

HG Interview w/Steen Nepper Larsen on January 30, 2002

Version May 20, 2002

Key: CAPS for H. Gardner; plain text for S.N. Larsen

I have a lot of questions.

Why do men need education?

WELL, I THINK A LOT DEPENDS ON THE WORD “NEED”. EVOLUTIONARILY SPEAKING, THE ONLY GOAL IS TO SURVIVE UNTIL YOU HAVE OFFSPRING. BUT AS CULTURE EXISTS, IT DEVELOPS, AT A MINIMUM, FOR PEOPLE TO SURVIVE TO REPRODUCTION, AND TO BE KEPT IN A COMMUNITY, PEOPLE AT LEAST HAVE TO BE RAISED IN THE NORMS OR VALUES OF THAT COMMUNITY. OTHERWISE, THEY WON’T SURVIVE, THEY WILL BE KILLED OR EXPELLED.

EVERY CULTURE THAT WE KNOW TRANSMITS KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, VALUES TO OFFSPRING. SO WHEN I’M TALKING ABOUT EDUCATION I SHOULD INDICATE WHETHER I MEAN FORMAL OR INFORMAL EDUCATION. ONCE YOU BEGIN TO TALK ABOUT SYMBOL SYSTEMS, INCLUDING NOTATIONAL ONES THAT ARE PART OF CURRICULA, THEN MOST PEOPLE WILL NOT LEARN SUCH SYSTEMS BY THEMSELVES. FORMAL SCHOOLING PROBABLY BEGAN MOST FUNDAMENTALLY SO PEOPLE COULD MAKE SENSE OF FORMAL SYMBOL SYSTEMS. AND NOW, OF COURSE, WE HAVE LOTS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF SYMBOL SYSTEMS.

Men can only become men by education; it’s merely what education makes of him. Is that true?

AN INTERESTING WAY TO THINK ABOUT IT IS IN TOTALITARIAN SOCIETIES WHERE THEY BURN BOOKS, THE ONLY EDUCATION THAT THE TOTALITARIAN LEADERS WANT IS THAT PEOPLE SHOULD BEHAVE IN A CERTAIN WAY. AND READING FREELY IS NOT A GOOD IDEA; PROBABLY A BOOK OF PHILOSOPHICAL READINGS GETS BURNED FAIRLY EARLY ON IN THE PROCESS.

It’s believing in Enlightenment all the way so anthropological speaking, people have to come from the first nature to the second nature. Does that kind of a language make sense for you ?

YES, AND IT JUST GETS MORE COMPLICATED WITH TIME.

And we even have to invent a kind of something called the third nature or fourth nature—

IN MY LIFETIME, WE’VE SWITCHED FROM OLD EDUCATION AS SOMETHING THAT TERMINATES ROUGHLY SPEAKING BETWEEN THE AGE OF 15 AND 25. AND NEW EDUCATION, WE’RE JUST SUPPOSED TO GO ON.

Yes, lifelong education.

AND IT'S INTERESTING BECAUSE THE CHINESE AND THE JEWS ARE TWO GROUPS FOR WHOM LIFELONG EDUCATION WAS LONG AN ASSUMPTION. AND THAT GIVES THEM A LEG UP AGAINST GROUPS WHERE LIFELONG EDUCATION WASN'T THE ASSUMPTION.

Oh, yes, you see that pride obviously in the United States these days when they are scoring high in all kinds of educational exams. So the next question will go like this: what should and what could or can be the content of the substance of education? Being also you form individuals in a fast changing, complex world. You write in INTELLIGENCE REFRAMED that people should study the history of the country, and etc., and respect and honor its values and also learn algebra and geometry. But what can it all be in a fast changing world.

WE'RE MOVING FROM AN OPTION TO NECESSITY. OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD, I THINK THERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT NOW THAT WERE LESS IMPORTANT EVEN WHEN I WENT TO SCHOOL. ONE IS AS YOU'VE JUST SAID, THAT STUDYING NEVER ENDS. SELF-IMPROVEMENT, BUT ALSO FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION. I DON'T KNOW OF ANY PROFESSION WHERE THE KNOWLEDGE YOU HAVE WHEN YOU'RE 20 IS GOING TO BE ADEQUATE WHEN YOU'RE 50 OR 80, BECAUSE DOMAINS CHANGE SO RAPIDLY NOW. SO I THINK THAT'S THE FIRST THING.

THE SECOND THING IS SIMPLY SOME UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT'S GOING ON GLOBALLY. AND I DON'T JUST MEAN WORLD HISTORY, BUT I MEAN WHAT WE CALL GLOBALIZATION: UNDERSTANDING SOMETHING ABOUT THE ECONOMY. UNDERSTANDING SOMETHING ABOUT THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF SOCIETIES. UNDERSTANDING SOMETHING ABOUT ECOLOGY. THOSE ARE, AS I SAY, MOVING FROM OPTIONS TO IMPERATIVES: IMPERATIVES BOTH FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND FOR THE LARGER UNIT.

THIRD OF ALL, SOMETHING WHICH IS A LITTLE BIT MORE ECCENTRIC: THE NECESSITY OF BEING ABLE TO AT LEAST PARTICIPATE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITY; THAT IS, ACTIVITY, WHICH CALLS ON YOU TO BRING TOGETHER DIFFERENT SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE, TO BE ABLE TO SYNTHESIZE THEM, JUDGE THEM, AND SO ON.

SO MUCH WORK NOW AT THE FOREFRONT OF SOCIETY IS PROBLEM BASED. AND AS WE HAVE INCREASING EXPERTISE IN DIFFERENT REALMS, AT THE VERY LEAST, ONE HAS TO LEARN TO WORK WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIFFERENT EXPERTISE. AND MAYBE, OPTIMALLY, ACQUIRE MORE THAN ONE FORM OF EXPERTISE YOURSELF. I WROTE A BOOK CALLED *THE DISCIPLINED MIND*, AND I ARGUED THERE ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MULTIDISCIPLINARY WORK, WHERE A NUMBER OF DISCIPLINES DISCUSS THE SAME TOPIC, AND INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK, WHERE INDIVIDUALS FROM DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES ACTIVELY WORK TOGETHER TO SOLVE A PROBLEM THAT NO DISCIPLINE CAN ATTACK ON ITS OWN.

Yes, so that's what we're basically we're doing at the University in Copenhagen is interdisciplinary problem solving and in project work.

EVEN TO BE ABLE TO EVALUATE THE HUGE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION THAT WE'RE DELUGED WITH NOW, YOU NEED TO HAVE AT LEAST A NODDING FAMILIARITY WITH DISCIPLINES AND HOW THEY RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER.

WE'RE STUDYING INTERDISCIPLINARITY FROM HIGH SCHOOL, FROM SECONDARY SCHOOL, AND ALL THE WAY TO INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE SANTA FE INSTITUTE, AND THE MEDIA LAB, WHICH ARE COMMITTED OVERTLY TO INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY. AND, AGAIN, THAT SEEMED VERY EXOTIC 50 YEARS AGO. IN FACT, I THINK THE WORD WAS ONLY COINED RECENTLY BUT NOW, IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE DISCIPLINE, YOU'RE KIND OF LIKE A REPAIRMAN.

Dinosaur, you're a dinosaur.

YOU'RE LIKE A REPAIRMAN WITH ONLY ONE TOOL, SO THOSE ARE AT LEAST THREE ELEMENTS WE MIGHT CALL NEWER IMPERATIVES.

I'm asking you this type of question because the debate in Denmark, it has been going on in a kind of post-Marxist way where people are discussing their theses from the Communist manifesto where Marx is writing about the insubstantial zero, the loss of substance.

"ALL MELTS INTO THIN AIR."

Yes, you know that . When I'm reading your books, you are writing that you are kind of critical towards uniform schooling. And you are critical in all these aspects where people are trying to kill individuality. But you are in favor of individual configured education, but still you maintain some kind of a universalist perspective. So one, is there a contradiction there that you are actually very critical of a kind of uniform schooling, but you are having highly universalized attitudes to life?

YES, I AM SENSITIVE TO THAT.

So is there a contradiction or can it be solved, or is there no problem?

I WOULDN'T SAY "NO PROBLEM," BUT I CERTAINLY HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ON THE TOPIC. NUMBER ONE: PART OF THE REASON I PUSH FOR INDIVIDUALIZATION IS BECAUSE OF MY CONVICTION THAT PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MINDS AND HAVE DIFFERENT STRENGTHS AND PERHAPS EVEN DIFFERENT EPISTEMOLOGIES. SO EVEN IF YOU HAD A SINGULAR CURRICULUM, THERE IS NO POINT I BELIEVE IN TEACHING EVERYBODY IN THE SAME WAY AND ASSESSING EVERYBODY IN THE SAME WAY. SO WE MIGHT CALL THAT INDIVIDUALIZATION OF MEANS. AND THAT IS A REVOLUTIONARY IDEA.

I JUST CAME BACK FROM HONG KONG WHERE THERE ARE CLASSES OF 40 AND 50 CHILDREN IN THE CLASS. IF YOU GO NORTH TO CHINA, THERE COULD BE 50 OR 60. THE NOTION OF INDIVIDUALIZATION WOULD BE BIZARRE. I ALWAYS SAY PEOPLE WILL NOT BE INDIVIDUALIZED BECAUSE HOWARD GARDNER SAYS THEY SHOULD OR EVEN BECAUSE JOHN DEWEY SAYS SO. BUT COMPUTERS WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE. EVEN IF WE WANTED EVERYONE TO LEARN ALGEBRA, THERE IS NO REASON WHY YOU WOULD HAVE TO LEARN THE SAME WAY AS I DO AS LONG AS WE CAN BOTH UNDERSTAND THE IDEAS OF ALGEBRA AND USE IT EFFECTIVELY. SO THAT IS INDIVIDUALIZATION AS MEANS.

IN A FEW OF MY BOOKS I ADMIT THAT IF I WAS A CZAR, I WOULD BE HAPPY TO HAVE A SINGLE CURRICULUM. I DON'T BELIEVE IN MULTIPLE CURRICULA FOR THEIR OWN

SAKE, BUT I BELIEVE THAT AT LEAST IN A COUNTRY THAT IS AS COMPLICATED AS THE UNITED STATES, THERE ARE SUCH DEEP DIFFERENCES AMONG PEOPLE IN WHAT THEY BELIEVE SHOULD BE LEARNED. WHAT THEY THINK THE CURRICULUM SHOULD BE, THAT I DON'T THINK EVERYONE WOULD EVER AGREE ON A VIABLE CURRICULUM.

I HAVE WHAT I CALL THE "JESSE TEST". JESSE JACKSON, THE BLACK LEADER; JESSE HELMS, THE SENATOR. AND JESSE VENTURA, THE "WRESTLER" GOVERNOR IN MINNESOTA.. THEY WOULD NEVER AGREE, AND THEY EACH REPRESENT SUBSTANTIAL PARTS OF AMERICA.

SO I TAKE A LEAF FROM THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM, WHICH IS QUITE GOOD. YOU HAVE A LOT OF DIFFERENT CURRICULA AT UNIVERSITIES. I THINK A COUNTRY LIKE THE UNITED STATES COULD EASILY HAVE HALF A DOZEN WHAT I CALL "PATHWAYS". WHAT EACH EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY DOES WOULD BE PUBLIC, AND IF THEY ARE TOO ECCENTRIC, THEY WOULDN'T BE LICENSED.

FOR INSTANCE, PATHWAYS COULD DIFFER IN THEIR COMMITMENT TO DEPTH VERSUS BREADTH. MAYBE THEY WANT TO GO, AS I FAVOR, MORE DEEPLY INTO A FEW TOPICS, OR MORE BROADLY INTO A GREAT VARIETY OF THINGS. THEY COULD DIFFER IN WHETHER THEY ARE MORE OF A SCIENTIFIC OR MORE OF A HUMANISTIC CURRICULUM.. THEY COULD DIFFER ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY TAKE A MULTICULTURAL APPROACH, WHICH IS A BIG THING IN AMERICA. .

It's not such a big thing here.

AS OPPOSED TO HAVING MORE OF A CULTURE BLIND APPROACH.

LET'S PUT IT THIS WAY, IF THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF TOPICS AND DISCIPLINES THAT PEOPLE COULD CONCEIVABLY KNOW, THEN THE MOST THAT ANY SCHOOL IS GOING TO BE ABLE TO DO IS ONE OR TWO DOTS OF THE OVERALL PATTERN. SO IT'S NOT NECESSARY THAT EVERY SCHOOL IN THE WORLD DO THE SAME ONE OR TWO DOTS.

Okay, I understand your point there, but one of the keys to your way of thinking where I was preparing myself for the interview was to read page 180 and 181 of INTELLIGENCE REFRAMED. And there you say that we shouldn't just learn something to learn something, but to make the world a better place to live, and to chart human possibilities. And that means that you have a vision of a good life where in your books, a kind of a maybe Aristotelian view of a good life, maybe harmony or something. Could you elaborate that a little bit? Do you have a vision, a kind of Utopia in your writing about, of education and knowing and intelligence?

AS I GET OLDER, IT GETS MORE EXPLICIT. I WOULD SAY THAT THERE ARE TWO THINGS WHICH DRIVE ME, AND I THINK YOU'VE TOUCHED ON BOTH OF THEM: UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVEMENT. UNDERSTANDING AS WE HAVE A LOT OF FACULTIES IN OUR MIND/BRAIN. WE COULD SIT IN FRONT OF TELEVISION FOR OUR LIVES OR GAMBLE. OR WE COULD TRY TO UNDERSTAND AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THE WORLD, AND TRANSMIT WHATEVER WE UNDERSTAND TO OUR CHILDREN.

I THINK IT'S EXCITING. IT'S ALSO A GOOD USE OF OUR EQUIPMENT, AND I ACTUALLY THINK IT'S REWARDING. I LIKE TO QUOTE PLATO, WHO SAID, "THE PURPOSE OF

EDUCATION IS TO MAKE YOU WANT TO DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.” AND FOR PEOPLE, OBVIOUSLY LIKE YOU, WHO ENJOY UNDERSTANDING, YOU CAN’T UNDERSTAND WHY SOMEBODY WOULD WANT TO WALK AROUND THE REST OF THEIR LIVES AND JUST EAT FRENCH FRIES AND WATCH TV.

BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, UNLESS YOU USE THAT UNDERSTANDING FOR SOME WAY OF BETTERING THE WORLD, “MAKING A DIFFERENCE” IS THE AMERICAN CLICHÉ, IN A SENSE, YOU HAVEN’T EARNED YOUR PLACE ON THE PLANET. NOW, WHEN WE GET TO THE DETAILS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AS OPPOSED TO MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE, THAT’S PART OF WHAT I’M TRYING TO STUDY IN THE GOODWORK PROJECT. AND THERE ARE SOME THINGS, WHICH I DO BELIEVE, THEY’RE PRETTY BASIC, BUT I GUESS THEY WOULD PUT ME ON THE SIDE OF JURGEN HABERMAS IN HIS NOTORIOUS DEBATE WITH PETER SLOTE DIJK.

I BELIEVE THAT WE OUGHT TO HAVE AN INCLUSIONARY VISION, RATHER THAN THINKING PARTICULARLY OR EXCEPTIONALLY, WE SHOULD THINK IN TERMS OF AS LARGE A PART OF HUMANITY AS POSSIBLE. I BELIEVE WITH ISAAH BERLIN, IN THE KIND OF NEGATIVE LIBERTY THAT NOT DOING HARM IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT.

The lack of cruelty is the only norm we can embrace.

YES, AND NOT DOING HARM, AND BEING TOLERANT OF ANYBODY WHO ISN’T DOING HARM. I WOULD LIKE A LESS HIERARCHICAL AND LESS BOUNDARY-FILLED WORLD.

When it comes to income and distribution and equal rights and so forth?

YES, AND THAT’S A BIG PROBLEM NOW BECAUSE, UNFORTUNATELY, THE MARKET FANS DIFFERENCES AMONG GROUPS AND NATIONS UNLESS YOU HAVE VERY ACTIVE COUNTER MEASURES.

Or even a state with an ambition, which we don’t have in Denmark; we have this awful state right here, right now. Have you heard about it?

JUST IN PASSING.

It’s an exclusionary state right now.

OKAY, WELL SO INCLUSIONARY AND FLATTENING. I’D LIKE A PLACE WHERE ARTS AND SELF-EXPRESSION FLOURISHES. I WAS JUST IN HONG KONG, AS I SAID, AND SOMEBODY THERE TOLD ME. THEY SAID, “NOWADAYS, THE ONLY DEMOCRATIC PARTY THAT WE HAVE IS THE JOURNALISTS, IS THE NEWSPAPERS.” AND THAT’S VERY IMPORTANT. SO I GUESS MY VISION IS RATHER STANDARD FOR SOMEBODY WHO IS A WESTERN LIBERAL BASED IN CAMBRIDGE MASS.

But you don’t have any kind of idea or approach: mankind self-liberation or that kind of metaphysics from any enlightenment period? You don’t need that. You have more of a pragmatic way than this big history or philosophy kind of enlightenment. That’s too much.

ONE OF THE THINGS I'VE BECOME INTRIGUED WITH RECENTLY IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PEOPLE WHO WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND THE PEOPLE FOR WHOM THAT'S NOT EVEN A PART OF THEIR LEXICON. AND I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN PEOPLE WHO WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THAT'S WHY I STUDY CREATIVITY, LEADERSHIP, AND SO ON. BUT AS I SAY IN MY WRITINGS, I ALWAYS STUDIED IT IN A VERY AMORAL WAY—THAT IS, WITHOUT REFERENCE TO HOW THOSE SKILLS OF LEADERSHIP OR CREATION ARE USED.

TAKE THE EXAMPLE OF BIN LADEN, WHOSE LEADERSHIP SKILLS MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH FROM A MORE BENIGN FIGURE, LIKE CHURCHILL OR GANDHI, BUT I THINK THAT'S NOT ENOUGH ANYMORE. IT'S CERTAINLY NOT ENOUGH: I NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE, WHICH IS VERY COMPLICATED. AS I ALWAYS SAY ABOUT MY WORK: IT'S BASICALLY CONCEPTUAL AND SCHOLARLY, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE IT A LITTLE BIT OF PUSH IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

But there is a lot of life and memory in it, as well as your own life and your own history.

YES, FORGETTING ABOUT ME PERSONALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE: CHANGING IS ONE THING; CHANGING IT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IS IMPORTANT TO ME, BUT ANYBODY WHO LIVED THROUGH THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SHOULD BE AFRAID OF ANYTHING THAT THEY'RE CERTAIN ABOUT.

Yes, you have to be a little bit modest. But when I am reading your books, I have a hard time understanding how you discuss the "observation of observations."

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE WRITINGS OF LUHMANN EXCEPT THAT IT'S A KIND OF A REFLECTIVITY?

Yes, he was this picture of a sociologist, and he is always talking about there is a certain, that blind point in your observation. You kind of observe yourself observing. You kind of see yourself seeing. And when I am reading your books, I have a hard time to find out the criteria you use to judge right from wrong. An example or when you are asking this question: what should be taught and why, and then you go on answering it. I have a hard time to see what's foundational in judgment? Is there a critical normativity background on which you are standing?

WELL, LET ME APPROACH THAT WITH A STORY, AND THEN I'LL TRY TO GIVE YOU THE BEST ANSWER I CAN.

I AM ABOUT TO GO TO THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM THAT USUALLY IS IN DAVOS, BUT IT'S IN NEW YORK THIS YEAR. AND THEY PUT ME IN A PANEL ON ENHANCING CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING FROM AN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE. THIS IS A VERY POST-SEPTEMBER 11 KIND OF TOPIC, RIGHT? SO THEY WANT YOU TO SAY SOMETHING GRANDIOSE; I THINK YOU'VE SEEN GRANDIOSITY ISN'T CONSCIOUSLY MY STYLE, THOUGH YOU CAN'T TELL MAYBE (AS LUHMANN WOULD SAY?) HOW GRANDIOSE YOU ARE OR AREN'T. BUT I DON'T THINK OF MYSELF AS BEING GRANDIOSE. I WILL HAVE 90 SECONDS TO SPEAK, BY THE WAY:.

Ninety seconds, okay.

I'M GOING TO SAY THAT BASICALLY WHAT I DO IS I TEACH, I RESEARCH, AND I WRITE. SO WHATEVER INFLUENCE I HAVE HAS TO BE VIA THOSE VENUES, RIGHT? AND I'M GOING TO INTRODUCE THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER JOHN RAWLS, WHOM I'M SURE YOU KNOW, BUT WHOM THEY PROBABLY WON'T KNOW. AND ABOUT HOW HE TRIES TO REDESIGN A SOCIETY FROM FIRST PRINCIPLES. AND THE TERM, WHICH YOU KNOW, "THE VEIL OF IGNORANCE", WHERE YOU WANT TO DESIGN A SOCIETY SUCH THAT YOU DON'T KNOW WHICH PLACE YOU'RE GOING TO BE BORN IN, OR WHAT KIND OF RESOURCES YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE AVAILABLE. AND THAT TEMPER'S HOW HIERARCHICAL AND HOW ASYMMETRIC WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO DESIGN A SOCIETY.

AND I'M GOING TO SAY, "I WILL STRIVE IN MY FUTURE OF TEACHING RESEARCH AND WRITING TO ASSUME A VEIL OF IGNORANCE VIS-A-VIS THE SETTING AND VIS-A-VIS THE AUDIENCE SUCH THAT I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I AM GOING TO BE THE SPEAKER OR THE LISTENER. AND I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I'M GOING TO BE HERE OR THERE., AMONG THE HAVES OR THE HAVE NOTS, INTELLECTUALLY AND ECONOMICALLY.

Teacher or being taught

THAT'S RIGHT, AS OPPOSED TO BEING KIND OF THE EVER CONFIDENT WESTERN LIBERAL, WHICH I PROBABLY MOSTLY COME OFF AS, SO THAT'S AT LEAST A WAY OF THINKING ABOUT THE RAWLSIAN CONUNDRUM.

Because you changed this position and communication also.

MORE GENERALLY, I THINK THE ONLY THING THAT I CAN SAY IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION IS THAT FROM A VERY EARLY AGE, I HAVE HAD AN INTERESTING EPISTEMOLOGICAL COMMITMENT IN MY OWN WORK IN PSYCHOLOGY. I'M A PSYCHOLOGIST, AND MY IDIOSYNCRATIC EPISTEMOLOGICAL COMMITMENT WAS TO STUDY THE MIND FROM AS MANY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AS POSSIBLE.

I ACTUALLY HAVE A HERO IN THIS REGARD, A SOVIET RUSSIAN PSYCHOLOGIST NAMED ALEXANDER ROMANOVICH LURIA, WHO WAS A STUDENT OF THE EVEN GREATER SOVIET PSYCHOLOGIST LEV SEMONOVCH VYGOSKY. WHENEVER I STUDY SOMETHING, I STUDY IT HOW IT DEVELOPS IN CHILDREN; HOW IT BREAKS DOWN; HOW IT EXISTED IN DIFFERENT CULTURES. WHAT LED TO MY THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES WAS BRINGING TOGETHER THESE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES. WHILE THEY DON'T ENSURE ACCURACY, THEY SORT OF BOUNCE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. AND WHEN THEY ALL SEEM TO BE SAYING THE SAME THING, THEN TO ME, THAT'S A SIGN OF VALIDITY.

NONETHELESS, AS YOUR QUESTION APPLIES, NUMBER ONE, WE ALL HAVE OUR GROUND PLANTED ON SOME SOLID LAND. WELL, YOU KNOW MY BIOGRAPHY: I'M NEVER GOING TO BE A PAPUAN, NEW GUINEAN.

Or a woman, right?

AND THE WORLD CHANGES. I WAS VERY SHOCKED BY SEPTEMBER 11; MAYBE MANY PEOPLE IN AMERICA, OUTSIDE AMERICA WEREN'T, BUT I CERTAINLY WAS, AND THAT'S MADE ME RETHINK MANY THINGS. SO HERE'S AGAIN WHERE I THINK

MODESTY IS TO BE PREFERRED TO SELF-CONFIDENCE IN THIS REGARD. ALSO, WHEN LUHMANN SAYS YOU CAN'T OBSERVE AND OBSERVE YOURSELF, THAT'S KIND OF A CLICHÉ. SOME OF US ARE QUITE GOOD SELF-OBSERVERS. SOME PEOPLE ARE TOO GOOD. SOMEONE DESCRIBED TO ME WHAT A GOOD LEADER IN ACTION IS, AND IT'S A WONDERFUL DESCRIPTION OF BILL CLINTON. LEADERS LIKE CLINTON ARE COMPLETELY THERE IN THE MOMENT; AT THE SAME TIME, THEY ARE COMPLETELY AWARE OF WHAT'S GOING ON, AND THEY CAN LOOK AT IT FROM A DISTANCE.

AND I THINK PEOPLE WHO AREN'T LIKE CLINTON, CAN'T SEE THAT SYNOPTICALLY. BUT IT'S A FACULTY YOU CAN DEVELOP; NAMELY, THE FACULTY OF BEING THERE AND BEING AWARE THAT YOU'RE THERE. IN FACT, I IMAGINE ALL SKILLED ACTORS ARE LIKE THAT. ON THE ONE HAND, THEY ARE COMPLETELY IN THE MOMENT, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY HAVE TO BE AWARE OF WHAT'S GOING ON. SO TO THE EXTENT THAT I UNDERSTAND IT, I THINK IT'S MORE A CONTINUUM RATHER THAN SOMETHING WHICH WITHSTANDS SCRUTINY. IN FACT, I WOULD IMAGINE THAT YOU COULD RANK INDIVIDUALS IN THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY CAN OBSERVE THEMSELVES.

THAT'S LIKE PERSPECTIVE TAKING OR THEORY OF MIND: IF THE CHILD FIRST THINKS ONLY THE WAY HE THINKS.

The center of the world.

AND THEN HE REALIZES THAT YOU SEE THINGS TOO FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE. AND THEN SHE CAN PLAY A VERY COMPLICATED MIND GAME.

The culture must learn the same.

IT'S A GOOD QUESTION ABOUT IRONY: CULTURES MAY DIFFER IN THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY CULTIVATE AN IRONIC STANCE. IN FACT, I THINK IRONY IS PROBABLY A SIGN OF THE LONGEVITY OF A CULTURE AND THE DEGREE OF HIERARCHY IN IT BECAUSE A LOT OF IRONIC CONVERSATION IS AN EFFORT TO DEAL WITH HIERARCHY. YOU HAVE MORE PRESTIGE THAN I DO SO I MAKE AN IRONIC STATEMENT, BUT WHEN YOU CALL ME ON IT, I SAY, "WELL, I DID SAY YOU WERE THE MOST HANDSOME PERSON I HAVE EVER SEEN." I DON'T KNOW OF CROSS CULTURAL STUDIES OF IRONY, BUT THAT'S A SPECULATION.

Oh, yes. Or judging upon the, one of the things you're most world famous about, all this intelligence research and different ideas of eight and one-half of separate intelligences. What is their source. How can one speak about them as separate capacities?

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION AND IT'S A PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTION. BUT SINCE I'M AN EMPIRICIST, I ONLY CAN ANSWER EMPIRICALLY.

Okay, let's hear it.

ANYWAY, WHEN I SAY I'M AN EMPIRICIST, OF COURSE, I DON'T MEAN THAT IN A PHILOSOPHICAL SENSE. I MEAN THAT: I ALWAYS TRY TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOU COULD GET A DATA-BASED ANSWER TO A QUESTION.

You are a scientist and you do empirical studies (EXACTLY). That's good, but you are not an empiricist, I wouldn't say.

NOT IN THE BRITISH SENSE.

Not in the British sense.

THE WAY I THINK ABOUT POTENTIALITY IS TWOFOLD. ONE, IF IT'S A GENERAL HUMAN POTENTIAL, LET'S SAY LIKE LOVE, THEN ANY HUMAN WHO IS RAISED IN A NORMAL ENVIRONMENT WILL EXHIBIT THAT UNLESS THEY ARE GROSSLY ABNORMAL. BUT I'M ALSO INTERESTED, AS YOU KNOW, IN THE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE ASPECT. AND THERE, THE WAY I EMPIRICIZE IT IS TO TRY TO DETERMINE THE LIMITED AMOUNT OF EXPOSURE OR PRACTICE THAT A PERSON NEEDS TO ACHIEVE AT A HIGH LEVEL.

SO YOU AND I DO NOT HAVE THE SAME MUSICAL POTENTIAL IF EACH RAISED IN THE SAME ENVIRONMENT, WITH THE SAME, AMOUNT OF MUSIC THAT WE HEAR AND THE SAME LESSONS. ONE OF US BECOMES MUCH MORE ACCOMPLISHED THAN THE OTHER. AND THAT TO ME IS THE GENETIC CONTRIBUTION OF THE POTENTIAL. AND YOU AND I DO NOT HAVE THE SAME BIOLOGICAL PARENTS, AND SO ONE OF US MAY JUST HAVE A LOT MORE MUSICAL POTENTIAL THAN THE OTHER. BUT, IN BOTH CASES, IF WE AREN'T EXPOSED TO MUSIC, IT'S NEVER GOING TO GET EXPRESSED.

WELL, THE WAY I THINK ABOUT IT, IN THE SPECIES, THERE ARE CERTAIN REGIONS OF THE BRAIN WHICH NORMALLY ARE DEDICATED TO A CERTAIN KIND OF INFORMATION PROCESSING, TO MUSIC, OR LANGUAGE, LET'S SAY. AND IN CERTAIN PEOPLE, THE CONNECTIONS GET MADE MORE RAPIDLY AND MORE INTEGRALLY THAN IN OTHERS. AND ONE COULD CERTAINLY HAVE ANIMAL MODELS OF THAT KIND OF THING.

So, it's actually how you're raised in society that the potentials are released in a full blossoming form? Or whether or not they have been canceled or stopped or blocked or something like that?

RIGHT, BUT THE SAME EXPERIENCES IN THE SAME CULTURE COULD LEAD TEN PEOPLE TO TEN VERY DIFFERENT LEVELS. ALSO, AND THIS IS WHY NEUROLOGY IS COMPLICATED: I MIGHT BE AT A HIGHER LEVEL THAN YOU IF I WERE RAISED IN ONE CULTURE WITH ONE SET OF EXPERIENCES. BUT IF YOU HAPPEN TO GO TO ANOTHER CULTURE WHERE THEY DID MUSIC VERY DIFFERENTLY, YOU MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE MORE PROFICIENT THAN I.

THERE ISN'T JUST ONE ROUTE TO BECOMING MUSICAL AND PROFICIENT. HOWEVER, DOMAINS AS I CALL THEM, MAY DIFFER ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH HUMAN VARIABILITY IS PERMITTED. AND TO USE A VERY BASIC EXAMPLE, WHAT ALLOWS MOST PEOPLE BUT NOT ME TO SEE STEREOTYPICALLY, TO SEE OUT OF TWO EYES AT THE SAME TIME, IS SOMETHING THAT IS DETERMINED PRETTY EARLY AND WITH RATHER LITTLE VARIATION ACROSS PEOPLE.

ACTUALLY IN THE CASE OF MUSIC OR OTHER CAPACITIES, SOME WITH MORE PLAY, YOU HAVE TO LEARN NOTES AND THEIR NAMES MAYBE BY FIVE OR SIX TO HAVE EXCELLENT "PERFECT" PITCH. BUT THERE IS QUITE A DEAL OF VARIETY: YOU MIGHT

BE ABLE TO GET UP TO 50 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION TO HAVE ABSOLUTE PITCH IN ONE SOCIETY, AND ALMOST NOBODY IN ANOTHER SOCIETY. WHEN IT COMES TO LEARNING THE CALCULUS, THERE ARE PROBABLY A HUNDRED WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN LEARN.

Okay, you call your own perspective as psycho-biological perspective, but it seems also to me that you are very interdisciplinary. And that you have a lot of things about sociology and philosophy and cultural history and artistic or esthetical history. And so in your own perspective, can you actually describe your own method here? Are you an interdisciplinary madman or friendly man combining all conflicts coming by?

I'M JUST READING LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME BY THE FRENCH PLAYWRIGHT MOLIERE. YOU KNOW THE FAMOUS MONSIEUR JOURDAIN WHO IS THIS POMPOUS WEALTHY MERCHANT WITH THESE DIFFERENT DANCE AND MUSIC TEACHERS TRYING TO MAKE HIM MORE CULTIVATED. BUT HE SAYS, HE WAS SPEAKING PROSE ALL HIS LIFE WITHOUT KNOWING IT. SO IT'S ONLY VERY LATE I'VE BECOME INTERESTED IN INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND SYNTHESIZING AS A THING TO STUDY.

It's also there in some number five or six level of seven or eight steps to the absolute mind.

YES, YOU'RE A BETTER STUDENT THAN I AM.

And he has a synthesis level.

I'M GOING TO TALK NEXT WEEK ON "CHOICE IN EDUCATION." AND IT'S A PUN BECAUSE I'M GOING TO TALK PARTLY ABOUT MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AND PARTLY ABOUT THE NEED FOR DIFFERENT PATHWAYS TO LEARNING.

BUT I'M ALSO GOING TO TALK ABOUT THE PRESSURE IN THE UNITED STATES FOR CHOICE IN TERMS OF SCHOOLS, VOUCHERS, AND SO ON. AND THIS FAMOUS CHINESE SAYING, "LET A THOUSAND FLOWERS BLOOM," I'M GOING TO SAY, WELL, YOU COULD SAY I'M GOING TO SAY, "LET A THOUSAND FLOWERS BLOOM." BUT MAYBE BECAUSE IT'S EDUCATION, I SHOULD SAY, "LET A THOUSAND BLOOMS FLOWER." AND I'M GOING TO TALK ABOUT BENJAMIN BLOOM AND ALLAN BLOOM AND JUDY BLOOM.

Yes, that will be hard to write about in Denmark, my guess, all these Blooms. Bloomy Blooms, Bloomy Brothers. (YES.) But you're using all kinds of very different approaches I would say, but it's true that psychology and biology seems to play, or neurobiology seems to play a very high role in your argumentation.

EXACTLY RIGHT. I THINK THAT EVERYBODY WHO IS A THINKER HAS A COUPLE OF CORE DISCIPLINES, PROBABLY A COUPLE OF CORE INTELLIGENCES AS WELL, WHICH IS SORT THEIR DRY LAND AND WHERE THEY START FROM. AND SO YOU NOTICE WHEN YOU ASK ME A QUESTION, I RIGHT AWAY TRY TO THINK ABOUT THE EXPERIMENT I COULD DO, AND IN THE BRAIN.

AND IT'S FUNNY, I'VE BEEN MARRIED TWICE, BOTH TIMES TO DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGISTS. AND THE ONE THING WE CLEARLY LEARN HOW TO DO IS HOW TO DO

EXPERIMENTS. THAT'S WHAT WE'RE TRAINED TO DO, KIND OF OUR REFLEX WHEN WE ENCOUNTER A CLAIM OR A PUZZLE.

BUT AS A CHILD, I READ WIDELY AND WITHOUT FOCUS. AND WHEN I WENT TO UNIVERSITY, I GUESS I WOULD HAVE HAD A CHOICE OF EITHER BEING VERY CHANNELED OR GOING FROM ONE SUBJECT TO ANOTHER. AND I JUST FOUND IT VERY INTERESTING TO STUDY DIFFERENT KINDS OF THINGS.

Yes. Something that interests me a lot is that you say that to be a master of change is not enough. To be an ideal human being, and why not actually? How do we evaluate this ? Smallest, being flexible, readjust your intelligences?

I think it's a good point that it's not enough to be a symbol analyst, and others toward our master of change. We have to be more ambitious, or we have to have more ambitions than just being flexible.

WELL, THE POINT I WAS TRYING TO MAKE HERE WAS ACTUALLY A DIFFERENT ONE, BUT I CAN TAKE YOUR PREMISE AS WELL. WHAT I WAS TRYING TO SAY IS THAT THESE THINGS WERE NOT SO IMPORTANT UNTIL RECENTLY. THAT IS, UNTIL RECENTLY, YOU DIDN'T HAVE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE SITTING IN FRONT OF A SCREEN ALL DAY PLAYING AND WORKING WITH LITTLE SQUIGGLES. NOR DID YOU HAVE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY WHAT WE WERE SAYING, MEN AND WOMEN OF AFFAIRS, WHERE THERE IS A CONSTANTLY CHANGING TERRAIN IN WHICH THEY WORK.

SO THESE WOULD BE, IN TERMS OF THE BEGINNING OF OUR CONVERSATION, KIND OF NEW NEEDS, OR AT LEAST NEW DESIDERATA. BUT YOUR PREMISE IS ALSO WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT EARLIER, BEING ABLE TO OBSERVE CHANGE AND UNDERSTAND AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO IT MAY BE IMPORTANT NOWADAYS. BUT YOU HAVE TO ASK WHAT'S THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE, AND IS IT GOOD?

Conditions, you could write. It's a hard conditioning.

RIGHT, YOU CAN EMBRACE CHANGE OR YOU CAN REJECT IT. YOU CAN USE IT POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY. YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO IT POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY. I'M DOING SOME WORK NOW ON GLOBALIZATION, AND ONE IDEA I'VE HAD IS THAT YOU CAN THINK WELL OR POORLY OF GLOBALIZATION, BUT YOU CAN ALSO BE PROACTIVE OR REACTIVE. THAT IS, YOU CAN ANTICIPATE WHERE THINGS ARE GOING, AND EITHER TRY TO BLOCK THE TREND OR MERGE WITH IT. OR YOU CAN WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN DRAGGED ALONG BY GLOBALIZATION. AND I THINK WE NEED TO PREPARE, AT LEAST IN THE WEST, WE NEED TO PREPARE KIDS SO THEY CAN BE PROACTIVE VERSUS GLOBALIZATION SO THEY ARE NOT THROWN BY THE TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES AND BY THE INTERCONNECTIVITY.

WELL, IT'S INTERESTING, ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO, ROBERT J. LIFTON, WHO IS AN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST, WROTE A BOOK CALLED THE *PROTEAN MAN*, AND HE HERALDED THIS NEW KIND OF PERSON. HE WASN'T THE DAVOS MAN THAT SAMUEL HUNTINGTON TALKS ABOUT. BUT HE WAS WRITING ABOUT PEOPLE WHO WERE VERY AGILE AND COULD MOVE VERY QUICKLY FROM ONE TO THE OTHER, ONE THING TO THE OTHER, AND PUT ON DIFFERENT MASKS. AND I WAS VERY CRITICAL OF THE BOOK.

BUT I GUESS I HAVE CHANGED MY MIND IN TWO WAYS. ONE, I THINK THAT IT'S NOT AN OPTION ANYMORE; IT'S A NECESSITY. YOU CAN'T REALLY LIVE CORDONED OFF AND, OF COURSE, RICHARD SENNETT, WHO WROTE ABOUT "CORROSION OF CHARACTER" DOESN'T; HE'S THE DISEASE OF WHICH HE PURPORTS TO BE THE CURE. BUT I ALSO THINK PEOPLE ARE MORE FLEXIBLE THAN I THOUGHT. IT'S HARDEST OBVIOUSLY IF YOU LIVE IN A VERY TRADITIONAL SOCIETY WITH VERY TRADITIONAL VALUES. I READ A VERY INTERESTING ANALYSIS BY THOMAS FRIEDMAN, WHO IS THE *NEW YORK TIMES* FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT, ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO CRASHED THE AIRPLANES INTO THE TOWERS. THEY WERE 15 SAUDIS AND 4 EGYPTIANS, AND HE DESCRIBED THEM, AS WE ALL KNOW, NOT AS POOR PEOPLE.

Those people were not poor at all.

BUT PEOPLE WHO WERE QUITE AFFLUENT. THEY WERE SENT ABROAD TO EUROPE TO STUDY BECAUSE SOME OF THEM AT LEAST HAD STUDIED ENGINEERING OR OTHER TECHNICAL SUBJECTS AND FRIEDMAN SAYS, "WHEN THEY GREW UP, THEY WERE FAIRLY CONFIDENT OF THEIR VALUES. AND THEN THEY WERE THROWN INTO EUROPE. ALL OF A SUDDEN, THERE WERE NOT ONLY NEW ANSWERS BUT NEW QUESTIONS." AND IF YOU ARE A YOUNG MIND, YOU CAN'T HELP BEING INTRIGUED BY THAT.

BUT HE SAID, AND THIS IS A CRITIQUE OF EUROPE, "IN AMERICA, THOSE PEOPLE COULD BLEND INTO A SOCIETY, BUT IN EUROPE, IF YOU'RE WEREN'T BORN A BELGIAN, YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO BE A BELGIAN." THESE PEOPLE WERE TORN BECAUSE ON THE ONE HAND, AS YOUNG PEOPLE, THEY WOULD LIKE TO UNDERSTAND THE FOREIGN CULTURE AND INCORPORATE IT INTO THEIR WAY OF THINKING. BUT BECAUSE THEY WERE MARKED AS BEING NOT EUROPEAN, THEY KNEW THEY NEVER COULD.

AND FRIEDMAN CLAIMS THIS CAUSED A REACTION WHERE THEY WANTED TO BECOME HOLIER THAN THE POPE, MORE FUNDAMENTALIST THAN EVER BEFORE. AND IF THEY INTERSECT WITH A CHARISMATIC CLERIC LIKE OSAMA BIN LADEN, THAT JUST MAKES IT EASIER. THE INTERESTING PART OF THE ANALYSIS IS THIS NOTION THAT BECAUSE AMERICA IS A MELTING POT, WE DON'T REALLY ASK THAT MUCH ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU ARE COMING FROM. YOU JUST SEE WHETHER THE PERSON CAN FIT IN AND MAKE HIS MARK IN THE MELTING POT. BUT IN EUROPE, YOU ARE MUCH MORE MARKED IF YOU ARE LIKE THAT, YOU CAN'T JUST MELT.

I think that is a good analysis because here, we see it right away in the Danish politics of this last half year of many intellectuals, they have reading, believing what they are seeing because it's been so harsh now to have this idea about.

We have this so-called liberal or party, which is very Friedman type liberals, combined with old conservatives. They form the government.

WHAT POSITION DO THEY GET, DO THEY TAKE ON THESE ISSUES OF IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURALISM?

They are, they are really hostile towards so-called strangers and they are having, they are feeding the fire for people's exclusionary fantasies offering strangers, offering non-Danes out, and so it's really an awful

society right now. It used to be, have this self-interpretation of being very protective and very open minded. But it's being more and more hostile towards strangers and other life forms, and so forth. So this government has won the election actually on building a kind of coalition with the fire of right wing party with this liberal/conservative movement.

WHERE IS THE NEW GOVERNMENT ON THE EUROPEAN UNION ISSUE?

They are, and most of them in favor, the leaders in Parliament, but the ones they joined in this campaign to win the election, they were harshly against, they were right wing stupid.

SO IT SOUNDS LIKE A VERY UNSTABLE POLITICAL SITUATION.

It is because it's a minority government, and you'd always have the Democrats and the Bourgeois blocked them, as only a matter of just small percentages and difference. So they end up having this fragile government. But I know they are in power, they have the majority, so they are having all kinds of laws with many reductions and cut downs in universities, welfare, and unemployment aid.

HAVE YOU HAD A GOVERNMENT LIKE THIS BEFORE?

No, it's not for many years; it's like 20 years ago that they were there, or 15 years ago they were there for the last time. But it's another debate, so I would like to come back to this question. If you say in your writing something about, "should we open the Pandora's Box of values and subjectivity?" And if we do, as professional pedagogues or teachers, how do we then make it possible to embrace and to pass on that universal approach to truth, goodness, and beauty that you're writing about? Because you're saying that more or less, that we have to open the Pandora's Box to personal values and differences. At the same time, you are holding up the banner, telling us that we are having to be in favor of universal approaches.

WELL, I'M NOT SURE THAT THE INCONSISTENCY YOU SEE IS THE SAME INCONSISTENCY THAT I SEE.

Therefore, I can learn something; that's interesting.

BUT THAT JUST MEANS THERE MAY BE LOTS OF INCONSISTENCIES!

TO BEGIN WITH, A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD SAY VALUES HAVE NO BUSINESS BEING IN SCHOOL AT ALL. CERTAINLY, THE CONSERVATIVE RIGHT WOULD SAY THAT THAT'S A JOB OF THE FAMILY, AND SO ON. I THINK THAT'S AN ILLOGICAL STATEMENT BECAUSE THERE ARE ALWAYS GOING TO BE VALUES. BUT YOU CAN DEAL WITH THEM VERY SUBLIMINALLY OR YOU CAN HAVE WHAT WE CALL VALUES EDUCATION, WHICH IS WHAT THE RIGHT WING WANTS TO DO WHEN THERE IS NONE. THEY SAY, "WELL, AT LEAST WE'LL BE IN CHARGE OF DETERMINING WHAT IT IS."

SINCE THERE ARE GOING TO BE VALUES ANYWAY, WE MAY AS WELL BE EXPLICIT ABOUT THEM, TRY TO ARTICULATE THEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, TRY TO JUSTIFY THEM. TRY TO BE AS TRANSPARENT AS POSSIBLE; IN OTHER WORDS, AND AS REFLECTIVE AS POSSIBLE. AND IN THE PARTICULAR PART OF "THE DISCIPLINED MIND", AS YOU KNOW, WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO IS TO TAKE A NON POST-MODERN POSITION VIS-A-VIS PRECOLLEGIATE EDUCATION. AS I SAY IF YOU GIVE ME THE

PRECOLLEGIATE YEARS, YOU CAN TEACH WHATEVER POST MODERN MATERIAL YOU WANT IN COLLEGE, I'M NOT GOING TO CENSURE YOU.

I THINK THAT EPISTEMOLOGICALLY, THOSE POST MODERN POSITIONS ARE TOO DIFFICULT FOR PRECOLLEGIATE STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND. AND THEY ARE PROBABLY JUST GOING TO BE CONFUSING TO THEM. AND I ALSO HAPPEN TO THINK THAT IN THE LONG RUN, THEY DON'T HOLD UP, BUT THAT'S A PERSONAL OPINION. AND WHAT I GO ON TO SAY IN THE BOOK, IS THAT TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND GOODNESS AND THEIR OPPOSITES ARE IDEALS. AND WHAT'S WORTHWHILE IS AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, WHICH ENCOURAGES THE STRIVING TOWARD THOSE IDEALS

I MIGHT SAY REFERENCE POINTS.

Reference points, okay, yes, because when you open the Pandora's Box to values and subjectivity and this particular subjectivity, you also kind have to embrace all the different intelligences, different standpoints, difference cultures. And then you have a real hard time also to say that in a way that this philosophy, you cannot live your life without knowing about it. Or this kind of book, you cannot live your life here without knowing about them, and in a way, some other people, they have said that at least these 20 books you should learn or know about. Do you find that to date is absolutely futile?

YES, MY POSITION IS THERE ARE CERTAINLY SOME BOOKS THAT ARE MORE WORTH READING THAN OTHERS. AND EVERYBODY SECRETLY BELIEVES THAT, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR STATED EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITION IS NO ONE SHOPS FOR BOOKS WITH A BLINDFOLD ON.

THE PERSON WHO TAKES A RELATIVIST POSITION DOESN'T WRITE ABOUT DIME NOVELS THAT YOU PICK UP AT THE AIRPORT NOR DOES HE WRITE ABOUT THE TELEPHONE BOOK OR YESTERDAYS NEWSPAPER. I BELIEVE STRONGLY IN THE HYPOCRISY TEST. AT LUNCHTIME, THEY WERE TELLING ME ABOUT SOMEBODY WHO SAYS THAT YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH LIFE DISTRUSTING EVERYTHING. "WELL, THAT'S RIDICULOUS," I SAID. "DOES HE DISTRUST HIS CHILDREN, DOES HE DISTRUST HIS WIFE? YOU CAN'T CROSS THE STREET UNLESS YOU TRUST PEOPLE." AND SO WHEN PEOPLE TAKE A POSITION: THIS IS WHERE I'M VERY MUCH LIKE SAMUEL JOHNSON KICKING THE STONE. WHEN SOMEBODY TAKES A POSITION, WHICH CLEARLY THEY DON'T OBSERVE IN THEIR OWN LIFE, IT FAILS THE HYPOCRISY TEST.

Understanding human beings, you say that there is no inner "homunculus" in charge of our actions. I think that's a point of philosophers to stress in their framing of the mind. And you try to see the body both as subject and object and try to get rid of old philosophical mind/body dualisms.

DID I SAY ALL THAT?

No, you didn't, but the way I'm interpreting it but, at the same time, it seems to me that you have a basic or psychological key to understanding. And how do you get rid of this inner homuncular kind of way of thinking, this inner psyche in us trying to know what we're doing. Trying to tell us what to do: how do you get rid of that in your writing?

WELL, MAYBE, HERE'S THE PLACE: I LIKE DANIEL DENNETT AS A PERSON. I DON'T PARTICULARLY AGREE WITH HIM AS A THINKER, BUT MAYBE HERE'S A PLACE WHERE

I WOULD GO ALONG WITH HIM. I WOULD SAY EVEN IF THERE ISN'T REALLY SOMETHING CALLED THE MIND, WHICH DOES WORK ALL THE TIME. IT'S ESSENTIAL FOR ME, FOR MY OWN THINKING , THAT WE (2 words) IS SUCH A THING CALLED THE MIND WITH ITS OWN FACULTIES AND OPERATIONS AND SO ON. SO, FOR ME, IT'S A NECESSARY GROUNDING FOR MY WORK.

A language grounding, or you can't find it empirically?

I THINK YOU CAN FIND IT EMPIRICALLY AS MUCH AS YOU CAN FIND ANYTHING SCIENTIFIC. WHAT IS AN ATOM? WHAT IS A GENE?

Yes, of course.

AND THESE ARE ALL CONSTRUCTS. AND MY VIEW OF THE MIND, IN TERMS OF DIFFERENT INTELLIGENCES, IS IT'S JUST MY BEST SHOT AT HOW TO DESCRIBE WHAT'S IN HERE IN A WAY THAT'S USEFUL FOR MY PURPOSES. IF I WERE A NEUROSCIENTIST, I WOULDN'T USE THE THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES. IT'S MUCH TOO GROSS AND CLUMSY, BUT SOMEBODY WHO IS INTERESTED IN EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND PRACTICE, IT'S ABOUT THE RIGHT NUMBER OF SLICES. YES, I'M MORE HOMO PSYCHOLOGICUS THAN I AM ANY OTHER KIND OF A THINKER. BUT I TRY TO LEAVEN IT, AS YOU SAID, BY BRINGING OTHER PERSPECTIVES. I'M HOMO PSYCHOLOGICUS, BUT I'M NOT A PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPERIALIST.

ANYWAY, BACK TO MORE MUNDANE THINGS, WHAT ARE YOU ASKING?

Yes, the question is actually, do you actually try to get rid of those philosophical mind/body dualisms in your work now? Or do you accept them? One way to go could be to go is trying to kind of dissolve the subjectivity.

TO GIVE YOU AN HONEST ANSWER, IT'S A QUESTION I'VE NEVER FOUND VERY INTERESTING.

You touch upon it and then you run away from it.

YES, BECAUSE, TO ME, IN A SENSE, IT'S TOO SIMPLE.

It's too simple?

YES, IT'S NOT PROBLEMATIC.

It's not problematic, right.

FOR ME, EVERYTHING IS IN THE BRAIN AND NOTHING BUT THE BRAIN, SO IN THAT SENSE, I'M A TOTAL MATERIALIST. BUT, I CANNOT MAKE SENSE OF ANY OF THE PHENOMENA THAT I'M INTERESTED IN WITHOUT POSITING THE MIND WITH ITS OWN INDEPENDENT FUNCTIONING. AND I SHOULD GIVE YOU A CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF THAT TO SHOW YOU THAT IT'S NOT HYPOCRISY ON MY PART.

WE JUST GOT A DOG, A YEAR AND ONE-HALF AGO, AND I CANNOT HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DOG. AND THE REASON WHY IS BECAUSE DOGS DON'T HAVE THEORIES OF MIND, AND I CANNOT RELATE TO AN ENTITY, WHICH DOESN'T HAVE A THEORY OF MIND. YOU CAN TRAIN A DOG, RIGHT, BUT THE DOG DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE INTUITION, INTENTIONS, INTENTIONS FOR IT, AND IT DOESN'T UNDERSTAND INTENTIONS. AND EVERY THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLD UNDERSTANDS IT, EXCEPT THOSE WHO ARE AUTISTIC.

AND SO ANY SCIENCE WHICH DOESN'T RECOGNIZE THAT DIFFERENCE TO ME IS MISSING; IT'S LIKE THE PLAY HAMLET WITHOUT THE CHARACTER HAMLET IN IT. SO, TO ME, AS LONG AS YOU RECOGNIZE THOSE TWO THINGS, I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE AN EPIPHENOMENALIST, A DUALIST, AN IDENTITY THEORIST, OR A MATERIALIST. TO ME, THOSE ARE THE TWO: IT'S UNDER THE TWO REALITIES. BUT IF YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE IT, YOU HAVE TO SLIP THEM IN THE BACK DOOR.

Okay, good point.

AND THAT'S WHY I'M NOT A PHILOSOPHER.

Do you still then maintain a kind of a division in your way of thinking between ontological level and epistemological level? Or will that also be blurred or is it not interesting?

WELL, IT'S FUNNY: I JUST GOT INTO A DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICAN LITERARY CRITIC, STANLEY FISH.

BECAUSE HE WROTE A KIND OF A POST-MODERN INTERPRETATION OF SEPTEMBER 11.

Yes, I know; he asks is there a text in this class?

YES, AND I OUTRAGED HIM BY MY CRITIQUE, SO HE SENT ME A LONG THING IN WHICH HE SAID, "ONTOLOGICALLY, OF COURSE THE WORLD IS A CERTAIN WAY, BUT EPISTEMOLOGICALLY, YOU JUST CAN'T CONVINC OTHER PEOPLE OF IT." SO HE IS SURE HIS ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED ON SEPTEMBER 11 IS TRUE, BUT HE IS EQUALLY SURE HE COULD NEVER CONVINC SOMEBODY ELSE THAT IT IS TRUE.

AND HE CRITICIZES HABERMAS AND ALIGNS HIMSELF WITH RICHARD RORTY IN THIS BELIEF THAT ALL WE CAN EVER HAVE IS DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE IN THINGS. AND EVEN IF IT IS A REALITY, IT'S NOT POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE? I JUST DISAGREE WITH THAT, AND THAT'S WHERE I TALK ABOUT TRUTH. IT'S NOT THAT WE'RE EVER GOING TO AGREE TOTALLY, BUT WE CAN CONVERGE ON IT, AND THAT MUST BE OUR GOAL.

Yes, it is.

BUT I ALSO SAID TO FISH THAT MAYBE ONE DIFFERENCE IS THAT BASICALLY, I'M A SCIENTIST AND BASICALLY, HE IS A HUMANIST. AND SCIENTISTS DO CONVERGE, EVEN THOMAS KUHN WOULD ADMIT IT. AND, ULTIMATELY, WE'VE GOT A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNIVERSE THAN THE GREEKS DID. MAYBE THAT DOESN'T APPLY WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND SHAKESPEARE, I DON'T KNOW. SO WHEN YOU HAVE AGAIN, WHEN YOU HAVE A DIFFERENT CORE DISCIPLINE FROM

WHICH TO START, YOU'RE GOING TO EITHER BE MORE CONVINCED BY SUBJECTIVITY RELATIVISM ON THE ONE HAND OR BY OBJECTIVITY AND UNIVERSAL LAWS ON THE OTHER.

Okay, it also has to do with the status you put upon the human being and their interpretation; do you try to integrate in your ontology that being in the world is also part of your understanding yourself as being in the world? That means that you put in the human or self-interpretation?

I ONCE ASKED ANTHROPOLOGIST CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS WHOM I WAS WRITING A BOOK ABOUT WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT MAURICE MERLEAU PONTY WHO IS THE PHENOMENOLOGIST THAT'S THE EASIEST FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS TO READ. LEVI-STRAUSS GAVE AN ANSWER, WHICH IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME. HE SAID, "YOU'VE GOT TO START THERE, BUT YOU CAN'T END THERE."

AND SO I THINK THE PHENOMENOLOGISTS BROUGHT TO OUR AWARENESS SOMETHING, WHICH PEOPLE HADN'T BEEN AWARE OF BEFORE, EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THAT HEIDEGGER FOUND A LOT OF IT IN THE EARLY GREEKS.

AND MY DEFINITION OF GENIUS IS DISCOVERING AN ADDITIONAL TRUTH ABOUT THE WORLD SO, TOGETHER, WE COULD SAY, WELL THEY WERE GENIUSES BECAUSE THEY WERE ABLE TO WRITE ABOUT STUFF AND LECTURE ABOUT STUFF, WHICH HAD BEEN INVISIBLE BEFORE.

Oh, yes. It's also pretty close to your definition on intelligence system.

WELL, LET'S PUT THAT ASIDE. BUT AS THE EMPIRICIST WE'VE ALREADY AGREED I AM, I ALWAYS SAY, "BUT NOW WHAT?" GIVEN WE'LL SAY, "YES, THAT'S RIGHT," I'M STILL LEFT WITH TRYING TO EXPLAIN IT WITH MY TOOLS OF PSYCHOLOGY AND BIOLOGY. AND IN THAT SENSE, I AM VERY CLOSE TO ANTONIO DAMASIO WHOM YOU PROBABLY KNOW. WE HAD THE SAME TEACHER, A NEUROLOGIST NAMED NORMAN GESCHWIND. AND THE IDEA IS TO BE HUMBLE TO ALL ISSUES OF CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE LEVEL OF CONSCIOUS AND SELF, BUT TO SEE WHAT WE CAN CONSTRUCT FROM PSYCHOLOGY AND BIOLOGY SO THAT WE HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING. I WOULDN'T FIND IT PERSONALLY SATISFYING TO BE A PHENOMENOLOGIST AND TO SIMPLY DESCRIBE MORE AND MORE KINDS OF EXPERIENCE. I'M MORE INTERESTED IN THE MECHANICS OF IT, WHICH MAKES ME MORE OF A STANDARD WESTERN SCIENTIST.

Okay, well, I just have a few questions here in the end...do you have an ambition that you want to develop a completely new science with a new label? Are you looking out for a new name? Or are you looking more like where you favor different divisions of labor in being in the branches of, psychologists, psychobiology, philosophy and sociology. And then integrate them in unseen forms actually? Running for a new, campaigning for a new name and new science? Does it make a new science of mankind?

NO. TRYING TO BE HONEST ABOUT MY OWN BACKGROUND, I THINK THAT: I STARTED OUT STUDYING HISTORY, AND IN MANY WAYS, IT WAS A SURPRISE TO FIND MYSELF IN EMPIRICAL PSYCHOLOGY. BUT I GOT VERY EXCITED BY COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY WHEN I FIRST LEARNED ABOUT IT, SO THAT'S WHAT I BECAME. AND SO FOR A LONG TIME, EXCEPT FOR MY OWN WORK, WHICH WAS STANDARD EXPERIMENTAL

PSYCHOLOGY WITH CHILDREN AND WITH BRAIN DAMAGED PATIENTS, I WAS REALLY MORE OF A SYNTHESIZER OF WORKS OF OTHERS.

I WROTE ABOUT STRUCTURALISM. I WROTE ABOUT COGNITIVE SCIENCE. I WROTE A TEXTBOOK ON DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY, AND I SAW MY JOB AS DESCRIBING STUFF AND CLASSIFYING IT AND BEING A GOOD WRITER ABOUT THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. AND ONLY GRADUALLY, OVER 20 OR 30 YEARS, DO I DISCOVER THAT I ACTUALLY HAVE SOME OF MY OWN THINGS TO SAY, AND THAT MY OWN IDEAS GET SOME ATTENTION. AND IT'S NOT FALSE MODESTY. I NEVER REALLY EXPECTED THAT, AND SO IN A SENSE, I'M NOT LIKE ONE OF THESE PEOPLE WHO EXPECTED AT THE AGE OF 20 THAT PEOPLE WOULD KNOW THEIR NAME AND THEIR OWN IDEAS. SO THAT'S THE FIRST POINT.

THE BEST UNDERSTANDING OF ME, AND I'M GOING TO PRETEND TO BE YOU FOR THIS, IS THAT THIS IS SOMEBODY WHO IS TRYING AT ONE TIME TO DO TWO THINGS. ONE, HE'S TRYING TO GIVE A BROADER VIEW OF MIND AND MENTAL CAPACITIES THAN MOST OTHER PSYCHOLOGISTS DID. AND THAT'S BECAUSE I CAME TO PSYCHOLOGY FROM THE ARTS. THAT WAS MY FIRST ISSUE IN PSYCHOLOGY. AND NO PSYCHOLOGIST IN AMERICA WROTE ABOUT THE ARTS. AND I SAID, "MUSIC, PAINTING, DRAMA: THIS IS NOT PART OF PSYCHOLOGY?" SO A LOT OF MY EARLY WORK WAS ABOUT THAT, AND THAT LED TO MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES.

You're an artist?

I WAS A PIANIST OF SOME SERIOUSNESS, AND MORE, PROBABLY A BETTER DESCRIPTION IS THAT I PROBABLY COULD HAVE BEEN A SUCCESSFUL MUSICIAN OF SOME SORT. I'M SOMEBODY FROM THE ARTS. IT'S IN MY BODY, AND IT WAS VERY SURPRISING TO ME THAT AT LEAST IN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY, THERE IS NO RECOGNITION OF THIS AT ALL. SO MY CONTRIBUTION WITHIN PSYCHOLOGY HAS BEEN A BROADER VIEW OF THE MIND.

AT THE SAME TIME, I THINK I'VE ALWAYS HAD A HANKERING TO BE A PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL. AND THE REASON I KNOW THAT IS BECAUSE MY HERO WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE WAS A MAN NAMED EDMUND WILSON, WHO WAS A GREAT PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL IN AMERICA. HE MADE A LIVING WRITING CRITICISM AND WROTE ABOUT 30 BOOKS, AND I THOUGHT HE WAS WONDERFUL. AND I DIDN'T HAVE HIS KIND OF TALENT, BUT I ADMIRERED THAT. MORE RECENTLY I HAVE HAD THE SAME ADMIRATION FOR ISAIAH BERLIN WHO IS MORE OF A SCHOLARLY PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL.

AND AS YOU GET OLDER, IF YOU GET A CERTAIN DEGREE OF RENOWN, WE CAN PRONOUNCE ON THINGS. SO I'VE REACHED THE POSITION NOW WHERE I CAN WRITE ABOUT SOMETHING OTHER THAN MY OWN WORK. AND SO I THINK WHAT I'M TRYING TO DEFINE NOW IS WHAT'S THE TERRITORY OF MY PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTION? AND THIS IS WHERE I THINK THE GOODWORK STUDIES IN WHICH I HAVE BECOME ENGAGED COME IN.

That means that you also think that the intellectuals have a kind of obligation to interfere in their cultural criticism and politics.

WELL, I THINK THAT'S THE DEFINITION OF AN INTELLECTUAL, BUT A SCHOLAR DOESN'T HAVE AN OBLIGATION OF AN INTELLECTUAL; THOSE ARE DIFFERENT ENTERPRISES.

No, but an intellectual has an obligation.

YES, SO ANYWAY, THE "GOODWORK" PROJECT, WHICH I GATHER HAS BEEN HEARD ABOUT HERE IN DENMARK (Yes) HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN AMERICA, BUT IT'S COMPLETELY UNKNOWN. WE COULD TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHY THAT IS, ACTUALLY, IT'S A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL REDEFINITION AT A TIME OF UNIQUE MARKET POWER AND VERY FAST CHANGING CONDITIONS. IT'S THE ENRON QUESTION (Yes). WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ACCOUNTANT NOWADAYS? IT'S NOTHING LIKE WHAT WE MEANT 50 YEARS AGO. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A DOCTOR NOWADAYS? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A LAWYER?

THE FIRST TWO PROFESSIONS WE STUDIED WERE JOURNALISM AND GENETICS, "MEMES AND GENES" AS WE PUT IT. BUT, WHAT WE ARE REALLY TRYING TO DO IS TO FIGURE OUT WHETHER EXCELLENCE AND ETHICS CAN WORK TOGETHER. IT'S A VERY OLD FASHIONED IDEA, BUT OLD FASHIONED IDEAS HAVE TO BE RECOMPUTED EACH GENERATION. AND IT'S NOW CONSUMING ALL OF MY ENERGIES—THIS "GOODWORK" ENTERPRISE.

SO YOU MIGHT SAY "GOODWORK" IS ME, AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST, WORKING WITH A COUPLE OF OTHER PSYCHOLOGISTS. BEING EMPIRICAL, WE'VE STUDIED ALMOST A THOUSAND PEOPLE. BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE TRYING TO MAKE A PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL STATEMENT BECAUSE WE WOULD LIKE TO INCREASE THE INCIDENCE OF GOODWORK IN OUR SOCIETY.

There are a lot of people that are actually going into this work concept, debates. I was also attending a big meeting this last spring in Romania, where there was a conference about the future of work. A lot of people from all over the world discussing work concepts and the connection between work and recognition.

IN AMERICA, EXCEPT FOR INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY, WHICH IS AN EFFORT TO GET THE WORKERS TO BE MORE EFFICIENT, AN INTEREST IN WORK IS COMPLETELY ABSENT WITHIN ACADEMIC PSYCHOLOGY.

Oh, yes, I have just one question here in the end because it's so simple. You write, people can read, but they don't: why not? And then do you have a simple answer describing the major obstacles? People can read, but they don't.

WELL, I THINK IN AMERICA, THEY WATCH TELEVISION.

How does it come that it can swallow your mind?

THERE ARE OTHER AMUSEMENTS AROUND. AS CSIKSZENTMIHALYI HAS SHOWN, TELEVISION IS ACTUALLY A DEPRESSANT. THE MORE TELEVISION YOU WATCH, THE MORE DEPRESSED YOU GET.

I never watch; nearly never watch television.

YES, I DON'T WATCH IT EITHER, ONLY WHEN I'M ON VACATION IN A HOTEL ROOM, BECAUSE WHAT ELSE ARE YOU GOING TO DO THERE? ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE JET-LAGGED AND CAN'T SLEEP.

I THINK THAT TELEVISION IS BY FAR THE BIGGEST FACTOR, BUT THERE ARE, WHEN YOU SAY PEOPLE DON'T READ, I THINK PROBABLY A BETTER STATEMENT WOULD BE PEOPLE DON'T READ BOOKS ANYMORE. ALMOST EVERYBODY HAS TO DO SOME READING FOR THEIR WORK. MAGAZINES ARE SOMETHING YOU JUST LEAF THROUGH.

BUT THE CONCENTRATION AND THE WORLD THAT IS REPRESENTED IN A BOOK, WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME, I THINK IT DOESN'T OCCUPY THE RADAR SCREEN THAT MUCH ANYMORE. A BOOK IS A WORLD, AND IT'S A WAY TO GET LOST AND IT'S A WAY INTO PEOPLE'S MINDS. BUT WHEN THERE IS A GOOD ENOUGH BOOK, PEOPLE DO READ IT. *HARRY POTTER* IS A FASCINATING PHENOMENON.

Yes, my kids think so.

CHILDREN WHO NEVER READ ANYTHING.

Even my daughter eight years old, she is reading the book.

AND I ALMOST NEVER READ FICTION BECAUSE I HAVE NO TIME, BUT ON THE WAY OVER HERE, I READ A NEW NOVEL, WHICH MANY IN AMERICA ARE READING. IT'S CALLED *THE CORRECTIONS* BY JONATHAN FRANZEN. I DON'T THINK IT'S THAT GOOD, BUT IT'S WON EVERY AWARD. AND I THINK THIS IS AN UNFAIR COMPARISON (UNFAIR TO THOMAS MANN), BUT IT'S KIND OF A "BUDDENBROOKS" FOR THE DAY.

It is.

IT IS ABOUT A DISINTEGRATION OF A FAMILY IN THE MIDDLE WEST. DID YOU SEE THE MOVIE *AMERICAN BEAUTY* WITH KEVIN SPACEY? (No.) I RECOMMEND NEITHER THE MOVIE NOR THE BOOK *THE CORRECTIONS*. BUT THEY ARE ABOUT DISINTEGRATION, ABOUT HOW LIFE DISINTEGRATES IN A COUNTRY WHERE EVERYTHING IS BASED ON MONEY AND APPEARANCE.

Oh, yes, well that's a cultural critique then?

THAT'S RIGHT, SO THEY ARE CULTURAL CRITIQUES; THEY ARE MIDDLE-BROW CULTURAL CRITIQUES. THEY ARE WHAT SINCLAIR LEWIS WAS 80 YEARS AGO WHEN HE WROTE *BABBITT* AND *MAIN STREET*.

Yes, I know his work. And *Upton Sinclair*.

WELL, THIS IS NOT THE SAME. *UPTON SINCLAIR* IS YELLOW JOURNALISM (Yes). SINCLAIR LEWIS IS NOVELISTIC, AND HIS CHARACTERS ARE SCANDINAVIANS WHEN HE IS WRITING ABOUT THE UPPER MIDWEST.

Are you then coming close to the German critical theory, like forefathers of Adorno because they are writing all this criticism about self-destruction, potential of cultural disintegration.

I DON'T THINK OF MYSELF THAT WAY. IT ALWAYS SEEMED TO ME A LITTLE TEUTONIC: NONETHELESS, YOU PUT YOUR FINGER ON SOMETHING; AS A STUDENT, I READ ALL THAT STUFF.

It's pretty close.

THIS IS WHAT EVERYBODY WAS READING WHEN I WAS A STUDENT, SO I READ IT ALSO. AND, OFTEN, YOU'RE NOT AWARE OF THOSE; THIS IS PART OF YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS NOT BEING AWARE OF ITSELF. THOSE THINGS MIGHT SEEP IN. I WAS A STUDENT OF THE PSYCHOANALYST ERIK ERIKSON, WHO WAS ACTUALLY DANISH BY BIRTH (Yes). AND WE MIGHT SAY THAT I LIKED HIS CRITIQUE, WHICH WAS MORE AMERICANIZED THAN ERICH FROMM AND HERBERT MARCUSE AND THAT SORT OF STUFF.

That was Erikson?

YES, HE WAS MY TUTOR AT HARVARD IN THE EARLY '60S.

Early '60s, right.

HE HAD AN ENORMOUS INFLUENCE ON ME. HE WAS VERY BRILLIANT, AND HE IS STILL APPRECIATED IN AMERICA. HE NEVER WENT TO COLLEGE; HE WAS ACTUALLY A PAINTER, AND MAYBE HAD THAT ART/SCIENCE STRETCH ALSO. WHAT HE WAS, WAS A BRILLIANT OBSERVER. I DON'T HAVE HIS BRILLIANCE OF OBSERVING, BUT I WROTE ABOUT THAT SKILL OF THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS... ABOUT HOW HIS ABILITY TO NOTICE THINGS AND TO MAKE SENSE OF THEM WAS REALLY WHY EVERYBODY READ HIM. AND TO DO THAT, AND WITH FREUD TOO, BUT I THINK ERIKSON WAS IN MANY WAYS MUCH KEENER THAN FREUD. FREUD SAW WHAT HE WANTED TO SEE. WITH APOLOGIES TO STANLEY FISH, I THINK ERIKSON SAW WHAT WAS THERE AT THE TIME.

Okay, I will say thank you now.