

RAVEN.LET

Dear John Raven,

My thanks to Bob Perloff. I think your notion for a symposium in Sydney next year is quite splendid. I would have been disappointed if I had only learnt about it after it had happened.

I will be very happy to present a paper along the lines given in the accompanying abstract.

I am pleased that at least you saw Futures We are In. In Choice of Futures (the same non-market oriented publisher) I was so under the trance of the Keynesians that I wrote that "There seems no reason that the rate of 3.0% (growth in productivity) achieved through the sixties should not be sustained" (p201). By 78-79 I realized that I had to go back to my economic studies. A lot of my time still goes to those studies. What appears is that modern economies are, as you write in your attached article, "managed economies". At best, however, they are managed to achieve efficient allocation of resources by criteria of returns on investment or strengthening of bureaucratic powers. Neither of these criteria necessarily encompass the purposes held by those who are neither investors nor power-wielding bureaucrats.

Our system of representative democracy acts only to preserve and justify allocation of resources in this fashion. It seems to me, when I reflect on these allocation problems, that "perhaps most importantly, they call for the development of new concepts and structures of democracy ".Do the words seem familiar to you!

The word psychology produces an immediate chill in me, and there is no way in which I would introduce myself as a psychologist (F B Ps S notwithstanding). I have become a closet psychologist and will remain so until Isidor Chein's, "The Science of Behavior and the Image of Man," is accepted as our primer. If, however, we do not get our psychology right, then I see no way of getting any institutional structures right- and that includes our structures for our governance (cf Emery, Systems Thinking, Vol 2, Penguin, 1982).

I do not think that your claims are 'grandiose'. Try Kurt Lewin's post-humous statement, Human Relations, Vol 1. No, I think that in the years since then we have witnessed a cold-blooded, gutless pursuit of standing within academia. Academic salaries and tenure versus scientific and human goals. The world crisis we are now in, and the related stunting of university growth, would appear to make your endeavour most timely.

All the best,

yours sincerely,

ABSTRACT

Notes for same:

- the aim is to argue that psychologists should be involved with major problems in their society.

- psychology cannot restrict itself to the Skinner box or the clinic.

- the involvements of psychology are with the O-E relation, mind. What the head is into, not the chimerical search for what is inside the head

. - for psychology the critical dimension of the environmental term in the relation lies in the need for joint action for any significant effort at adapting the E to the O.

- joint action is not the same as subservient action. For historical reasons psych, when it has been involved at this level, has been directed toward the better maintenance and exploitation of

subservient relations. This can only be disastrous for the future of the social sciences.

- the social sciences must empower people to better perceive their own purposes and ideals and to plan, execute, administer and evaluate their pursuit of these purposes and ideals. They must, above all be empowered to govern themselves in these pursuits and in the choice between conflicting purposes and ideals.

- the theoretical conditions for genuine joint action were laid down by Feibleman, Heider and Asch (1945, 1946 & 1952 respectively). In a one-sided fashion Habermas has done a valuable job of drawing attention, once again, to the fundamental role of 'democratic dialogue' as the basis of joint action.

- some of the practical steps to operationalize these theoretical considerations have been achieved with the development of criteria for the design of semi-autonomous and self-managing workgroups, for participative design workshops and search conferences.

- a critical practical step in the development of self-governance has been the re-discovery of the psychological significance of sortition, the principle of filling representative positions by drawing lot, as distinct from selection by ballot.

- new institutional arrangements are desperately needed to cope with radical transformations in work, family and community life, and in the international matrix within which these changes are occurring.

- after a brief but glorious ride on Keynesianism the economists, for the most part, have agreed that they can contribute nothing. With an amazing degree of unanimity they advise governments to leave all economic decision making to the market-place. (For this advice they get handsomely paid! It was only a short while ago that we had well looked after Anglican bishops telling us that God did not exist).

- economists can say that know one knows how the economy works, only the market knows (they slyly fail to admit publicly that their models of market operations are only toy models). Social scientists cannot permit themselves to be bystanders to this scene. We do not know how SOCIETY works but we do know a good deal about how people can jointly act to produce the sort of society they want.