

In Gratitude: The Right Chemistry, Timing, Place and Organization

Remarks prepared for the occasion of accepting the Lifetime Achievement Award from [The Society for the Study of Social Problems](#), Las Vegas, Nevada 2011¹

There are two problems with the new surveillance technologies. One is that they don't work. The other is that they do.

—*Anonymous social studies scholar, ca. 2000*

I would like at least that my own intellectual activity should not make things worse or more dangerous, and, preferably, that it would make things by a tiny margin a little bit better, a little bit clearer, a little bit more rational, even a little bit more compassionate.

—*Conor Cruise O'Brien*

The only way to escape the personal corruption of praise is to go on working.

—*Albert Einstein*

Wow! I am at a loss for words. Let me draw upon those of a colleague (at least in spirit) who is no longer with us. [Audio clip: James Brown singing "ah feel good... I knew that I would."] As another singer said, "I second that emotion!"²

So many years, so little time. As a distantiated observer I like to shine spotlights, not be under them. Descartes' motto (which might also have been Erving Goffman's) "he lives well who is well hidden" in general suits me just fine.³ I am in the uncovering business, not in the business of being uncovered—our power, such as it is, is in revealing other's secrets, not our own. I know what I think.

I was aware of withholding information early in life at the age of 6 when (according to my baby book) I said, "I know two and two is four. I don't need to tell the teacher." That was a precursor of an attitude that would later help and hinder.

The challenge for the social analyst is to learn about others and not to condition the data received from them by showing your own aces until you really have to. Yet apart from the need to know when to hold and when to fold, there is a time to show.

Andy Warhol's observations on the need to be attended to—however briefly—can't be denied, nor should the reciprocity inherent in meaningful interaction be avoided. So I will offer a few remarks in response to this capstone career event.

But audiences must be careful. George Orwell wrote: "an autobiography is only to be trusted when it reveals something disgraceful" since the person "who gives a good account of himself is probably lying." As Erving Goffman instructed, attention must be paid to the veracity of self-

proclamations. Even when authentic, there is the question of sampling and incompleteness noted by Mark Twain.⁴

Karl Marx suggested that come the revolution there would be time to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon and read for pleasure in the evening. Increased productivity and new social arrangements would permit meeting our needs with minimal labor and bring leisure to the polymorphous person of the future. I can't speculate on that, but come the retirement I have been most fortunate to hunt for ideas in the morning, garden or mountain bike in the afternoon and read fiction in the evening.

Any social studies scholar is of necessity Marx' student in seeing the causal role of social structure and the systemic links between material interests, culture and society, though people with the same last name are not necessarily relatives.⁵ I have benefited from his ideas and also from receiving references that belonged to him.⁶ Yet I have some profound disagreements. Anyone who could write about "the idiocy of rural life" obviously never lived on Bainbridge Island and picked wild strawberries in the morning, saw the Blue Herons at noon or heard the Barred Owls at night, and, being in the library, is unlikely to have smelled the creosote after a desert rain or seen the sunset through the high desert pines. The space and pace of rural life has given me the chance to look back on a life and on life as I will do in these remarks.

Raymond Chandler wrote of an ill-fated affair in which "the chemistry was right but the timing was wrong." I am profoundly grateful that here *the chemistry and the timing are right*. But in addition, today the place and the organization are also right.

It is great to be back in Las Vegas where for a short time in 1946 by father owned an early gambling joint—The Kit Kat Club in nearby Henderson. He didn't last long because he said, "it was no life for a family man." Not that it was better to run a night club on the Sunset Strip as he did next. It is also here that the International Scouting Museum is located. This holds the collection of my scout master and partial role model LAPD officer of stalwart bearing Phil Bailey whose tales of shootouts with the bad guys in the late 1940s (as in the film *L.A. Confidential*) contributed to my interest in social control.

The accidental timing for a celebration and reflection is providential! It was exactly 50 years ago in mid-August (1961) that my continuing romance with my wife Phyllis Anne Rakita began. I am very pleased that some of the results of that union are here today, our sons Ben and Josh and grandson Nate. I am pleased that my 98-year-old dynamo mother Ruth—to whom I owe my awareness of social justice issues and appreciation of words, will be able to see and hear the events today through the wonders of the microchip.

Given the separate worlds of family and work it is rare to have one's offspring—whether literal or intellectual in the same room. Children are often unaware of much about their parent's lives beyond the family and students are unaware of their teacher's lives beyond the classroom. Both sets of children receive much of the same stylistic, moral and content mentoring. So I am especially pleased to have these parallel and overlapping worlds come together here. As a

younger colleague who can not be here wrote, "we are all, in one way or another, your children." He did not know the second sense in which that was true at this meeting.

It was also fifty years ago plus two weeks that I began my teaching career, in September 1961, as a T.A. for Professor David Heer's methods class.

This is also the year that, contrary to the skeptics, I will finish *Windows Into the Soul*. In fact if truth be told, I have finished and now am simply mopping up repetition and cutting off dangling participles. It feels like more than 50 years on that book (but has really been less than half.) As one ages, standards rise and satisfaction is increasingly found internally in the craft and art of producing the best possible product, rather than in the reception it receives.

With respect to the organization being right, I have a special fondness for SSSP, which can represent social issue research at its best.⁷ The organization's officers and editors (many of whom I was thrilled to later have as colleagues in various capacities) ranked at the top of my youthful pantheon of who I wanted to be when I grew up. Songwriter Guy Clark sings of a person who for him was "one of the heroes of this nation." Many of the people early associated with SSSP were heroes of my social problems nation. To name only a few:

A.M. Lee, Herbert Blumer, Arnold Rose, Alfred Lindesmith, Everett Hughes, Howie Becker, Mel Tumin, Rose and Lew Coser, Ray Mack, Kai Erikson, Ed Lemert, Peter Rose, John Kitsuse and Egon Bittner.

I was thrilled to twice be a finalist for the C. Wright Mills award, and that my name was spelled correctly in 1967 with *Protest and Prejudice* and in 1988 with *Undercover*, even though I did not receive the award.⁸ I may still have one last chance at it. I learned about the politics and vagaries of such awards when I chaired the committee in 1980-81 and in the failure of the 1996 Lee Founders Award committee to make an award. As the country and western singer put it, "sometimes you get the ring and sometimes you get the finger." I was accustomed to the latter after failing to get a part in the 1949 film *Jolson Sings Again*.

My first editorial position (1969-75) was on the journal *Social Problems* under David Gold; among my articles the one I like best on the ironies of social control appeared in the journal in 1981; I was co-chair of the annual meeting under Jackie Wiseman in 1978. I have been pleased to help recruit new members over the years including in 1978—Tom Hood who has served the society so well for so long.

Now to some substance. Since I never met an audience I didn't like and deference norms make you a captive audience, I thought this would be a good place to talk about an intriguing topic of great interest and greater social import:

The Hermeneutics of Perfect and Near Perfect Multicolinearity as Applied to Warrants for the Appropriation and Misappropriation of Social Problems Nomenclature in Recent Causal Models of Refractory Interactions in the Blame Games of Late pre-Post Modernism.

That topic has it all—quantitative data, sophisticated concepts, specialized words devoid of any impassioned and distorting popular language, and of course maximum incomprehensibility and irrelevance.

But on second thought—the hell with it! Who wants to hear about that? So I will save it for a journal. Instead I will just tell some stories involving memorable moments.

Six speakers have just graciously commented on aspects of my career and our interactions. Since they are all my students (although with several this has been through writing and our interactions), I will discuss a bit about my early days as a student, recall a few memorable encounters with students and note my good fortune in being part of the great progression in which we benefit from our teachers' gifts and later bear gifts to our students who will repeat this with their students.

Early Days

In remarks written for a recent Pacific Sociology Association event organized by Glenn Goodwin on sociology and the 1960s ("From Conservative and Optimistic to Reactionary, Counter-Revolutionary and Pessimistic: Sociology and Society in the 1960s") I talked about Berkeley. Today I will add to those remarks.

Malcolm X came to Berkeley in the Spring of 1961 and, in a precursor of events that would inspire the Free Speech Movement, was denied the right to speak on campus—supposedly because of religious advocacy, but we in the know were sure it was simply because of what he stood for. He was fortunately allowed to speak to a small gathering across the street at the YMCA.

He was an amazing speaker and a marvelous illustration of C.W. Mills' call for showing how personal troubles could reflect broader social problems. His personal tales of victimization, imprisonment and redemption, his energy, eloquence, delivery, humor and cries against racial injustice were stirring and affecting. Yet when with the same forcefulness and passion he began talking about Yakub, a black scientist who created the evil white race thousands of years ago, I was in disbelief. Earlier in the semester I heard Eric Hoffer speak and was troubled to see so many remnants of the true believer in Malcolm X. I was incredulous and wondered if this might not just be a mobilizing device and was pleased, and not surprised, when he later rejected the more debatable aspects of that theology.

Shortly after I was inspired by hearing Norman Thomas speak. He ran for president many times on the socialist party ticket—important aspects of his program were taken over by Roosevelt in the 1932 election. Thomas said, "I am not the leader of lost causes, but of causes not yet won."

A few months later we picketed a more successful presidential candidate—John F. Kennedy over issues of disarmament and discrimination in federal housing projects and then went with thousands of others to the Berkeley Greek theater to be inspired (perhaps against our initial will) by his eloquence and his substance as the first U.S. president born in the 20th century. In

this speech he first spoke of creating the Peace Corps which Josh and Stacey, our son and daughter-in-law, later served in.

Six years later I was on the outer circle of advisors for Robert F. Kennedy's presidential bid and was asked to draft some thoughts toward a speech on how he should respond to civil disorders, should they occur again during the campaign.

I was fortunate to encounter some of the national leaders of the civil rights movement and it was exciting to experience history in the making. The times were indeed changing in some ways. I knew James Farmer the head of CORE and was thrilled to be on a program with him. His courage and dedication were an inspiration and he radiated charisma. Bayard Rustin a founder of CORE with Farmer and the strategist for the civil rights movement and leader of the March on Washington wrote the introduction to my first book *Protest and Prejudice*. Shortly after it was published Martin Luther King was asked about it, but said he had not read it. I met Roy Wilkins head of the NAACP when I worked for the Kerner Commission (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders) on which he served. *Protest and Prejudice* helped in fund raising and to fight the back lash against the civil rights movement as a result of the urban disorders of the late 1960s.

I am glad to have been able to apply social science knowledge to public policy through working with national commissions, government agencies, congress and reform groups in the U.S. and in Europe⁹ and in engaging the popular media through writing and speaking about racial issues, policing, privacy and surveillance, It is very satisfying to have helped secure a seat at the table (even if not at its head)—most recently for privacy and surveillance questions and to have contributed to the national conversation on these issues.¹⁰ It was thrilling to see my unattributed words, phrases and arguments reverberate through reports, editorials and political speeches. I also was not above appreciating the occasional attribution from those who were bound by academic reference standards.

Perhaps more important and certainly more enduring than the fluid and quickly forgotten direct encounters with the policy and political worlds are the interactions with students and communications from the public who encounter one's work.

Students

My students (and now colleagues) who have just spoken said kind things about my research, but, to my surprise, they also mentioned I am a nice and helpful guy—in spite of an impatience related to a driving work ethic and certain supposed gender characteristics.¹¹ I am a little surprised that this would be noted. It seems that being nice should be the default position for teachers.

In contemplating my future, I asked Dick Morris, one of my undergraduate teachers at UCLA, what it took to have a successful academic career. He said you had to be a productive scholar

and be a nice person. The first was obvious. The second, while less acknowledged in tenure decisions where the work not the worker is supposed to matter, is also important.

I hope it won't sound unduly inauthentic to note that being nice can have instrumental results, even as it should be done because it is appropriate. First we can learn from others—even when they are wrong. As Erving Goffman said, "it's all data" and has meaning apart from its validity. But beyond that, fundamental to the sociological sensibility with its attention to roles, subjectivity and personhood is taking the role of the other and being a good listener. Engaging others' ideas and writing can aide your own work. Just as all a painter sees in some tiny way can condition what is produced, all you read and critique can help you be clearer about what you think and may help see ways your work could be improved or pitfalls avoided. If not, honestly, if gently, critiquing work that is so bad that the student should be required to present a note from his or her mother before proceeding, will help build your confidence. Students are the vital vacuum and conduit pulling us from the powerful isolating forces of solipsism and pushing us toward broader public audiences.

In addition, we need allies and torch bearers. Cream might rise to the top if it's not in the freezer, but academic reputations and opportunities require supporters and networks. Given the reciprocal nature of much interaction there can be more direct payback. Those in subordinate positions we encounter today may later be in positions to help (or harm) us tomorrow. Students seem so young and jejune when first encountered (and that intensifies with each passing year)—it is hard to remember that pretty soon they will be on editorial, hiring, grant-giving and award committees to which, in a role reversal, you may come to (or be offered), as a humble supplicant.

With students I tried to do three things—socialize them to the traditions and values of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and civility and to the high ideals of scholarship, freedom of inquiry and critical reflection; encourage their research curiosity and ability to seek answers to the questions they identify; and inspire and train them to be effective teachers (likely the most enduring and important thing most scholars in the social sciences and humanities contribute.)

I gave all my teaching assistants the following statement:

Great that we will be working together! Under the best of circumstances teaching is a calling and not a job. It has a sacred and egalitarian quality. There are not many things in life that can be enriched by being shared, but information is one of them. Among my best memories and experiences are getting students excited about ideas, encouraging them to see things in a new light and helping them develop the habit of asking questions and wondering why, even better the occasional cases where they generate new knowledge. I hope as you carry out your duties that you can be aware of the following:

1. our greatest impact is likely to be on helping students to think and on generating a scholarly perspective rather than on transmitting facts or fixed answers. Those are quickly forgotten or become dated, but habits of mind endure.

2. sociology (or social studies as I prefer to call it) mixes scientific and empirical and non-scientific and intuitive elements, quantity and quality, objective measurement and subject experience and meaning. This mixture is our glory, but it can also be our downfall if we stray too far from one side to the other, or are unaware of what approach we are adopting. While the line often cannot be clearly drawn, make students aware of the (in principle) distinction between facts and values. Know the difference between asking how and asking why and why seeing that difference is so important in our technical age. Develop in your students the ability to think critically and to write clearly in making the case for what they are arguing.
3. learn from your students without falling into the relativistic trap that all answers carry equivalent empirical, logical or moral weight. Be aware of the powerful insights from the sociology of knowledge perspective. Try to involve students in their own learning and get them to take responsibility for it and to take themselves seriously as inquirers. You are not their parents, but are like a more experienced co-worker and a resource. Regardless of whether we pay or are paid, we are all students.
4. share your doubts in the pursuit of knowledge and invite them to be players. The quest for understanding is among the most egalitarian of human endeavors. Encourage them to question you.
5. have high expectations for your students and yourself, but also be honest with them and yourself.
6. continually reflect on how you are doing as a teacher, make use of the many resources available to help you become a better teacher.

In reading this in retirement some of it sounds trite, but that doesn't mean it isn't right.

Student and Reader Memories

First a comment on the student I know best. As is common with new graduate students, in the fall of 1960 as school began, I was not at all sure that I would be successful in graduate school (holding apart uncertainty about a success in a career if one got through school.) The self-confident and learned demeanor of students from eastern private schools was intimidating, as were the heavy brief cases they carried. I had a tattered green book bag. Fortunately it was six years later before I saw the following evaluation Kenneth Bock, my first semester history of social theory teacher, wrote:

This is a very marginal student. I would be surprised if he receives a master's degree. He certainly will not receive a PhD.

I did not see that until I was on the Berkeley faculty and dipped into my file one Sunday evening—something that is now legal to do, but might not have been then. That letter was balanced by a positive evaluation from my instructors in the required methods course. Seeing

the negative review further fueled my suspiciousness of labels and introduced a certain caution in seeing evaluations of students based on only one indicator. It also meant often taking the side of the student when the data was mixed. The case I am proudest of is the student who I had to argue strongly for in the face of doubts by the leading American sociologist of the time. The student was finally accepted and went on to a distinguished career as Dean of her faculty and a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

My negative first semester evaluation identified another of those paradoxes that must give us pause, but not prevent us from acting. Rationality and fairness can be furthered by public standards of judgment, even as the latter involve choices about what and how to evaluate and to varying degrees are relative. As Whitehead said, "every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing." That relativism should introduce caution, but hardly lead us to believe that all ways are therefore equal.

I early on saw the role of labeling and measurement as a child in wondering what color things "really" were since this varied depending on which eye was the source of the data. I later drew the same conclusion in noting a marked difference in my achievement levels on untimed tests vs. timed tests.

Turning to other students, my friend Jack Weinberg, a graduate student in math, was responsible for popularizing the statement "never trust anyone over 30" (which with the wisdom and tentativeness of aging I would suggest reversing to "never trust anyone *under* 30" or maybe even 40.) Weinberg's arrest for sitting at the CORE table at the entrance to the campus on Telegraph Avenue and Bancroft Way was the event that triggered the Free Speech Movement.

I sat at that table a few months before giving out information and seeking donations (the table can be seen in the film "Berkeley in the 60s.") At the time of the Free Speech Movement in December of 1964 we were in India looking for art in caves and meaning in life. I have often wondered whether my life would have been different had I been still sitting at the CORE table and been arrested instead of Jack.¹² I often recall a marvelous quote (which I can't now find) from Sorokin about how he was deep in the library reading and missed a central event that resulted in the first Russian revolution.

I knew some of the early Black Panthers. Richard Aoki was a neighborhood friend of Huey Newton and Bobby Seale and was among the first members of the Black Panther party in Oakland. He legally provided them with their first weapons and gave them weapons training and became a Panther Field Marshall.

Richard was a very smart student and I had many discussions with him—we had no disagreements about racial and economic injustice, but many about the best way to bring about social change. In our discussions I encouraged him to continually question his assumptions just as I do mine, and also to look at the empirical base for the beliefs held and to think about the logical structure of an argument. I like to think that our interaction helped guide him toward a

successful career in Asian studies and administration, though luck as well may have prevented him from being killed or jailed.

One of the researchers on *Protest and Prejudice* did not fare as well. He was indicted for a plot to blow up the Statue of Liberty in 1965 that, alas, also had been infiltrated by a police agent who could not have been impassive. The former's interviews were culled from the study.

Jerry Rubin, one of the Chicago Seven and founders of the Yippie Party, was a graduate student in sociology in Berkeley then for a short time. He participated in a CORE sponsored "shop-in" at Lucky's market on Shattuck Avenue against discriminatory hiring practices.

Over the years students I did not know, or work directly with, have kindly thanked me for the impact my writing had on their thinking and careers. A leading scholar of the civil rights movement told me reading *Protest and Prejudice* while working in a factory led him to want to become a scholar.

More recently an Italian student I helped wrote, "sometimes I think the world is terrible. I see corruption. I see cynicism and people without solidarity. Then I met people like you and I come back to smile because you give us hope. I feel myself stronger than before because I see that another world is possible.... What can I do it is Italy? But I will try not to change my mind about my moral integrity."

A letter from Rebel, an articulate outlaw biker:

Dear Professor Marx: I usually detest sociologists. About a year and a half ago, I was very tempted to stomp xxx (author of a book about Viet Nam veterans)... But I want to tell you, even though you are a sociologist, how much I appreciate your work. I promise you, I pose no threat to you at all. I am just appreciative and excited. Thank you very much. You now have a new fan. Rebel.

(maybe he could help me with the critics!)

Given the topics that I study, I have a collection of poignant and impassioned letters seeking help from people with very sad tales about being victimized by listening device implanted after a visit to the dentist, about being remotely subjected to mind reading and idea implanting devices and about conspiracies large and small. The intermingling of newsworthy cultural themes with mental illness is one of my potential papers in waiting and I'd welcome suggestions for appropriate ways of theorizing about it.

Pride and Gratitude

As social beings dependent on the reflected image of ourselves we mostly construct from others, it is nice to be acknowledged as a player in one's endeavors. Being the last kid on the playground chosen for the team is not a nice feeling (although one might learn from that to try harder or to find a different game.) While outsidersness has its virtues, so does honor with its implication of insidersness. I have written about the meanings, vagaries and distorting influences

of success and the towering mentor I would most like to be like—David Riesman has movingly critiqued the dangers of playing to the crowd. Yet my gratitude today is unbound.

I hope that this award can serve to further legitimate interdisciplinary and integrative work around topics of broad social importance for which (contrary to the abundant politicians and ideologues) there are no easy answers. I hope it serves to justify the search for wisdom, as well as knowledge and strengthens the realization that the former is impossible without the latter, and the latter is pedantic and lifeless when divorced from the concrete details of our lives and values.

Hemingway wrote, "if you want to send a message call Western Union." That is part of a different conversation about blatancy and the possibility of neutrality. Yet when social practices are enshrouded in secrecy and misinformation on tilted playing fields and significantly depart from basic values and norms, the scholar as witness, documentarian and interpreter can play a role.¹³ That is how I interpret the public sociology ethos that was forming in Berkeley in the 1960s and has recently received greater formal recognition as a result of the efforts of Michael Burawoy.

Certainly interests and culture are intermingled. Caution is required and there is a bit of chutzpa in claiming to speak for "the public." Yet we can draw from Karl Marx without ignoring Max Weber, and there are values that are civil or public in the broadest sense growing out of the highest ideals of western civilization, involving the dignity of the person, fairness, community, rationality, and pragmatism/empiricism.

A lifetime achievement award also alerts us to the fact that comprehensive work, particularly on controversial and less visible topics, takes time and scholarly independence. I spent a decade working on the undercover book and several decades working on the surveillance book. I would not want to have been judged on that work after only a few years. The bureaucratic pressures to produce work quickly and to bring in research grants on topics defined by funding agencies was fortunately something I have been able to avoid in recent decades.

Institutional centers of learning are a precious and precarious social form with a hallowed shell ever in danger of being hollowed out. Such institutions must maintain a degree of sacred independence and separation from the immediate demands of the world beyond, but neither must they move too far from it. The university as a hot house and repository for the best that is said and thought and where there is unfettered freedom of inquiry in the pursuit of truth and wisdom must rank high in any list of the world's great inventions. To share in this pursuit and to benefit from the contributions of those who came before is a wondrous blessing (or as some would say a *mechaya*) which comes with rights as well as obligations. Individuals of course continually reshape institutions and touch the lives of others and, in so doing, leave thousands of tiny, unseen memorials.

Research and writing have been a vital part of my life for the last 50 years. The subsidized opportunities (a kind of scholarship for life) to find and solve puzzles of our own choosing and to

think and write well is a gift. Unlike the upper class scholars of an earlier age, we are paid to do this. Yet no matter how much personal satisfaction and pride one takes in social research, or how worthwhile you think a given publication is, it is likely to be little noted, or if noted, not long remembered for a variety of reasons. The star quickly burns out even if our personal memory of the flame remains awhile. In contrast, our training of teachers has a longer shelf-life because it is self-renewing.

The most satisfying aspect of my career has involved the education of teachers. I can't begin to count the many students I have had who became productive scholars and teachers, in turn passing on the values of the university, the excitement of learning and the flame of Erasmus. I take equal pride in those students who instead chose the world of public affairs—from my first thesis student who became Solicitor General under President Clinton and was considered a candidate for the Supreme Court, to my last PhD. student who was active in Tiananmen Square and has gone on to become one of the Bill Gateses of China, to the many in-between such as the founder of the National Drug Policy Alliance, the leader of the Police Executive Research Forum, the student who wrote a fine paper on hustlers whose nomination by President Clinton to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights was withdrawn, a leading Congresswoman, and a Commissioner of Probation.

The individual must go to bat alone as C.W. Mills observed. Yet the batter is also a member of a team and that team nestles within a broader series of overlapping communities. As ET said, "we are not alone." I am very proud of having written papers with so many of my students over the years (in most cases this was the student's first published paper.) Students often overflow with the raw materials for an article, but need to be encouraged to believe in themselves and to learn the craft of asking questions and converting ideas into publishable form.

Like baby birds, they require nurturing and protection, but shouldn't stay in the nest too long. It is important to support and complement (as both supplementing and praising) one's students—but this must be toward the end of setting them free to follow their own path, not replicating yourself.

Neil Smelser was a model for me in doing this. He has worked with more PhDs than anyone I know. Yet there is no Smelser school of sociology—rather there are many independent scholars sharing in the ethos, craft and way of being a scholar that he provided. His intellectual breadth also owes something to the great variety of students he has had contact with.

Students sometimes thank their teachers, the reverse is less common. Yet basic role analysis will show the dependence of teachers on their students and the gratitude we owe them. They offer not only a captive audience but, in a curious economic reversal, they don't require payment for what we receive from them. Under the best of circumstances their energy and fresh experiences and thoughts provide a reason to bound into the classroom each morning, particularly if one teaches in a Socratic fashion and makes question raising the core of

instruction. In the beginning there are the questions and our goal is to provoke wonderment and to cultivate asking "why" and to then provide the tools to find some answers.

Wordsworth tells us that we should not grieve for the splendor in the grass, nor for the glory of the flower, but rather seek strength in what remains behind. Yet we can also gain strength in what lies *ahead* that we will never know.

When Ruben Rumbaut of UC Irvine (who I had contact with when he was a student in Boston) asked his mentor, former SSSP president the late Egon Bittner, "how can I ever repay you?" Egon gave a wry look and said in his understated way, "in the great chain of being, one day it will be your turn." And so it is and will be. As Henry James observed, "we work in the dark. We do what we can. We give what we have."¹⁴

As teachers we are rewarded in knowing that through our students and their students *ad infinitum* some of what we give seeps into the culture and geometrically trickles across generations.

I am grateful to my teachers (and their teachers) and to those I have taught and worked with over the last 50 years for their complicity in the great chain of being that involves the delivery, receipt and transmission of knowledge. Knowledge, unlike other forms of wealth, is enriched as it is shared and exchanged.¹⁵

As with The Dude in the film *The Big Lebowski*, the giving of ideas abides—that is our satisfaction and our solace, our sustenance and perhaps even our salvation, so thanks to all of you and to your students and to theirs ...

Notes

¹ In focusing primarily on teaching and mentoring and more generally on the academic career over five decades, I have tried, but likely with only partial success, not to repeat what I have written elsewhere.— Most recently in "From Conservative and Optimistic to Reactionary, Counter-Revolutionary and Pessimistic: Sociology and Society in the 1960s" (Pacific Sociological Association, Seattle, 2011) and at various articles in section 6 on career and social research issues on www.garymarx.net

² I will not embed the music here, since although I believe in sharing information, this is not at a cost of a possible \$10,000 fine for copyright violation.

³ This of course conflicts with the idea of accountability through openness required of any political process and of the transparency and sharing necessary for responsible scholarship and more broadly for community. It does however fit with an inhabitant of an island in the farthest north-westerly reaches of the U.S.

Camus got it right again when he wrote, "There are no more deserts. There are no more islands. Yet they are needed. To understand the world, one must sometimes turn away from it; to serve society better, one must sometimes be distanced from it." (*Le Minotaure*, my translation.)

⁴ Mark Twain wrote, "What a wee little part of a person's life are his acts and his words...[they] are so trifling a part of his bulk! A mere skin enveloping... the mass of him is hidden... Biographies are but the clothes and buttons of the man." *Autobiography of Mark Twain*, Edited by Harriet Elinor Smith, 2010, Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁵ That also holds for Groucho Marx, but my grandfather did play golf with him. However the Maharal of Prague (1520-1609) is a direct relative. While he is family and a revered religious figure, I am skeptical of his claim to trace his ancestry to King David.

Some further disambiguation: while I am interested in passing and deception, it is not true that I have performed as Gary Marx, the leader of a British Rock group called the Sisters of Mercy; been a Latin American news correspondent; Governor Romney's liaison with Christian right wing groups, run for the office of Drain Commission of Ingram County, nor written articles on educational leadership. The absence of a middle initial starting with T is a further source of differentiation from other poseurs.

⁶ The reverse is also true, although it won't help him get tenure. For example an August 15, 1999 headline in *The Huntsville Times*, "Our vanishing privacy America marches toward Karl Marx's "maximum-security society."

⁷ That of course comes with some of the trepidation that Lew Coser (former SSSP president) warned about when he wrote of greedy organizations. The scholar must like the mercurial boxer—weave and dance to maintain independence and to not get unduly trapped into the predictability and rigidity of the formal, nor by pressures for unreflective conformity. We need organizations to work at, but not for.

⁸ I was in very good company. In 1968 the award was shared by my Berkeley colleagues Travis Hirschi and Hanan Selvin, and Eliot Liebow. Travis and I were fellow graduate students in a deviance and social control study group and Hanan was my methods teacher and offered me the first job I refused. I knew Eliot through work on the Kerner Commission. In 1988 it again went to a deserving colleague my co-author Doug McAdam.

⁹ With my Belgian colleague Lode Van Outrive I worked with the Council of Europe in developing its approach to issues of personal data protection and the Undercover book has been the basis for policies in a number of democracies and for anti-corruption projects in China.

¹⁰ When I started working for the Kerner Commission we were promised a party in the Rose Garden and a photo-op with President Johnson; instead along with most other Commission employees, the social scientists got fired. That was related to the decision to bring out a final report on an expedited schedule, rather than an interim report. The document we wrote that was to be central for the final report *The Harvest of Racism* was never published. Yet there is good reason to believe that it was the Damoclean sword that Mayor John Lindsey used to push the commission to take a stronger position with respect to the role of racism in the disorders and in American society.

The Commission stated, "...white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it." In 1970 I wrote, "The report of the National Advisory Commission is perhaps the most significant and far-reaching statement of a programmatic nature ever made by a governmental unit on American race relations. It is a major call for new will and resources and a reordering of national priorities. In 1968 it represented the broadest compilation of materials on intergroup relations since the publication of Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* twenty-six years before.... Cynics may, of course, suggest that it has all been said before, and perhaps in clearer, more manageable form. Yet it has not been said before with the potential power of a presidential-level commission composed of Establishment moderates.

(<http://web.mit.edu/gtmarx/www/kipner.html>)

¹¹ Regarding the latter, a faculty member announced she was voting against my being hired as chair of her department because, "I know a macho man when I see one." I was hired in spite of her opposition. I think I won her over when I agreed to dress as a well-endowed woman in a faculty play.

¹² There are many other roads not taken musings that an occasion such as this calls forth—I wonder how my career would have been different if I had gone to Michigan rather than Berkeley for graduate school (as I had planned to until a failed romance led to a last minute change in plans); if I had taken a Rochester job offered by Hanan Selvin before I had finished the PhD ; if I had remained teaching in Berkeley rather than jumping to Harvard in 1967; if I had taken a tenure offer from Columbia in 1970 rather than staying put; if I had remained at Harvard in 1973 rather than moving to MIT in the face of a tenure offer several years before by contract was up; or if I had pursued serious offers from UCSD and Arizona in that early period. I most likely would have remained in a sociology department, had many more graduate students, raised much more grant money to support them, done lots of good citizenship-administrative work—but had less time for my own work, not traveled as much, done more conventional disciplinary work and I doubt had as much fun or insight as one who skims the surfaces of others' worlds, rather than one who is deeply rooted (mired?) in a single world.

One can also spin this out in a reverse fashion. What if Chuck Tilly had not left for the University of Toronto in 1967 or if Herb Gans had not left for Columbia in 1973, creating the vacancies I filled at Harvard and later at MIT?

¹³ Erving Goffman while claiming that social life should be studied because it is there and is ours, also offered something for those who wished to be more than fiddlers: "If one must have warrant addressed to social needs, let it be for unsponsored analyses of the social arrangements enjoyed by those with institutional authority—priests, psychiatrists, school teachers, police, generals, government leaders, parents, males, whites, nationals, media operators, and all the other well-placed persons who are in a position to give official imprimatur to versions of reality."(1983, "The interaction order" *American Sociological Review* 48: p. 17.)

¹⁴ Egan was correct. With respect to seeing "37 moral mandates for Aspiring Sociologists" written for graduate students (<http://web.mit.edu/gtmarx/www/37moral.html>) Ruben wrote that he found the article "...such a refreshing antidote to so much of academic sociology and of the "training" of graduate students "that ever since I've made a practice of sending it with a personal note to all the students of every seminar I've taught... I've also sent it to colleagues and former students who went on to become sociologists and noticed subsequently that some of them even included it in their syllabi to their students. (Nobody ever keeps a citation count for that—but it matters more.) ... In front of my computer I have a handcrafted sign on a 3 x 5 white card with this personal motto: ASPIRE TO INSPIRE BEFORE YOU EXPIRE. I'm looking at it now. Every time I send out your 37 moral imperatives, I think I'm living up to the spirit of those six words."

In validation, USC Professor Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, one of Ruben's students decades ago, graciously wrote on hearing of this award, "Thank you for your moral imperatives. I teach a two semester grad seminar on participant observation and interviewing at USC, and I always use that article from *The American Sociologist*. It helps students, and it inspires me every time." I like to think that some of her students who are teaching are now passing on the ideas to their students.

¹⁵ Popular culture is helpful here—as Anna sings in *The King and I*, "if you become a teacher by your students you will be taught."