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THE NECESSITY OF TAKING SOME THOUGHT OF THE MORROW

Scripture admonishes us to take no thought of the morrow. Yet, while this advice carries unquestionable religious appeal and even some therapeutic merit, at least according to a few counselling doctrines, the counselling profession as a whole would be ill advised to follow this line of thinking. Indeed, it could be argued that counsellors have thought this way too long, paying, for the most part, little attention to the rapid social, economic, and technological changes around them and instead believing or rather blithely pretending that what was, *is*, and what is, *will be*.

Reference here of course is being made to all those within the profession — and they are considerable in number — who have helped create a kind of credibility gap between themselves and those they serve, either directly or indirectly. Included in this group are the practitioners who have adhered rigidly to early Rogerian tenets and by doing so have ignored the evolution of the man and his theory. Rogers has gone on to other things, like the encounter group for instance, but his disciples have chosen to clutch tightly to *Counseling and Psychotherapy* or *Client Centered Therapy* and to ignore the “becoming” of his more recent works. As one writer (Lawton, 1971) has so poignantly stated it, counsellors have lived in a “lobotomized Rogerian Utopia” which loosely translated could be taken to mean that process, in and of itself, and not outcome, has remained the thing.

Now all this is certainly not meant to detract from the significant contributions Rogers has made to the field. To overlook these contributions would be more than a little presumptuous. Nor is it intended to serve as encouragement for what might be called the “latter day Parsonians,” those counsellors who so desperately long for a return to the basics as they see them, viz. vocational and educational counselling presumably devoid of reference to personal and social concerns. Such an answer is a non-answer for reasons which will be enlarged upon later. What is meant, however, is this: counsellors can no longer totally rest their case on a role definition and practice which had its origin thirty or more years ago. Today, to paraphrase Leibnitz, the present is even bigger with the future than before, and if counsellors are to keep pace with the many possibilities that this statement implies they will obviously have to offer more than a nod and a “M-hm.”

Perhaps more than anything else, Toffler's (1970) best selling (and therefore "old hat") but disquieting revelations bear witness to this. Toffler pretty convincingly argues that science and technology are within finger-tip reach of innovations which will dramatically alter society. Among many things, society can expect to see genetic engineering permit man to replicate himself and thereby realize and preserve his fondest and most grandiose delusion; bio-technology bring about the fusion of man and machine; and human embryos developed *in vitro* (Alas, where are you Mr. Huxley now that we need you?).

More germane to the present discussion, however, are the social-psychological implications of rapid technological changes. Toffler maintains that society will become more diversified, offering individuals not just choice but "overchoice" — a psychologically overwhelming array of choices. Further, the individual's ability to cope with these choices and changes will determine the degree to which he will be afflicted with "future shock," a malady of the future, according to Toffler, marked by several psychological and physiological symptoms.

Placed in this context counselling cannot hope to retain its present form — something's got to give, as the song goes. But, what? Clearly the answer is one of probability only, but armed with the knowledge that everyone (Caesar notwithstanding) enjoys a good prophecy, the following represents some thoughts of the morrow. In a sense, however, these thoughts reflect not only where counselling might be going but, in a few instances, where it *should* be going.

To begin with there will likely be a diminished emphasis on one-to-one relationships as the "core" of counselling. Even today this approach is at odds with the developmental slogan "counselling is for all students," and is generally speaking uneconomical — usually too few can be reached too late! Others have already expressed this view. The late Fritz Perls (1969) saw both the therapist-patient dyad and the small-group phenomenon as outdated and turned his attention instead to the possibility of a therapeutic community or "kibbutz."

This is a direction with some variations that counsellors might take. Within established institutions such as schools and universities — if in fact they still exist — community experiences, probably in "packaged form," could be provided periodically throughout the year, or actually be offered over a longer period like a full term under the course title Human Enrichment 101. In a sense the latter alternative has some roots in the "deliberate psychological education" presently being developed by Mosher and Sprinthall (1971).

Outside these institutions, counsellors might simply wander the country, like minstrels of a bygone age, and dispense instant assistance from mobile units to individuals leaving or entering a new "life style," or to groups where the harmony of such has soured.

In either case, whether within or without an institution, the aim of counselling would be much the same — to enhance the individual's power to transcend the constant uncertainty he faces and, perhaps more important, to tolerate the many differences in "life style" of

others he encounters. The latter aim seems to be a necessary ingredient for future counselling and one which Toffler doesn't deal with extensively in his discussion on education. Certainly if social fragmentation occurs to the point Toffler foresees, then tolerance of diverse ways of life will have to be embedded somewhere in one's learning. A quick glance at the growing chasm between young and old (i.e. those over thirty) should serve as sufficient evidence for the need for such training, but if it doesn't Lorenz's (1966) more scholarly works on aggression can be consulted.

So far no mention has been made of the role technological aids will play in counselling. The reason for this is simple. It goes without saying that technology will be an integral part of counselling in the future, particularly certain phases of it. For a short time anyway counsellors will likely make much use of computers, especially those programmed to retrieve occupational-educational information, and so on, which can then be passed on to the student. As Loughary (1970) has indicated the less expensive "mini-computer," easily installed in home or school, and the huge computer "supersystems" are a "means of bringing previously unheard-of sophistication to the smallest of educational and, therefore, counseling programs."

In some ways such an arrangement will make vocational-educational counselling highly appealing to the counsellor. Its appeal, however, will be short-lived. Since students can be expected to become more familiar with computers, having literally grown up with them, and since they will be taught how to learn according to Toffler, they should have no real need for the middleman, the counsellor.

Earlier in this paper it was stated that a return to the "basics," i.e. vocational-educational counselling, was not a solution to some of the current questions in counselling. The preceding partially explains why. Stated euphemistically the counsellor will be redundant.

In addition, however, assumptions now thought basic to this type of counselling will undergo revisions. For one thing the notion of linear and irreversible career patterns will be replaced as streamlined education allows the individual to move tangentially to areas that suit his momentary life style.

More than this the individual of the future will define himself and thereby define his job rather than working backwards from the point where someone else prescribes the qualifications and the individual then determines whether he can be "fitted" into the role. Thus a concern like, "I want to take some tests to see what I am best suited for," will disappear, and with it vocational-educational counselling, unless of course the counsellor's role changes sufficiently.

Before closing, one other subject warrants brief consideration — professional organizations. Certainly the massive memberships (witness APGA) today cannot grow even larger and still reflect the aims of all members. Lawton (1971) contends that a new "Green organization" (as in green light) is required to offset the more conservative Red and Yellow associations. This will probably happen.

Initially, the split could be along humanistic (Green) vs. behavioristic (Red) ideological lines. The former will appeal to the younger

“socially-aware” counsellors (call them “consciousness III” counselors, if you wish), while the latter will attract the older, accountability-conscious counsellors. In the short run the effective proselytizing on behalf of behavior modification (see Franks, 1971, contingency management in comic book form) will make it more acceptable to society, especially schools as long as schools see a need to make the extraordinary ordinary (viz. normal) through regimentation. Throughout this period the Green movement will remain on the periphery and perhaps even underground. Once, however, regimentation is no longer necessary or desirable, the Green organization will find its star in the ascendance, and the beautiful thing is that there will be no bitterness between the factions when this happens. The “humanists,” being full of tolerance, will realize the potential in learning principles, particularly as they apply to learning how to be human. The behaviorists on the other hand will understand that their bread and butter lies not with broad schemes for making wayward students adjust, but with consciousness-expanding programs. The result? Probably peaceful co-existence.

At the outset of this paper the position was taken that Rogerian counselling alone was untenable in terms of present and possible future social, economic, and technological developments. This position could just as easily have included any doctrinaire definition of counselling. What followed provided, albeit somewhat globally, some of the reasons for this contention. What was deliberately excluded was that any projection about counselling presupposes the survival of it, and unfortunately right now the profession is on the endangered species list. While some encouragement can be derived from the knowledge that people like Goodman (Glasgow, 1971), once an outspoken critic of the profession, believes that education should be placed in the hands of counsellors and psychologists, faith in this belief is not enough. Counsellors must be able to meet such a challenge. They must start afresh for, to paraphrase Kahlil Gibran, progress shall not be made through improving what has been done but only by reaching toward what has to be done. This certainly calls for taking some thought of the morrow!

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