

Seymour Sarason Remembered: “Plus ça change...”, “Psychology Misdirected”, and “Community Psychology and the Anarchist Insight”

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Abstract The intellectual legacy of Seymour Sarason continues to serve as a critical resource for the field of community psychology. The present paper draws on one of Sarason’s favorite aphorisms and two of his seminal writings to suggest the relevance of ideas articulated 35–40 years ago for the current time. Each in their own way highlights the importance of unearthing and interrogating core assumptions underlying our research and our efforts to make a positive difference. The aphorism reminds us that the rhetoric of change is far easier to articulate than to enact and all too often ignores or disguises issues of power among actors. The “misdirection” of Psychology reflected his assertion that the asocial, acultural, and ahistorical nature of American Psychology reflected American culture more generally and ill prepared it to understand and engage in social change, particularly with respect to educational reform. The “anarchist insight” articulated his belief in interrogating the implications of the increasingly interdependent relationship of science and the state for the autonomy of scientists and scientific inquiry. The evidence-based practice movement is offered as an example of the current day relevance of the aphorism and core insights of these two papers. The paper concludes with a plea to rekindle the discussion and continued examination of Sarason’s paradigmatic insights for the intellectual and social development of the field.

Keywords Foucault · Sarason · Evidence-based practice · Science and the state · Systems theory · Anarchy

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Introduction

It is both a pleasure and an honor to speak with you at this historic 50th anniversary of the 1965 Swampscott conference right down the road that stimulated the subsequent development of community psychology. And, for me, there is no other award more gratifying and humbling to receive than the Sarason award, named to honor one of the finest minds and most inspiring colleagues in shaping the field itself.

As with all of us, our biographies reflect the history of our times and the insights, relationships, and commitments of those who have gone before. I had the extraordinary privilege of beginning my career in community psychology as a student of Jim Kelly, who took time away from developing the ecological metaphor and attending the Swampscott Conference to chair both my Masters thesis and Dissertation. He has been a life long mentor. A letter to Jim from Rudolf Moos about a postdoctoral research fellowship opened the door for me to spend two subsequent years at the Social Ecology Lab at Stanford at the moment Rudy was developing social climate scales to measure every high impact social setting he could think of. His commitment to understanding and measuring context and his persistent influence on my development as a researcher greatly influenced my decision to join the academy. Seymour Sarason then welcomed me to the Yale Psycho-educational Clinic, a priceless 8 years I will describe in more detail later. Subsequently, at the University of Maryland, Forrest Tyler, who also attended Swampscott and who Jim Kelly credits as author of the phrase “participant-conceptualizer“, taught me about the richness and complexities of promoting social justice through a deep and unswerving commitment to cultural diversity in graduate training.

I have subsequently been enriched enormously through my early collaborations with Rod Watts, whose social

conscience, commitment to the social and scientific value of population specific psychologies, and insistence on social justice has influence me more than he may know. And, of course, Dina Birman, whose ability to integrate feminist sensibilities, an insider appreciation of the struggles and courage of acculturating immigrant and refugee groups, and characterological commitment to collaboration as both a personal and research given, has inspired and enriched both my life and work.

One of the criteria for intellectual impact is the degree of relevance one's thinking has over time. Today I celebrate Seymour in this regard through one of his favorite aphorisms and two of my favorite papers that he authored. The aphorism is “plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose”—literally, “the more it changes, the more it's the same thing”, an 1849 epigram from Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr. If there was one recurrent phrase in Seymour's rich repertoire of memorable phrases, that was it! Such sayings, of course, while containing kernels of truth, sometime large kernels—may not be blueprints for prediction. After all, over time “absence makes the heart grow fonder” may change to “out of sight, out of mind”.

Still, its relevance to Seymour's world view got me to thinking “When is it more likely that—plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose—will occur”? Here are my thoughts. In 1955 George Kelly published his two volume rendition of Personal Construct Theory (Kelly 1955). Likening individuals to scientists, he posited that as we live our life we develop personal constructs that help us anticipate and predict our world. When our constructs successfully enable us to predict what should happen they are reinforced; when they are disconfirmed we have the opportunity to rethink and revise how we see the world. Kelly distinguished between core constructs and peripheral ones. Core constructs are comprehensive in their scope and are central to a person's identity while peripheral constructs are less important and more readily amenable to change.

In 1956, Thomas Kuhn failed to gain tenure at Harvard, went to the University of California, Berkeley, and wrote *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, published in 1962 (Kuhn 1962). Like George Kelly, Kuhn was interested in core constructs and underlying assumptions, this time about the practice of science. Kuhn located scientific developments in an historical context as a frame for understanding how science works, how it changes, what its assumptions are, and how, over time, its theories change. Here, the process centered on paradigms, or world views underling the practice of science, how they develop, are maintained, and change. Like Kelly, he described how when predictions fail, the more peripheral aspects—methods, measures, statistics, inadequacies of data gatherers, etc.—first take the blame. The paradigm, or set of core constructs that constitute a fundamental worldview, is the last to go. However, on

occasion it does go through the accumulation of scientific anomalies and the subsequent rise of a community of scientists first persuaded and later converted to a new set of assumptions, a new way of looking at the world. Which brings me back to Seymour and his aphorism.

Seymour invoked this aphorism to remind us that change efforts, particularly well-intentioned efforts, are often implicitly framed in ways that either do not address, disguise, or indeed prevent the kinds of change touted and indeed rhetorically advertised from occurring. So change strategies need to be carefully interrogated to understand not only their manifest intent, which is usually to do good, a lot of good, but also the assumptions underlying them, their deeper and often unarticulated social implications and consequences, and whose interests they serve.

One community intervention implication of this aphorism is that when systems decide that there is a need for change, those interventions that least disturb the system as a system will be most likely to be considered, and, if adopted, will themselves adapt to system demands over time. In so doing, they become “plus c'est la même chose”. The change rhetoric may be that of core constructs—an entirely new way of doing x, y, or z; a new paradigm, fundamentally different, etc.—but the effort will more likely be designed to maintain rather than challenge such fundamentals.

It was around the time of Kelly and Kuhn, almost 55 years ago, when Seymour himself had a paradigm shift from a quantitative empirical research program on the measurement and effects of test anxiety in elementary school children to a systems focus on schools as cultural institutions. In a 1960 book summarizing that research program (Sarason et al. 1960) he commented on how his long-standing involvement in schools led him to question his focus on individual test—takers and more on the nature of the school itself as an encompassing institution.

In 1961 he made plans to create a setting at Yale he called the Psycho-educational Clinic, where, over the next decade plus, Murray Levine, Ira Goldenberg, Dick Reppucci, and I, among others, including graduate students Rhona Weinstein, Cary Cherniss, and Pat O'Neill, had a chance to learn from one of Psychology's master teachers. As those of you who knew Seymour can attest, it was almost literally impossible to have a dull conversation with him, at least on his end. Every Friday we—students and faculty at the clinic—would meet for 3 h as a group led by Seymour to discuss our ongoing work in the schools and other social settings. Seymour's role was to remind us that we were only partially aware of the assumptions we were making about how schools or other social settings worked. In so doing, he created many “ah-ha” moments for us, though at the time they were more likely to be experienced as “why didn't I think of that?”

The first thing we learned from Seymour was that attempting to do good in the real world rests on and reflects

the life of the mind, the world view, which frames our goals and directs our behavior (“the road to hell is paved with good intentions” is perhaps a relevant additional aphorism here). The second was that, for Seymour, changing schools involves an ecological systems perspective that places the notion of institutional culture front and center as the focus of change; The problem of changing that culture, he repeatedly said, does not reside in the development and implementation of more and better technologies or programs; rather, it lies in an examination of the very assumptions we make about the change process itself and the degree to which this examination can liberate our thinking about alternative possibilities for the education of children and the social organization of schools (Sarason 1971). And third, Seymour stressed the importance of professional humility and of developing collaborative learning relationships between psychologists outside the institutional and historical cultures of schools and school insiders who walked the educational walk every day.

Seymour was an intellectual who took the responsibility of the academy very seriously. He understood the privilege and protection of tenure to think, to provoke, to argue, to educate, to learn, and, through writing, to put your ideas on display, a display that became fair game for subsequent debate and discussion in the profession and beyond. The academy was a place to for everyone, teachers and students, to learn. I remember seeking advice about what to do when yet another professional invitation to engage in a relatively irrelevant opportunity arose. Seymour responded without hesitation. “If you don’t think you’re going to learn something from doing it, don’t do it” he said. Further, his vision of the role of scholars in the university was not an aloof one but a thoroughly engaged effort to make a social difference through taking ideas and their behavioral implications seriously, implications whose implications, as he liked to say, were not always themselves obvious.

He was particularly interested in the notion of power as central to school reform, particularly how power is distributed among parents, teachers, students, and school administrative personnel. He suggested that there was an absolute unwillingness in school reform efforts to confront issues of power as manifested in the classroom, relations between teachers and principals, and between parents and school personnel. He more recently wrote about such top down efforts as No Child Left Behind that “What seems clear thus far, in the movement to impose national standardized testing and draconian measures of so-called ‘accountability’, is that power relationships are, if anything, more unbalanced and unequal than before.” (Sarason and Fried 2003, p. 118). “Plus c’est la même chose”?

With this aphorism as background, let me move to two of Seymour’s papers that reflected and heightened the

importance of paradigms and their underlying assumptions in how we understand and attempt to change the world. The first is “Psychology Misdirected”, the second “Community Psychology and the Anarchist Insight”. I select these to raise questions about “plus ça change” in the context of today, particularly the rise of evidence-based practice as a social as well as scientific movement.

Published in 1981, “Psychology Misdirected” was Seymour’s book length elaboration of his American Psychologist paper of the same year entitled “An asocial psychology and a misdirected clinical psychology” (Sarason 1981a, b). Initially delivered as his presidential address to Division 12, Clinical Psychology, and thus speaking directly to those with whom he quarreled, Seymour emphasized that not only individuals but fields of inquiry are shaped by larger social forces. He viewed the pervasive influence of the broader American culture on American Psychology in general and Clinical Psychology in particular as resulting in a Psychology of the individual that was fundamentally asocial, acultural, ahistorical, and, in the words of Ryan (1971), victim-blaming. He implored us to always add “in our culture” and “at this time and place” to any statement about human behavior. His bottom line: “A clinical psychology not rooted in a realistic social psychology—that is, a social psychology that sees itself as a cultural and social-historical product and agent—is a misdirected clinical psychology” (p.).

He described the creation of the field of clinical psychology after WW II not only as an understandable moral imperative to aid the plight of returning veterans but as an economic boon for medical schools in consolidating their influence over how mental health was defined and who got to provide it. It opened doors for mental health professionals to the heady world of policy and reinvigorated the mental health industry through creating in needs for new professionals. The NIMH budget increased. In Seymour’s words, “mental health professionals promised a lot, wanted a lot, and got a lot” (1981a, p. 830).

Seymour also emphasized that at this historical moment professional self-interest and public interest were merged and framed as identical (What’s good for General Motors—or mental health—is good for the country). However, he also understood that self-interest depends on where you are in the social order. Thus, we needed to interrogate medicine’s interest in mental health as an effort to maintain and increase legitimacy as well as further its economic interests. As he cautioned, “money as an incentive is almost always powerful and frequently and unwittingly corrupting” (1981a, p. 834).

“Community Psychology and the Anarchist Insight” (Sarason 1976) was also delivered on a special occasion: Seymour’s 1975 Division 27 award for what was then called “Distinguished Contributions to Community

Psychology and Community Mental Health”. Introduced by Emory Cowen, Seymour used the opportunity to provide a cautionary tale to community psychology colleagues about the relationship between science and the state. Characteristically, he began historically, describing the Great Depression as a time that changed the relationship of the individual to the state. The idea that government had a responsibility for those unable to take care of themselves was then new. Indeed, it was then shameful to request federal assistance. (I grew up with a grandfather who worked as a coal miner and labor organizer, and in my childhood, the phrase “I’m from the government and I want to help you” was often invoked as a reminder to watch out for governmental actions, particularly when couched in the rhetoric of helpfulness.) The issue was not whether or not such problems as poverty or social injustice exist; the issue was who was responsible for doing something about them. Was it the individual or the state?

Seymour said that, in general, during the Great Depression citizens wanted the kind of increased government responsibility that Roosevelt’s New Deal delivered. There were dissidents, however, on either political side. In 1932, Norman Thomas, the Socialist Candidate, received several million votes. (Am I giving away all of the “plus c’est la même chose” punch lines, Bernie Sanders?) The conservatives resisted, though they reluctantly saw the state as necessary. The anarchists were the exception. They viewed the state as an “inherently evil force” (p. 250).

Seymour cited two aspects of the anarchist insight:

1. “The central state (and its governmental apparatus), by its very nature and dynamics, inevitably becomes a force alien to the interests of its people, and the stronger the state becomes, the more it enslaves people in the sense that they are required, they are forced, to do things they do not want to do; i.e. there is a dilution in personal autonomy. The rhetoric of the state is one thing; Its actual operations are something else again.
2. The more powerful the state becomes the more people look at it as the fount of initiative and succor, the more is the psychological sense of community diluted. That is to say, the more the lives of people are a consequence of decisions made by Kafkaesque officialdom, the more they are robbed of those communal bonds and responsibility upon which the sense of rootedness is built” (p. 251)

Seymour used the university as an example of the heuristic value of the anarchist insight, an institution with which many of us are quite familiar (At age 4 or 5, son Alec was sitting in the back seat of our car with a friend and we drove by the university where Dina and I were working. What’s that, asked his friend. That’s the university. What’s a university. Replied Alec: “It’s a place you

go after high school and you just stay there”). Seymour asserted that the university—remember this is 1975—is no longer autonomous, stating that “It is not fortuitous that the entire process of securing governmental grants has hardly been studied” (p. 252) and asserting that the process of doing this is inherently corrupting to the university and the autonomy of its faculty.

Just as he reflected on how history, context, and economics shaped clinical psychology at the Boulder Conference, he suggested that community psychology was in like manner trapped in a history and culture that makes it difficult to consider alternatives to the current—1975—individual-state relationship. To quote: “There is no better instance of this than the unreflective way community psychology participated in governmental programs, confusing as it did government-provided and defined ‘opportunities’ with the needs of communities and their peoples to begin to learn for themselves the opportunities and dilemmas of responsive and responsible community living” (p. 257).

Seymour, “Plus ça change”, and Evidence-Based Practice

Thirty five to forty years have elapsed since Seymour made those comments, and much has changed in social science since then. Multiple philosophies of science emerged in the 1980 to enrich, modify, counteract, or oppose positivistic perspectives on research. My colleague of the last 15 years Stephanie Riger has done a lot of heavy lifting here with respect to feminist inquiry (Riger 1992, 2016). Jack Tebes has done a lovely job providing a modified contextualist perspective for the field (Tebes 2005, 2016). It is gratifying to see him honored today for his body of work. Community based perspectives are slowly encroaching on community-placed efforts in community intervention. CBPR has sharpened issues of power relationships in community work (Minkler and Wallerstein 2008). And both federal and philanthropic organizations are confronting the possibility of multilevel interventions (Trickett and Beehler 2013). But in some important ways, it is useful to reflect on the possibility that “plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose”.

In the past few years I have taken a deep interest in the emergence of evidence-based practice as a scientific and social movement. Here I do not want to dwell on this movement in terms of its contested scientific merit but in the context of Seymour’s two notions of “Psychology Misdirected” and the “Anarchist Insight”. From this perspective, this movement, as applied to the school and community settings of relevance to community psychology, may be seen as the “perfect storm” for reflecting on the core concepts of both those papers.

In pursuing an avowedly cautionary tone about the social/political effects of this movement, I am not out to dismiss or diminish the contributions this movement has had in terms of sharpening our scrutiny of the community research process, reinvigorating the interest in schools as a setting for social as well as intellectual development, and creating a new awareness of the potential relationship of science and policy. However, this literature also includes a large and persuasive body of peer-reviewed papers on the politics and social implications of the movement that represent a counter-narrative of caution about the dominant enthusiasm and support for evidence-based practice in school and community settings. In this context, and in tribute to Seymour, Sarah Beehler and I have entitled our chapter in the upcoming Handbook of Community Psychology “Community Psychology Misdirected? The case of evidence-based practice” (Beehler and Trickett in press). Here is some of that narrative.

First, as a social movement, we see in the evidence-based practice movement another instance where professional self-interest coincides with the perception of public good. (“What’s good for evidence-based practice is good for the country”) We see that enormous amounts of money are being spent to develop and disseminate programs rated on hierarchies of evidence that privilege a particular understanding of what good science is and what it is not. We see the further intertwining of economics and science in the very language of our community interventions, beginning with the idea of a “gold standard” for research and punctuated by such phrases as “community buy-in” to whatever we are selling. As a quite relevant aside, according to Wikipedia, most countries abandoned the gold standard in the twentieth century. We see the increased interdependence between universities and funding organizations, the role of grant support in academic survival, and the role of accounting schemes such as the H factor to measure and evaluate individual productivity. If Seymour thought the university was dependent on the government in 1975, one can only imagine what he might think today. If he thought that professional autonomy was of concern then, what might he think now? Threats to the very core of autonomy, the tenure system, are found in the increasing number of adjunct faculty hired and discussion at some universities of doing away with the very idea of tenure. I need not belabor the obvious relevance of the anarchist insight to those of you in university settings.

Misdirection?

Is this movement misdirected in the sense that Seymour meant? Does it perpetuate an ahistorical, acultural, asocial, victim-blaming view of individuals? We do indeed find the

overwhelming preponderance of practices geared toward individual change and the extensive use of individual level theories as conceptual justification. Within this movement, human misery is still more likely to be defined as a personal problem resolvable through individual level interventions rather than a “public issue open to contestation from different social groups about its nature, causation and solution” (Pilgrim 2011, p. 130).

To push the envelope as Seymour did, even within individual level change efforts, we see the value placed on promoting good behavior over social consciousness and critical inquiry. From across the pond, Biesta (2009) describes the aims of the Scottish national “Curriculum for Excellence” as facilitating the development of four capacities (successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor), “a trend which verges on turning education into a form of therapy that is more concerned with the emotional well-being of pupils and students than with their emancipation” (2009, p. 39). Similar observations may be made about school-based Social and Emotional Learning programs, whose proximal goals include “self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making” (Durlak et al. 2011, p. 406).

We can further infer misdirection in the difficulty of the evidence-based practice movement finding a welcoming home among culturally diverse communities and groups. This tension flows at least in part from the often implicit assumption that research conducted in some cultural contexts reflects processes basic enough that they can and should be adapted in other cultural contexts. Here, culture is viewed as an add-on rather than as a fundamental and pervasive world view. There are reasons for these emphases in the evidence-based practice movement, both conceptual and pragmatic, but the core individualistic premise and its implications (which are not always themselves obvious) are clearly evident. As Kuhn, suggested, the paradigm is the last to go. While I have a position on this issue, scholars clearly differ, and my purpose here is suggest that we consider how directed or misdirected, how much ‘plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose’ remains useful to mull over in this movement. There is much in the current literature to stimulate such a discussion.

Let me turn to the alternative sociopolitical narrative found in this literature and again reflect on Seymour’s emphasis on power and money as formative influences on the direction and nature of science. Here, the question of whether the claims of “science” are masking political and economic agendas is prominent. Within this literature, the notion of a hierarchy of evidence placing randomized controlled trials on top is viewed as an exercise in political power to define, shape, and limit the very definition of science. Goldenberg (2006) asserts that this RCT process

operates “through the positivistic elimination of culture, contexts, and the subjects of knowledge production from consideration, a move that permits the use of evidence as a political instrument where power interests can be obscured by seemingly neutral technical resolve” (p. 2622).

The most prominent theoretician invoked by those looking at the movement from a sociopolitical stance is Michel Foucault (1994), whose concept of “governmentality” has been used to frame the processes through which EBP has become institutionalized as an exercise in political power. “Foucault (1994) uses ‘governmentality’ to describe the regulation of individuals’ lives, which includes procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics that allow for the exercise of power through the governing of others.” (Piggin et al. 2009, pp. 88–89).

A particularly intriguing aspect of Foucault’s analysis is the assertion that existing forms of power are not so much a matter of ‘imposing’ constraints or limitations upon citizens but more a matter of “‘making-up’ citizens capable of bearing ‘a kind of regulated freedom’ (Naughton 2005, p. 48). To achieve this power, government must “obtain the free will of the population to make the changes that they see fit...through the construction of discourse—a body of knowledge that builds and builds until the case for the proposed reforms carries with it such a momentum that it is not only accepted by a reluctant population, it is demanded by the population as the resolution to the problem as defined and understood. This is where ‘evidence’ comes in. The selective definition and management of evidence...is a vital component in the manufacture of legitimate authority to implement desired ideological reform agendas” (pp. 49–50). Within this frame, “‘evidence-based-policy’ is presented as a quality control mechanism, which purports to ensure that government follows democratic principles and precisely does not impose its will upon a dominated population of subjects.” (p. 50).

Critical Theory and EBP

A second perspectival force is critical theory. Hjørland (2011) suggests a critical theory perspective asks how the unfolding of EBP serves primarily industry rather than client interests and suggests two plausible realms. “First, the fact that most interventions compare their effectiveness not to other comparable interventions but to placebo groups or ‘treatment as usual’ means that patients (or society) are paying for the development of new products that do not represent improvements but serve the industry’s need for new patents” (p. 1305).

A second realm revolves around the independence of the norms governing scientific evidence from market forces. Here discourse interrogates conflict of interest. Conflict of

interest is a “set of conditions in which professional judgment concerning a primary interest, such as the validity of research, might be influenced by a secondary interest, such as financial gain...A conflict exists *not only* when judgment has been clearly influenced. It also exists when judgment might or might be *perceived* to be influenced.” (Tobin 2003, p. 1161).

The close relationship of science and state evident in the EBP movement has resulted in numerous efforts to elucidate the potential conflicts of interest involved in both producing science and benefitting economically from findings showing that a program “works”. Perhaps the most publicized issues here involve drug production, where the consistent finding is that “there exists a systematic bias in the reporting of study outcomes favoring the products of those companies sponsoring the research”. (Gorman and Conde 2007, p. 423). In addition, “full service” contract research organizations (CRO) for drug companies have evolved, whose services include hiring authors to write up trial results and offer the nearly finished manuscript as a publication to established academics in the field. Here, scientific publications themselves have become a marketing tool.

However, conflict of interest issues have also arisen with respect to school and community programs. One involves the lack of separation of the program developer/program evaluator role. Gorman and Conde (2007) argue that “the culture and norms of the program developer and those of the program evaluator are fundamentally distinct and that the interest in the success of the product “is fundamentally at odds with the disinterested orientation that is so basic to the norms of the practice of science” (p. 423). As Weiss et al. (2008) conclude, “the developer is likely to give the program the benefit of the doubt in reporting, expatiating on the good news and underplaying less favorable results. Inevitably, there is the possibility of conflict of interest and bias in reporting” (p. 39). (see also Petrosino 2003). Drawing on limitations of evidence-base practices in the drug and violence prevention literature, Gorman (2005) suggests that “the problem with setting out to verify a hypothesis is that one can usually come up with confirmations and supportive observations if these are what one is looking for, while at the same time coming up with ad hoc accounts to explain away discordant observations” (p. 42). Once again, scholars differ on many of these issues, and the question is how much they bear reconsidering in the light of Seymour’s work.

Conclusion

To conclude, the story of political and economic influences in creating, shaping, and sustaining the form the evidence-based practice movement has taken is both considerable

and relatively untold. It constitutes a narrative that has not been adequately discussed in community psychology and one that led me back to a reconsideration of Seymour's two papers central to this talk.

Clearly the anarchist insight is an impractical one, and might raise the question, well, what do we do instead of business as usual. What's the alternative? Seymour anticipated and answered that question in his paper thusly. "If I try to answer the question what to do, I am substituting 'my thinking for your imagination and analysis'. The question is yours to answer: How are my actions consistent/inconsistent with the anarchist insight?" (p. 257). Thus, to respond to the question "if you don't like what we are doing, what is your alternative?" is a plea to replace one orthodoxy with another—a plea that Seymour would predict leads to "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose".

Over 40 years ago, Chris Argyris (1970), in his book "Intervention theory and method", suggested that the goal of intervention was to increase choice, not invoke pre-specified change or solution to a problem or issue. In this same spirit, Seymour unashamedly professed no specific solutions for the educational ills facing our country and its schools. His was not a concern about, nor indeed a belief in, specifying of end-points or "solving" wicked social problems.

In revisiting Seymour's aphorism and two papers, I was reminded of an old story from the Unitarian tradition, a tradition high on discourse about important topics. In it, a Unitarian comes to a fork in the road and looks up at the road signs. One sign says "this way to heaven"; the other, "this way to discussions about heaven". For Seymour, that decision was a no-brainer, we are all the richer for his choice. "Plus ça change... plus c'est la même chose"...Psychology Misdirected and Community Psychology and the Anarchist Insight. To what degree do these core ideas help us understand our world today? And how does this understanding affect how we behave? I urge us all to reflect. Seymour would smile at that. Thank you.

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