

SENSE-MAKING: "I'm all alone, and nothing makes sense any more.".....Elliott #770

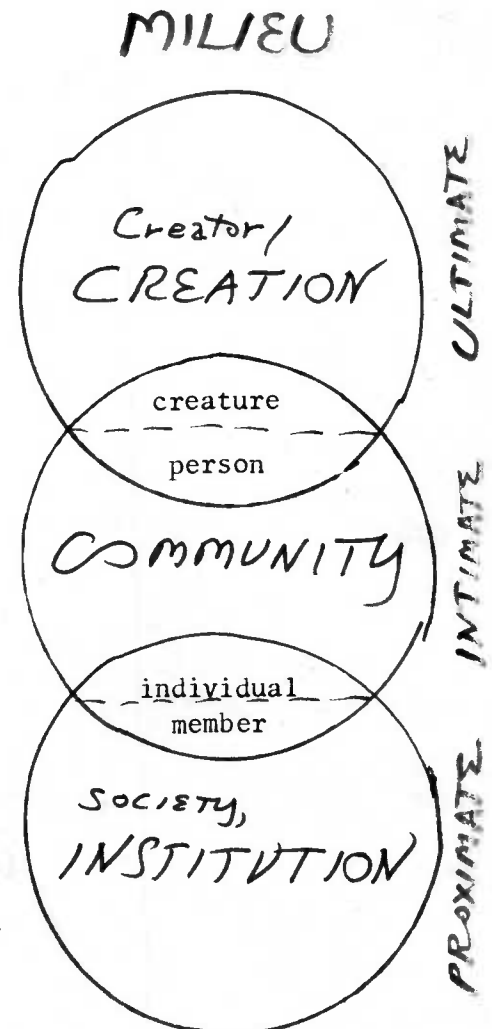
At the U. of Hawaii I asked students whose background included all the world's great religions to rate 50 prominent persons of this century as to their degree of "alienation," then we set to sorting [1] objective, historical considerations from [2] subjectivity, i.e. what was going on inside and in the life of each student at points where other than ignorance had distorted their estimate of these prominents. As you would expect, the more the student him/herself was an isolate, a monad, and "individual" in the withdrawn, either nonsocial or antisocial sense, the more alienation he/she saw in the 50....Recently I did a radio program on "Loneliness" and was overwhelmed with mail.... The complication and specialization of life [Thilo's "fragmented man"], combined with the attenuation of the mythic and consequent loss of cosmic home, added to the loss of place-roots through high mobility [reluctant as refugees and as corporate pawns and as the poor sucked into central cities] and the deterioration both of institutions and of trust in socioeconomic-political processes...well, "alone" is the right word for all this, and "absurd" is the right word to describe the condition of the soul faced with multiple milieu-loss. Deeper than Sartre's hell of other people is the hell of no other people, of no other, of no Other, of no anything significant beyond one's own shrunken, dessicated world, a world without power to sustain its own significance.

This thinksheet places, in intersecting "worlds," the four common terms for speaking of a human being. Each of these terms signals a primary locus or milieu ["milieu," Fr.-Eng., from Lat. "locus" with, as prefix, the term for "middle"--therefore, the sense of being in the midst, which makes "milieu" a better term for our purpose than "environment" or "setting" or "surround" or "surrounding"]. Each of these loci has its own language interacting with the languages of the others [on the three languages, see thinksheet #556]. One may properly speak of the mutual priority of the three worlds; for our purpose I'll speak first of....

THE INTIMATE MILIEU, into which at birth we are individuated [become "individual"] from mother in the primary community of the family. Whether or not the American Dairymen's Association is right that we "never outgrow" our "need of milk," certainly we never outgrow our need of intimacy-in-community. NB: Intimacy one-to-one without community not only will not do, i.e., fulfil, but also will not even work, i.e. be self-sustaining. Note that all four human-being terms are, among the circles, only in this circle.

THE PROXIMATE MILIEU is "institutions," including the general eco-society. If we are "individuals" only in this milieu, then we are only "members," human beings defined only vis-a-vis the institutions we participate in. The worker whose primary identity is in his institution of work soon dies on retirement, deprived of his primary life-substance: he was neither a "person" nor a "creature."

THE ULTIMATE MILIEU is creation. In "nature" we are only an "organism," subhuman. [Sex as "natural" is inherently dirty, obscene [the Lat. for "dirty"], pace Masters/Johnson. Sex as "creational" is creative and recreational.] Within "creation" vis-a-vis the Creator, the human creature can become "person" in communion both with the Creator ["prayer," I/Thou] and with fellow-creatures ["community"].



- QUESTIONS: [1] How distribute, on this diagram, "church," "mission," "ministry," etc.?  
 [2] Any juice from transposing TA's P-A-C on the diagram?