

\* When we sit under the tree and tell sad stories, we should tell all the sad stories--for balance. For me, the saddest stories are of right-brain sociodominance [i.e., of clericalism] and, in general, of repression of the legitimate products of the left brain ["science"].

1. Yes and no. Yes in that its qualified practitioners have been trained in the same disciplines as those who are in the "nine mental health professions." Nine, count 'em in the "Omnibus Licensing Bill for Mental Health Professions" now on its way through the Albany labyrinth: clinical social work, marriage and family counseling, psychoanalysis, psychology, psychotherapy, rehabilitation counseling, school psychology, social work, and career and human development counseling. To continue on the bill: "Each profession has a defined scope of practice and exclusive [sic!] rights over use of the specific title." You can grandfather--i.e., claim practitioner rights on the nonretroactive ground--but "must file [for one of the specific professions, and meet its standards] within 1 year." So also no: all this proves that pastoral counseling is not a mental health profession. It's unlisted, and no representative of it as such is to sit on the "state board of mental health practice...[for] licensing" and for policing "professional practice and conduct."
2. So pastoral counseling has one leg in the mental health professions--but where is its other leg? Is the pastoral counselor to do his/her own thing outside "mental health" recognition, or acquire competence/recognition within one or more of the "mental health professions"? And is this a choice between isolation and cooptation [passive], or between isolation and invasion [active]? This thinksheet is an historical-theoretical reflection on this double divide, viz. between new and old priest and between the old priest's present options vis-a-vis "mental health."
3. Religion and psychology should both be good for people, and can be better for people if they cooperate. Therefore, whatever can be done to improve working relations between old and new priest should be done. One thing that can be done is anthropological: we can explore the pre-differentiated state, the shamanic profession, which included both "spiritual" and "mental" in undifferentiated awareness within the sacred and outside of, separate from, the profane. This can be seen as late as the NT, where logikos means not only "logical" (i.e., left-brain analytic) but also "spiritual" (i.e., right-brain synthetic)--in Ro. 12.1, self-giving is both; in 1P.2.2, inner nurture is both. The situation of course is not simple: where consciousness senses a dimension beyond logikos, NT uses pneumatikos ["spiritual" in a heightened sense]; and Jesus (Mt.15.10f) uses the mouth [ein/aus-geht, as I read in the Zink tr. this morning] to distinguish "nature" as the material-physical from the meta-physical, yet without giving "nature" independence from "spirit" and "God."
4. Here, precisely, is the issue: the autonomy [Selbstständigkeit] of the left-brain hemisphere, to which all is "nature," impersonal, atheist. Hear, e.g., Maslow ["Lessons from the Peak-Experiences," JHumPsy II.I(1962), 9-18]: Peak-experiences are "natural," not "supernatural"; "and I gave up the name 'mystic' experience and started calling them peak-experiences....The history of the sciences has been of one science after another carving a chunk for itself out of the jurisdiction of religion....It may turn out that pulling religion into the realm of science will have been the most important consequence of this line of work" [i.e., of Abe's own work]. Here, in bald statement, is the new priest's threat to the old priest: the imperialism of the left brain-hemisphere, i.e. of "science" voracious toward, cannibalizing on, "religion." For Marx, the state was to wither away; for Freud, the church. Communists and "mental health practitioners" are enemies\* of God and therefore bad for people--as are other cancerous forms of left-brain dominance, e.g. autonomous technology. The cure is, of course, not obscurantism but control [in the interest of freedom] and balance [in the interest of potential, including the psychology/religion cooperation in consultation and mutual referral].

8. What I'm saying is that religion and psychology [the latter, along with all "sciences" developed out of the left brain-hemisphere and therefore impersonal and atheist] are autonomic complementaries, under divine-"natural" command-demand to work together on the neurological model of the brain itself. The arts are coming to represent this truth. Says Pirandello in his play "The Rules of the Game," "Happiness is a question of proportion"--the rationality/instinct tension in that play leading, as usual in his plays, to insanity and death.

5. More than 1/3rd c. ago I wrote an article on "The Natural and the Supernatural," which I'll not dig up for this thinksheet, but I remember it's evidencing that the "nature" and the "supernature" ideas derive from a common matrix of consciousness and are therefore ineluctably cognate: using either implies at least the shadow presence of the other. Marx's materialism goes back through Feuerbach to Democritus' atomism in "physics," i.e. "phusis" (Lat. "natura") over against the gods; "nature," as a rhetorical over-against, is a left-brain distillate necessary, as a working hypothesis, to the birth and development of "science." The world-picture the ancient Greeks used to sanction the hypothesis was atomism, the world as composed of mindless "uncutable" (lit., "atomic") particles in conjunction/collision but not in collusion-community--so, a picture of mindless, moldable stuff in the potter's hands, the potter being none other than Man. I thrill to the defiance in this! It makes my left brain humm and buzz and purr! Eve risked hell on that apple, and I love her for it! The child, including the child of God, must be born not only from but also away from the parent, to return as the ex-prodigal adult. What we're sent to hell for, then, is failing to check this blasphemy with devotion, failing to bridge the sides with repentance, failing to use the invisible equivalent of the midbrain, the neural crossover network, and resisting the new development of that crossover when in a particular culture we've gone schizoid [lit., "split" between the brain hemispheres]. The divine assignment now, in the confrontation between "religion" and "psychology," is not cannibalism but cooperation polymorphous against the old mutual rejection--an unneat process with love/hate ambivalence, the balance tipped, by goodwill and intelligence and compassion, on the side of love. The creative-encounter attitude is primary; what happens to "the professions," as the generations roll, is secondary.

6. I've taken the IBM Selectric element to the office to finish this thinksheet, and have just read today's (30Apr75) NYT on the train--full of the left-brain autonomy issue. E.g., Values education is reviewed extensively on p.37, with its implicit atheism rammed home with the sanction of maturity: "More mature" chn. are not "guided by authority imposed from outside" [e.g., Torah Mitzvah Jesus] but by "thinking from the inside"; and "indoctrinated values are not as strong as those that are internalized"--as though imposed values were uninternalizable, and heuristically-dialectically discovered values not! The insidiousness of this atheism, which is now the public school's hottest "moral education" sans religion thing, does not at all detract from the value of the values education process as instrumented by Piaget, Raths (and his students, especially Simon), and Kohlberg [especially the insights of his six stages--Nixon's moral development having been arrested at stage two]....In contrast, see p.43 where, in addition to Gensel's appreciation of the Duke, we have the Mass. governor vetoing the death penalty 3rdly for a structural reason [it may be unconstitutional], for a practical reason [our inability to evidence reverse correlation between violent crime and the particular violent crime called "the death penalty"]--that's the 2nd reason he gave--and, 1stly, for the heteronomous, authoritarian reason of nonjurisdiction, with theocentric implication: "I do not believe that this commonwealth has the moral authority to execute human beings."

7. Frankl's distinction between "spiritual health" [through logotherapy as cure for noogenic disease] and "mental health" [through psychotherapy and its cognate professions] presents numerous possibilities, including (a) viewing "mental" therapy as first-aid (with "spiritual" as "advanced"!), (b) forbidding governmental definition of, and therefore regulation of, the encompassing professions, on ground of violation of separation of church and state ["mental health" considered as comprehending "spiritual health" being the absorption of old priest-and-church into new priest-and-church--on which see, in today's NYT, the Albany squabble between the State Education Dept. and the State Board of Health for MD controls], etc.