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## "Suicide As a Way of Life"

John Kerr

Hugo Maynard

Ronald Snodgrass

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John Kerr, Hugo Maynard, Ronald Snodgrass  
"Suicide as a Way of Life"  
July 7, 1969  
Portland State University

PSU Library Special Collections and University Archives  
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Transcribed by Carlos Julian Santizo Salazar, April 15, 2021

Audited by Carolee Harrison, May 2021

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is this on, can you hear it now? Oh, I gotta swallow it. Is this... is A/V recording this? They were supposed to. The speakers are throughout the audience: John Kerr is over there, just stand up please. He's the Director of the Willamette Learning Center...

[audience responds]

Oh, excuse me... oh yes, he's the Director of School House, which is an institution of learning and also a house, hence the name; and Ronald Snodgrass is... where is Ronald Snodgrass? There he is, over in the white shirt, who is the Director of the Willamette Learning Center.

[pause]

OK. Dr. Maynard... [laughing] I'll bow out. Would you like to start?

HUGO MAYNARD: I'm actually Andy Warhol.

In one of Charlie Chaplin's later films, *Modern Times*, there's a scene where one of the characters in the film is standing before this enormous machine; it's covered with cogs and levers and wheels and things like that, and he works for that machine. The machine spits out these funny things and he has to tighten bolts on them, and so the machine determines his

work, speed, and what he does and so on. So he approaches this machine, which is his employer in a sense, and he is going to feed it: he's got an oil can in his hand, so his intentions are honorable, and the machine eats him. It sucks him in and there he is, lying among all these cogs. He can't get out, he's on his back, he's helpless, and it begins to look as if he's going to have to spend all his life inside of that machine. In a sense, he's been sacrificed to the machine. Chaplin walks up and begins to feed him while he's lying in there.

This is kind of an illustration of the topic that we wanted to discuss today; I say *discuss* because I don't have any prescription to give people about what to do about this. I do have a few points to make, and after that... is this thing still working? ...and after that, I would as soon it became a discussion, so that we could deal with some of the problems that have to do with work and life, and the way these things are defined for us. In a sense, the character in the Chaplin film has decided to sacrifice himself to the machine. He's adopted this, in a way, *suicide*, in the service of production, which the machine personifies. What I want to say today has to do with that particular problem: with the ways in which we have become accustomed to sacrifice our lives, in many cases, to the terms of production, and what we can do about this. I'd like to start out talking about it by raising a couple of crises in human life, a couple of special kinds of crises which have to do with the way we think about our work and our lives.

The first kind of crisis has its origin in what a lot of people call the Protestant work ethic. Now, some people like Max Weber and [Tony], an English sociologist, have had a lot to say about the Protestant work ethic. The essential point is that the basic supposition, or premise, in the Protestant work ethic is that "My work is my life; what I do, what I accomplish, what I produce, is the essence of what I am. It's the essence of my worth." Now Layne Barton, who is the originator of this series of talks this summer, had what seems to me a very brilliant kind of idea. He decided to invert that statement. He decided to say that the statement "My work is my life" is nonsense, and that what we ought to say is that "My *life* is my work." Meaning that it is my life which is the first priority, and it is that to which I should give the usual kinds of value that ordinarily we give to our work. The sense of that, to me, is that we cannot think of having a satisfactory life because we are productive or work in the usual sense, if, in the process of doing that we destroy any prospect of satisfaction in our lives.

Now, the kind of psychological effect that something like the Protestant work ethic has on people influences very much the kinds of possibilities which they see open to them in living their lives. For instance, if it is true that what a man does, what he produces personally—and please distinguish personal production from the production of the social system, because I think there is an important difference there; it's possible to have a social system that has a very high ability to produce goods in the usual sense, material goods, without having very high

personal productivity in that same sense. In fact, this is the general trend which is a result of the cybernetic revolution. It's true more and more that machines have the ability to produce material goods with very high efficiency in very great quantity, and we are faced with the prospect of having people becoming more or less obsolete as producers of material goods. We're faced with the prospect of machines being better at that than we are. As one example, a recent conversion of a plant in England which produced machinery to an automated kind of scheme, reduced the number of people necessary to run that plant from 48 men to 5 men. In the same operation, they increased production by over two times. So, we have to contend with the fact that if we are going to base our notions on self-worth, if we are going to base our psychological feelings of self-worth and the way in which we define ourselves on our ability to produce, that we simply can't compete with machines.

Now, even though this is true, we still have to contend with attitudes that have been built over a period of time and which are still a part of our personal training, still a part of the childrearing practices that we have, and still a part of the psychological equipment of a lot of people. And it seems pretty clear that the human race is going to have to deal with that more and more as time goes on.

In principle, in principle, human work is probably obsolete. It's probably a matter of time; I'm talking of course in terms of producing material goods, not in producing ideas, and it's probably a matter of time before that becomes more and more apparent. But as some even fairly conservative people have noticed in past years, like John Kenneth Galbraith for instance, we remain saddled with psychological attitudes and orientations to the arrangements of our economic lives which are really pretty much out of date. So that even in places like the United States, some parts of Western Europe, which have become, through various practices that probably we can't look very closely into for the sake of our own self-comfort, but by the use of these practices have become very efficient economies and have the ability to produce very large amounts of goods in the usual sense. Because of this process, the condition of scarcity, the scarcity of resources which used to be the basic rule creating the economic system is no longer the case... I'm blocking a word I need, what is it... is no longer *necessarily* the case in creating economic systems. We have to deal with our ability to produce affluence, to produce a huge surplus of goods, and we have to deal with what we'd do about that ability.

Now the rub, of course, is that we continue to maintain old kinds of forms, old kinds of thinking, in dealing with these new kinds of problems. Well, what does it mean if people continue to feel that the basis of their self-worth is their personal productivity? What happens if that continues to be the feeling people have, in spite of the fact that we're involving a technology that makes individual productivity irrelevant? Well, what happens, I think, can be seen in some very

concrete examples of what is going on now. People become very protective of their right to work. They become very protective of their opportunity to work, and they are quite willing to deny it to other people if it will affect their own ability to carry out these kinds of activities. So that at present, for instance, in the case of the building trades—the building trades unions—many of those unions are actively resisting the advance of technology which would allow them to do the same kind of work in less time and more efficiently, because the social conditions on which they live, as union members, ties their income, their self-concept, their ability to enjoy the affluent life they've become accustomed to, directly to their job. Their job in terms of standard 8-hour days, 40-hour weeks and so on. In cases where there have been attempts to try to get people to reduce the number of hours they work, to make room for other people to enter the union, to have the opportunity to work, there have been various kinds of difficulties. Well, I'll talk a little bit about that when I get to the third part of what I want to say.

If people are defensive about their ability to work because it has an important psychological meaning to them, and at the same time they are confronted by the increasing ability of machines to be more productive than they and to eliminate the need for their labor, then we have what one might call the crisis of self-worth or self-image. The idea that we are no longer, as human beings, of any value, because we are no longer producers of goods in terms of our individual productivity. That's the first kind of crisis that I want to mention. The second kind of crisis is a little different. It has to do with the crisis of having an unsatisfactory life: of being unhappy or dissatisfied with the way one's life is going. This is a much vaguer type of concept to get a hold of. It's a much more subtle kind of thing, and it has to do in many cases with retrospect, with looking back on what you have already accomplished. What seems very plain is that if you do ask people who are at the end of their productive lives to look back on what they have done, that one gets a fairly high proportion of people who are dissatisfied with the way in which things have turned out. For instance, a recent study about two years ago asked a group of people, of about 650 people, who had an average age of about 52 years—so most of these people were close to retirement, some of them were already retired—asked them if they had been satisfied in the jobs that they have held, in the employment that they had held during their productive lives. Now this was a sample of people which, if anything, was biased in favor of positive responses. For example, about 38% of the sample had gone to college. That's *not* the rate in the population at large, which is about 8%. Also, people who have higher educations and typically have a bit more to say about the eventual job that they do, tend to have higher ratings in satisfaction at their jobs. This is mainly because of their flexibility in pursuing interests and not particularly... is not particularly related to the kinds of tasks that they do.

Well, what kind of response did they get from that 650 people? Well, 40% of the people answering that question there, said that they had ended up in their jobs because of

circumstances more or less beyond their control, but they had learned to be satisfied with it. 40%, that's the largest single category. About 18% of the people said that they had done exactly what they wanted to do, 18%. Another 23%, or 26%, said that it was more or less what they wanted to do. The remainder of the people acknowledged that their work tasks had been more or less unpleasant for them and unsatisfactory.

Now, what kinds of situations do we have that get people in such large proportions into spending a great deal of their lives doing what they perceive as unpleasant kinds of tasks? Well, one can think of several. I don't know if this is an exhaustive list, and some of them are speculative, but I'll throw out the speculation in hopes of stimulating some kind of thinking and discussion about this. One is that we have a fairly restricted definition of productivity in the work sense. We tend to link it, particularly, with the production of material goods, and we tend to hold people's jobs in terms of being a respectable job in association with that kind of idea. Another thing which affects this kind of lifestyle probably has to do with the various kinds of arrangements we have, which capture people in jobs in which they are unsatisfied. For instance, there's a fairly severe financial penalty that any person would have to pay if, at the age of 35 or 40, they decided to explore another kind of profession or another kind of employment. Usually, this means starting over, it means a loss of income which is very valuable to most people, and since the kinds of arrangements we have for providing people with income are closely related to the things they do and the social definition of their job, this tends to trap them and restrict their movement into other kinds of exploratory modes.

Now, these kinds of things I think are especially important in the lives of women. For instance, women, generally speaking, have a much lower rate of satisfaction with their life's work than men. Very often, women have to completely abandon aspirations that they have. Especially aspirations that they have at the close of their schooling. In one study of a group of people in Iowa, the overwhelming factor which determined whether or not a person had achieved their aspirations in work was sex. About two-thirds of the women who were asked eight years later whether they had achieved their aspirations, had not achieved them mainly because they were unemployed; they had never had an opportunity to achieve them. And the sex factor was the most significant one in dealing with a variable like job satisfaction. We generally don't have the social awareness of the position of women as holding a job. The position of housewife *is* a job. It has that kind of status and it holds people in it in just as restrictive a way as many other kinds of employment that we have, which are, of course, employment for remuneration of one kind or another.

For many people, a hobby is about as close as they get to a kind of productive work which is also satisfying. But the way in which we think about hobbies, I think, is very revealing; we tend

to think of hobbies as not being legitimate productivity. It's in no way the equivalent of work, it's not serious, no one takes it seriously as an accomplishment. It's something we do on the side, as an extra. And yet, it is to that kind of activity that many people go to find some kind of satisfaction together with productivity. Also, vacations, under this kind of system, become an escape from work. An abandonment of the kind of life one has to lead to make a living, temporarily, with the knowledge that one must go back to that kind of a life sooner or later.

Well, what are some other kinds of possibilities? Are there any other kinds of possibilities that people can... along which people can arrange their lives? I think there are, and I think that there are some examples of other kinds of social arrangements available to us right now that illustrate the different kinds of arrangements that people can make. For instance, take the case of academics, people who work in a university. They have, generally speaking, greater ability to shift their interest and their work than many other people who are tied to a particular material means of production. And very often, academics are perfectly willing to give up advantages in salary and other kinds of benefits in order to lead that kind of life. This seems, anyway, to be the sense of a study done last year—I'm sorry, *two* years ago—which seem to show this kind of effect in academics. Also, academic groups have something which they have been keeping as sort of a secret from everybody else for a long time. Academic groups have the sabbatical, the "time out" period. Every seven years you get to go and do something else if you choose, although even there, there is a penalty; you get half pay, usually. But you get to do something else; you get to explore another interest if you're inclined, you get to travel, you get to take time out.

Well, how can we apply those kinds of lessons, which we know exist under some social conditions, to the work situation of other people? Why doesn't *everybody* deserve a sabbatical? Why shouldn't everybody have the chance to occasionally shoot the moon with security? To take some kind of exploratory risk without running the kind of financial risk which might put himself, herself, or their families in some kind of jeopardy? Is it a question of us not being able to afford it, in the economic sense? Well, probably not, not with the amount of wealth that a society like this has, and so that couldn't be the block to it. Obviously, it lies in other kinds of social variables. Some of them are leftover institutions from the past. Some of them present institutions which are serving some other kinds of purpose but which have that side effect.

Of course, there's also the matter of not only changing the social arrangements under which people work to give them more liberty, to explore different lifestyles, all the... during their entire life, with more flexibility than they have now. But obviously it's also a case of the psychological attitudes that people have, whether or not they can accept this kind of changed

role. That obviously is a problem. There are indications that people can do this, although the indications are by no means unambiguous.

One particular example was something carried out by Kaiser Steel, in which they have a program which gives senior members of their program an extended vacation. Thirteen weeks is what the vacation is, and that vacation only occurs every five years, so it's a very restricted kind of extended vacation. Nonetheless, the people who took these kinds of extended vacations didn't show many of the attitudes that some people expected them to have in terms of the loss of their self-image as workers and so on. I don't want to put too much emphasis on that study and I don't want to be too sanguine about the problem, because obviously that is a very restricted kind of increased freedom. Thirteen weeks every five years, with the certain knowledge that at the end of that time you go back to the same job, obviously isn't the same kind of thing that I've been talking about, but there is at least the possibility that people could change in their attitudes along these lines. I want to stop talking now, and offer the microphone to anybody else who would like to say something about these issues. Obviously I don't have any answers or any systematic kind of analysis, in depth, of this kind of issue, but I would like to open up these kinds of points for a discussion. What do you think about these kinds of problems? There's another microphone over there, about where Layne is.

[tapping on mic; talking in the background]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is this one hot?

MAYNARD: No. [blowing and tapping on the mic]

JOHN KERR: Yeah, that's good.

SNODGRASS: This one is now hot? Except it doesn't seem to be doing much.

KERR: Does that one work?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's very difficult to converse with the speaker... [indistinct]

MAYNARD: Incidentally, you don't have to ask questions of us, necessarily. You can simply make a comment if that's... that's what you want to do.

DAVID: [off mic] Well, suppose somebody said that, "Look, most people would rather be relatively secure, fairly stupid, rather than drum up the courage to run the risks that are

involved in the kind of change [louder, getting on-mic] and breaking free you're talking about." Where do you go from there?

MAYNARD: Well, that may be true... wow, this one's really loud. That may be true from this standpoint: that people have difficulty in breaking their set or changing their attitudes. But even if that is the present condition, we have to consider that kind of factor in combination with something else, and that is the rate of dissatisfaction. Now, for instance, the study I mentioned shows really an amazing number of people... it may not be a proportion that's unexpected, but an amazing number of people who are dissatisfied with the way in which their lives have progressed, and they were dissatisfied with what they ended up doing as a job. They would have been interested in more opportunities. We have to balance any kind of psychological affair of changing one's habits against that overall effect. It's no small psychological problem for a person to reach the end of his life, either death or retirement—and some people consider retirement the end of their life—with that feeling of failure. That feeling of having wasted a life. That's a very strong psychological problem, and it has to do mainly with an area in which we are very incompetent. That is, dealing with people of advanced age. What do we all do when we get old? Superimposed on the general problem of "What do we do with ourselves?" and "Are we worth anything anymore?" is the regret of looking back on a disappointing or a wasted life. I think that's an important point to any psychologist, and probably to most people. I think it should be dealt with. Does that get at the question you asked?

DAVID: Yeah, yeah, see, I was... [indistinct response]

KERR: .. Why shouldn't... *Why*, why why... Why should I pay the price? Why shouldn't it be some, you know if... if Cali... oh, okay, the whole thing. [chuckles] If California can provide, you know, free junior colleges, why can't Oregon provide places where I can piddle around with different kinds of things that I want to do with my life besides going to college? That's what I mean by "Why should I pay..." Why shouldn't the... you know, why shouldn't the social order, as it were... provide us... this as an option or as a possibility?

[DAVID replies in background]

KERR: Oh, I think we do David, deep down inside. [laughter] One of the reasons I'm not at Portland State has to do with, you know, what's... what's going on up here, and I took you for a professor once, so... [chuckling]

DAVID: Well, I tried to at least make... [unintelligible]

KERR: He just quit. I quit, David, I quit. No, you're not listening, David, you're not listening, man. You're not listening to what I'm saying, man. [laughing]

[DAVID continues in background]

KERR: No.

[Another audience member begins to comment in background]

KERR: Get that mic. Get that mic, they made me get one, and you've got to stand up, too.

AUDIENCE 2: All right. Well the point is, I've been fascinated by this "Change your lifestyle" for something like six years and I've run the risks; I've dropped out of school twice. And every time the system cracked down on me, I took a sort of a stupid job and got financially back on my feet, and I always end up back in school because... [laughter in background]

KERR: Because *why*? Because why?

AUDIENCE 2: The system is effectively slapping my hand, and believe me it's getting very effective. But I've come to the point where I'm almost ready to decide to either leave the whole system behind or something, but it's really getting to be a desperate feeling. I'm skipping two classes right now. [laughter in background; AUDIENCE 2 laughs] And the reason I'm doing it is because...

KERR: Do you feel guilty?

AUDIENCE 2: ...I'm falling into my typical pattern of behavior, which is that school seems to be less suicidal than "out there," but this, also, you know, follows the same pattern. I'm being programmed to produce rather than find any kind of self-awareness, and every once in a while I will rebel and I will... you know, I'll sit here. Two days ago the same thing happened in a literature class; I was given a plot quiz on Joseph Conrad and my whole literary instinct rebelled. I knew I was going to have the quiz, you know, I could have argued about it last week, but I thought "What's the use?" You know, I do this in every class I go into, and no one seems to really pay much attention and I really get tired of yelling, and so... well, I could have faked my way through the quiz, but I wrote a little note on the quiz that said, you know, "I do not have any intention of fooling you, I haven't read all of the material."

KERR: You wrote a letter to the editor, huh?

AUDIENCE 2: Yeah. I hadn't read all of the material, but I still could have passed it... He handed it back without any comment and I... you know I walked out this morning thinking "Well, the game goes on"; they keep score, whether it's in here or out there. You can take these sort of risks, do it for your reason, you know, but the point is the system will come down on you. In this instance it's only a plot quiz, but every time I quit a job because of this reason, it means I can... I move. I move because I can't pay the rent. I usually move into a worse situation because I can't pay the rent, or I can't pay my dues and there *are* dues. You know? I'm beginning to think that we should be given some sort of outlet to explore our own creativity. I don't think we're all that mechanistic. Yet. And I think it's high time someone considered the society, you know, giving us the option rather than us weaseling around it. Now that I've made my harangues... [laughing]

[response from audience in background]

AUDIENCE 3: How are you gonna pay your rent if you're gonna spend more time doing outside things that are more creative and less productive?

KERR: [off mic] Why should you have to pay your rent? Yeah, that's the point. Why do you think society owes you a living, darling?

[laughter in background]

AUDIENCE 4: That's not the point, it's not the point. The point is... [indistinct]

AUDIENCE 3: The one thing brought up here...

SNODGRASS: On the, on the... ok... we'll do it.

AUDIENCE 4: ... Well maybe they should, but you have to convince them that they do.

KERR: Why should I have to convince them... Why should I have to convince them that they do owe me a living if I decide to take his... to answer the question: Yes, that they do owe me a living. Why should I have to, you know... It's that kind of thing that... you know, what I'm doing is running a school right now, but I have to convince certain people in the city that what I'm doing is the right thing and that I'm willing to bend myself into a pretzel-like position for a long enough time that they really believe I'm sincere. And as a result of having been in a pretzel

position for a year and a half, kowtowing to different authorities who have different control over different aspects of what has traditionally been defined as school, *then* they'll let me do it. But I've got to stay in this pretzel position and I'm... you know, why should I have to stay in that pretzel position? It's assumed... [laughter in background] It's assumed that... [laughter]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Therapy, right?

KERR: Therapy.

[laughter]

KERR: Thank you, doctor... It's assumed that we have to go through a certain period of *paying dues*, or you know, going to school, or some sort of... you know, it all seems hooked up to the Protestant work ethic kind of thing, where we've gotta go through this period before we can do what we want to do, and that we don't know how or what we want to do without having gone through this period, which I think is bullshit.

[audience member responds in background]

Fine, fine. So we've got... so essentially what we're doing as a result of the socialization process is that we're all learning to goose-step together.

DAVID: [off mic] ...then you have to change the social order... [indistinct]

KERR: Let me say something about that whole notion of risk... the way it was, they've set it up and in some sense the way it was responded to, was that the risks that you run are going to destroy you. And make your life, like, really miserable but the... it seems to me that the strongest point of say the New Left movement... is this thing working at all? That the strongest point of the New Left movement and any resistance kind of movement to the system is that people discover that in the midst of the risk, that into the midst of the struggle, they find themselves for the first time. So that the risks that you are running are the risks of losing alienation, the risk of not having the money to purchase a lot of worthless bullshit you don't need anyway, the risk that you may have to confront some other people in terms of some kind of collective enterprise in which you're all intimately involved and committed to. I mean, those are the kinds of risks you run. Now, if those are the risks, it seems to me that the risks of staying in the present system... of running the risks that involves.. Running the risks of suicide as a way of life area lot worse.

And I might add one other thing: I disagree with some of... I think, I'm not sure, with some word Hugo said in terms of theoretical structure that he was pinning it to. It seems to me he stressed the psychological aspects much too much, in the sense that there's some kind of atavistic attachment to the work ethos when it's no longer necessary. Well, the point is that you have to look at... you *can* look at those kinds of cultural values in terms of their social control function. That is, the work ethos is a beautiful kind of social control mechanism and social mobilization mechanism in a period of industrialization. Now, after the period of industrialization is over, it may have some kinds of dysfunctions to it, but unless the system can come up with another way of assuring that the people in the system aren't going to revolt, keeping them attached to jobs will do it so that... you know, the system is faced with a fundamental contradiction, and that's the contradiction that's coming out at the elite kind of schools. On the one hand, it has to ensure the commitment and loyalty of the people there. On the other hand, because they're at elite schools and because the jobs they're going to run when they get out are jobs that have a lot of freedom, their education has to have a lot of freedom in it. And you give them too much freedom in their education, and they suddenly realize that there's no reason for them having loyalty to the system, and they revolt.

Now, the problem with a social change system is that there are strong structural constraints and strong structural reasons for maintaining the job, because at present that's the only way we have of controlling people. And the only other way of... if we could take people out of jobs and take the position I was, is that society owes me a living, I think that kind of arrogance is necessary to fight the system, is to demand. Somebody says: "So you think that society owes you a living?" say, "Yeah, why not? It owes you one, too." The only way that that can work is if the system is willing to give everybody the money for a decent income, and it can't do that without challenging the profit structure. So you see, the problem is not one that we have, historical, now anachronistic psychological attachments although that's part of the problem, the problem is that those psychological attachments are all functional to maintaining the power structure in this society. So that the struggle becomes more than one of just liberating your head, but of liberating yourself from those social institutions.

AUDIENCE 5: May I speak?

KERR: Yeah...

AUDIENCE 5: Is anything coming out?

KERR: Quietly. Speak... you have to speak right at...

AUDIENCE 5: Right into the top? There are two or three things that I'd like to ask about. One is it seems to me you are talking on three sort of levels; you're talking about the psychological effects on human beings, you're talking about an inadequate... what shall I say, of an economic system which is beginning to deprive them of work. That... where the machine is taking over. And there are two different things here; one is the economic situation, and how you're going to create wealth if everybody thinks that the system owes them a living, and the other problem is the problem of the gratification of the human being who wants to feel worthwhile. And it's interesting to me that never, in all the discussion about the people feeling worthwhile, did you talk at all about the concept of returning to the artisan or the creation or the painter or the doctor or whoever was doing something that he likes to do. You were speaking in only a sort of a small slab across the middle of the... say, the people who normally work on machines. It seemed to me as though that were the whole society, there was no discussion whatsoever about the person who gets gratification out of what he does.

AUDIENCE 3: He talked about hobbies... [indistinct]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, let her speak her comment so that everybody can hear.

AUDIENCE 3: Oh well, I was just saying, you spoke about hobbies. Well, that would come under that heading, and it seems to me that's supposed to be gratification and creativity. It's what a hobby is for. There's one thing you brought up though about this affluent society that most everyone can travel... I guess I've been left out somewhere because... [laughter] Most of the people I know that travel either travel on the company... sends them, or they travel through their job, or they travel through some kind of a half-paid process and... I came from an average family that certainly had an average income and [laughs] either I've been taken or something. I've been misinformed or something's happened that... [laughs] I'd like to know more about this everybody bein' able to travel.

MAYNARD: Well, you don't want to overlook the fact that besides anything else that may have happened that you're a member of despised minority group. Namely, women. And you just don't have all the rights of other people...

AUDIENCE 3: [laughs] I took that from a few classes here a few minutes ago, but I was brought up in the old-fashioned days when money was very very scarce, and you worked 8 hours a day six days a week, and got there an hour early for which you weren't paid. And there was a big long line of people waiting every day for your job, and I'll admit that I'm a very old-fashioned person here and probably don't fit in with your scheme of things because... anyway, it's very interesting. I didn't come with a hostile attitude, I just... [laughter on mic and in background]

Well... [laughter; comments in background and light applause] You can put it that way, but I'm just trying to understand, that's all. This all... all this leisure is a very new thing in modern society, and I'll admit that it must be very boring to a lot of people unless you can travel and do...

MAYNARD: Well, let me say I'd hate to not have you fit in in whatever scheme of things... you know, *evolves* out of all this mess we're in right now. And I don't see why, you know, everybody shouldn't fit in, but to return to the question asked by the other lady: I didn't think that I was speaking only about a particular segment of people. In fact, the illustration I gave, the particular illustration I gave was of really a privileged group of people in terms of flexibility of what they can do and the ability to end up in satisfying kinds of employment. In spending their productive lives. Yet even in that group, 40% of the people simply acknowledged that at the least, 40% and more...

[audience member responds in background]

And I... I'm sorry?

[audience member continues]

No, no. No, no... the Iowa study was the... had to do with the women, two-thirds of which had never achieved their aspirations. The other study was drawn from a nationwide sample. That was of 650 people with a very heavy bias toward college-educated people. About 20% of these people had doctor's degrees, for instance, of one kind or another. And yet 40% of those admitted that they had ended up somewhere by circumstances beyond their control, and they had just gotten used to it. Another group of people, smaller, admitted that they were actively unhappy during their productive lives. Well, that's a lot of people, and if we're in the situation where people are leading lives like that, then we are simply not giving priority to life satisfaction. I mean that's very plain. And so I wanted to really open up the possibility of giving that high priority. What happens if we give that high priority?

AUDIENCE 6: I have just one thing to say, and that is, my parents were raised in an atmosphere like this lady was speaking of. I was raised in the same sort of atmosphere; I worked at a 40-hour job when I was fourteen years old and I accumulated enough money for a college education. You know, things like this that were really... were real values to my parents, because they'd never had the opportunity. I have gone through periods where I had worked at school as though it were a 60-hour job a week... and I got the rewards, you know? I got all the rewards pretty consistently, but there's just one problem with the ethic, and that is that its base is that

you don't... you aren't allowed a measure of freedom unless you can perform. As long as you can perform, the system is there, you know, rewarding you for every step you make, because you are sort of an outlet for a production. There are scholarships available, excellent scholarships, you don't have to work to go to school if you can prove that you can perform. There are fantastic grants available after you get out of school if you can prove to someone that you can perform. But the point is that you have to prove that you can perform; it has nothing to do with what you are or what you want to be. I'm at a point now where I realize I can perform; they've trained me to do it, you know? Why shouldn't I be able to perform? I'm really good at it when necessary, but...

KERR: Are you really good at it, or are you performing at somebody... you're good at performing at somebody else's standards, right?

AUDIENCE 6: No, I'm really good at performing at their standards; I can get their rewards, but now that I've...

KERR: What if you don't accept those rewards?

AUDIENCE 6: Now that I've proved to myself that they're their rewards, which they definitely are, I discovered something about them; that they're willing to let me have a measure of freedom because they realize that, you know, given the opportunity, I work hard, but there's a tag on absolutely everything I am asked to do. The issue right now is, I see federal money going you know, to students, I see it going in all kinds of areas of... when there's a string attached, but I also see tons of federal money spent on destruction every year and... you know, everyone's convinced of this. I think a lot of people know it, but I'm really getting desperate as to what, if anything, we can do about it. If it is feasible for the government to spend \$8 billion dollars on an ABM system that is not going to work, according to scientific reports, there is no reason why they couldn't at least investigate, you know, what we could be doing with our lives rather than... corpses. I will end my harangue at that point. [chuckles]

KERR: I wanna talk about something Gary was talking about that has... maybe has to do with the change in why I'm thinking about not doing anything. Not running a school next year. That seemed to me that you were talking a lot about defining who you were or defining who you are in terms of your struggle with the system, and that still leaves... as far as I'm concerned, that still leaves something missing that I want very much. And it just bothers the hell out of me that I have to define myself constantly out of that struggle, still doesn't leave me much... I'm defining myself in opposition to a negative thing, instead of, you know... what if instead of being somebody you know marching around with a sign or something like that, I was an artist? And

had a very positive feeling about that thing I was doing and also was selling, hopefully, but of course not... [laughs] What kind of attitude, then, do I have about my total surrounding and about myself, as opposed to the kind of feeling I have about myself and about my surrounding when I'm defining myself out of opposition? I think that's what I'm really concerned with, because I think it's almost easy to escape into that defining one's self out of opposition to the system. Aha, Snodgrass is finally going to take the microphone.

RONALD SNODGRASS: To give it to a young lady.

KERR: Aha.

AUDIENCE 7: I don't know if this is... if I'm getting your message, but I kind of get one of... it kinda relates to something that I've been thinking about for the last few minutes is... can we change, or do we have to change the social system in order to be able to do what we want to do? Or, if more people do what they want to do, is this going to change the social system? And I think here we have to decide whether we're going to do what we want to do, and... then we have to do what you were just talking about, we have to stay outside of the... we have to define ourselves outside of the social system, right? I mean, you're... oh, OK... and then, or, you can be somebody who's hellbent for election, to change the social system, and maybe running around with a sign... Running around with a sign in your hand might also be a sort of alienating kind of activity. Maybe it isn't really for everybody, what is going to be the kind of thing that will help you realize your own self or actualize your own self. So I don't... systems don't just change, social systems don't just change overnight, we've seen a lot of change, but I think that... this really bothers me, maybe somebody else has some comments on it, but I think more people are going away and doing what they wanna do rather than trying to offer their lives on the sacrificial altar of social change just... and not doing what they wanna do, but running around with a sign. [off mic] I'm getting redundant.

MAYNARD: I think you've raised a very good point. It, you know, the question arises... can you create indiv... the meaning for the individual by a change in the social system? I think this is basically illusory. Certain social systems can be more conducive towards meaning for the individual; however, the social system itself isn't going to do it. And this is, you know, this is kind of what I would say to your last comment.

KERR: Yeah, let me... well, it seems to me to be completely illusory to believe that you can go off and do your own thing and have this society allow you to *do* that. The people have been trying it in communes and I find that they, that their communal existence, is *always* at the mercy of the system. Communes have been busted up all across this country, and you can *only*

survive to the extent that the social system allows you to survive and usually the key breaking point is if local kids get at all interested in your commune: *boom*, they really come down on your head. You can be an artist, but the consequences of being an artist in this society... if, you know, you can be an artist and align yourself with the struggles against the society, and a number of good artists have done that, or, you can take the other thing and go be an artist, but the problem there is I don't see that you can escape there any more than you can elsewhere; if your painting doesn't sell, then you gotta go to work, which will take away from your artistic endeavors; probably drain a hell of a lot of energy, put you up into a whole lot of uptight hassles about how are you going to pay this bill or that bill? How are you going to, you know, get that arthritic limb fixed at the doctor's so you can go back to painting? That whole trip... if you sell, what you find is that the price for artistic success, although you may be very honest with yourself and with your own artistic success, what you find is your art coming back at you as a way of enslaving other people. That is, art which historically has served a kind of alienating function. That is, art has been in some sense a realm that is separate from the present and because it's separate, it makes the present clearer and indicates both the joy and the pain of the present. But what you're likely to find is that the art comes back at you as a way of making people feel better. That is, an artistic creation that you use to really express some deep pains that you feel about the system becomes a consumption item in *Time* magazine to make people feel better, because "By god, the arts are flourishing in America," and it's all swell.

I dig the pressure that you're talking about, and the kind of thing where every day... you know, after a while it's easy to become fun. I mean when you first start fighting back against the system there's that sort of "Wow," you know? I can do it and somehow get away with it, and it's pretty groovy. And after a while it gets to be a drag, and there's always the pressure on the people who are resisting to find escapes, but it just seems to me that it's illusory to assume that there are any kind of escapes, because your escapes are only escapes as long as they're going to let you escape. That's the problem. You know? And the other question I think is... not illusory, but an irrelevant way of stating the problem. A social system's not going to *do* anything for anybody. A social system has to be looked at in terms of a set of relationships. And one of the problems has happened here is a positing of the individual against society, and that doesn't exist, because society doesn't exist independently and, you know, vice versa. So when you talk about the social system, what you're talking about are a set of human relationships and social organizational relationships that allow people more freedom and more spontaneity or whatever your values are, rather than social systems that depend upon sublimating and repressing. One of the commune ought to quit forever...

[audience member interjects in background]

[off mic] All right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [off mic] Well, that worked pretty well.

KERR: [off mic] Yeah... [indistinct]

AUDIENCE 8: I am astonished that, in our day, we still ask the question; "Does the world owe you anything?" Of course we do, we don't do... owe anything to each other by means of a comm... by means of cooperation. We cooperate with one another, and we contribute to society as much as we can. So, society is held together by cohesion and coercion. Cohesion is produced by what we contribute to each other and we benefit by. Coercion, out of the rules that we must accept, naturally, to fit in the society which we have accepted. Now, it seems to me that the way we live is a tragedy. That we are told to live it by slogans, and slogans... one of the slogans is, "The world doesn't owe me a living." As slogans go, as capsules of wisdom, instead they are capsules of stupidity. Produced or created only because of a certain vested interest. Naturally, when the employer, for instance, tells you, "You have to give a day's work for a day's wages," but who makes the determination? That's the point. The determination must be made about by the employer and the employees. Another thing they say, "How far you can go when you ask for a change?" Well, Abraham Lincoln, I want to use this illustration, has said when they went to make fun at him because he had the legs not proportionally too strong for his body, they said, "Mr. Lincoln, how long should the legs be?" Lincoln answered, "As long as they reach the ground." Now, how they reach the ground, by understanding, by arbitration. But there's not one side of arbitration, it's both sides. All people involved. Now the professor there, he's a professor, I'm told, he manufactured the men, either to his image or to a visionary image. He speaks about responsibility, about taking this, and this and that... Man is not manufactured by man, man is man, man is unknown. No? [...] of the book, no, we don't know, and we don't know ourselves. So we have to accept man as he is, and try to channel his activities, channel his potentialities in the best direction to produce the best effect for all of us. And that's what I call cooperation, that's what I call... Now, let all... this is just a rambling thought and besides, my English is not sufficiently good, probably, that you have understood me, yeah? Have you? I hope you have.

Now, speaking of suicide... well, I finish this soon, yeah? Suicide, I'm not a candidate for suicide; therefore, I am not qualified to speak about it. However, I say... [audience murmurs in background] ...however, I say this; suicide, to my mind, has a psychological content. When a person... or rather this one reason first. The first reason is when a person suffers from unbearable sufferings, they cannot stand suffering anymore, he commits suicide. That's fine. But there is a psychological reason: when a person fails to understand the meaning of life, he

wants to find out what life means by ending it, so that he may enter, in his illusion, into another existence. And of course religious people say, "Well, you go to heaven." Well, I say, "I go to hell." I am in hell already. [laughs] So, all summing up, we have to say this: that we owe each other a living, one another living. We cooperate with one another, and therefore, you see, I end up at the philosophy of the hippies. I am not a hippie, but I... [audience laughs in background] I end up in their philosophy. I envisage the time when all of us, really, will be able to do all of the things that we wanted to do with very little question. However, if it's necessary that, let's say a professor has to drive a car for a half hour a day, he may have to adjust himself for half an hour, that wouldn't kill him, and so that even if all people become college graduates or get sage, they still fit in a society, have a better society. But we have to destroy slogans, or [...] to them in their true meaning. [off mic] I hope I said something. If I didn't say anything, don't kill me.

[scattered applause]

KERR: Thanks very much. [off mic] I'll put this back up here so more people can get a hold of it. Anyone want to join now?

AUDIENCE 9: I've been sitting here just thinking about the past few years... my husband is retired a short time back from this automation you speak of, and if we're gonna live this freedom, this... I guess that's what we've been doing: living this freedom where each does what he wants; it just never occurred to me 'til now... but I've never been so miserable in my life. [laughs] And until we get back to the... I don't think we have any society if we're going to live that way where we're each gonna do as we please, I really don't. I think until we get back to the values of where we live with consideration, and understanding for the other fellow, and cooperation, and those good old principles... I don't think we have a soc... I don't think you can sit here and call this a society where everybody's gonna do as they please. I'm sorry if you consider me hostile, but I've never been so miserable in my life since [laughs] we've been each doing as we please... and I don't think he's been happy either, but it's that freedom you talk about. There's nothing morally wrong with it, but it just doesn't make for happiness.

MAYNARD: Well, I'm not sure how to answer that, except that the notion of people continuing to have the ability because the social supports exist to allow it to continue to explore their lifestyles as long as they are alive, I don't think is quite the same thing as you had in mind. What you had... what you were describing sounded a little more like just a kind of a license that is based on not a respect for other people as human beings, but a contempt for them. That isn't the kind of thing I had in mind, and I don't think it's the kind of thing that most other think-other people had in mind who spoke to this point. I don't think that it's possible for a person to lead a satisfying life if by doing so they must exploit the life of others. I think that ultimately

that this becomes unsatisfying, and the kind of freedom to explore lifestyle, as long as possible while we are alive, to make changes, not to become trapped into something that becomes meaningless or unpleasant, is very different from... sort of the simple expression, "Everyone does what they like." I don't think that quite covers what I had in mind. Do you wanna say something more?

AUDIENCE 9: The number of hours though that generally... does this thing work? I... oh.

MAYNARD: [off mic] Just talk right into the top.

AUDIENCE 9: If a person wants to go into an occupation or do something that is very low productive and his family's going to suffer, and yet with all the leisure time we have in this day and age he can't do that in his leisure time... we had discipline, I don't think there's anything takes the place of disciplining our lives in order to make it better. And I just don't see how you can expect to have a good life unless we have a certain amount of discipline, and apply ourselves to something that's going to help support our families and give us a good basis of home life, and do these other things in all this spare time that we... now am I still far from what you're trying... what you, [laughs] is that still not on the... ? Have you...

[tape skips and resumes mid-sentence]

MAYNARD: ...of people living together in a society, and the coercive aspect of people living together in a society, and to point out that it is possible to get a great deal of things done in a society by the cooperative aspect. That's what we have been talking about. Now, the other thing is that we can't overlook the point that a social system, by simply arranging what kinds of penalties people have to pay for trying to do certain things, has a very powerful effect on their ability to do those things. So that for instance, it's all very well to say, "Well, people can find a way to carry out the things that they want to do. They can find a way, in their spare time or any other way, to do the things they want to do." But if we so arrange it in our social arrangements that one has to pay a penalty for that by putting yourself or your family in jeopardy for essential kinds of things that they need—food, clothing, shelter, medical protection, things like this—if the consequence of exploring actively what a man wants to do with his life, or a woman wants to do with her life, has to take place under those kinds of penalties, there's just no doubt but that we will reduce the probability of people doing that. There seems to be very little doubt about that. You will get a few heroic souls who will do it, but we can't depend on sainthood for our social arrangements, not if we're willing, or rather not if we're anxious to gain the most satisfying kinds of lives for people. Which is why I think we have to speak to the social arrangements we have when we talk about an issue like this. Anybody else?

AUDIENCE 10: I feel... [off mic]

KERR: Well, I'm probably gonna do something that will eliminate the possibility for your question to be asked...

AUDIENCE 10: [off mic in background] Do it. Just take the mic away from him and don't let him say it.

[laughter]

SNODGRASS: I'm nervous... I wanted to do something to earn my money. I'm getting paid to be here today... [interjections in background] ...and I feel guilty. [laughter] So I'll make... [interjection in background] ...right, it's my... when I walk into this institutional framework, the work ethic or something happens to me, but... from when I left from what I was doing before, which was sitting in my living room, talking to three people about the problems about going out and trying to deal with something ourselves and the kinds of pressure that's on us to do something meaningful... you know, like, we're not defining ourselves in negative terms... I'm gonna forget all that kind of talk because it happens to me too.

I wanted to make one comment that was that I've been moving around a little bit in the audience and... did a lot of you see the film *High School*? That was here? [murmurs from audience] Yeah, well, it's no good for an analogy if you didn't see it, but there's a... they demonstrated something graphically, a phenomena of education in the United States; there's a kind of fog machine that people learn how to control, and I see it being done here. It's that in the front of the room, when there's a question, someone gets up and turns on the fog machine. Now the fog machine is, there's a kind of fog that prevails in this kind of atmosphere that makes everyone's face go blank, and there are a hell of a lot of blank faces; and they particularly get blank when the fog machine's turned on. Now the way I see the fog machine operating is best demonstrated by the teacher or the professor: when he takes the microphone, who floods you with conceptual language; concepts and references to magazines and the other people who are thinking like he's thinking, and you don't know who those other people are, but it sounds good so it must be true. Or else, that's an answer. Just the fog is an answer. And what I'm disturbed about is that when this many human beings gather for anything, that they're not getting anything. That that will make something, you know, probably happen to you in the next hour. We could have put, you know, like a laxative in the coffee or something like that, but the... or LSD or something like that, that something would have happened and that... so, I was trying to think of some way that we could make some things

happen that would be related to the topic of “Suicide as a way of life,” you know... so I thought what I’d do is to ask someone to commit suicide... [laughter] ...is there anyone? [laughter]

KERR: Well you just nominated us all, right?

SNODGRASS: Pardon?

KERR: We were all committing suicide, is what you were just saying.

SNODGRASS: Well... so, what I thought I would do is suggest a different social arrangement to try and facilitate... this is concep... this is the fog machine, hear it? What I thought I would do is suggest a social arrangement that might be different, you know, like... oh, a manipulation of the bodies in the room, or some of us to... get up and move around and try a different arrangement, so that all the blank faces are no longer blank, and there’s some sort of engagement in the topic, you know. Would you like to try something?

Well, let me give you an example. I’m not gonna ask anyone to do anything that would embarrass themselves, you know. That’s the last thing that I would do, because I’m very sensitive to anyone’s feelings being hurt or embarrassed. So, like... I went to a conference in Montana that was very productive, what we did was sit around and—in one large group of about 30 people—and everyone wrote down on a piece of paper what they wanted to learn. More than anything else. And then we made a college on the basis of that, you know... so, that’s one thing we could do, is we could get together in circles and people could tell each other what they wanted to do with their lives, you know. You could lay a fantasy on someone and see how they react. It’s two-thirty, and maybe it’s too late to do that, you know...

AUDIENCE 11: It’s not too late, we could get another room that’s not... [indistinct]

SNODGRASS: No, I don’t wanna do it in another room, ‘cause think everyone would cop out and leave.

AUDIENCE 11: There’s one that’s not that far away.... [indistinct]

SNODGRASS: No, I’m not... it’s a voluntary effort, you know. [audience member responds in background] Gee, that’s right. [laughter]

KERR: What do you want to do with your life?

SNODGRASS: Pardon?

KERR: What *do* you want to do with your life?

SNODGRASS: What I want to do is... what do *I* want to do with my life?

KERR: Yeah. I mean we may as well start it right now.

SNODGRASS: You mean, if I will tell you what I want to do with my life, you'll tell me what you want to do with your life?

KERR: As far as I know.

SNODGRASS: Who else will trade? Who else will trade with me?

AUDIENCE 12: Excuse me, sir.

SNODGRASS: Yeah.

AUDIENCE 12: One of the things that I had written down here is I'm increasingly depressed because I do not communicate with the young people, and I should like to know if some young people could tell me what *they want*. You see, I should like to go about trying to secure these things that in our social system, trying to make changes so we can secure what the young people want. Up 'til now, I'm not real sure I know what the young people want. Now I agree that we're spending gobs of money on ABMs and the Vietnam War and all that sort of thing, which is [...], and we should channel these things, but I don't know how to go about it. I go about it any way that I can, but you also have to have an objective, I'm quite sure, whether you do your thing or not you *must* have an objective. I'm sure psychologically you must have an objective.

SNODGRASS: Yeah, you think that we all know what we *don't* want, but you want to know what we want.

AUDIENCE 12: That's right. What do the young people and what do I want, for that matter. I'm over thirty and you can't trust me, but... [laughter in background]

SNODGRASS: Do you want to know something? I'm over thirty too.

AUDIENCE 12: Oh, you are?

KERR: We can't trust you either, then, huh? [laughter]

SNODGRASS: But John Kerr and I are good friends and fellow fantasy spinners, in that what we believe in is in a sense that in order for a person to really get going on what you want to do with your own life is that you have to sort of open up your imagination and your latent desires, and declare, you know, who I'm going to be, sort of like Clark Kent walks into the phone booth and takes off his shirt and he's really Superman. Or, in reverse, Superman goes into the phone booth and puts on Clark Kent's clothes and he's Clark Kent. That... what we found out is that—I found out that I am unable to really live my fantasies out because of some basic insecurities that I don't really believe that I could ever do it, and that I at first was really embarrassed to really talk about it. And in working as a teacher, I found out that most people don't even think it's a probability that they could be what they want to be. And in that Montana conference, what came out is that most of the people who were there had things that they wanted to know about, and mostly because that's what they wanted to do. Like some people wanted to learn how to ride horses, you know, and ride horses, and a lot of people wanted to be like in the wilderness and had no opportunity to do it, because they didn't know how to survive there. And other people wanted to have three wives and be the master of, you know, three women.

And there are a lot of things that people want to do with their lives but never get a chance to explore, like I think that... you know... [laughter in background] ...but one thing you can do with a limited group of people, like we have in this arena right now, is that we can... we could explore, you know, like some of these arrangements. You know, if all people were committed to the common exploration of what people wanted with their lives. And a college... see, what I'm turning around is that a college could do that; if college students could sort of open up and say: "We're not committed to the goals of society or the state legislature..." you know, "...but what we're committed to are the goals and the desires and the fantasies of the twelve hundred people who are students," and this fall, all twelve hundred of them wrote down on a slip of paper, or said into a tape recorder or something like that, what their fantasies were and they wanted to try and accomplish them in a year. See, that's what most communes are about.

Most of you are familiar that there's a tremendous underground movement, and a lot of it's underground. Some people are living under the desert in Arizona. But there is a tremendous underground movement going on, that is out of the public eye and out of the media—that's how it's underground—of people exploring their fantasies, trying to find ways to live with each other. Cooperative marriages. There's a thing outside of Eugene that there's a marriage of about fifty people, and people are married to the group, and the children belong to the group.

Now, that's certainly trying to live out a fantasy. There are people who are trying to build their living... you know, how they're living... they're trying to build their houses out of common synthetics that are floating around like polyethy... you know, foam and things like that. There are people who are trying to live without electricity by harnessing the sun, you know, and they're all grouping together through kinds of communication in the country.

But, all that is... see, that's where I am right now, is trying to approach fulfilling some fantasies that I have with my life. See, at one time I was a student at Portland State. One time I was an executive trainee at U.S. National Bank. One time I was a member of a fancy fraternity at the University of Oregon, but in all those situations, we were very limited and none of us could act out our fantasies, because the group had some sort of limitations that they were putting on us, especially at Portland State. And so I thought that what we could do with the rest of the day, or what I would like to do, is to talk with a few people who would like to talk in those terms. Like, I am very interested... I don't know any of you, and I'm very intrigued to know like, why you came to hear this topic, and now after we've heard it, what can we do with where we are now so that it means something more for us? Do we want to continue like how we were doing, or do we want to do something else? You see, I wanna do something else, because this is not taking me anywhere where I wanna be. So, I would suggest that one way we take it is by... I'm not gonna put, you know, like sensitivity trips, I'm not suggesting that we all rub bellies or something like that, but if... I think we probably... [chatter in background] Well, that's not my fantasy, but... [laughter] If about 40 people want to rub bellies in the back of the room or in the middle of the room, we could explore that.

[audience member responds]

...See, because it's not real, we're not living it now, you know, in that it's like a dream, a construct. You know, it's something that you build up in your imagination and mind that you'd really like to be.

AUDIENCE 13: You've used twenty minutes so far. [laughter]

SNODGRASS: Well, I can appreciate that, so...

AUDIENCE 13: Well, I'd really like to hear something; I mean you keep suggesting the fantasies but you give us some examples. Communicate them. I think that's the problem here, we're not communicating.

SNODGRASS: Well, I'm not gonna spin a fairytale, what I'm suggesting is that we regroup and...

AUDIENCE 13: Communication is not a fairytale, and I think your interest should not be a small group, it should be the whole group. The whole group is here because they want to hear and they want to communicate.

KERR: Do they?

AUDIENCE 13: I think so.

KERR: Well, then you're the first person to say it, man. Is anybody else willing to do it as a group? Are we gonna break up into groups of five or twenty?

AUDIENCE 13: Well, you've shot twenty of our minutes, let's do something then, because we've had twenty more minutes of the same thing we had before. [whistles in background]

SNODGRASS: Well come on, get up here.

AUDIENCE 13: I'm a listener, but I haven't heard anything.

[groaning and heckling from the audience]

KERR: Any more of those? [laughter]

AUDIENCE 13: Well then, he has no more right to be up there than anybody else.

SNODGRASS: I don't have, that's why I want you to get up here.

KERR: Other than the fact that he's getting paid! That's the reason why he's up there.

[laughter; audience member responds]

KERR: You can't, why should I? [laughter; audience member responds] He just blew a blowtorch, man.

SNODGRASS: What?

[audience member asks question]

SNODGRASS: Could I? Jesus, no! [laughter and background talk] How many people would like to sit down, on the floor, in like five small groups and to tell each other their fantasies about what they would want with their lives?

KERR: Without a mic.

SNODGRASS: Without a microphone? Well, what I suggest is that those people come up in this part of the room and we'll pull the door shut and... Hugo, do you want to talk to the rest of the people? [laughter]

MAYNARD: About what? [laughter] I raised my hand...

SNODGRASS: But he works here! Would someone else like to conduct this discussion?

AUDIENCE 14: I just want to ask one question which has to do with... [indistinct]

SNODGRASS: OK, I'd like to invite those people who want to explore their own fantasies with others, into the other room, and I'll give this to anyone else here to continue the discussion. Like, I think it would really be chickenshit if you didn't get up here and do something.

AUDIENCE 13: Well, let's go ahead and do it, instead of calling... [indistinct]

SNODGRASS: Well, I'm willing to do that but, someone ought to do this.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This doesn't have to go on any longer.

[background talking for about a minute; four seconds of silence; program ends]