

Phase 2 - COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY (Concluded)

Week 11. Unit 2.8. WHO is/are “WE” II: Can Prejudice and discrimination be overcome? Predicaments Past and Present; Future Perspectives; What can and must change in order for humanecological sustainability to become attainable?

Theme: Liking, Loving, and Interpersonal Sensitivity

Questions to Think About:

- What, if anything, do the contents of this chapter have to do with "what it takes" to organize and develop a collaborative learning system of the kind we are building in 9.70?
- What causes one person to like or dislike another?
- What is the reward theory of attraction?
- How are we influenced by praise and criticism; by flattery; by doing and asking or being asked for favors?
- How are we influenced by our impressions of the socioculturally defined "personal attributes" of other people – e.g. competence, beauty, attractiveness (and their opposites)?
- Are your social attitudes toward others (e.g. classmates, potential dates or partners) influenced by the opinions of your peers?
- What role does the perceived differential attractiveness of others play in influencing how you relate to them?
- What do the "adolescents" of your acquaintance value? ("young adults"? "mature persons"? "old folks"?)
- How does the concept of "distance regulation" relate to your experience in social life (home-life and work-life)?
- How do similarities/differences in attitudes between members of "dating" couples relate to their "distance regulation" processes?
- Compare and contrast the ways in which power and intimacy influence social relations.
- What is "love"? Compare/ contrast platonic (companionate) and erotic (passionate) love.
- What do you find "attractive" in encounters with potential "significant others"?
- Consider relations between self-esteem (on the one hand) and liking and being liked (on the other).
- What is the gain/loss theory (of attraction)?

Humanecological Sustainability as a Social Psychological Problem: Can Personal and Social Values Coexist in a More Multidimensionally Harmonious, More Humanecologically Sustainable Society possible?

FACILITATION:

Study Group #8

It has been a long, hard, path that we have followed through many of the less attractive, or frankly antisocial aspects of “human nature.” Having traversed this territory, we need something here that is more positive -- something that leaves us feeling that we're on the right track as far as defining and dealing with the world and its contents, including ourselves and each other, is concerned. Can we hope for a more humanecologically sustainable future?

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW:

READ by yourself then DISCUSS in your study group:

2.8-1 [SA] Chapter 8

2.8-2 “Jigsaw groups and the desegregated classroom: In pursuit of common goals”

2.8-3 “Engaging Communities”

2.8-4 “Mobilizing Human Energy”

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS: THINK OVER by yourself then DISCUSS in your study group:

2.8 – 1 [SA] Chapter 8

2.8 – 2 Aronson, Elliot, and Diane Bridgeman. "Jigsaw groups and the desegregated classroom: In pursuit of common goals." Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin (1979). Units 1.2-1.8.

2.8 – 3 Assadourian, E. “Engaging communities.” State of the world 2008. Worldwatch Institute: 151-165.

2.8 – 4 Calder, J.S. “Mobilizing Human Energy.” State of the world 2008. Worldwatch Institute: 166-179.

What is "human nature"?

How would you describe/define:

- relations between humanity and nature?
- individual rights and social responsibilities?
- legal, moral, political and economic arguments regarding the concept of "corporate personhood"?
- "humanecological sustainability" as a social psychological problem.

We will revisit some of the questions raised by the film *The Corporation* (which we viewed and discussed in Unit 2.3), primarily the issue about corporation as a person. We’ll examine the social-psychological and humanecological consequences of this bizarre characterization afforded to an institution.

Another important issue here is the prevailing sense of alienation – of disconnection between the individual and the large-scale social structures like corporations and other institutions which often seem to operate in a manner that excludes any possibility of individual influence, thus creating a feeling of helplessness and despair.

Think of instances when you feel like that. Does MIT as an institution sometimes incite such feelings? What other institutions, bodies, organizations have similar impact on you? Do you ever think you should or could do something about it?

What are some possible positive alternatives to this state of alienation, disconnection and helplessness?

What conditions and human relations can enable the re-connection of individuals in social structures?

R-E-S-P-E-C-T Group Process Issues (evaluations):

Relate the foregoing to your experience with the 9.70 "collaborative learning system". Does the class integration/connection present an example of a "re-connected", "de-alienated" social structure –

particularly because the dissolved authoritarian relations enable better communication/decision conductivity up and down, and – what is essential – shared responsibility, which is emphatically absent in typical large scale structures (like the corporation).

For effective communication it is important to have clear, concise, constructive and timely feedback.
Good Luck!

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