

This thinksheet is rough notes toward a '77 Convocation Seminar, the notes brief and numbered for easy reference.

1. The pure aspirate ['h' sound] begins many words [in Gk. and other I-E languages, incl. Eng., which has 'hale' and 'whole' and even 'holy' and thus 'hallow', 'hallowed']. More than 40 years ago I read J.C.Smuts' 1926 book kicking off 'holism' into Eng. (OED 1-vol.: "The tendency in nature to produce wholes from the ordered grouping of units" --a biblical-scientific counterpoise to the fissiparous tendencies of modern technism, including its bio-spinoff as "the survival of the fittest," most recent version being gene survival-striving). As Calvinist theologian (as well as pres. of S.Africa!), S. was manifoldly convinced that God wills the unity of as well as unity with his creation, and that this willing is evidenceable in "natural" [i.e., creational] processes and structures....I think, too, of something Ashley Montague said to me on a walk 1/4 c. ago: "I aim to stand Darwin and Freud on their heads; life's basic law is cooperation-love, not competition-fragmentation." Soon he was to come out with THE NATURAL SUPERIORITY OF WOMEN, for the feminine principle is as gathering [and we are in a gathering, and therefore, feminine-emergent, period] as the masculine principle is scattering [and we are seeking, culturally, now, to redress the hypertropy of the masculine in our culture's modern boom period].

2. "Holism" and other words built on its stem has an amphoric quality [an amphora being a Greek two-handled vessel too big for one handle]: anything convergent-centripetal, in any of the academic disciplines, gets thrown into it. S. was speaking within the tradition of philosophy only--e.g., to the Leibnitzian monads and the Jamesian pluralisms; he'd be shocked as well as pleased at what's happened to his word! Philosophy being neocortical and the neocortex being impersonal and therefore atheist, S. used "holism" to include the personal and theistic, for which he had the biblical-theological vocabulary; but those without biblical commitment soon came to use his "holism" to include the numinous dimension, and that spookiness carried over into current medicalese (most lately, as "holistic medicine").

3. Since WWII, into the "holism" amphora have been hurled additional philosophies, esp. gestalt, existentialism in various versions [Jaspers et al], and phenomenology [Husserl et al]. As I studied these first as philosophies and only thereafter as therapeutic perspectives, I'm impressed at the osmotic flow of philosophy into therapies as much as I have long been with this flow into theologies. As far as I know, no one in print has explored what appears to be a psychodynamic similarity here: when therapies take on, and are shaped by philosophies, they tend to function in theory as theologies and in practice as religions--thus, for hundreds of thousands of Americans today, PSYCHOLOGY TODAY is a religious magazine; and psychotherapists function, 1:1 and in groups and in "growth centers," as shamans-priests-roshis-gurus.

4. As leaders tend to assimilate into successful leader-images, clergy, under pressures noted in the paragraph above, tend (1) to substitute "pastoral counseling" for tradition "spiritual guidance-direction" and (2) to replace traditional theology as explicative matrix with "human-potential" or "humanistic-psychological" thinking. In the same Zeitgeist, psycho-theologians tend to inform their theologizing with the going philosophies [holism, gestalt, existentialism, phenomenology, etc.] just as socio-theologians do with the going socio-theories [e.g., Marxism in "liberation theologies"].

5. In the light of the paragraphs above, the indicated facial expression is a smile on one, only one, side of the mouth when discussing "holistic" anything. Anxiety to be "in" fires this fresh-name-on-old-reality syndrome. In preparation for this Seminar, I explored several libraries--including NYTS and IRH--for "holism" and found nothing new, though some old things freshly put (and that's a gain not to be underestimated!). Lift the new lid, and underneath is the old Daseinanalyse between Freud and Frankl's logotherapy, and Glasser's reality-therapy, and Roger's convergence, and May and Maslow after Adler and Jung and...and...and....I'm not cynical, mind you, for all this is a kind of human caring; but I'm watchful of (1) journalistic exploitation of language and (2) professional conspiratorial-mystical manipulation of language.

OVER

Since what gets my attention gets me and what holds my attention is my god, I am of the quality of my god. Is he "holy"? "Whole"? Source and destiny of to holon? Therapeutes? Is she worthy of me?

6. Speaking of "mysticism" in this negative way, I mention in passing a severe impediment to "holistic" dialog [both as content, and as intent-effect] on "holism": the data are so vast, the lexica so abstruse-inhouse, and the bridging lexicon so diffuse and ill-developed that opening your mouth, wherever you stand [from within whatever discipline], is dangerous to the point of suicidal! What ironic security there is in the fact that on a "holistic healing" [say] panel of six experts, each has the power to ask any on the others questions the others can't even understand, to say nothing of making intelligence responses [less than "answers"] to! What a labyrinth, bog, embarrassment, and ? waste! No, not waste. Better to make fools of ourselves than to spend energy avoiding dialog to avoid the pain of encounter-exposure. Also, relax: we are, now, all ignorant, and more than ever before need to (1) listen to each other and (2) strive to help build a bridging languages (a) among the disciplines and (b) between the academics-professionals and "the laity."

7. In the Bible of capitalism, Adam Smith's 1776 THE WEALTH OF NATIONS, specialism is celebrated as the central process in capital formation [illustration: a pin factory]. Smuts' wouldn't have invented "holism," or if he had the word would now be obsolete, if it hadn't been for divergent tendencies in modern culture [Teilhard's from the south pole to the equator, now increasingly convergent tendencies from the equator to the north pole]. "Modern" health-care services, supremely the horror of the "modern" technohospital, is the mindless medical product of AS's process. A member of the NYTS board of directors has just taken his aged father off eight "specialists" and put him back onto the equally old family doctor, who is comparatively ignorant and incomparably caring. A model from the three levels of hermeneutics: pointing-indicating is not enough; explaining is not enough; one must go on to co-understanding. [Linguistically, the antonym of *holism* would be *merism*, the disease of part cut off from whole being *meria*-- but I have never heard or seen either word, and they would be useful only for wowing the rabble, an unworthy use.]

8. Two concentricities, from inner to outer circles: individual integrity, social integration, cosmic location [= the three dimensions of sense-making]; the four-dimensional person [spirit-psyche-mind-body of my holistic "cube" in one dimension], the supportive-betraying community [including "church"], the divine-demonic milieu [the latter two, the other dimension of my holistic "cube"]. Models of reductionism: the idiot savant, hypnosis [severe attention-ascetic, attenuated concentration, as lights switching off in the outer circles], "meditation" (but not prayer in biblical sense, for this widens as well as deepens attention, as does biblical contemplation)...Illusory holisms: shrink down to "the whole person" (e.g., Ken. R. Pelletier, "Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer" [35ff PT Feb77], much use of "holistic" in this limited sense, as is true in much pop psychology). Transpersonalism, going beyond both intra- and inter-personalism, theoretically includes theistic, nontheistic, and atheistic visions, but currently excludes theism [the biblical vision] in favor of Eastern-hemisphere metaphysical perspectives and praxes. But now some maturing to the point of Western-roots recovery, as in Ab. Maslow and Andras Angyal just before their deaths (on which a fascinating story, p.vii in M's Foreword to A's great NEUROSIS AND TREATMENT: A HOLISTIC THEORY [Jn.Wiley/65]). ...And the parasensory: Larry LeShan, Harold Sherman, Judy Skutch, etc....And expanding systems-logic (as Roy Kaplow, 61 TECHN. REVIEW Dec/71: "analyzing and designing systems in the context of our total society.")..And hymns as holistic!...And "plausibility" as intellectual and political category....Other names needing dropping in holistic healing? Thomas Hora, Granger Westberg....Biomedical ethics [Dan Callahan et al]....Lunch at the Yacht Club Wed., an inventor told me his device shows Manhattan execs believe 85% in immortality but only 5% in God: a trade-off into solipsistic pseudoholism?...Needs-projection metaphysics-theology?...The seduction of "being" vs. having [E.Fromm's TO HAVE OR TO BE (Harper/76), a nontheistic religion of caring-in-being] and doing--but humanistic rather than [as the mystical wing of the human potential movement] monistic (in biblical light, pseudoholistic)...The arts and sciences yearning toward wholeness. ...The local church as society's highest-potential matrix for wholeness-healing.... Subtitle of my PhD: "A Comprehensive Interpretive Methodology."...My current book: SENSE-MAKING....Devotional-critical force of *holo*:- (1) Holography as photography + a third dimension; (2) *to pan* is only "everything," but *to holon* is "the universe" because order (all parts and relationships); (3) Mt.13;L.11;Jn.9&13;1Th.5;Hermes (rev.&rep.).