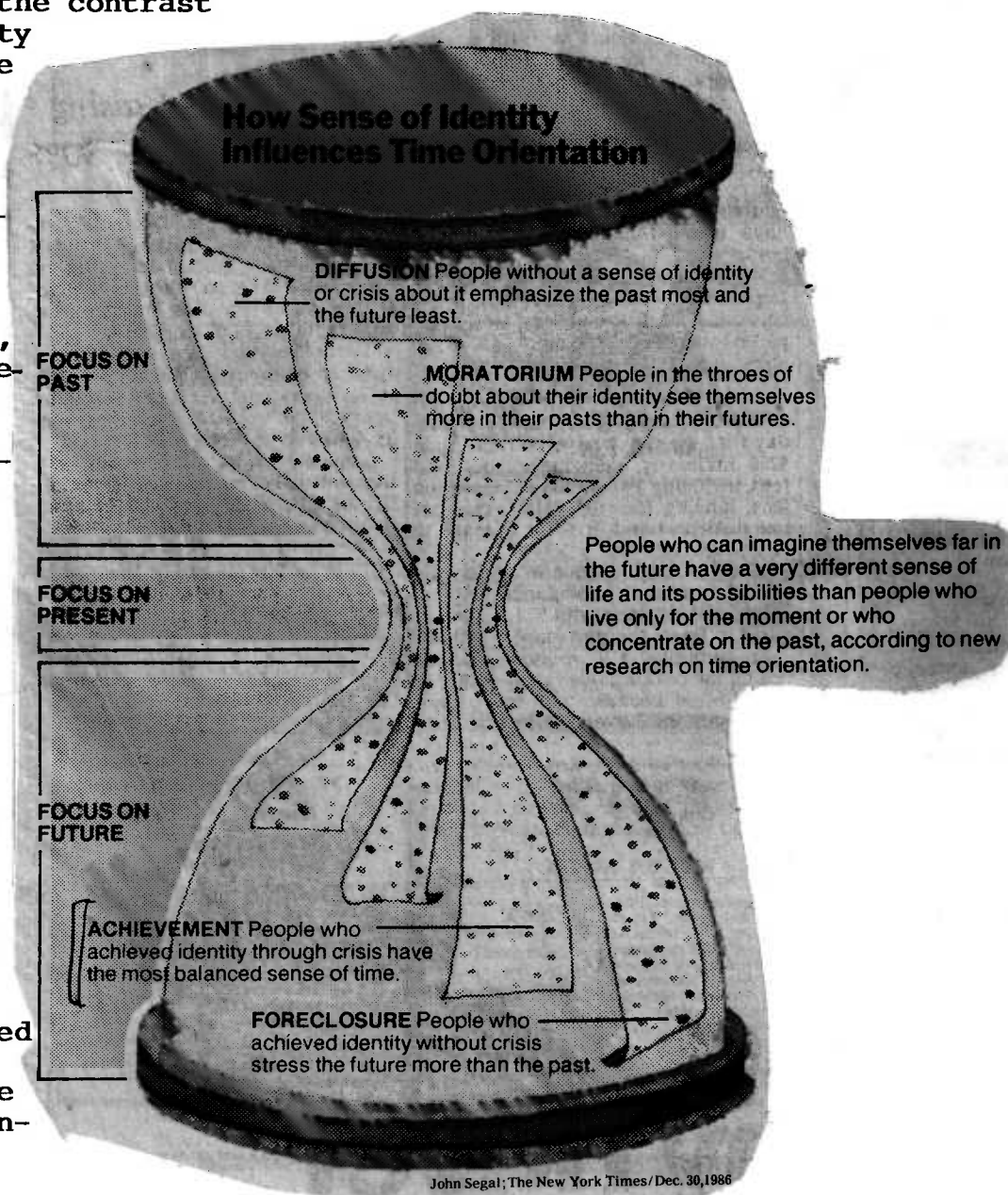


It's New Year's Day, and I just "did" the current (30Dec86) NYTimes "Science Times" and am moved to share with you some reflections on its two lead articles, both of them--appropriately for New-Year's-Resolutions time--on time-awareness, which (Dan. Goleman, "Perception of Time Emerges as Key Psychological Factor") "is almost totally subjective," varying largely with (in light of Erik Erikson's "ego identity" theory of maturation) "a sense of oneself and one's place in society as well as a feeling of continuity with the past," defining oneself "in terms of (one's) entire life span." (Note the shrunk context: forgotten is what Mircea Eliade gave his whole life-span to, viz, the world-universe-God context of (un)awareness, the human distinctive he denominated with the phrase *homo religiosus*.) The other article, by NYT science chief Walter Sullivan, confirms Goleman's psychological accounting for the subjectivity of the human time sense: no science, or combo of sciences, can "explain the flow of time."....On Goleman, here's a visual done for this NYT edition:

1. Observe, please, the contrast between the modesty of current science and the immodesty of public-school teaching of "evolution,"

which unscientifically assumes the human time-sense to be fact--a "fact" challenged, ironically, by pre-scientific fundamentalists, who are currently making progress against public-school scientism on the grounds that (1) it's a religion and (2) it's destructive of America's heritage....Walter Sullivan came up to agree with a speech of mine on this, and esp. underlined my point that the religious bias of evolutionism is revealed in its being overimpressed with "evolution" as anabolism while neglecting the contra-movement of catabolism, viz, entropy (devolution, the 2nd law of thermodynamics). He

agreed, further (& this was 20 years ago!), with my statement that an adequate metaphysics must posit "Spirit" beyond d/evolution.



John Segal; The New York Times/Dec. 30, 1986

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2. Thus the OPTIONS: (1) Belief in "Evolution" as omnihermeneutic, ie able to explain everything known & everything to be known, "mystery" being nothing but terra incognita as yet unexplored by "science" understood as experimentation sifting the verifiable, called "knowledge," from the unverifiable, called "faith," "superstition," "illusion." This is itself a faith, a religion with its priests & rituals & dogmas & codes. And it's the only religion permitted to be preached in our Am. public schools. (2) Belief in Polarity, a dualism of cosmic-historic-psychic energies--yin/yang, Ahura Mazda / Ahriman, evolution/entropy, the cosmizing / the chaotizing--whether the two ever converge (coincidentia oppositorum), or only one of the two ultimately survives. While for some religions & philosophies (eg the East's Taoism & the West's Stoicism) this dualism is primordial, in Biblical religion (which sops up & reshapes contiguous dualisms, eg Babylonian & Persian) Satan/devil/evil is secondary to, and ultimately overwhelmed by, God/angel/good (a defeat Christian cosmology presents as Jesus-and-the-saints' triumph over sin & death)....So Biblical religion belongs not in the Polarity category, any more than in the Evolution category. (3) Belief in "Spirit" working in & through polarities, anomalies, & glories. This belief, which includes evolution and entropy, divides the unknown into (a) the Unknowable, the Mystery proper, "God," paradoxically both unknowable &, by Self-disclosure, knowable; and (b) the as-yet unknown though knowable through "science." This 3rd belief is the most scientific in the sense of paradigmatic adequacy, ie ability to account for more of experienced reality than is either of the other two beliefs. Walter Sullivan & other observers of the science scene believe that this, now gaining ground among theoretical scientists, will commend itself more & more to the public. Without question it would be a better educational metaphysic for our public schools (as best helping make sense of world-reality-life-history-self-others, and as politically peaceable: of the three beliefs, it's the only one than could be called "pluralistic" as polyhermeneutic, ie open to all worldviews & religious commitments). The religious need, now avoided in our public schools, could under belief #3 be recognized and honored and the terrible distortions of our children's inner lives cease (on which hear F. O'Connor, M&M, 160: "When the religious need is banished successfully, it usually atrophies, even in the novelist. The sense of mystery vanishes. A kind of reverse evolution takes place, and the whole range of feeling is dulled").
3. The Mystery, evolution/entropy, time, ego-identity in time & in society --all this reminds me of this week's invitation-to-the-ecumenical-scriptures paragraph in my 1987 Kirkridge lectionary ("Readings & Intentions"): "Communion with the Eternal delivers us from darkness, freeing us to be friends of time, all time. The wonder of the Word and of the world persuades us that we need not take up yesterday's or tomorrow's stick to beat today, or today's stick to beat yesterday or tomorrow. All time is ours as God is YES for us and we are YES for God." Those who've reached (Herb. Rappaport) "identity achievement" through an identity crisis through which they arrived at commitment to occupation and/or ideology are able to move freely in present, past, & future--in contrast to the "moratorium" group (who see themselves more in past than future) and the "foreclosure" group (the reverse) and those in "identity diffusion" (the uncommitted, who are not in crisis & are stuck in the past, as the depressed are stuck in the present).
4. Sociological time-notes: (1) While our middle class is future-oriented, the poor are present-oriented--students, as hedonistic; the nonstudent poor, as fatalistic. (2) Our Sinic population, strongly future-oriented, feel themselves to be in charge of their future (Chinese, Jap., Korean, et al); but our Afro & Hispanic populations (says Philip Zimbardo, above article), present-oriented, feel oppressed with destinies imposed on them.