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The Foundation of Pioneering Thought of Community

In the Thought of Edward Carpenter

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Towards Democracy

(1)

(2)   (3)

Introduction

The rapid increase in urban population in the two centuries since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution has been pointed out as a world wide phenomenon, and the examples of change in population of British Industrial cities and of world population trends after the Industrial Revolution clearly shows that mankind has directed itself toward the cities and constantly gathered in them. Population concentration has greatly changed urban conditions. This has produced two major kinds of social problems: urban problems such as lack of sanitation, crime and delinquency; and environmental problems such as air, water and noise pollution, both of the working to reinforce and worsen each other and to have major effects on the lower classes of the city.

The age in which Edward Carpenter lived was one in which clouds had begun to form over the optimism previously felt about qualitative progress in the reality of human life compared to the acceleration of forward progress in civilization's size. It was a time when the change in the paradigm of our existence from an open to a closed thread was beginning to remove the ideal of progress from the stage. Humanistic nature lost its absolute character and had been removed from the human feelings of an existence in reality and the human as absolute and there was no longer any opportunity to put the brakes on these feelings even within the self. This paper shall examine the foundation of Edward Carpenter's pioneering thought of community.

Chapter I   Humanity's role in the new intellectual climate

(1) The organic view of nature

The age of hope and of crisis in flux is that much more strongly reflected, not just in the area of thought, but in the action, of Edward Carpenter trapped as it was in the fetter of narrow tradition and set foot on a new continent in his search for a land of experiment. In the new world, "Fellowship of the New Life", he felt a freshness of the unknown that could never have been experienced and it is not hard to imagine, he partook directly in the new intellectual climate and moved toward freer thought and bolder methods.

Carpenter was not reticent about his philosophy or about the image of human nature derived from it. Quite explicitly Carpenter refused to separate the human race from the rest of nature. Rather the whole universe was an expression of a purposive mystical entity. Humanity's role in this scheme was both prodigal son and savior inside nature and yet at the same time capable of viewing it from the out-

side, human experience was to be the agency through which the connectedness of things was to be celebrated and the shattered wholeness of the cosmos to be reintegrated.

Carpenter was keenly aware that nature was entering a critical state, and he questioned the one-dimensional nature of this ideal of progress in the forward thrust of modernization.[4] When the existence of the self, or the basis for that existence, is shaken or threatened, people look into internal and external nature, attempting to gaze steadily into the depths in a search for something concrete. When the basis or the conditions of reality are shaken, or there are signs that basis will be threatened, nature too begins to show elements of danger. The objectifying of nature has been a central task in discovering the unknown elements, and the appearance of elements of danger changes the central task into one of clarifying the structure of the composite body of known elements.

The two major views of the relationship between man and nature are the view of nature as teleological, which was the rule from ancient times through the middle ages, and the mechanistic view which mechanically combines nature with a foundation on which stand the methods and principles of the modern natural sciences. From the criticisms of the view of nature in the modern enlightenment, arose a thinking that aims for a restoration of the organic view of nature and sees a new organic relationship between man and nature.[5]

The teleological view of regards nature as a certain type of harmonic order (cosmos) and mankind's cultural and social conduct is basically subsumed within that cosmos. The true nature of things is not an attribute of some other subject and things that are not within some other subject, are considered to be individuals. An entity cannot exist apart from the individual. Therefore, the universal exists within the individual. The universal may not exist apart from the individual. Universal things and individual things are not separated and in conflict, rather the universal exists within the individual, and it is through their transformation that the self is realized.

Since the advent of the modern era, awareness of history has been based upon trends of progress and growth, i.e., the time structure is thought of as a vertically-divided one. However, change in the history of reality in which nature is included takes place in extremely long, units of 10,000 or 100 million years, and cannot adequately be depicted linearly. It takes the form of a composite body of horizontally-divided and multilayered measures of time. An historical awareness founded on these multilayered measures of time lies at the foundation of Carpenter's criticism of civilization.

(2) "an illness of social morality"

Carpenter regarded civilization as an illness of social morality. He said, "I would not be ashamed to say that the words 'to become ill' applied to their most appropriate location, whether in the literal or

derivative sense, should be applied to the civilization and society of today."[6] These words are a most straightforward description of the restrictions of civilization as he saw them. Illness occurs because of loss of the physical unity that is the structure for health, which results in struggle and friction between core entities, an abnormal development of all time periods and a wearing out of organization. In contrast, the unity needed for the structure of a true society and of our modern lives is lost, and in its place are seen abnormal development of all kinds such as confrontations between classes and individuals, incursion into the other, and wearing down of organizations by socially parasitic groups, which are regarded as the illnesses that all nations and ethnic groups must suffer at one time or another.

In *The Healing of Nations and the Hidden Sources of Their Strife*, published in 1915,k Carpenter uses phrase "class disease", to say that when one class does not act in accordance with the interests of the whole, taking over government authority and seeking only its own interests and advantages, it becomes a parasitic body and the state must of necessity become ill.[7] He points out that when the human body does not supply the needs it requires in its entirety, the part become a parasite on the entire structure, and enters an absolutist solution. He regarded that as the true state of illness. Carpenter points out that an illness of society is the same as an illness in the human body, that there is a plundering class and a state of parasitism, in other words, a loss of harmony, resulting in psychological disease.[8]

He also criticized the growth of bureaucracy in *Toward Industrial Freedom*.

"Most people agree nowadays in the view that the growth of bureaucracy and officialism in the modern state is a serious evil, and that the extension of the government interference and the multiplication of laws are a great danger. We all know that the institution of the law and the courts actually creates and gives rise to huge masses of evil bribery, blackmail, perjury…"[9] "We have to realize that our present social forms are as ugly and inhuman as a club foot; and then we shall begin to realize how little necessary are these institutions, like law and police, whose chief concern and office is to retain and defend these forms. The chief difficulty, then, which arises in people's minds at the thought of a free non governmental society does not concern its desirability they are agreed as a rule that it would be desirable but concerns its practicability."[10] The wearing down of the structure by these social parasite groups inevitably results in many different kinds of abnormal development that include strife between individuals and violations of the other.

Carpenter also points out that the causing of self-conflict and self-contradiction within each and every individual leads to a change from a state in which the self is unified to one of loss of unity within the self, which is a sickness of the individual. In effect, human beings are no longer able to form di-

rect relationships with systems or other human beings and a collapse occurs in the human external system that connects nature and mankind.[11] The meaning of existence of the self becomes unclear and when we wonder there we will find the basis for that existence, the instability of the core foundation increases, unable to stabilize.

Chapter II   To produce mutually supportive relationships of alienation

In post-modern society, the atmosphere is one in which the only universality is a localized universality. Those things that are universal in a time sense are no longer considered important. That is to say, there comes a way of looking at things that sees temporal change and development to be normal. Therefore, natural science is perhaps the only thing created after the modern era that has a unique temporal universality. However, rather than asking whether natural science has real temporal universality or that the truths it has unearthed have temporal universality it might be better to say the natural science is developing.[12]

The psychology of people in the post-modern era has been to think of all things as moving forward and progressing over time. Therefore, having temporal universality has come to be considered unimportant. The psychology of affirming localized universality and denying temporal universality has matched very well with the logic of the capitalist merchandise economy.

The capitalistic mode of production makes nature a procedure, i.e., it is a mode of product mutually supportive relationships. That has resulted in the principles that politically unify modern society also spreading across national boundaries. Out of this has been created the base for developing the human psychology which thinks that which is universal is localized universality. Therefore, when mankind attempts to build a society based on production that makes use of nature   that produces by making use of the power of nature   it greatly restricts the logic of modern localized universality.

When an arrangement is created that centers on a productive system, the people who are working under those conditions no longer are aware that work is established within the relationship between nature and humans. They are no longer aware of the direct relationship between nature and work. The meaning of the content of work becomes vague, the same day's pay means the same kind of work and as a result the equilibrium in the relationship between nature and mankind that exists within work is destroyed. The problem here is the denial of the relationship.

We human beings do not simply live within groups we have created, we live in complex and intricate sets of relationships   their pattern having no particularly mandatory character   with many different aspects the most important of them being language. Nature has by this point become a means

of production in these relationships, and in the same way that the relation between man and nature can no longer be seen in work, the relationships between human beings have become relationships of alienation and mere means of production. People gather together solely according to the requirements for production and they are merely placed in those relationships. No sense of community exists between human beings. The productive system is the main entity, and people have been gathered together only as a means for that production. People scatter about with no sense of unity because work is a means of the production system. And they are used indiscriminately as means of the production system.

Carpenter said in *Towards Industrial Freedom*, "Thus it will be observed that whereas the present society is founded on a law-enforced system of private property, in which, almost necessarily, the covetous hard type of man becomes the large proprietor and is enabled to prey upon the small one; and whereas the result of this arrangement is a bitter and continuous struggle for possession, in which the motive to activity is mainly fear. We on the contrary, are disentangling a conception of a society in which private property is supported by no apparatus of armed authority, but as far as it exists is a perfectly spontaneous arrangement. The main motives to activity are neither fear nor greed of gain, but rather community of life and interest in life."[13]

The communality of work has now been lost, work is used by the production system in separate and isolated units, and we see that the result is the human being itself becoming an isolated entity within work. Man and work are isolated the thin that connects work of the human being is the production system, the merchandise economy, the society. A situation where community between individuals and direct relationships are lost, is a situation in which each and every human being lives in isolation. The connections between individual humans are created as separated and isolated systems.

There are two questions that Carpenter presents in regard to this situation. First, if we attempt to live by making use of the forces of nature, we must think about what the relationship of temporal universality is in which man and nature live in symbiosis. Second, we must bring back the relationship of temporal universality in work, that is to say, we must reclaim the quality of work both temporally and universally.[14] In addition to restoring the temporal universalistic relationship with nature in the quality of work, we must uncover social principles that do not change as the times change and that accord with society's new economic setup. We must hold on to the social principles that can contain values that do not change with time.[15]

Contemporary society has nothing more than localized universality, it is a society that considers change normal and it is constantly developing temporal items and enveloping us in a sense of time that constantly demands change. It must be recovered to build the relationship that transcends the

logic of products and currency. Eliminating the kind of labor that exists today, a king that makes nature and human beings the means of the production system, we will realize a change to a kind of labor that makes mankind and nature in interaction with each other the principle subject. Modern society has made nature and humankind the means of production. Totally unaware, human beings have taken on the perception that they are achieving their goals.

The four thins that are the subject of interaction between nature and mankind, that will restore labor in its broad sense, that restore value to use and that will restore skills, are nothing more than the same thing seen from different angles. That will establish a way of thinking that sees true temporal universality in restoring a world that has a value of use and restoring labor that has quality relationships. The problem is that during that process the logic of currency will intervene tearing asunder the meaning of labor in its broadest sense, qualitatively changing skills and the value of use and turn nature and man into the means of a productive system and cause true relationships to disappear from the world of man and nature.

When Carpenter says, "man is something that exists to be formed in character by nature so that it can exceed nature."[16], he means that the relationship between man and nature is created through internalizing nature. This incorporates correlative relationship, with the things it stands in conflict with and blocks the negative elements that lie within. When he says that "for the human being...to understand and achieve freedom and happiness of the self, i.e., to convert one's awareness from the external perishable to the internal non-perishable one must be aware of one's own fate."[17] Carpenter shows that the base for the aim toward the internalization of nature lies in a strong awareness of the internal self. This means not a direction toward a peculiar state of self-interest in which only the self is the object, but rather, one in which the individual self can live in unity with the totality, in the search for individual independence. To Carpenter nature lies within the range of totality.[18]

Chapter III   The Foundation of Pioneering Thought of Community

As modernization moved forward, social systems developed and became highly advanced but that also threatened traditional social foundations and even brought on the danger of destroying them. The individual human being was being sealed within a set of hypertrophying social relations that resulted in a diminution of the feelings of reality as a human being. Carpenter was strongly aware of the crisis surrounding this diminution, especially in its links to the structural changes occurring in British capitalism.

The pioneers from the beginning of the 19th century on who would influence Carpenter attempted

to use this model to test the concreteness of coexistence of diversity among people. Since the start of the industrial revolution, the people who had made those attempts were aware of the positive and negative aspects of the mechanism of machine and mechanized industry, the factor that most regulates modern industrial society. They were aware that according to the way in which science and technology were used either the greatest happiness or the greatest misery would be brought to mankind, and they conceived a world in which the unlimited progress of science and technology through the industrial revolution would establish both happiness and good fortune for all human beings.

In the point that the use of machinery under the existing industrial system not only impoverished and caused suffering among the poor working class, that the industrial system increasingly threatened the internalized values of mankind, and that a direct search must be made to bring that system to its demise, Carpenter can be called a forerunner in thought about the contemporary crisis.[19] He did not stop at simply expressing an awareness of crisis, he went on to criticize the artificiality of a society and its principles that ignored the natural state in the future of mankind, and sought to overcome the crisis of social nature through a complete recovery of humanistic nature.

Carpenter's concept of complete recovery is not a simple utopian concept of crisis recovery, it is a means of critically dealing with the realities of absolutism and all of its philosophical underpinnings. It takes fact as fact and is a product of nature and reason that is supported by a psychology that is in line with and does not depart from the facts. Carpenter's practicality lies in the establishment of a total recovery of humanistic nature in a state harmonious with societal nature. The social reformation that guarantees that recovery is then put into practice using a cooperative thought that incorporate nature as its base.

This theory of a cooperative society removes the state, a superficiality standing in an artificial, ruling position, and makes most important the way in which the natural and life dimensions that are based on the human being exist. In reality, the state that rules all social relationships based on its superiority is originally, nothing more than an entity that takes care of one of the functions in socially organic relationships. Therefore, this is a theory of social harmony that reduces the ruling characteristics of the state itself into those of a one function entity and creates cooperative relationships above them.

Conclusion

Carpenter fixes the structure of centralized authority, and regards the system of the efficient society in which only things that are useful are propelled forward, as an external skin that will eventually

peel off.[20] He says that he is searching for the secret of society's existence, and thinks that, as far as social evolution is concerned, society will progress by taking off and thinks that, as far as social evolution is concerned, society will progress by taking off and throwing away out of necessity this external skin that it is fitted with, and as for social progress, that we must constantly condemn the obstacles created by the freezing of the existing legal system.[21]

At the foundation of these ideas were his suspicious about social Darwinism which extols the logic of survival of the fittest. Although the theory of evolution had been dealt a serious blow when the world of biology pointed out that the survivors are those who are most adaptable, the Social Darwinists applied the survival of the fittest to social theory, and from there in influenced liberal economics. This is a developmental theory of economics that connects the notion of free selection in "The Origin of Species", with the optimistic view that out of the free will of each and every person order will naturally result.

However, basic to the original theory of evolution is competition between individuals of the same species, but when humans are taken as the subject of that theory and the theory is applied to the competition between individual human beings and a further notion is derived that the superior win and the inferior lose, then what we have is a clear deviation from the original Darwinian theory. When the dark side that accompanies the development of industrial capitalism continues to grow, the theory quite logically, no longer causes and fits with reality. Carpenter's publishing of *Civilization   Its Causes and Cure* in 1889, was way ahead of its times in its criticism of the rationale of Social Darwinism. He harshly criticizes the rigidity caused by the concentration of organization and authority, but rather than emphasizing this critique is much more interested in the growth of a new humanity created out of respect toward work and human beings that will open up a hole in the present situation and searches for what that should be like.[22] Carpenter was determined to promote life's internal creative powers as the life of the community and the awakening and growth of that awareness was moving forward as a medium interacting with nature.

Footnotes

(1) Edward Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, (1st ed.)Manchester and London, 1883, p.21

(2) Ibid., p.22

(3) Ibid., p.21

(4) Edward Carpenter, *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure*, London, 1889, pp.10-11

(5) Hajime Ikeda, *Nihonshimin shiso to Kokkaron*, Ronsousha, 1983, p.14

(6) Edward Carpenter, op.cit., p.6

cf. What strengthened this feeling of crisis in Carpenter was the smoke pollution that engulfed the city of Sheffield. He was extremely concerned about what would happen to the human being living inside those

huge clouds of thick, black smoke that were rising up into the heavens. His focus was steadily fixed on those people living suffocating lives, working like slaves, struggling to get a little bit of air and sunlight, and getting ill because of the dirty air and insufficiency of light. Legal measures had been taken to deal with the situation, but Carpenter's problem awareness had been stirred by questions about the effectiveness of those laws.

⑺　Edward Carpenter, *The Healing of Nations, and the Hidden Sources of their Strife*, London, 1915, p.5

⑻　Ibid., p.11

Carpenter regarded modern capitalistic civilization as socially and morally diseased. Sickness arises from the loss of the physical unity that makes up health and the result there is a conflict between the separate parts or a friction between the organs or a growing abnormality of those organs, or the organism wears out. In contrast to this, our lives in modern society of the unification that forms true society, are lost, and in their place arises a conflict between classes or between individuals, there is abnormal development of all things that violate the other, and there is a large number of groups who are parasites on society. This is seen as a sickness that every type of group must get.

⑼　Edward Carpenter, *Towards Industrial Freedom*, London, 1917, p.76

⑽　Ibid, p.77

⑾　Chushichi Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter 1844-1929, Prophet of Human Fellowship*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, p.159

⑿　Edward Carpenter, *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure*, pp.17-18

⒀　Edward Carpenter, *Towards Industrial Freedom*, pp.87-88

⒁　Edward Carpenter, *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure*, p.22

⒂　Ibid., p.25

⒃　Ibid., p.32

⒄　Ibid., p.34

⒅　Ibid., p.46

⒆　Chushichi Tsuzuki, op.cit., pp.58-59

⒇　E. Carpenter, *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure*, p.50

(21)　Ibid., p.52

(22)　Ibid., p.55

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