communicate with others, learning from their experiences and teaching them what you've learned.

These two images exaggerate the differences between alternative ways of life. Yet those very exaggerations can help us to understand the limitations of our bureaucratic patterns of behavior, and they do suggest alternatives.

Given our lifelong experiences within a bureaucratic way of life, we require an extremely effective tool if we wish to change ourselves and society. That tool is nothing less than an incredibly powerful science of human behavior. It is a science that fulfills the vision of Francis Bacon, a founder of the scientific method, who wrote: "I have taken all knowledge to be my province, and "For also knowledge itself is power." In Chapter 2 we shall examine the nature of that tool.

Chapter 2 A Powerful Science of Human Behavior

We take seriously Bacon's orientation to the full breadth of human knowledge by beginning with attention to the entire known physical universe. Whatever else is true about its nature, it is an interactive universe. For it is impossible to completely isolate any element of it from the rest of the universe. This makes for complexity, since we cannot fully understand any element of the universe without taking into account that interaction.

Turning now to the human being, our invention of oral and written complex languages enables us to interact with others, both living and dead. Also, our many thousands of words enable us to name and explore the full range of our experiences with the entire known physical universe. We humans, and that includes all of us, appear to be the very jewel of the entire world with respect to our interactive capacities. Nothing else that we've discovered comes close to our potentials. And it is those very capacities which are the basis for our continuing to learn throughout our lives.

We might compare this understanding, which points all of us in an evolutionary direction, with the widely-held idea that people vary in their IQ, intelligence quotient, or basic capacity to learn. Not only has no biological basis for that idea ever been discovered. Recent studies—such as David Shenk's *The Genius in All of Us: Why Everything You've Been Taught About Genetics, Talent, and IQ Is Wrong* (2010)—have successfully challenged that idea. Despite all this evidence, our fictional beliefs about IQ continue to persist, for they conform to a way of life emphasizing hierarchy.

Moving from physical to biological structures, we turn now to Jonathan H. Turner's *On Human Nature: The Biology and Sociology of What Made Us Human* (2021). Turner, a widely-known sociological theorist, wrote the foreword to *Creating Life Before Death*. He claimed there that the book "offers an agenda and suggests various strategies for how humans can create and live in modern societies that are more in tune with human nature."

Turner's own book takes us back to the origins of the human race, combining contemporary biological, sociological and psychological research. He manages to isolate our biological heritage from what happened to us afterwards, finding that we are far more individualistic than is generally assumed. It is this very orientation that we can and must build on as we continue to develop our intellect, emotions, and problem-solving ability.

When our great-ape ancestors were forced to the ground as the forests in Africa receded some ten million years ago, they had to develop social ties to protect themselves from powerful and nimble four-footed predators to avoid becoming extinct. The further development of their emotions accelerated this process. The result is that we humans are the most emotional animals on earth. Equally, our biological heritage has given us a large repertoire of interpersonal skills that have proven useful in adapting to diverse environments. Further, our biological ability to utter a wide variety of sounds has made possible our complex languages along with the development of culture.

What Turner finds absolutely appalling is the trashing of our emotional development with reliance on the recent products of physical technology. He writes in his final chapter:

What has emerged, surprisingly, is not devices that enhance interactions among real people, face-to-face, but a series of faux interactions among illusionary people/beasts of video games in an unreal fantasy world.

. . . of supposed “friends” who are prepared to “like” you and your posts until they choose not to like your faux presentations of self . . . And, if this were not enough, many humans have become more attached to their cell phones than real people, and indeed, people are clearly addicted to their phones for the latest news, text, Facebook posts, and just about anything . . . Even in public places people are nose-deep in their cell phone, paying little attention to real people . . . we are animals that are programmed to respond to others in co-presence, not to avoid all interpersonal contact . . .

As I noted in earlier chapters, teenage suicide is at an all-time high in the United States and elsewhere in the modern world; old people feel alone without interaction with their grandchildren and children . . . And this syndrome of addictions to video games, Facebook, texts, faux friends and faux communities is one reason that media societies are filled with unhappy persons . . .

The solution is surprisingly simple: engagement with more people . . . to say hello, engage in small talk, interact in dozens of encounters generating positive emotions each day, and still have the time and energy to engage with personal-talk in high-solidarity friendship and family groupings. And coupled with choice, options, freedoms, and other features of post-industrial societies, an evolved ape like humans can retain a sense of efficacy, individualism, and orientation to communities and beyond (Chapter 12).

Turner is calling for a combination of social and cultural development with the individualistic potentials that are programmed into us as evolved apes. More specifically, he understands our supposed technological advancement illustrated by cell phone usage as stifling our emotional development, and moving away from that is absolutely essential. He sees the result as yielding the human ability to address our present-day mammoth problems.

Fulfilling granting the importance—indeed, the necessity—of Turner’s solution, how can we possibly achieve that solution, or even move in its direction? More specifically, how might we actually turn away from our many negative feelings and toward positive ones, as listed below:

- From pessimism toward optimism
- From hate toward love
- From shame toward pride
- From guilt toward self-acceptance
- From fear toward confidence
- From despair toward hope
- From anxiety toward serenity
- From unhappiness toward happiness
- From boredom toward passion
- From disappointment toward satisfaction
- From sorrow toward joy

Looking toward a solution, we require three developments. First, a powerful scientific method must be placed within the hands of the ordinary individual. This is our focus in the remainder of Chapter 2. Second, we must learn to use that tool throughout our everyday lives, which we treat in Chapter 3. Third, we must proceed to change the structures of society to emphasize the full and continuing development of the individual.

As for that first step, let us examine this idea from the psychologist George A. Kelly:

To a large degree...the blueprint of human progress has been given the label of “science.” Let us then...have a look at man-the-scientist...Might not the individual man...assume more of the stature of a scientist, ever seeking to predict and control the course of events with which he is involved? Would he not have his theories, test his hypotheses, and weight his experimental evidence? (1963: 4)

Building on Kelly’s analysis, what we require in addition to our ability to use the scientific method is the interdisciplinary knowledge that is the basis for a science of human behavior. *Creating Life Before Death* makes a start in this direction.

To illustrate our gaining more knowledge of the individual, including the researcher, there is the idea of a “reflexive sociology,” put forward by the widely known sociological theorist Alvin W. Gouldner in his *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970). Here, the sociologist does research on his or her own life no less than on others. This can also yield an advance in methodology, for it enables researchers to assess “investigator effect,” or their impact on those under investigation.

Supreme Court Justice Louis C. Brandeis illustrated the power of interdisciplinary knowledge of human behavior by developing a new type of legal document which became known as “the Brandeis brief.” For example, in a 1908 case challenging Oregon’s requirement for employed women to work very long hours, Brandeis’s brief included three pages of legal citations and over a hundred pages of articles, governmental reports, and other references presenting the results of social research. These materials demonstrated the importance of a ten-hour limitation on women’s working hours.

As a result, the *Muller v. State of Oregon* case led to the very first Supreme Court decision accepting the legitimacy of scientific research in addition to legal precedents. This approach cleared the way for other decisions, such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954 which desegregated public schools.

If the researcher’s “heart,” emotions or feelings is to be part of a science of human behavior, as implied in Chapter 1, then a fundamental change within social research is required. For social scientists widely believe that such phenomena get in the way of genuinely objective research. This is the doctrine of “value neutrality.”

Yet Chapter 1 above has taught us that this will seriously compromise the research process. A recent collection of the work of eleven contemporary philosophers of social science, edited by the philosopher Harold Kincaid, has addressed this very problem (2007). They concluded that arguments for value neutrality are misleading at best, and may well be destructive.

Just as it is important for the individual to make full use of “heart” in employing the scientific method, let us not forget “head” and “hand”. We can develop our intellect by learning from the importance of the number system, which has been central to the development of the sciences.

For example, we might think of a physician’s asking us to rate our pain level using a number from 1 to 10 as a way of our making use of “gradational” thought. By contrast, it is a focus on “dichotomous” thinking—such as “good” versus “bad”—that is much of the basis for racism, ageism, sexism and ethnocentrism.

Yet dichotomies can be quite useful when coupled with gradation, as illustrated by the dichotomy in this article between a bureaucratic and an evolutionary way of life. We might see, as a dichotomy, these two ways of life as points on the left and right side of a paper. A line suggesting gradation that links those points can indicate movement from one way of life toward the other. Here we have action or “hand”.

Alfred Korzybski, a Polish engineer, not only focused on the importance of gradational thought in his basic book, *Science and Sanity* (1933). He launched a new field of linguistics, general semantics. Among his many students was Samuel Hayakawa, a former Senator from California, who wrote *Language in Thought and Action* (1949). The current journal ETC focuses on the field of general semantics. For a popular treatment of Korzybski’s ideas, readers can turn to A. E. Van Vogt’s two science fiction novels: *The World of Null-A* (1945/1970) and *The Players of Null-A* (1948).

Let us now carry forward the idea of action, building on Chapters 1 and 2. Granting the importance of our contrast between two ways of life, and given the centrality of scientific knowledge as a tool for moving from one toward the other, how does one actually proceed? How does one move gradationally along that line between the poles of a bureaucratic and evolutionary way of life? This is the topic of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 The East-West Strategy

Reviewing where we are in our effort to move beyond bureaucracy, we started in Chapter 1 with a vision of that way of life and an evolutionary alternative to it. We continued in Chapter 2 by outlining the nature of the key tool we need to move in that direction: a powerful science of human behavior in our own hands. In Chapter 3 we shall begin with indicating fundamental problems standing in our way, coupled with a strategy designed to solve them. Chapter 4 will move us from a focus on the individual to attention to the group and society as a whole. Given our aim of changing our entire way of life, we must chart a direction for changing our basic social structures.

Of course this must appear to be an overly ambitious agenda for contemporary societies. Yet we believe that increasing problems throughout the world, with no solutions in sight, call for nothing less. What we should take into account is a new idea: the incredible potentials of every single individual who walks the planet. It is a question of our learning to awaken ourselves from our too-long sleep.

The very basis of our bureaucratic way of life was suggested many years ago by George Gurdjieff, an Armenian philosopher and educator who had traveled extensively throughout the Middle East,

Africa, and Central Asia. P. D. Ouspensky, one of Gurdjieff’s students, recorded and explained his ideas in *The Fourth Way* (1971):

If we begin to study ourselves we first of all come up against one word which we use more than any other and that is the word “I”. We say “I am doing”, “I am sitting”, “I feel”, “I like”, “I dislike” and so on. This is our chief illusion . . . we consider ourselves one . . . when in reality we are divided into hundreds of different “I”s . . .

So in self-observation . . . generally you do not remember yourself . . . because you cannot remember yourself, you cannot concentrate, and . . . you have no will. If you could remember yourself, you would have will and could do what you liked . . . You may sometimes have will for a short time, but it turns to something else and you forget about it . . . we become too absorbed in things, too lost in things . . . (3-4, 12).

Gurdjieff is claiming that we deeply believe that we have unitary selves, illustrated by our frequency of using “I” in our conversations. Actually, however, we have been taught to be outward-oriented individuals who are largely invisible to ourselves. As he said, “we become too absorbed in things, too lost in things.” The result is that our ability to direct “hand” toward our personal development is equally eliminated.

We must take into account our continuing “revolution of rising expectations” for fulfilling external wants that take away from internal emotional development. Emile Durkheim illustrated this idea in his *Suicide*, at a time when the industrial revolution was gathering momentum in Europe: “From top to bottom of the ladder, greed is aroused without knowing where to find ultimate foothold. Nothing can calm it, since its goal is far beyond all it can attain” (1897: 255).

Phillips along with co-author Louis C. Johnston focused an entire book on this gap between our aspirations and their fulfillment: *The Invisible Crisis of Contemporary Society* (2007).

The East-West strategy developed in *Creating Life Before Death* yields a solution to this gap. But first we must learn to respond to Ouspensky’s deep insight into our invisibility. We can begin by making full use of the fact that we perceive phenomena from one moment to the next. But instead of looking outward to conform to external requirements, we can, over time, learn to look to and become aware of ourselves: our bodies, our ideas, our feelings. We can become visible. It is exactly here that our East-West strategy can kick in.

It begins with the Buddha’s Eastern solution, developed some 2500 years ago. To illustrate, a woman’s only son, whom she loved dearly, pleaded with the Buddha to restore him to life. He responded by asking her to bring him a handful of salt from a household that has never experienced death. After going from house to house throughout the entire countryside, she found not a single household where no one had died.

She returned to the Buddha, weeping at her failure, and he replied: “Death comes to everyone, for that is our fate. Go now and bury your son, and fill your heart with cherished memories. Then you shall be free to live your own life, just as your loving son had

wished.” And so can we all free ourselves from unrealistic aspirations by following this Eastern strategy of realism.

Adopting the Western strategy depends on one’s applying a powerful science of human behavior to one’s moment-to-moment behavior. We might think of that science as providing us with a vision of how to fulfill our potentials. Our momentary efforts to address mundane problems are our actions.

An ancient Japanese proverb points exactly in this direction: “Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare.” We must learn to carry forward the vision we learn by following Chapters 1 and 2 into the momentary actions we learn by following Chapters 3 and 4.

Central to this approach to solving personal and world crises is our emotional development. The science of human behavior that we can learn to employ can substitute value commitment for the widespread stance of “value neutrality.” Just as Chapter 1 teaches us, our emotions or feelings are a vital aspect of our behavior.

What, then, is “the East-West strategy”? Let us recall that we begin by responding to Ouspensky’s claim of our invisibility by becoming visible to ourselves. We follow this with an Eastern approach of realism that ties together aspirations and fulfillment, combined with a Western approach where one applies an interdisciplinary science of human behavior to one’s momentary behavior. That Western orientation carries forward one’s emotional commitment to fulfill one’s potentials so as to make progress on personal and world problems.

To illustrate the centrality of our need for personal emotional development in the modern world, we turn to a traveling opera company coming to a town to present *Aida*. You may know the story of an Ethiopian army invading Egypt, but being defeated by the Egyptians. The Egyptians returned in triumph with treasure and Ethiopian slaves.

The company needed extras, and Charles Collins was the first to sign up. He was physically a Greek god, and he knew it, but he was also a black and rather effeminate gay male.

Charles wanted to carry a spear right behind *Aida* herself. But, no. He was type-cast to be an Ethiopian slave, tossed in chains into the middle of the stage, to remain motionless and subdued. But, suddenly, Charles rose to his knees, and with hands clasped together as would have a slave from the old South, begging Master Jack not to whip him no more, his protest was profound!

Not surprisingly, Charles’s antics were stealing the whole show. A shocked and angered stage manager sent in two Egyptian guards to drag his black ass off stage.

At the end of the Act, the singers came out, to be greeted by polite applause. But now Charles burst from the wings, dancing and prancing about, waving and tossing kisses to the audience that was on its feet, cheering “Bravo” and “Go man go!” For five full minutes Charles had his fifteen minutes of fame.

Now we ask you, readers. How many of us would have had the balls to challenge Authority as Charles did? We confess that we wouldn’t have dared. But then, for years society has taught us to behave, be silent, and conform!

Yet there must be more to the East-West strategy if it can actually succeed in countering our lifelong commitment to a bureaucratic

way of life. And as if that isn’t enough, there are the many structures of society pointing in the same direction. Still further, all of our personal relationships have been based on that same way of life.

It is no coincidence that the eminent sociological theorist Jonathan Turner not only has focused on human biology; he has equally centered on our emotional lives. Here are three key propositions he put forward within the covers of *Creating Life Before Death*:

The (Simplified) Law of Positive Emotional Energy: When individuals receive positive sanctions and/or realize their expectations in an encounter, they will experience positive emotions.

The (Simplified) Law of Negative Emotional Energy: When individuals receive negative sanctions and/or fail to realize their expectations in an encounter, they will experience negative emotions.

The (Simplified) Law of Repression and Activation of Defense Mechanisms: When individuals experience negative emotions, they become more likely to protect self through repression that, over time, leads to the intensification and transmutation of the repressed emotions (93).

Turner is referring to three different situations we all experience: (1) We are either praised by others or achieve our goals while interacting with them; (2) we are either put down by others or fail to fulfill our aims in an interaction; and (3) when the second situation occurs, if we repress or fail to become conscious of what has happened, this will have negative consequences for us.

As for the first situation, the reinforcement we obtain from others or ourselves in an encounter can indeed be helpful for our evolutionary journey. But only so long as it does not overshadow our own personal development.

Moving now to the second situation, would you believe that this approach can enable us achieve personal development from such negative experiences? This requires us to recognize what Chapter 1 emphasizes: the existence and power of our patterns of hierarchy, narrow perspective, and conformity. We can learn to see that recognition as an important accomplishment, for it makes visible a problem that we can proceed to solve.

As for the third situation, we can learn to face up to those negative occurrences rather than repress them, and come to see them as a product of our present way of life. As a result, we can become motivated to work toward an alternative pattern of behavior.

But we cannot afford to forget what Ouspensky has taught us that must serve as a prerequisite to our strategy: our movement from personal invisibility to visibility.

Let us now move beyond the social interactions, which are the focus of Turner’s analysis, to consider our emotional experiences in every other aspect of our lives. In the case of the first situation of positive emotional energy, evolutionary movement requires that we move beyond merely fulfilling our responsibilities or limited aims. For those responsibilities and aims are tied to our present way of life.

By contrast, evolutionary movement requires the passion to fulfill ever more of one’s potentials and, by so doing, contribute to the

solution of personal and world problems. Such movement equally requires optimism about the possibility of achieving that solution.

As for the second and third situations, optimism and passion can win the day there as well. For we can believe that we can move toward a better way of life than one where we have learned to put ourselves down rather than blame our way of life. Further, our passion can be joined with knowledge of a science of human behavior so as to yield the solution of our problems.

That optimism and passion which we need in these three situations is a product of our learning to use this same strategy combining realism about our desires and the scientific knowledge necessary to continue to fulfill increasing aspirations. To illustrate how this approach works on a personal level, Phillips gives us this illustration, based on his writing about his experiences in a small notebook he carries.

His two-hour phone conference with Andy Plotkin and Neil Weiss on Sunday yielded discussion of the depth of people's immersion within a bureaucratic way of life. They concluded that an extremely powerful approach would be needed to free the individual from such conformity, and that this would have to be developed.

Phillips awakened at 5 AM on Monday most excited about having come up with a solution. What is desperately needed is the emotional development that is a product of our new strategy. Apparently he had been wrestling with the problem while asleep, and thoughts of his past experiences yielded that understanding.

He then recorded in his notebook headed "Monday, November 6th, 2023" 70 ideas supporting that conclusion. One of them was the simple word "Football." Phillips likes to watch football on TV occasionally. On that Monday morning he realized that it was the passionate commitment of the players and audience to every play of the game that made it so intriguing to watch.

He recalled what had been written in *Creating Life Before Death* about how the New England Patriots, with the help of Tom Brady, had come back from a 28-3 deficit in Super Bowl 51 to a 34-28 victory. It was passion, even more than emotional commitment, that was absolutely essential, the same passion that all of us can learn to develop.

Using the Eastern strategy, he pushed aside other less important tasks on Monday morning to record those seventy ideas. And most of those 70 ideas illustrated the Western strategy's emphasis on science, such as a reference to avoiding value neutrality.

As a result, Phillips worked to emphasize emotional development in the above chapters, just as he frequently changed what he had written. That continuing urge to improve his writing is analogous to what Giacomo Puccini, the giant of opera, experienced with the librettos of his productions, such as *La Boheme*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Turandot*. For he was known as the bane of his librettists, asking them for draft after draft. We might also recall the immense emotional power of Puccini's operas.

Apparently, this new problem-solving approach can point the individual in an evolutionary direction. Granting that individuals can change in these ways, what about society as a whole? And what about the full range of societal structures—in the world of work, education, the political arena, religion, the military, the

family—oriented hierarchically and demanding conformity? Can they be changed as well?

Chapter 4 Constructing the Future

Reader, you might recall from the introduction to this paper the work of the sociologist and futurist Fred Polak, along with Lawrence Busch's doctoral dissertation, in learning the characteristics of the successful social movements that have occurred throughout Western history. Busch responded to Phillips's request for an article. It appeared in a new journal, *Sociological Practice*, that was the offspring of the new Section of the American Sociological Association that Phillips and Donald Gelfand had founded, "*Sociological Practice*" (Spring 1976).

Busch's article, "A Tentative Guide to Constructing the Future," begins with the idea that "a crisis must be widely perceived in the existing order" as a precondition for a successful image of the future. Readers may judge for themselves, based on our above discussion of Guterres's state-of-the-world address, coupled with our own comments about the war in Gaza and the Domsday Clock, whether that precondition actually exists in our world.

Busch focused on the characteristics of the "images of the future" of successful social movements, using the title of Polak's books. We shall list them and then determine the degree to which our own ideas point in those directions:

1. An image of the future must be holistic if it is to achieve widespread 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 (Busch, 1976, 29-35).

1. The breadth of our vision was indicated in Chapter 1 with our focus on nothing less than our entire way of life. Max Weber set the stage with his sociological approach to capitalism, C. Wright Mills continued with an interdisciplinary image of the sociological imagination, Kuhn took us a step further by helping us to understand our movement toward a scientific revolution, and we continued with our image of a cultural revolution and an entire way of life. By contrast, for example, there are 53 Sections of the American Sociological Association and 54 Divisions of the American Psychological Association. Each of them contributes important knowledge, but overall we have a failure to develop what Busch is calling for.

2. We cited what we see as the very deepest problems of contemporary societies on the very first page of this paper. We summarized the world's situation in *Creating Life Before Death* as a double crisis involving fundamental individual and well as

social problems. We continued by citing the UN Secretary-General's outline of specific crises throughout the world, and then we added to his analysis. We advanced three Chapters that we see as addressing those problems. And we are now adding a fourth Chapter, focused on the world situation, which focuses on fulfilling what the analyses of Polak and Busch have discovered about initiating a successful social movement.

3. We are advancing our image of the future at the present time, where we might even see ourselves as located on the Titanic and heading toward the end of our species. It is in the present that we must plant the seeds for a future where we've learned to turn our ship away from that looming iceberg. Our ideas are most relevant to the people who are living at this time in history, and far less to those living in some distant future. As a result, we see it as essential that we develop procedures—such as those making full use of the internet—to send our message out to the entire world. That will also enable us to learn from the experiences of others and continue to develop our ideas.

4. We applaud the achievements of the countercultural movement of the 1960s, which attempted to chart a path for solving the problems of our bureaucratic way of life. Those individuals, largely college students and many of them studying sociology, succeeded both in their broad vision and their emphasis on the importance of emotions. But they retreated from addressing society as a whole to communities spatially remote from the rest of society. And they lacked the knowledge of human behavior that has developed since their time. By contrast, we intend to avoid making those mistakes, especially since we are now able to integrate far greater understanding about the nature of human behavior, and then put it to work.

5. Our methodology, the East-West strategy developed in Chapter 3, makes full use of the understanding of our problems developed in Chapter 1 as well as the tool of a science of human behavior advanced in Chapter 2. Further, we are sensitive to the importance of a widening application of that approach, which is our present concern in Chapter 4. Once again, we see our approach as undergoing continuing improvement on the basis of what will be learned from its employment. And we do not see ourselves as maintaining any future control over the ideas we are advancing. Instead, we expect others to improve them and carry them ever further.

6. We see *Creating Life Before Death* and this article as an initial structure for an approach that helps us all move from a bureaucratic toward an evolutionary way of life. That structure also includes the ideas on our website, behavioral-scientists.com. Our intention is to continue to improve those structures in the future with the aid of others who join what we see as an evolutionary movement. Yet what is crucial for this movement's success is far more than written material or ideas and images on the internet. It is the daily personal habits of ever more individuals making full use of this approach to solving problems. And it is also the social structures which develop as a result, and reach out throughout the world.

7. Let us recall that ancient Japanese proverb: "Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare." We see Chapters 1 and 2 as yielding a vision of a new world, Chapter 3's strategy as wedding that vision to our everyday moment-to-moment behavior, and this Chapter 4 as carrying that vision

outward from individuals to the social structures throughout the world, also impacting biological and physical structures. We are pointing toward a new proverb: "Vision with action yields optimism; action with vision yields passion." We all can move away from present-day pessimism about our future, and develop the passion we need to change the world.

Without losing in the least that optimism and passion, let us recall and emphasize the realism in this paper. Poems by two coauthors can help us here.

Tom Savage's personal journey, you may recall, moved him from theoretical speculation in the pulpit to practical implementation in the patrol car, where he found struggling issues in the real world. He illustrated what he sees as the human condition: In the *Tree of Life*, how like a leaf our lives have been. "The Leaf," suggests how we all have the potential to gift our wealth of experiences to the next generation:

Here am I
Once supple, smooth, alive
Now rigid, course, dying
Soon to drift quietly to the ground where expectant
seedlings Greedily await my life-giving death. Those
gentle breezes who Yesterday fondly caressed me
Now would rip me
From my mother's limbs, sending me
Tumbling down to be trodden under foot
Raked, piled, leaped upon in childhood's delight
Gathered and burned
The wind will aid a few in escape
But all such evasion an illusion
For the decree is quite simple: New leaves from old.
Now, it is my turn
Behold, I am coming
Let all the earth rejoice.

Bernie Phillips wrote the poem, "When I Begin the Ancient Game of Chess." It focuses on the nature of our bureaucratic way of life. And it suggests the motivation he developed, as a result of his work at Columbia with C. Wright Mills, to change the world. Here it is:

When I begin the ancient game of chess
Commanding knights and pawns in bitter strife,
I wonder at the thought that I possess:
How is it with the greater game of life?
Am I a wooden piece which someone moves,
A means to satisfy another's ends?
Do I advance, retreat, in patterned grooves,
A creature of commands another sends?
Perhaps I am a player in the game,
And force the moves of countless other souls
To seek my own fulfillment, fortune, fame,
Ignoring in my quest their secret goals.
The castle falls, the knights remain en pris [exposed],

Besiegers there are none the eye can see.

(Phillips, Summer 1954, 18)

Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was also President of Columbia University when Phillips was an undergraduate, has been attributed to writing these words in 1962: "In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."

We see this entire paper as our planning for a better world, and we see that as essential if indeed we are all to move in that direction. That planning includes the following vision of the future that Phillips developed in a preface to *Revolution in the Social Sciences* (Phillips and Johnston, 2012). But we see specific plans for how to change the different institutions of the world, their impact on the structures of society, and what the world will look like at different stages, as useless at the present time. Here, then, is our vision:

There will be a future for our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren, and their great-great-grandchildren.

One day we will all learn to see ourselves as children who are only just beginning to understand ourselves and our world, and we will also learn to dream about our infinite possibilities and move toward those visions one step at a time.

One day we will all learn to pay close attention to the accomplishments of all peoples throughout history as well as to our own personal accomplishments, and we will also learn to pay close attention to the failures of the human race and to our own personal failures.

One day we will be able to bring to the surface and reduce our stratified emotions like fear, shame, guilt, hate, envy, and greed, and we will learn to express ever more our evolutionary emotions like confidence, enthusiasm, happiness, joy, love, and empathy.

One day we will see peace on earth and fellowship among all humans.

One day we will no longer look down on any other human being.

One day we will all learn to be poets, philosophers, and scientists (xiv).

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