

I. The notes are random, with interspersed comments (but on the latter, see further the reverse side of this sheet)...LEADER: Daniel Levinson, Yale Medical School, specialist in mid-life research.

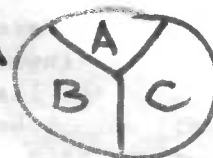
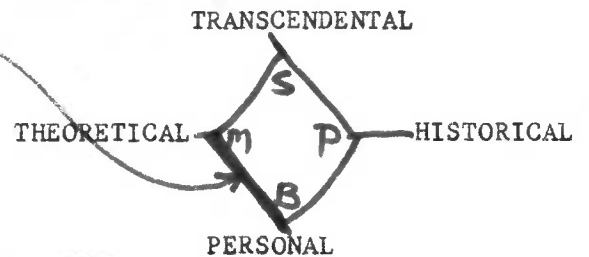
1. GOVERNING QUESTION: How improve our mid-life knowledge/skills/art on mid-life for self/others?...ATMOSPHERE: Epicurus' garden, human potential, with same goal (eudaimonia from using one's potential for self/others, especially self) and same death-sadness (Gilbert Murray's famous "failure of nerve" chapter in his FIVE STAGES OF GREEK RELIGION)...CENTRICITY: Geo-, not even helio- (as most primitives), to say nothing of theo-centric (except when I pressed the leader as to whether the life-era "tasks" were God-given and he said an energyless yes so as to be able to get on with his task). From another angle, anthropo- rather than either psycho- or socio-centric: a boundary position I affirm, and on which he worked for 16 years on the Harv. faculty....LEADER COMPETENCE: Cognitive, excellent; group skills, nearly hopeless....EXPECTATIONS: Glashing, between professionals seeking continuing education more than personal help, and laity seeking personal help. (The latter won hands down, but I'm sympathetic: the management, for this workshop which was to be the only technical mid-life event of the Kirkridge year, probably couldn't get enough professionals to come.)

2. Dan's MODEL: Life-"eras" (started on 35-45 when he hit that period himself) are 20-year units, a model "at this point" "more tha heuristic": pre-adult, (20-40) early adult, (40-60) middle adult, (60-80) late adult, (80-) late late adult. (I recall this in 9Feb75 NYT MAGAZINE, from John Leonard: "What is it like to be an adult? I don't know. I've never met one.") "Transition," taking 4-6 years, is "a key developmental concept," peaking at each "era-change." (E.g., 20-23 is "the early adult transition.") Each transition has a double task: "termination of the past and the beginning of the new" era: "we both want to keep growing and want this to be the last crisis." Self-questioning in transition: "What have I made of my life? What do I want to give up/ keep/ put in?" (+ "other developmental periods within the eras"). (Checks closely with my turning points: into pastorate (after being "too radical" in schools), just turned 31; into national church office, 40; into emotional renewal, 50.) "Focus on the life lived," not personality development (as psy.) or roles/careers (as soc.). LIFE-STRUCTURES of "self-in-world": "Let's look (structurally, elements/patterning) at where you are in your life." EXTERNAL L-S is "my world," INTERNAL L-S is my meanings, values, hurts, satisfactions. "No life-structure can last more than 8 or 10 years," for each is flawed and time changes. (Continue in margin.)

II. My MODEL, not at all in conflict with his, derives from (and contains the components of the regular 5½-hour sessions of ) Mid/Double/Second-Career Exploration: "Space-making" is at S(pirit: decision-making); Logs are PB (Psyche-imagination, Body); Classics (chiefly Bible), SP; World-Making (cosmizing, theologizing), SM (S, Mind-cognition), etc.

DIMENSIONS OF AN AUTHENTIC HUMAN EVENT

The workshop was limited, unfortunately, strictly to the flatland of MB, indeed almost entirely on B with some illuminations + a lecture from M--to the neglect of PB (self-location in history/society, and commitments thereto), SP (pertinent classics, esp. sacred/attentional literature), and SM (God-picture & world-picture). To put my main point in another diagram, Interface A (theology/philosophy) was absent (B=psychology, C=sociology), an impoverishment unnecessary and crippling.



(Which reminds me: The workshop was eyeless--no use of visuals for sorting or clarifying.)

### III. REPORT

6. Dan. Levinson is a master of mid-life research, and I can hardly wait till his book on it comes out. Some are masters of teaching the joyful, playful, productive agility of moving from the right (image/feeling) brain hemisphere to the left (idea/architectonic) brain hemisphere--or, to use the cross dimension, from the coils of the gut to the head coils (thinksheets being born in the former as chaoi and birthed in the latter as cosmoi).

1. Tabu report: Instead of describing the participants, let's look at them through a tabu filter. The tabu against sex talk was down (with numerous confessions of adolescent genital behavior extramarital, in a "mid-life" group), but the tabu against God talk was up (except for Loree and me--in our case, an earlier tabu holding, viz. virginal marriage + marital genital faithfulness). Middle/upper-class tabu against "discourtesy": powerful! Quite severe treatment of anybody who wasn't nice--usually me. Tabu against audiorecording: the most severe I've ever seen--absolutely no taping! Encounter tabu: No "head-tripping," and no forgetting what's happened. (On the latter, an interesting incident: Perhaps Loree asked me a question--we don't know, because she couldn't remember having done so after the session--but somebody in group said "Aren't you going to answer Loree's question?" I asked "What question?" and was told "You know" (which of course I didn't; but to test this encounter tabu I waited a full two minutes, then claimed freedom from response.) Next tabu, leader gentility: The leader never attacked anyone in the group, and never countered an attack with an attack--a mode somewhere between a stoic and a zombie, but with the bogus aura of an academic guru rather than a human being. Next tabu, led gentility: Except for me, no one made either frontal or cushion attack on the leader; an artificial, salon academe atmosphere which my store-front clergy would laugh themselves sick at a movie of.

2. Loree was great, and such a joy to be with! Without her it would have been an almost insufferable bore. For 30 years every thought of her has warmed my heart and kept me steady even when lust for any other woman churned my gut--that, + the marriage vow before God: "and cleave to her only as long as we both shall live."

3. Pathos: While the encounter game was against head-tripping, commentary on encounter was, by unspoken contract, acceptable only when coming from the leader and (though this was untested, as the leader was flaccid) only when head-tripping! The "internal contradiction," as a Marxist might say, was glaring and antihuman. When under great pressure the leader, partly at my persistent goading, consented to make a statement of his "theoretical framework for looking at adult development," he flipped from near nonparticipation to old-style, long, boring lecturing: nothing in between, and no time sense! Nobody has everything; but it's naive to assume that a good scholar/author will have group skills. When he hasn't, he should say so and ask for a convenor with group skills.

4. The weekend was not inauthentic (except for the pernicious encounter-tripping, which sophisticated folks now play as well as their parents did head-tripping) and not sick--but was poor, impoverished. For a fat fee, the leader used us as "group modality for research" (his term!), led us into narcissistic, near-masturbatory "True Confessions" self-stories, did nothing about observation/reflection/evaluation at the end, used no centering device (such as Black Elk's great mid-life prayer, which would have given us a common mid-life focus to hang pertinent aspects of our life-stories on--or some great biblical passages might have been used, more a responsibility of Kirkridge than of the scientiest-leader).

5. No meditational device, not even quiet space-making, was used--to say nothing of prayer, even grace at meals (which we ate like the other animals). This can't be justified on the basis that the event was secular, for current secularity in such events is into meditation!....And no structured effort to overcome spiritual amnesia--such as a thoelogan's 20-minute critique, after which the leader would close with a 20-minute response to wrap up. No secular/sacred dialog, despite the Kirkridge "Intention." Here's where my hostility had its deepest root, in the institution's unfaithfulness to itself and its vision. Secular leaders coming to Kirkridge deserve the learning experience of being asked to face the biblical heritage, and this cannot be fulfilled by unstrucured insertions such as I was forced to use because of the absence of structured science/religion interface.