PRONOIA*

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Pronoia is the positive counterpart of paranoia. It is the delusion that others think well of one. Actions and the products of one's efforts are thought to be well received and praised by others. Mere acquaintances are thought to be close friends; politeness and the exchange of pleasantries are taken as expressions of deep attachment and the promise of future support. Pronoia appears to be rooted in the social complexity and cultural ambiguity of our lives: we have become increasingly dependent on the opinions of others based on uncertain criteria. This paper discusses individuals who suffer from pronoia, the organizational and interpersonal mechanisms that encourage it, and the connections between pronoia and paranoia. The paper suggests that introspection in a time of conflicting forms of consciousness is both an explanation for pronoia—and a problem in itself.

In an attempt to understand some of the connections between organizational and personality processes I have encountered a phenomenon that is rarely discussed and little appreciated for its existence and its effect. It occurred to me a number of years ago that paranoia ought logically to have an opposite. If some people suffered from a disorder characterized by delusions of persecution, then others ought to suffer from delusions of support and exaggerated attractiveness. In 1969 I observed an acquaintance who actually did suffer from this delusion. The subsequent observation of others in many organizations (including academic organizations with which I was familiar and a large corporation in which I was an executive) led me to the conclusion that this phenomenon, which I call *pronoia*, is a real one that both creates problems for individuals and reflects a number of social problems.

Pronoia is the delusion that others think well of one. Actions and the products of one's efforts are thought to be well-received and praised by others who, when they talk behind one's back, must be saying good things, not bad. Mere acquaintances are seen as close friends. Politeness and the exchange of pleasantries are interpreted as expressions of deep attachment and the promise of future support. Because there was no word in our vocabulary to describe these kinds of delusions, I coined the word *pronoia*. The dictionary definition of paranoia does include positive as well as negative delusions (Morris 1969). However, the negative delusions refer to the negative actions and attitudes of others while the positive delusions refer to feelings of grandeur about oneself. I am concerned not with delusions of grandeur but with delusions about what others think; and such positive delusions are not included in the definition of paranoia. It is not necessary to really think well of oneself to suffer from pronoia, but only to believe that others do.

ORGANIZATIONAL BASIS FOR PRONOIA
Pronoia seems to be rooted in the social complexity and cultural ambiguity of our lives: we have become increasingly dependent on the opinions of others that are, in turn, based on uncertain criteria (Fromm, 1947:69; Riesman *et al.*, 1950). We do not submit our products to the impersonal forces of a market place. Instead, we increasingly find ourselves either in organizations operating outside of a market place or in market organizations in which our occupational tasks

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do not produce quantifiable or easily measured outputs. The more uncertain the criteria, then, the less the consensus and objectivity—and the more we are dependent on guesses about where we stand in the eyes of others. As the opinions of others become more important in deciding our fate, the greater the likelihood that neuroses about these relationships will develop. These conditions have increased in our society as we have developed larger, more complex organizations with intricate career paths, and defined success in terms of promotions.[1] Our fates are in the hands of a few specific others.

LOOKING FOR CUES

Our lives are shaped by a kind of status ethic fraught with uncertainty: we look for signs that we have been chosen. Instead of looking to our material well-being for indications that we have already been chosen, we search for signs in the actions, behavior, and demeanor of those individuals who do the choosing.

When being chosen is important, when the criteria are vague, and when the decision is long-awaited, it is easy to presume that our every action is being evaluated and that the evaluators are as conscious as we are of the nuances of the interaction. Smiles, frowns, and apparent slights or expressions of interest all become cues about what the evaluators really think of us. Those subject to long-term evaluations assume that the process never stops. The assumption that everything done by someone in a position of authority is related to evaluation, is deliberate, and is significant, encourages the person being evaluated to search for cues to predict future actions of the evaluator.

CASE EXAMPLES OF PRONOID BEHAVIOR

The following descriptions of specific individuals are offered as examples of pronoid behavior. I observed each individual during the couse of my experiences in academic and non-academic organizations. All the pseudonyms I have chosen are John because all of the individuals I observed were men. I do not know whether this was a coincidence, or whether pronoia is especially prevalent among men—though I suspect it is the latter.

1) John Smith and two partners had been working as consultants for a committee representing a large organization. Smith maintained most of the contact with the committee and kept reporting back to his partners that the committee and others in the organization were pleased with their work. The partners took these reports at face value, until they were each in turn present at meetings that Smith reported positively to the third partner. After comparing notes, the partners discovered that their judgments were considerably more negative than Smith's. Paying closer attention to Smith's reports, they discovered that he always distorted the reactions of others in a positive light. Smith continued to say he was loved and well thought of throughout the three-year contract with the committee, and claimed he was the key to the relationship. Near the end of the contract, the committee asked one of the partners to continue alone for another six months on the project—without Smith. The committee said they had waited until they were alone with this partner to make the offer because they had not wanted to confront Smith. They reported that Smith's assumptions about their positive reactions kept him from listening to their requests. Out of loyalty to Smith the partner talked the committee into a deal that included Smith for three months. Smith criticized the partner for not having obtained a longer contract and claimed he would have done so if he had been present at the meeting. Significantly, the partner never told Smith what had happened.

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1. In his classic exposition of interpersonal misunderstandings Ichheiser (1949:35) posits that "perhaps some degree of illusion is a necessary as well as an inescapable element in the complexities of our life."

2) John White, a high corporate official, referred to any influential person he had met once as a close personal friend. He met many such persons through his job and claimed he had a wide circle of influence. White also assumed that these people supported anything he had to say. He would return from meetings with a highly placed public official to describe how well he had been received, while other executives had direct information to the contrary. Similarly, he claimed that a union leader he had met with had agreed with him about an act he proposed that was against the interests of the union. My own checking revealed that the union leader, after hearing White's arguments, had acknowledged his position but not agreed with it. White, like other pronoids, seldom listened to others and assumed that others always agreed with him.

3) John Brown, a university professor, was applying for tenure. He submitted a long letter from someone in the field as evidence of how well his own work was received. In fact, the only positive aspects of the letter were the opening expression of interest and a closing sentence saying that Brown was involved in an interesting area of research and should keep the letter writer informed. The rest of the letter was a devastating critique of Brown's work. Brown harmed his own cause because he could only see the expressions of interest as positive reactions which then blinded him from seeing the negative content. As confirmed by a phone call, the opening and closing remarks were but the kind attempts of a colleague to soften the blow of criticism.

4) John Black was engaged in a bitter dispute with a department chairman that threatened Black's chances of obtaining tenure. He was convinced, and told outsiders so, that his accusations against the chairman were supported by the rest of the department and the administration, and that the chairman was "on his way out." Not only did Black lose that fight, and his job, but it was clear from talking with other department members that he never did enjoy their support.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRONOIA

The situations described above might have elicited the more familiar paranoid responses in other persons. I do not know why some people exhibit paranoia and others pronoia. Nor am I interested in whether, or how, a particular individual exhibits pronoia, or in labeling or characterizing individuals as pronoids. And I am not competent to clarify the degree to which a psychological disposition was central to the pronoia exhibited in the cases above. I am interested in the manifestations of pronoia and in the conditions that encourage or produce pronoid behavior, especially the many reasons why people are seldom told negative things about themselves and are therefore led to think that others are more positive about them than they really are.

The Evaluative Process and Conditions for Pronoia

Bosses generally avoid criticizing subordinates to their face, thus leaving subordinates ignorant of negative evaluations.[2] This is most likely to happen when the criteria are subjective or, if objective, when there are large numbers of criteria to choose among. If subordinates simply accepted negative evaluations without question, bosses would probably be less likely to avoid the encounter. But a subordinate who demands explicit reasons — where there are no objective, and hence obvious, measures — makes face-to-face evaluation a thankless task for the boss. The best evidence of this avoidance is the failure of most organizations to successfully implement periodic evaluation schemes within their management hierarchy (Sofer and Tuchman, 1970). Such schemes frequently fall into disuse because evaluators frequently give all employees high ratings in an attempt to avoid explaining or defending whatever distinctions among employees they would otherwise have to make (Blau, 1963:214).

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2. Crozier (1964:220) has noted that the French characteristically avoid giving orders face-to-face.

If promotion is involved avoidance may occur when the criteria of the present job are objective but where higher jobs may be based on subjective criteria. For example, salespeople may know where they stand on the basis of their present performance, but not know about chances for a promotion to manager if that position calls for qualifications other than those involved in selling.

The unpleasantness of face-to-face negative evaluations is one reason foremen frequently support the introduction of employee time-and-motion standards, even though it reduces their autonomy and authority. The use of such objective data makes the foreman's evaluative relations with subordinates easier.

The explosion of anger on the part of bosses is an interesting and related organizational phenomenon. A display of anger toward a subordinate who makes a mistake is considerably easier than a periodic general evaluation. The error is specific. Subordinates, taken aback by the anger, are not prepared to counter-attack; they cannot use the occasion to compare themselves favorably with others subject to evaluation; and they are able to forgive a negative evaluation more readily when someone "loses their temper" than when the evaluation is expressed in cold reason. At the same time, displays of anger may be brushed aside by the pronoid precisely because they are displays of anger — that is, manifestations of a loss of control — even though the anger may have been contrived and deliberate on the part of the boss.

Most employees claim they want to know where they stand, but criticizing their work may destroy their self-esteem and render them even less use to the organization. This potential for the subordinate to make even less effort is another reason supervisors avoid evaluations, a factor further compounded when the parties have to continue working together. It is even more difficult to be frank in an evaluation meeting that is simply part of an ongoing process or is to be followed by a long delay before actions follow. Face-to-face negative confrontations are hard enough when the parties subsequently separate, but when their relationship continues it becomes considerably more difficult, and may serve no organizational purpose.

People's willingness to be critical of others depends on how they think their criticism will be received. The failure of John Smith's partner to tell him what the committee they were working for thought of him is an example of this avoidance. If a subordinate is overly sensitive, bosses are more likely to let the matter go, thereby reinforcing the subordinate's idea that others think well of him.

Letters of Recommendation as a Major Cause of Pronoia

Letters of recommendation are notorious for their inflated language, their avoidance of negative factors, and their frequent equivocation (Lewis, 1969). An indication of the suspicion with which positive ones are received is that recipients try to develop schemes by which to obtain more accurate letters. For example, some assure people who write letters of reference that negative statements will not be taken into account unless at least two separate letters are negative, thus freeing the writer from the burden of hurting someone's chances. As mentioned in Brown's case, they also make follow-up phone calls.

This issue of inflated letters and of the expected need for subsequent calls is illustrated by a case reported in the *New York Times* (Butterfield, 1981) of a physician who obtained a hospital position on the basis of positive letters of recommendation from physicians who knew he had been convicted of raping a nurse. The article quotes an official from one of Harvard's teaching hospitals as saying that "all doctors were now aware that letters of recommendation have become cheapened and, in any case, the Buffalo hospital had not followed through with phone calls to check what the letters really meant."

Since letters of recommendation are almost always written for a position or reward in an institution other than the writer's own, it is easy for the writer to avoid the unpleasantness of putting his or her real thoughts on paper. For example, an acquaintance of mine, whom I shall call

John Doe, was considered for a position at an institution where one of his friends was employed. The friend, who did not think highly of Doe's ability, was put in the difficult position of having to express his opinion about Doe in a formal letter. At the same time he also knew of Doe's pronoia and did not want to hurt him. However, he was sure Doe would turn down the position even if it were offered to him, thus freeing the friend to write a favorable letter.

The fact that persons see or hear about letters written on their behalf obviously encourages them to think that the writers hold them in higher esteem than they actually do. Similarly, subjects are impressed by the status of people who agree to write letters for them, despite the fact that high-status people frequently write letters simply to avoid the embarrassment of turning someone down. John Black told everyone that a prominent member of his discipline had written on his behalf. What Black did not realize was that some of their mutual acquaintances knew the letter was not an honest expression of the writer's feelings. People writing letters of recommendation may vary what they say depending on their view of the reputation on the institution involved; in this case the letter was positive because the institution involved was not held in high esteem by the writer.

Some of the pressures for changes in the system of refereeing journal articles also produce the conditions for pronoia. There has been a move to reveal the identity of journal referees. One of the reasons given is that this would encourage the referees to be more responsible, that is, to be less arbitrarily negative and provide more detailed reasons for negative comments. However, if referees are identified it is more likely that they will be less critical, and will arbitrarily include positive comments. Some editors themselves have complained that referees are too negative and feel that part of a referee's function is to find something to praise in a submission because it is difficult enough for the editor to reject something without being totally negative. Although editors are proud of their rejection rates, they take great pains to be as positive as possible in their reasons given to the contributors for that rejection. In all of these situations, candor on the negative side yields in the face of difficult interpersonal relations, albeit in writing.

Pronoia of Those in Superior Positions

Superordinates may be as susceptible to pronoia as subordinates. This is especially true in societies where the consent of the governed is required, or where authority has to be legitimated by deed and not just by position. Those at the top are frequently shielded from bad news about themselves. The "yes man" who hides or distorts negative information from below is common to such societies.

Organizations have a number of mechanisms to create awe of the upper levels of the hierarchy among subordinates, in order to legitimate the authority structure (Thompson, 1961). Distance, pomp, ceremony, privileges, and ornate surroundings are all used to create awe. As a result, these top members frequently believe that the awe displayed toward them is intrinsic to their persons, and not to the office or resulting from specific mechanisms set up for that purpose.

We are even likely to encounter the conscious recognition of pronoia, along with subsequent attempts to avoid it, within certain segments of society. The very wealthy or the very powerful are often afraid that everyone who likes them does so for what they have to offer. Hence, they become suspicious of those who flatter them and cautious of all but the equally rich and famous. Pronoia, thus, is explicitly rejected.

POSITIVE REACTIONS INDUCED BY PRONOIDS

The previous section discussed some of the organizational mechanisms and interpersonal behavior of *others* that helped create conditions for pronoia. However, some of these conditions are also induced by the pronoids themselves. The aggressive and argumentative character of some people inhibits disagreement: others think such people don't want to listen. And usually there is

no need to disagree unless too high a commitment is made by not doing so. The pleasure of ignoring or escaping such people is usually greater than the price one has to pay for avoiding such an argument. It is unpleasant enough to criticize someone; thus, if someone aggressively boasts about themselves or preaches a particular viewpoint it is even easier to avoid criticizing them.[3]

One reacts to aggressive and assertive people the same way one usually reacts to a boor — with silence. One hesitates to respond for fear of encouraging the speaker to continue. Silence is the result, and silence is taken as agreement. John White didn't listen to the union leader's objections to his position, so the union leader simply acknowledged an understanding of White's position, ceased her rebuttal, and lapsed into silence. It was neither a formal nor an informal bargaining session, so the union leader had little to lose by appearing polite. White, however, interpreted the silence as agreement and told everyone that the union leader agreed with his position.

Another example of how silence encourages pronoia is provided by the behavior of John Jones, who had been discharged from a well-paying corporate position. He wrote a memo to the president suggesting how the president should respond to inquiries about him from search firms or prospective employers. In addition to asking the president to tell others that Jones had resigned and not been fired, he then listed in the memo his major strengths that could be praised to a prospective employer. Among them was his: "ability to manage large projects and provide directions"; his "excellent interpersonal skills, particularly in bringing together disparate people to achieve common goals, particularly since people trust me"; and his being "a self starter with little/no need for direction once goals have been set. I don't need to run to my boss on everything." He could not have put together a more accurate list of the weaknesses that led to his discharge. The president did not respond to the memo, nor had he disagreed with Jones in their last meeting when Jones praised himself. There was really no need to do so, because Jones was leaving and it would have been unpleasant to try to correct Jones' misimpressions. This silence encouraged Jones to believe that his former bosses thought highly of his capabilities — even though they fired him.[4]

Displays of confidence reinforce pronoia because they too seldom meet with resistance or disagreement on the part of others. Even if not believed, others hesitate to correct these displays when the risk is small because the effort is not worth the consequences. The acceptance of expressions of confidence at face value is part of the willingness of people to accept judgments about others on the flimsiest hearsay. We accept what others say about someone unless we have evidence to the contrary, and that usually takes a good deal of effort to obtain. But we do more than that — we not only accept what others say about a person, we repeat it ourselves. Individuals within an occupational world often comment on the positive or negative reputation of someone if they have heard others speak about the person. For example, academics often say a colleague does good work, even though they have not read a single word by that person.

The lack of firm criteria to evaluate a person's abilities produces a desire for consensus that is achieved by simply repeating others' judgments as if they were one's own. People are anxious not to show that they are unaware of the correct or acceptable opinion about a particular individual if they think it is a commonly held opinion. Displays of confidence, taken at face value without evidence to the contrary, become self-fulfilling. We assume that someone who appears confident must be thought well of by others — that the confidence is based on reality. We do not, however, attach the same truth to the opposite case, because our familiarity with paranoia frequently leads us to discount self abnegation.

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3. This compares to Cameron's (1959:58) description of how the paranoid provokes others into self-confirming behavior.
4. For an interesting account of how ego filters and distorts information to produce positive images see Greenwald (1980).

"Name dropping" is a major characteristic of a number of pronoids. The briefest encounter with someone of recognized importance is described as an intimate relationship. John White is a perfect example of a name dropper. When he first entered the corporation, everyone was impressed by the important people with whom he appeared to be on intimate terms. He would frequently mention that he had dinner the previous night with this or that important politician; or, whenever the support of a high official was needed he would claim to be a close friend of the official. One day White's colleagues found out that his description of having had dinner with someone the previous night was his interpretation of his attendance, together with scores of other people, at a testimonial dinner for the named personage. White believed that attending a dinner function with other people, no matter how large the group, was the same as having dinner personally with every important guest. Similarly, he described as close friends people he had met the day before for the first time. White's pronoia apparently led him to assume that the merest acquaintance with someone of importance meant that the person was immediately impressed by him and could be counted on as a supporter. Name dropping, thus, is a kind of catalogue of pronoid situations.

Pronoids assume that every aspect of their relationship with someone is satisfactory if the other person describes any one aspect favorably. This leads to a great deal of difficulty for evaluators because every utterance reeks with significance for the person being evaluated. Off-hand comments assume crucial importance and lead to complicated interpersonal relations whenever one person attributes greater significance to a statement than the other person does. Mere politeness is taken as proof of a positive, total relationship. Politeness fuels pronoia whenever an evaluator assumes that the person he is evaluating can distinguish between the trivial and the important, when in fact the person cannot make that distinction and believes everything said is significant.

This inability to distinguish between the trivial and the important is particularly apparent whenever friendship is a factor. Pronoids cannot separate the personal from the impersonal. Signs of friendship are taken as signs of formal business approval. Perhaps this is why subordinates try to personalize their relationships with those above them, and those in authority try to maintain some distance from subordinates.

John Green, another high corporate official, provides an example of such a case. When a new management team was brought into the corporation, Green was told he would soon be replaced and that he should look around for another job. He reacted to the news by reciting what he considered to be his strengths; as with Jones, these were the exact areas that others judged to be his weaknesses and the reasons why he was being fired. During the several months it took to find a successor for Green he was called upon to help the president in a personal situation involving a member of the president's family. Subsequently, Green continued to express friendly remarks to the president who, out of simple courtesy, did not act brusquely or unfriendly. Although nothing positive had been said to Green about his work during that period, when he was told that a successor had finally been found and that he would have to leave he expressed great shock and dismay. He had assumed that the previous negative notice was null and void because the president had not subsequently acted hostile to him. The fact that nothing positive about his work had been said or that the notice had not been rescinded was never considered. He grabbed at any positive signs and assumed they extended to the whole relationship.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PRONOIA AND PARANOIA

The inability to distinguish between the trivial and the important characterizes paranoia as well as pronoia. In one of the few accounts I have been able to find of something like pronoia, Weil (1972:177), first defines paranoia as a "tendency to see external events and things forming patterns that appear to be inimical," then describes members of a California drug subculture as

characterized by what he calls "positive paranoia" — the feeling that the universe was a conspiracy organized for their benefit (1972:179). Commenting on Weil, Hertzberg and McClelland (1974:60) describe both negative and positive paranoia as offering the comfort that the universe is ordered about oneself and that, contrary to meaninglessness, they both drench "every detail of the world in meaning."

Given this link, some of the processes that produce pronoia are also likely to produce paranoia. We stated above that the reluctance to face others with negative evaluations leads to avoidance, as does the difficulties of being specific where criteria are vague. But this frequently results in negative actions such as discharge or demotion without prior warning. And if, only then, reasons have to be supplied to the already injured party, paranoid reactions are more likely.

There is increasing pressure in our litigious society to justify negative personnel actions. Unions, in an attempt to protect their members against the personal abuse of bosses, must assume that there are specific, demonstrable reasons for a negative action. They demand that these reasons be supplied. But the more professional, the more complex, and the more highly placed the job, the more difficult it is to give specific reasons: the criteria are qualitative and not easily measured. Evaluators, faced with demands for a degree of specificity that they cannot provide, frequently remain silent and hide their discontent.

Demands for specific reasons may trigger an opposite reaction — criticizing subordinates for every mistake they have ever made. Goffman (1961:155) demonstrated this phenomenon in a mental institution, Goldner (1965:722) in an industrial corporation. Thus, the same mechanism of demands for specificity may produce either silence or a barrage of criticism. I believe the former is more likely, but there is not yet sufficient data to test my hypothesis. In any case, these effects are not symmetrical. The building of a dossier based on every mistake, no matter how trivial, is produced by demands for specific reasons. This in turn produces what we might call paranoia but which is really an accurate perception. The avoidance phenomenon that produces pronoia produces an inaccurate perception. As Lemert (1962) has pointed out, when others react to aggressive behavior of paranoids by conspiring to avoid them then the delusions become reality.

Interestingly, members of a hierarchy demand specific reasons from those above them while denying reasons to those below. They know they have objectively judged those below, even though they cannot be more specific than to compare one subordinate's abilities to another. But they also cannot understand why their bosses cannot be more specific with them.

Pronoia is encouraged during periods of organizational slack (Cyert and March, 1963:36) when there are surplus funds and organizational growth. In times of growth, promotions occur more rapidly, standards of promotions are lowered so that people are promoted who might not otherwise be moved up, and employees are retained who might otherwise be fired. Pronoia occurs if growth periods are preceded by tough times, because those promoted during growth periods assume they are being judged by the same tough standards that were applied during the preceding, more competitive period of scarce resources.

Conversely, individuals who are laid off or not promoted in periods of contraction may feel there is a conspiracy against them because older employees who are retained or who were previously promoted and are now in superior positions may be of equal or even of inferior merit. Unless there is an explicit acknowledgment that the criteria are now higher than before, the aggrieved employees will think they have been singled out for unfair treatment.

Pronoia and paranoia can occur almost simultaneously in situations where one causes the other. Employees who are discharged are likely to view it as an arbitrary act if they interpret all the previous signs as positive or see all other people as supporters. John Brown was convinced that he was denied tenure because of a plot against him within the department. He believed he was qualified for the position: the letter of recommendation he presented was evidence enough

for him that he had the respect of other academics. He assumed that others were "out to get him" and not acting objectively. One can thus be paranoid about some people and simultaneously pronoid about others.

Paranoia and pronoia appear to have different degrees of stability. Paranoia may be more lasting because pronoia may bump up against reality sooner and, as we have seen above, some aspects of pronoia may produce a form of paranoia. On the other hand, the actions of others are more likely to reinforce pronoia than paranoia. People try to help paranoids: by assuring them of their safety, by dissuading them that anyone is out to get them, and by pointing out occasions when others have been supportive. But these same people do not try to help pronoids: first, because such a characterization is not yet in common usage; and, second, because people are reluctant to tell someone that they are worse than they think or that others do not think as highly of them as they believe others do. At best, people warn pronoids not to be too optimistic. If pronoia, like paranoia, becomes a label in our catalogue we will be continually forced to decide the degree to which the reactions of others are based on reality or whether these reactions are delusions on our part or on theirs.

CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary society seems to encourage introspection, yet we know little about the effects of this phenomenon. Most of our theories either assume or deny its existence. They do not treat introspection as a variable, and yet it seems clear to me that introspection must vary from culture to culture, from individual to individual, and from situation to situation. Estimating what others think of us is one form of introspection. Pronoia and paranoia are forms of self delusion about these estimates. They resolve, for many, the uncertainty about the opinions of significant people — people who are thrust upon us by the structure of our work rather than those whom we choose to be significant.

Our society is characterized by a set of alternative explanations for our behavior. We are no longer dominated by one perspective of behavioral motivation but by many. The very term "consciousness raising" indicates the degree to which we have become familiar with conflicting perspectives. And like the tendencies of paranoia and pronoia some cling to one explanation to the exclusion of all others in order to resolve the ambiguity. Class consciousness, race consciousness, sexual consciousness, and national consciousness all compete for our attention as ways to explain our own personal actions, just as do psychoanalysis and religion. The existence of this bewildering set of explanations for our behavior forces us to be introspective in attempting to pick and choose among them. We are each now potentially a "marginal man."

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