

Some Observations on the Themes of IYY 85 – Part 2

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PARTICIPATION is about young people:

- having the right to make decisions about their own lives and the things that are important to them
- having the skills to make these decisions and carry them through
- having a meaningful say in family, school, work, Government, and in other aspects of their lives. (IYY 85 Brochure)

As the young person moves up the age scale from 12 to 25 it is a reasonable expectation that his or her grip will be tightening on the full range of adult rights and responsibilities. The young person will also be letting go special rights and responsibilities pertaining to childhood. Hopefully this new independence and these new obligations will be welcomed and successful completion of the developmental tasks of childhood and adolescence will leave, more often than not, positive feelings toward self and life in general.

In the discussion on personal development reference was made to the importance of interaction with others in determining many of the outcomes of developmental tasks. The gaining of the knowledge, skills and guiding philosophies of life to achieve physical, intellectual, emotional and social maturity. In this article the emphasis is on the identification of some sets of concepts which describe the social and physical environment. It is intended that it will provide a framework helpful in examining the life space of the individual. That part of the environment which exerts influence on the person and which is subject to the person's efforts as he or she pursues a unique life course. In particular, it is those people and things which contribute to the satisfaction or otherwise of the person's need for identity, stimulation and security. The quality of that contribution significantly effects the empowerment of the individual and the social groups to which the person belongs.

The following scheme has been constructed in the process of listening to things young people themselves regard as important. From this source and the ideas which theorists and researchers most often cite as determinants of behaviour, groups of concepts have been selected. This has been done with the intention of alerting those who work with youth to these influential variables. Workers might therefore be better placed to enable young people to participate in decision making which influences present and future opportunities.

Young people might be better enabled to seek a greater range of available choices when exploring and negotiating

the world around them.

Other writers pursuing a social ecological approach have produced schemes to aid understanding of the environmental influences on behaviour, development, risks and opportunity. (Bronfenbrenner 1979², Moos 1976³, Garbarino 1982⁴, Hobbs 1985⁵). This scheme is not intended as a substitute for the wisdom contained in

those approaches but it does provide an inventory or check list of conceptual areas which might be used to aid an understanding of the particular people, agencies and broader influences when searching for issues of relevance to an individual or group.

In general the writer finds it useful to picture the individual located at any moment in time at the centre of three concentric circles. The circles form bands on which are arranged the conceptual areas which one needs to take into account when appraising an individual "person in situation". The three bands together form the environmental sphere of influence. (Owen 1982⁶). If one refers back to the first article in this series and the conception of a person as an apple, in this article the

apple is placed at the centre of the surrounding environment. The immediate task is to examine the content of the environment around the person with his unique characteristics. A third and final article will examine the way in which transactions take place between the unique person and his or her unique environment.

Figure 1 illustrates the overall scheme. Figure 2 illustrates the writer's view of the environment.

Figure 1: The Three Spheres of Influence

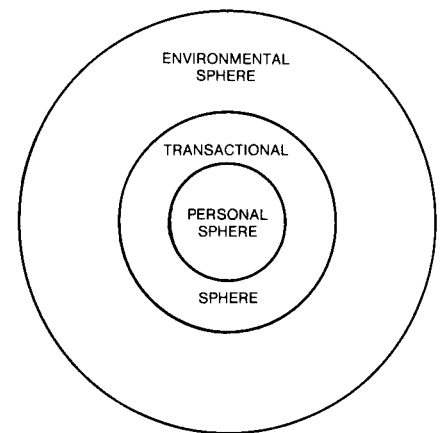
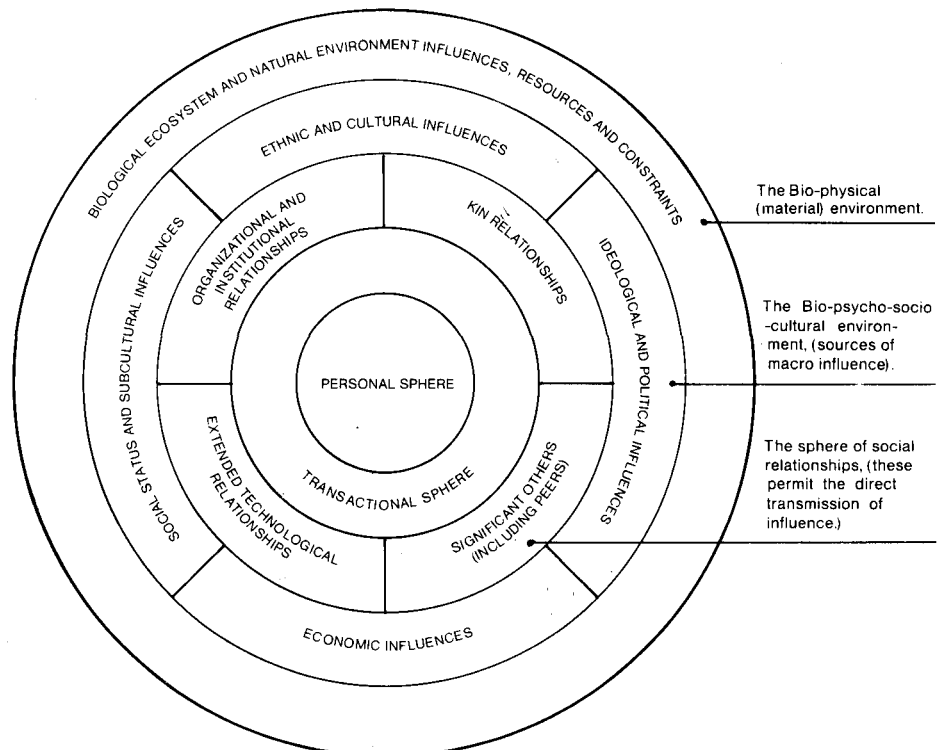


Figure 2: The ENVIRONMENTAL sphere. Groups of conceptual areas arranged in rings around the transactional and personal sphere.



These three bands are termed the personal sphere, the transactional sphere and the environmental sphere. In turn the environmental sphere is subdivided into three further bands each representing sets of concepts pertaining to the social and physical environment in which the person participates.

The band closest to the individual might be termed the sphere of social relationships. A more complex title for the group of concepts located in this band might be "direct interpersonal bio-psycho-socio-cultural influences". It consists essentially of all those people who have meaning in a direct way for the individual and who contribute to the young person's development (positively or negatively), as a result of the association. In many instances, the degree of connectedness and the degree of meaning (emotional investment, cathexis or bonding), established in the association, elevates it to the status of a relationship which will possess varying degrees of importance and varying degrees of intimacy.

Four conceptual areas on this band are posed as worthy of specific focus due to their differential importance in modern everyday life. They are relationships with KIN, relationships with SIGNIFICANT OTHERS (INCLUDING PEERS), relationships with ORGANISATIONS and INSTITUTIONS and finally, relationships provided via technology EXTENDED TECHNOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS. Together they represent the proximal arena in which the young person participates and uses to progress along his or her life course. It is suggested that no social environmental influence reaches the person except through

interaction with these associations and relationships. They are of crucial importance as behavioural and developmental determinants.

KIN RELATIONSHIPS:

The concept of kin is chosen in preference to the concept of family. It serves to alert the worker to a broader range of possibilities. Denoted by blood or legal ties, kin have primary potential to exert influence. By participating in a kin network or sometimes by simply belonging to it a young person has more or less power in negotiating the daily events in life. Even in their absence they are incorporated in large measure in the individual being.

Parent-child role obligations may be in part instinctive, as well as a product of the long period of child and early adolescent vulnerability and dependency. In the child care field the writer has experienced a frequent sense of tragedy at the impact of a lack of kin or capable and caring kin. Their role obligations to accept responsibility for care, control and support is of inevitable fundamental importance.

Within the family of origin intense interaction with parents and a small number of siblings is seen as the norm. Powerful emotional investments within the nuclear

family are inevitable, although they may take a wide variety of forms and may be adaptive or maladaptive in respect to subsequent intimate experience. It can be argued that within the family or for that matter any other primary social context that three kinds of learning are in process. Firstly there is learning consequent on modelling or identification, secondly there is learning as a consequence of conditioning (both operant and classical), and thirdly insight learning through the use of cognitive capacity to understand and develop a new skill. Affinity and the duration and frequency of contact between the individual and other family members make it the fertile field for growth that it usually is for its participants. Rutter and Madge 1976⁷ in discussing the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage list six family factors important in individual development. The family provides stable bonds or relationships which may serve as the basis for the child's growing circle of relationships outside the family. The family provides models of behaviour for the child to follow by imitation or identification. Parents establish a set of attitudes which the child may follow or rebel against. Parents help shape their child's behaviour by selective encouragement and discouragement of particular actions, by discipline and by the amount of freedom they allow. The family acts as a secure base from which a child can test out new ways of exploring and responding to the environment.

Beyond the nuclear family, extended kin networks tend to feel some affinity, emotional investment and role obligations, albeit tenuous in many cases. Some systematic variation of extended kin networks were noted by Bott⁸ in 1971. Close knit networks were seen as exerting more influence on nuclear family behaviour than loose knit networks. Nevertheless, such is the potential influence of kin that even when they are not physically present, actions may be weighed in terms of their approval or disapproval. Their injunctions are internalised in the individual conscience. At times of crisis some part of the kin network is often the preferred source of help. (McCaughey 1977⁹). In the child care field, one quite often observes the phenomena of lifelong absent kin being idealised in fantasy with the emotional pain of unfulfilled expectations. Recent renewed trends in the child care field in the direction of seeking out and supporting extended kin as parent substitutes and supporting positive family ties can generally be applauded. They appear to the writer to carry a higher probability of role obligations being accepted and surely it is the right of every child and young person to have access to the richness which participation in a close set of primary relationships can provide. Of course with that right come some responsibilities which change with increasing maturity and ideally the interchange of kinship rights and responsibilities adds to a positive, enriching and satisfying life style.

Hopefully with sufficient maturity, equi-

librium and poise the majority of young people engage in the next major participative kinship event in their lives, entry to the family of procreation. Managing intimate relationships, sharing responsibility in a household, parenting children demand much of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social domains. Strengths are tested, vulnerabilities are exposed, complementarity of identity and sources of stimulation become critical factors in the functioning and survival of this new kinship system, the security afforded by this mini organisation influences greatly the wellbeing of the present generation and the foundations of the next. It may be fun but it is no joke, usually it is a mixture of frustrations and satisfactions, a source of joyful peaks as well as grief and despair.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS:

The next conceptual area requiring attention, especially when dealing with youth are significant others including peers. Representatives of this group in the life of the young person are likely to assume a level of importance equal to and sometimes above kin. It might be argued given certain conditions of intimacy and cohabitation, that some of these are kin particularly in the light of some current conceptions of the family. Many, through social and legal mechanisms, do formally go on to become kin, i.e. through marriage and adoption. Some replace missing or ineffective kin with quasi kin roles.

As with kin their impact on attitudes, motivation, behaviour and development is great, accentuated and elevated at certain points in the life cycle a point obvious to workers with adolescents. They lack however the genetic linkages and culturally prescribed role obligations of kin. They remain people on a continuum of intimacy having a significant, direct personal impact. Associations around mutual or common affinities, interests or goals provide a source of relationships in which important learning takes place. Again this source of relationships in which important learning takes place. Again this might have positive or negative effects on one's momentary or habituated lifestyle and on the individual's life course. Having friends in high places is often useful and contamination in low places is a phenomena frequently observed by workers with delinquent youth.

By participating in activities with friends, events are enhanced and often much more is attainable. They might also have a restraining or controlling effect which in some circumstances enhances safety and in others limited potential. For youth there are important differential effects to be found in both same sex and opposite sex relationships, some of which were mentioned in the article on development. The writer recalls an interesting observation by an Outward Bound leader, Gary Richards, that young people participating in the standard adventure course in same sex groups appeared to advance

more in individual attainment, whilst those in mixed courses seemed to advance more in their social development in these intense challenging situations. The chemistry in human relationships expressed through love and hate and the full range of human emotion makes way for the activation of powerful behavioural drives.

Workers in residential settings with youth are often painfully aware of the effects of group composition and process. The prevailing moods and attitudes can be swayed by the effects of particular personalities, or the number of individuals coalescing in a particular direction within the group. As a Superintendent in residential institutions one often important daily observation was to gauge the prevailing mood or social climate in each residential unit and sometimes, to avoid trouble, take steps to alter it. One writer has referred to this human aggregate phenomena as "critical mass" when the influence of a subgroup builds up to overturn the prevailing norms of the whole group. (Vinter 1976¹⁰). Group workers are also familiar with the way interpersonal interaction is effected by factors such as the setting or group size. They are also aware of the way group process takes off and works its way through stages of forming, storming, norming and performing and how set expectations and time factors can influence progress and direction. Participation often involves taking risks in relationships. Hopefully young people can gain sufficient awareness of these processes, personal strength and autonomy, to avoid being "easily misled". They may place themselves in proximity to significant others who will enhance functioning and opportunities rather than introducing lifestyle traps and pitfalls. The proper place to study group and human aggregate behaviour is in the next conceptual area which focusses on organisational and institutional relationships but they are of significance here in terms of social networks and peer groups containing the people who become models, heroes and mentors in the eyes of the younger persons.

ORGANISATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Organisations and institutions are grouped together as purposeful aggregates of social beings which inevitably impact on the development and behaviour of individuals. It is more a question of which of these demand or afford the personal participation rather than whether or not he or she participates. A significant portion of an individual's time and life space is utilised in interaction with people who represent or fulfil a role in an organisation or institution. The purpose for interacting often includes an organisational purpose.

One might see an organisation or a societal institution as any collectivity of personal power which becomes organisational or group power by acquiring a rationale of for existing, a structure and a dynamic process of activity. They gene-

rally appear to develop in response to human need or ambition to tackle specific goals or tasks in a bigger or better way. Many human achievements are only possible through organised activity. Organisations such as companies, bureaucracies, unions, clubs, societies, interest groups and schools govern much individual life space. By participating in them, work, with all its possible outcomes, takes place; learning of many kinds takes place. Usually the rules of the game, the control of resources and the distribution of opportunities are determined by organisational processes. They have remarkable effects on the attitudes, functioning and behaviour of the individuals in them and the individuals who deal directly with them. They may also have resounding effects less directly on many other people who do not deal with them. Organisational behaviour can effect the environment both physical and social, e.g. pollution, economics. They may effect family relationships, neighborhood composition, political arrangements, etc. They may provide security and positive opportunities, they may also endanger, exploit and destroy people. They often do both good things and bad things at the same time. Participation in them almost inevitably impacts on human security, stimulation and identity needs.

The literature on formal and complex organisations is extensive resulting from the struggle of people to control them, harness them, exploit them and empirical effort such as the Hawthorne experiments have been conducted in an effort to understand the entanglement between the needs of individuals and the needs and goals of organisations. Any group of people from a dyad and upward in number carries certain organisational characteristics and effects. Again there is a rich literature on these informal but nevertheless potentially powerful entities. Charles Handy 1975¹¹ referring to organisational leadership drew attention to a number of forms of power used in organisations. They are physical power; resource power (control of resources desired by potential recipients); position power where value is placed on the grantor (usually underwritten by physical or resource power); expert power relying on a meritocratic tradition accepted by both parties; and, personal power resulting from charisma, popularity or being sociometrically central. Participation, either voluntary or coerced, is a necessary condition for the existence of an organisation. They may vie for the energy, commitment and skills of young people but they are apt to be choosy and parsimonious in handing out rewards as organisational goals are superordinate, often of necessity when organisations are in competition with each other or pursuing specific goals. Organisation theorists have given much attention to the degree to which people orientations and task orientations exist in organisations, to leadership styles and the way in which combinations of these are necessary to achieve

productive outcomes from human participation.

Allied to participation in organisations is participation in the social institutions of given society. Most commonly attention is drawn to those systems of organisations with their underlying common purposes, mores, beliefs, attitudes, conventions and expectations which make up institutions such as the law, the political system, the system of government, the church the professions, the trade union movement, the feminist movement, the conservation movement and so on. Much broader than any one organisation they manifest themselves often through organised activity but their significance goes well beyond this. They catch allegiances and opposition beyond the realms of organised activity and are often expressions of the diverse ideals present in society and contribute significantly to issues of identity, stimulation and security.

The individual cannot escape the influence of at least some of these institutions or the need to interact with them as participants, opponents or bystanders caught in their slipstream or wake. Hopefully for young people, their experience of society's institutions will be a positive and productive experience for they often carry great cultural power as they impact on physical, intellectual, emotional and social development.

EXTENDED TECHNOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS:

The fourth and final type of relationship in which individuals participate is termed extended technological relationships. In this area people owe their connectedness to means of communication which have the capacity to transcend space and time. Through pen and paper, telephones, the printing press, film, radio, video, computers, people are linked in many ways which permit influence to flow, sometimes one way, often two way, sometimes directly, and sometimes indirectly, reciprocated. Access can be obtained to knowledge and understanding which would otherwise be inaccessible. Social manipulation can occur for a wide variety of purposes, social control can be exerted and social support can be provided in spite of the physical separation of the participants in the process.

As the technological means are formed to connect the sensory systems of recipients to the signals conveyed by others, physical, intellectual, emotional and social development can be significantly effected. The knowledge of an Einstein can be distributed around the globe. Role models can be adopted who have had no direct interpersonal contact with the person concerned. Young people today are being socialised in the midst of a broad information explosion and are generally exposed to a variety of cultural and subcultural influence which crosses family, community and national boundaries. They have a much more extensive exposure to history

and the imaginations of others than previous generations.

To gain access to the benefits and to manage the dangers young people need a new range of skills and knowledge, much of which may not have been absorbed by those of the previous generation most in contact with them. In the rush to capture attention, allegiance, minds and markets, those with power over the various means of communication often work hard to extend, target or limit access to information. User friendly systems provide the means for an enormous degree of participation but also increase the complexity of distribution and rapidly shift the interdependencies which make up community infrastructures.

In common with previous generations those with economic means or other forms of power can exert greater influence by obtaining both the technology and other skills required to distribute the message. Young people are brought apparently face to face with an image supposedly representing life in the everyday world. The image is delivered to them at home and in school and it simulates many but not all aspects of real interpersonal contact. The rapidity and desirability built into messages often mask the effort put into achieving particular purposes and distortions which are also built into them. Thousands of dollars may be spent in constructing a message designed to get past people's defences implanting an ideal or emotion in a matter of seconds.

Debate still occurs about the degree to which these communications are reflected in the behaviour of recipients when the media is on the defensive concerning delirious consequences. Little uncertainty is displayed however when business or political parties commit resources to marketing campaigns. Market research and penetration behaves as both an art and a science backed by an awesome battery of technological gear.

Generally the writer believes that young people can welcome these opportunities but there are many traps and consequences to watch out for. Distorted role models, irresponsible advertising, selective reporting, competing values and expectations, excessive invasion of life space and life style can create neglect and atrophy of other capacities and skills. A greatly expanded opportunity for participation in a global community may overrun important participation in other forms of relationship with major consequences for identity formation. Accommodation to technological stimulation may numb a capacity for simpler and more subtle pleasures. One's security may depend on more complex inter-relationships beyond individual and local control and lead to pervading anxiety and a sense of dissatisfaction.

The clock, however, is unlikely to turn back and mastery of this form of relationship has become an exciting and essential part of the process of socialisation in a competitive world.

SOURCES OF MACRO INFLUENCE THROUGH THE BIO-PSYCHO-SOCIAL-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Outside this ring of social relationships providing direct interpersonal influences lies another ring of conceptual areas. This group of conceptual foci have a great bearing on the form which behaviour takes in the personal and transactional domains and the way people perceive each other. They tend to represent sources of power or as the case may be, lack of power, as the individual pursues his or her life style and life course. There are four conceptual areas in this group and they may be seen as sources of macro influence bearing on the individual through accident of birth, intergenerational transmission and fortune for good or ill. An awareness of their presence and some understanding of their potential may help the young person to utilise their potential benefits and cope with their potential negative effects.

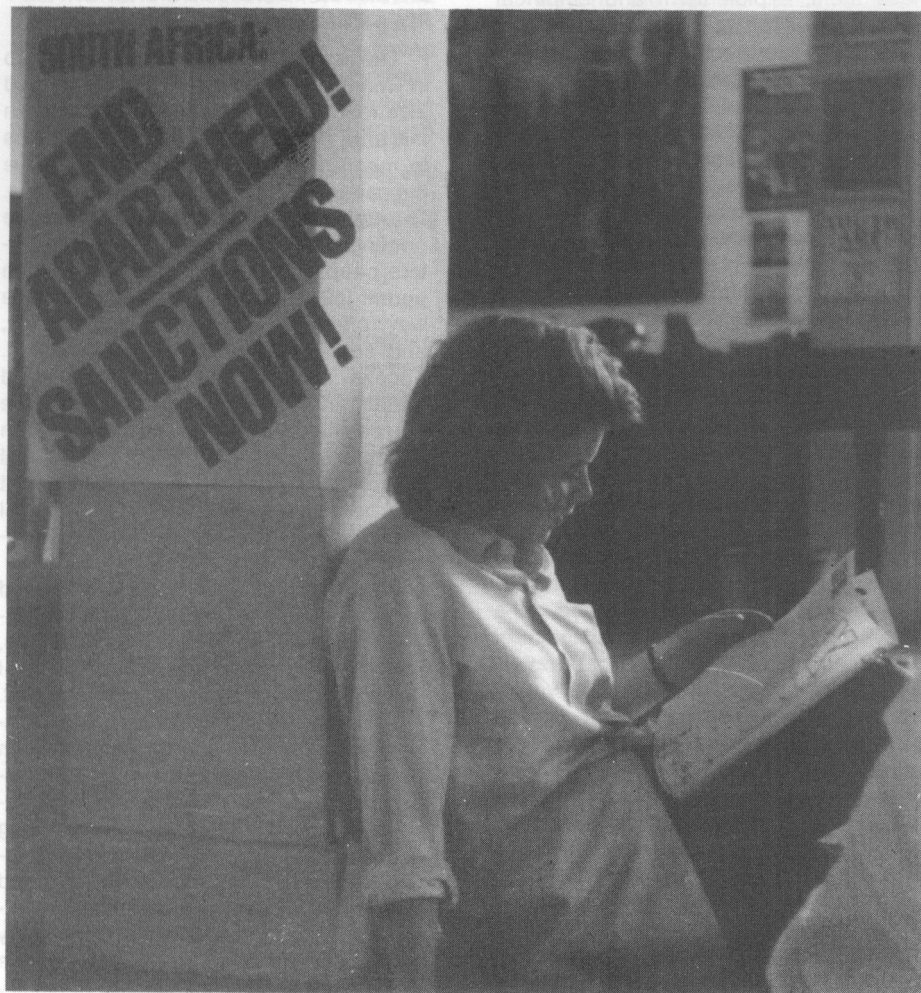
ETHNIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES:

Each individual is born into a race and a culture, or on occasions, a mixture of races and cultures. The notion of gene pools originally contained by physical boundaries or cultural boundaries mark people physically and to a lesser understood extent, in other ways. Reinforced by culture, perceptions of cultural stereotypes are built into human thinking, in spite of the enormous diversity within and overlaps between races and cultures. It can be a positive and powerful experience to get to know someone well from a different ethnic background. Such an experience is now more probable with matters of migration and travel in modern times. Workers with youth are likely to be aware also of the stresses which emanate from culture conflict for the children of migrant families and the importance of understanding cultural perceptions of common events. Family roles, norms of conduct and expectations of social institutions can differ to the extent of making certain events incomprehensible unless a cultural perspective is used.

Youth have time on their side and new opportunities through education and modern methods of communication, to develop understanding of issues of this type. Optimistically one hopes that future generations can avoid some of the agony of past and present events brought about by cultural misunderstanding and racial prejudice. Participation in positive events built around areas of common understanding between races and cultures is an urgent task in the world's populous environment.

IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL INFLUENCES:

Arising from a conjunction of value systems and aspects of social order, personal constructs develop through the socialisation process as people interact with each other. These coalesce usually in adolescence into the individual's world view or



beliefs about the human condition. These ideas can be cathected to the degree that they become sacrosanct to the individual and the social groups within which the person moves. As such they contribute to the presence of social institutions.

It is normal for allegiance to be attached to certain ideological and political themes and this has many effects on the life of the individual and the community. They become important sources of support, control, power and resources and can never be ignored when weighing up the opportunities and risks of daily life.

History and cross cultural studies testify to the blindness inherent in some strongly held systems of belief and solidarity. Hopefully the ideas and movements which capture the imagination and beliefs of youth will be productive for them and future generations. Hopefully also they will contain elements which permit some tolerance of the possible diversity of human beliefs and elements which permit the peaceful management of tensions and conflict between competing ideologies and their representative social groups.

It is a positive experience to sense commitment to the ideals of a great ideological or political movement. Unfortunately a common reason for such commitment relates to the perception of a different ideology or movement as wrong, a threat or a menace. Such is the involvement of such things in the identity of the person that people will wage war, persecute or vilify each other on the strength of them. When people believe that they have right or authority on their side, the ordinary individual can be capable of great cruelty, a lesson demonstrated clearly by the Milgram experiments and many lessons of history. There is in such situations, a need for protection and defence; a recognition of the need for social justice and an ethos of rights plus responsibilities; and an ever present readiness to negotiate and reduce unhealthy tensions.

Awareness of these dangers and the skill to negotiate solutions are needed qualifications for the coming generation. Hopefully as the generations participate in the movements of today such awareness and skill will be encouraged and allowed to develop.

SOCIAL STATUS & SUB-CULTURAL INFLUENCES:

These represent a primary locus of power. This conceptual area is inclusive of the sociological concept of social class and it relates to the identification of the person as belonging to a social strata or pocket of society which is evaluated in terms of the prevailing social order and prevailing standards of normative lifestyle. One's initial position has considerable bearing on available opportunities and the socio-cultural risks to which one is exposed. It is possible however for change to occur due to a variety of circumstances including the person's own efforts to achieve upward, lateral or downward mobility. Positions might also be affected

as the group or organisation to which one belongs changes in nature or status and there may be significant change in the social order itself as leaders change or governing parties change or other types of power balance shift. Membership alone may provide status, rights, privileges and possibly obligations. Status will also vary within such groups through formal or informal rank being accorded. Location at some ranks in some groups will be accorded significant prestige, at the other extreme one's group or oneself might be viewed as pariah or outcast.

Social class structures have been the subject of some study and ways of describing them vary from subjective evaluations, through factors related to issues of power and protection to multivariate approaches to evaluating power and prestige. (Congalton 1969 ¹², Encel 1970 ¹³). Commonly in the world of today reference is made to socio economic class and developments related to revolution, redistribution and equal opportunity are now well known in our society.

Subclasses and subcultures may have more or less social structure themselves and they may be regarded as normative or deviant. On occasion social processes and ceremonies are used to confirm or admit people to membership. Courts will ceremoniously admit some to membership of criminal and other subclasses. The work of the labelling theorists contains a wealth of information and speculation around these issues. (Goffman 1964 ¹⁴, Becker 1964 ¹⁵).

For young people today some awareness of social class factors, the influence and implications of the subcultures to which they and others belong, may give added strength to the daily decisions which effect later life course. Pop culture, the drug culture, the local gang and so on contain positives and negatives as they impact on the person through family, friends, human group and the media.

ECONOMIC INFLUENCES:

The economic domain of social influences is so pervasive and powerful in today's world that it is worthy of separate consideration. It represents a predominant source of power in the present International social order.

Economic factors have a major impact on the opportunities and risks encountered in daily life. It is a power used at all levels in society, of necessity to cater for a wide variety of needs and aspirations, as well as a source of political and administrative influence, control and sanction. The fair distribution of economic resources is an ongoing debate and sometimes a social goal. More often it seems to be basis of competition and activity based on self interest aimed at maximising profit. It is argued however, that such activity is justified as capital wealth and productivity is a necessary condition of having wealth to distribute. The basis on which wealth should be distributed, i.e. as wages for labour, as a consequence of entrepreneurial activity, as

a social security benefit or guaranteed minimum income, presents many dilemmas for the present generation. Should economic power be used to influence, control or reward certain lifestyles and discourage others or should collective wealth be distributed to all according to some set of social principles. Given the fervour with which economic matters are debated, the seriousness of the consequences of visible economic ills for people within nations, sometimes whole nations, its status is almost sanctified. Consumerism and productivity appear to have dominated social relations in the course of the last century and greatly influence the persons perceptions of identity, stimulation and security.

Young people have skills to attain in money management for survival and for those who will lead future generations an understanding of these powerful forces needs to be acquired. Somehow society has to find ways of matching the contribution of human energy, knowledge and activity to the needs spread across the globe without violating the natural balances required for the survival of the whole human race and the eco system of which it is part.

Human intellect is an ecological variable and economic power is a most powerful if imperfectly understood tool. It provides a means for opportunity and choice but extends human activity into realms beyond its kin.

THE BIO-PHYSICAL (MATERIAL) ENVIRONMENT:

Having considered four basic sets of social relationships in which participation is almost inevitable if not mandatory and four major sources of influence in society which effect those relationships, it is time to turn to a final aspect of the environment requiring human participation. It is shown in figure 2 as a ring surrounding the other conceptual areas. Labelled biological ecosystem and natural environment influences, resources and constraints, it imposes the ultimate and most basic requirement for participation in the human condition. As a mammalian living organism of complex variety the human person is genetically adapted to coexist with other living organisms, the natural topography and the atmosphere of a particular planet in a particular solar system in a universe.

From Copernicus onward our understanding of wider realms has slowly blossomed but is far from being in full flower. A clear understanding has developed of the importance and the fragility of natural resources both renewable and non-renewable. Ecological and systems thinking has emphasised the complexity of human dependence on supplies of basic elements for existence, maintenance, growth and development. Men and women are frequently tested by the laws of nature and with combined effort, technology and ingenuity for all sorts of purposes have been challenged and to some extent harnessed ever increasing sources of natural energy.

There are nevertheless, many limiting conditions in nature which require recognition if physical survival is a goal.

Ethologists such as Robert Ardrey¹⁶ have given attention to such issues and it is from him that the writer's references to basic human needs of identity, stimulation and security have been drawn. Many people including those from highly urbanised artificially and synthetically constructed environments can find solace, respite and challenge by taking an excursion into the wild. Many others are still engaged in lifestyles which of necessity are sensitive to the rigours and vicissitudes of natural events.

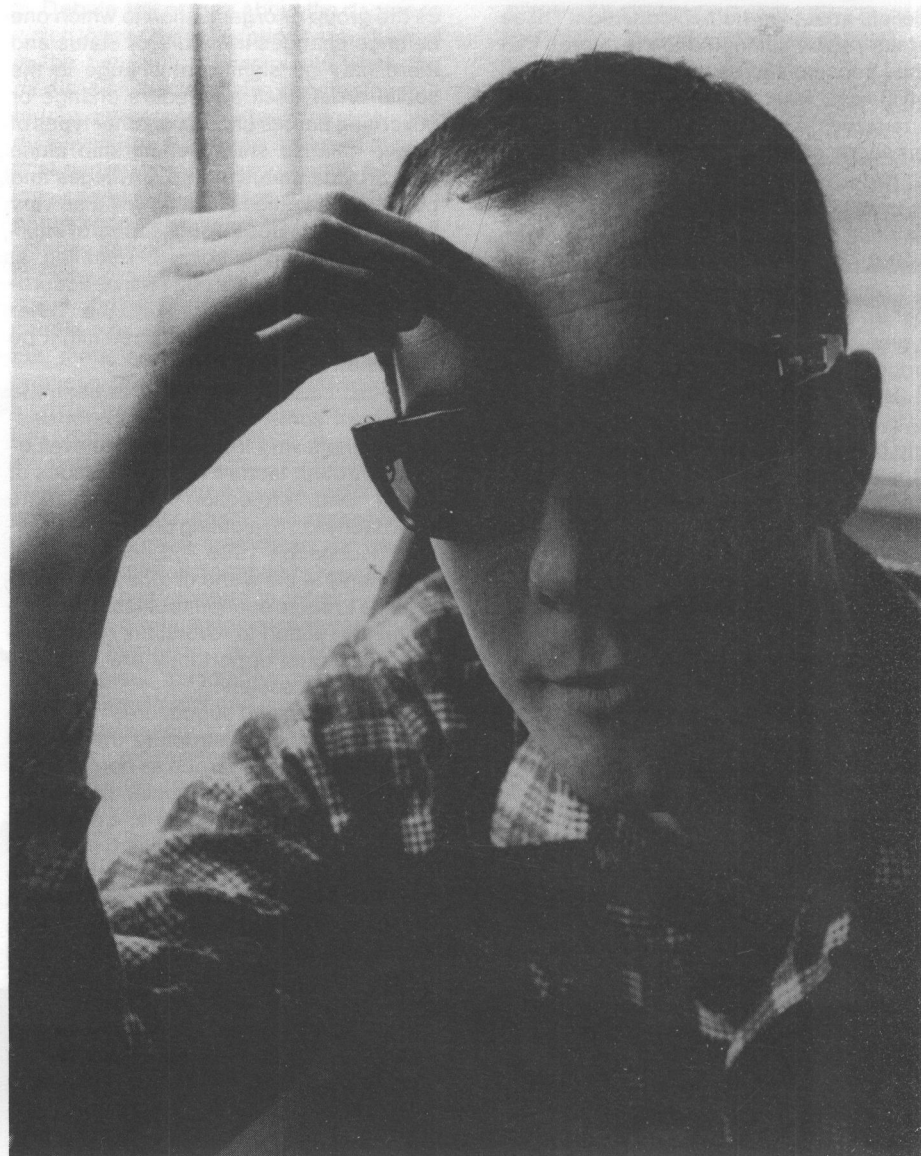
Harmony, adaptability and goodness of fit with our natural supply of air, water and food are ever present requirements. As people build more complex shelters and physical systems to support their social activities account has to be taken of the limits imposed by natural and physical features and events. As the ancient Romans experimented with concrete and slave power, modern humankind experiments with plastics, hydrocarbons and nuclear energy. It was not uncommon for Roman buildings to fall down and even greater risks are apparent in present day activities. Human curiosity and the felt imperatives of our times are such that the majority, whether they like it or not, do have to adapt to the outcomes of changes in the ecological and physical environment brought about by the experiments of others. Similarly, the majority are able to lead different, safer and more desirable lifestyles due to the productive application of many discoveries.

For young people today education, communication, technology and modern mobility can convey them with some reasonable assurance of safety into an experiential acquaintance with many of the more interesting aspects of their natural world. Hopefully it will be a generation more equipped to use it rather than abuse it, better equipped to cope with natural calamities, inclined toward participation with others in maintaining the harmony between people and their physical environment. A harmony which is necessary for the satisfaction and safety of future generations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

The foregoing has attempted to draw attention to a way of looking at the social and physical environment in which people exist, grow and develop. Three conceptual rings or bands are arranged around the person representing firstly social relationships in which people generally participate followed by a band of concepts which are a source of powerful influence on the social opportunities and risks encountered by the person. These are further contained by a band representing the ultimate limits placed on human functioning by the natural and physical environment.

In the area of social relationships attention was drawn to the importance of relationships with kin; relationships with signifi-



ficant others including peers; relationships with organisations and institutions; and extended technological relationships. These provide the source of direct interpersonal relationships in which people participate and are of major importance for young people. Important sources of influence effecting opportunities and risks were considered in four conceptual groups. Firstly, there are ethnic and cultural influences, secondly ideological and political influences, thirdly social and status and subcultural influences, and finally economic influences were considered with reference to young people and the well being of future generations.

As a social ecological viewpoint, overall attention is drawn to the capacity of individual young people to participate in the affairs of society at large. In an increasingly complex world competing environmental influences vie for attention and response. Young people need knowledge and skill obtained from growth promoting relationships to negotiate their way in the world. Empowerment can be one product of participation in the surrounding powerful environment, as can be wisdom and a sense of social responsibility, all much needed qualities in the modern world.

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