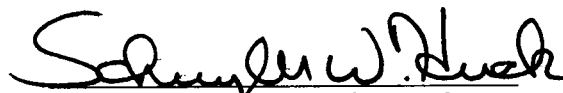
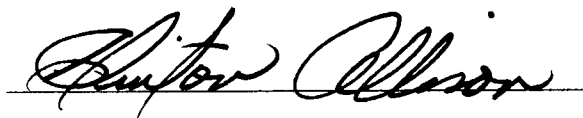


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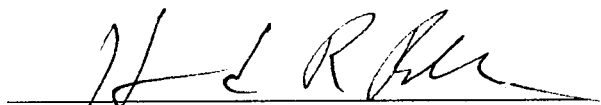
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by John Carl Habel entitled "Precipitating Himself into Just Manageable Difficulties: An Intellectual Portrait of Nicholas Hobbs." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

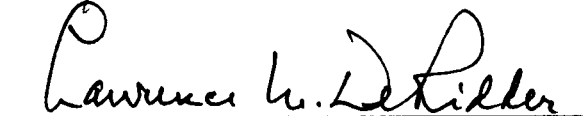

Schuyler W. Huck, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:









Accepted for the Council:


Vice Provost
and Dean of The Graduate School

PRECIPITATING HIMSELF INTO JUST MANAGEABLE DIFFICULTIES:
AN INTELLECTUAL PORTRAIT OF NICHOLAS HOBBS

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

John Carl Habel

December 1988

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ideas which eventuated in this dissertation first took form at the Riverbend School at Lakeshore Mental Health Institute in Knoxville, Tennessee, where I worked as a teacher-counselor from 1981 to 1983. At Riverbend, I experienced firsthand Nicholas Hobbs's ideas about serving troubled and troubling children and youth. Later, while a doctoral student in the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, I met my advisor, Schuyler W. Huck, Distinguished Professor of Educational and Counseling Psychology. As a powerful generator of ideas, he stimulates trains of thought that he does not himself conclude, but leaves in the hands of his students to pursue. The thought that a study such as this one might qualify as dissertation research started in Professor Huck's Seminar in Dissertation Proposal Writing. I am increasingly aware of the major ways in which his example and influence are emerging in the kind of educational psychologist I am becoming.

My general indebtedness is great to the other members of my committee. To Clinton B. Allison, educational historian and Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, and Howard R. Pollio, Distinguished Service Professor of Psychology, are owed an intellectual debt and a measure of personal regard greater than can be acknowledged here. Ohmer Milton, Professor of Psychology Emeritus, and Lawrence M. DeRidder, Professor of Educational and Counseling Psychology Emeritus, have been generous in drawing on their experience and expertise to abet my efforts.

I spent a number of weeks working in the Nicholas Hobbs Papers in Special Collections, University Archives in the Jean and Alexander Heard Library at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee where the staff was helpful and attentive. I also had

the privilege of discussing Nicholas Hobbs with his wife, Mary Thompson Hobbs. Her generous hospitality, friendly patience with my questions, and kindly interest in my work were, of course, absolutely essential to its completion.

I am gratified by the friendly way in which persons who had known Hobbs at George Peabody College for Teachers, at Vanderbilt University, and through Re-ED schools offered their recollections and insights. In listing these persons, I have resorted to alphabetical order: Jack Allen, Samuel Ashcroft, Paul R. Docecki, Susan W. Gray, Erwin C. Hargrove, H. Carl Haywood, Alexander Heard, James F. Kilroy, Wilbert W. Lewis, Campbell Loughmiller, William Clark Luster, Judith Mearig, J. R. Newbrough, Letha Rowley, Julius Seeman, May W. Shayne, Robert Slagle, Frank A. Sloan, Thomas M. Stephens, Hans Strupp, Lottie Strupp, and Jack Conrad Willers.

I am deeply grateful to my friend, Thomas R. Stokes, who granted me use of his laser printer. Without his kindness and generosity, preparing the various stages of the manuscripts of this study would have been much more arduous tasks than they have been.

There is one person without whom, truly, this study could not have been completed. I owe the greatest debt of gratitude to Dorothy Metzger Habel, my wife who has greatly improved this manuscript through her sensitive and insightful criticisms. She is a constant source of inspiration and support, and this dissertation is dedicated to her with love and thanks.

ABSTRACT

Nicholas Hobbs (1915-1983) was a psychologist, educator, university administrator, and active participant in the public policy arena. An examination of his work and thought reveals him to have been a potent exemplar of the social scientist working in the public interest and connected with the immediate, practical concerns of the larger society. He was an avowed innovator who established new institutional forms for educating troubled children, for strengthening families, for training teachers and mental health professionals, and for converting knowledge from the social sciences, the biological and medical sciences, and the humanities into material that could be used in making public policy.

"Invention," "engagement," and "reflection" are the themes of this study. They are terms that Hobbs himself applied to his professional life in a speech delivered in August 1982, a few months before his death. These terms have a personal dimension. They cut across the substantive areas of Hobbs's interest and the various kinds of scholarly activity, policy development, and institutional service he undertook. The terms have a second function. Each serves as a label for a period in his professional life and each is treated in a chapter.

Hobbs's period of "invention," 1946-1961, saw the first appearance and development of his ideas about: (1) helping others, particularly troubled children; and (2) his own role as a social scientist working on practical social problems in an academic setting. The second period of his professional life, 1961-1975, is designated as his period of "engagement" because during these years his work as a builder of new kinds of helping institutions gave powerful expression to his conviction that engagement in pressing social issues is a condition that is ineluctably associated with professional activity. Hobbs's period of "reflection," from 1975 to his death in January 1983, is so

designated because during these years he turned more and more toward reflection and consolidation, toward an attempt to draw on accumulated knowledge and understanding with which to confront the values to be served by public policy.

Each chapter addressing a period includes a discussion of the historical context of Hobbs's work and thought, a biographical sketch of the years under examination, and an analysis of his written material produced during those years.

This study is grounded in primary documentation collected in the Nicholas Hobbs Papers in Special Collections of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. This primary material is supplemented with information gleaned from interviews with his colleagues at Vanderbilt University and elsewhere and from his published work. In addition, expressions of the climate of thought within which Hobbs worked receive attention; these include retrospective accounts of the social, cultural, and political milieu of the years 1946 to 1983 and the writings of Hobbs's contemporaries.

Hobbs's work and thought are worthy of examination and recapitulation for two reasons. First, his ideas were influential both within his discipline and within the larger society. As a scholar who explored fundamental questions about how social institutions could be redefined to serve society more effectively, he helped to create the context in which such institutions are embedded. Second, his career is representative of a social scientist working within the American liberal, reformist tradition. His ideas are a reflection of his times. His career offers material for an illuminating case study of an individual who was committed to investigating a conglomerate of problems, issues, and methodological questions, all of which remain key today.

PREFACE

During the 1966-1967 academic year, while a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California, Nicholas Hobbs wrote the following passage in an early draft of his book about Re-ED schools that would eventually be published as The Troubled and Troubling Child. This passage, taken from the Nicholas Hobbs Papers in Special Collections, University Archives in the Jean and Alexander Heard Library at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, did not appear in the book. It expresses, more clearly than I could, both the perils and promises of historical studies such as this one.

History is an invention, an artistic construction that aspires to be an accurate record of things past. But accuracy is elusive and error inescapable. Selective recall, the need to have things one way rather than another, the distortions of condensation, the inevitable personal involvements, the lack of technical skill in historiography, all these and more stay the hand of writers who seek verisimilitude between their account and what indeed did happen. But write they must to complete a task about which they care deeply. Thus this apology. It may serve both as a warning to the reader that the account will have imperfections, and as an admonition to the writers to keep the imperfections as few as they can. Though such assurance is frail, it does make it possible to start.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On 14 January 1983 several hundred psychologists, university administrators, students, physicians, special educators, political scientists, economists, attorneys, child advocates, academics and clinicians congregated on the campus of George Peabody College for Teachers of Vanderbilt University to pay tribute to Nicholas Hobbs. The occasion was the dedication of the Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development, and it took place in the building being renamed for Hobbs.

Nicholas Hobbs was being honored for his long service to Peabody and Vanderbilt. In 1951 he came to Peabody to head the Division of Guidance and Human Development, a position he held for about fifteen years. He was Provost of Vanderbilt from 1967 to 1975, at which time he took a dual appointment as Professor of Psychology and Preventive Medicine at Vanderbilt. Renaming the building in Hobbs's honor had been authorized in the fall of 1982 by the Vanderbilt Board of Trust, but the dedication ceremony came only nine days before Hobbs's death from cancer.

Hobbs's condition had declined precipitously since August 1982 when he had delivered, without a podium for support, a keynote address of over an hour at a conference involving employees of residential schools for troubled children. The author was a member of the audience on that sweltering August afternoon, straining to catch Hobbs's words with the rest of the standing-room only crowd in the Second Presbyterian church in Nashville. Hobbs wore an open-collared shirt and ambled back-and-forth across the platform in the choir of the church as he spoke slowly, seemingly extemporaneously, in the velvet accent of his native South Carolina. He had a dry cough, was a little hoarse, and appeared frail and wan, older than his 67 years, in the

glare of the lights for the video camera. But the ease with which he spoke, the gentle humor, and the force of his commitment to his topic offered no indication that he would soon be confined to a wheelchair and that he had only about five months to live. He had recently taken to walking with a cane, but the cane did not give evidence of his infirmity (he did not so much walk with it as brandish it). The cane was flashy and looked expensive, with what appeared to be the head of a goose as its handle, and it was a proper accompaniment to the well-cut, dark suits and bow ties that he favored and the Fiat sports car in which he hurried around Nashville collecting speeding tickets.

On that August day Hobbs talked about his nearly 30 years of sustained attention to helping national and state agencies, public schools, residential institutions, community groups, and families become more effective in meeting the needs of socially vulnerable children. The church in which he spoke had been made available to the conference people because the site of the conference, the school up the street where Hobbs had founded his first school for troubled children over 20 years earlier, had no facility large enough to accommodate those in attendance.

There was a worshipful atmosphere in the church that morning, an atmosphere that was quickened by the setting, but one that would have emerged even if Hobbs had spoken in an aircraft hanger. A handful of university professors, school and hospital administrators, and local government officials—people who established and administered policy for serving troubled children but who rarely came into direct contact with them—were in attendance; but the majority of those assembled, however, were people in their 20s and 30s who served at the front lines in residential schools and who held a pious commitment to Hobbs's vision for improving the lives of troubled children.

The members of the assembled congregation had come to have their faith in their capacity to help troubled children reaffirmed. Hobbs had first instilled this faith in the late 1950s and early 1960s when he developed a new institutional model for serving

troubled children. This model, called Project Re-ED (an acronym for "re-education of emotionally disturbed children"), began as a demonstration program with Hobbs as its principal investigator. Sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health from 1961 to 1968, Re-ED grew out of Hobbs's experiences in the mid-1950s: first, as the director of a study commissioned by the Southern Regional Education Board in Atlanta of residential treatment facilities for troubled children in the South; and second, as a visitor to innovative residential programs for troubled children in several countries of Western Europe. These experiences loosened Hobbs's commitment to the prevailing psychiatric approach to providing mental health services to children in the United States. As an alternative, he came to envision Re-ED, an educational model

with emphasis on health rather than on illness, on teaching rather than on treatment, on learning rather than on fundamental personality reorganization, on the present and the future rather than on the past, on the operation of the total social system of which the child is a part rather than on intrapsychic processes exclusively.¹

The Re-ED position was based on the assumptions that 1) the personal attributes of teachers and counselors weigh more heavily than do their professional knowledge and technical skills in working with troubled young people and 2) the emotional disorders of children who require care in institutions are not private, individual woes, but are reflections of the weaknesses of troubled families and the social and moral problems of the entire society. With Re-ED, Hobbs was interested in the meta-theoretical issues involved in the mental health care of children. He placed the metaphor of normalcy at the heart of Re-ED and believed that this was important in evoking normal behavior. He

¹ Nicholas Hobbs, "How the Re-ED Plan Developed," in Conflict in the Classroom, eds. Nicholas J. Long, William C. Morse, and Ruth G. Newman, (Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 287-288. In this piece, written in the mid-1960s, Hobbs recounts the evolution of a social institution for troubled children.

tried to develop a vocabulary that was free of expectations that children in Re-ED schools would act in a delinquent or a sick fashion. In his eyes, they were "students," not "patients."

Invention, Engagement, and Reflection

On that August day in Nashville, Hobbs spoke about his vision for helping troubled children more than two decades after that vision had first taken form. During that period, the number of Re-ED institutions increased from the original two, in Nashville and in Durham, North Carolina, to almost two dozen in the Southeast—Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Virginia—and in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and California. Also, during those years, the American Re-Education Association (AREA), an organization for the now far-flung staff members of Re-ED schools, had been formed. The audience that day comprised the attendees of the first conference of AREA, and Hobbs offered this group his picture of himself at the end of his career. The question he seemed to be posing, retrospectively, rhetorically, less to his audience and more to himself, did not concern whether his answers were right, but whether he had been coherent and consistent in his beliefs. He did not assert conclusions, independent of his values; rather, he stated convictions that were true to his values.

Hobbs spoke of children; he offered three terms to describe his work with and for children: "invention," "engagement," and "reflection."

These terms have a personal dimension. They capture Hobbs's approach to creating a new kind of institution for serving troubled children, and they serve as a set of pervasive leitmotifs of his professional life. They cut across the substantive areas of his interest and the various kinds of scholarly activity, policy development, and institutional service he undertook. Hobbs was an inventor of new institutional forms and of new

professional roles in the field of mental health; he was continuously engaged in generating knowledge as a mode of active operation; and he reflected on experience as a source of wisdom.

These terms have a second function. Each serves as a label for a period in Hobbs's professional life. The idea of "periodization" is misleading in itself.¹ Essentially a conceptual convenience, the idea tends to suggest discontinuity between successive periods when no such discontinuity exists. A coherent frame of concern and intelligence, rather than an overarching theory, ties the periods together, and this concern and intelligence are the sources of Hobbs's consistency and persistence in both problem selection and in method of attack. In each of these periods, however, there is a general form to his thoughts and activities which distinguish it from the periods that precede or follow it. Each period, with the exception of the last one, which was cut short by his untimely death, lasts about fifteen years. Hobbs's period of "invention" spans the first years of his professional life, 1946 to 1961, when he is "discovering the possible." During the next period, 1961 to 1975, his period of "engagement," he works to "make the possible an operating reality."² During his final period, 1975 to 1983, he reflects on what became his primary theoretical interest late in life—the intricate relationships between science, psychology, values, and morality.

As an inventor—a self-avowed institutional innovator—he created something new, if not entirely original, that was persuasive enough to produce a shift in the pertinent thinking and activity of others who were concerned with institutional arrangements for troubled children and, more generally, with how institutions could be redefined to serve

¹Both Christopher Lasch, in The New Radicalism in America (1889-1963): The Intellectual as Social Type (New York: Vintage, 1967) and Seymour Sarason, in "The Nature of Problem Solving in Social Action," American Psychologist 38 (April 1978): 370-380, make this point about the idea of "periods."

²These quoted passages come from "How the Re-ED Plan Developed."

society more effectively. Hobbs characterized his work as a challenge to existing practice, although he was able to make effective use of the existing social science system of professional organizations, esoteric scientific modes of thinking, professional careers within and without academe, and large sums of subsidy money.

In his speech to the Re-ED people on that August day, Hobbs further characterized his work as a "continuing engagement with the realities of living, with life as lived, not as talked about in general, but in the particular." As an active participant in debate about the role of social institutions in society that so occupied people in the 1960s, Hobbs rejected the "old spectator theory of knowledge" in favor of a view of knowledge as a form of action.¹ Like John Dewey, he believed that knowing is a "specially directed activity instead of something isolated from practice."² In addition, his ideas about human development and about planning and carrying out a program for troubled children emphasized direct experience and action as sources of growth and minimized the function of insight.

In his remarks to the Re-ED people Hobbs stated that "experience naturally reflected is the source of new wisdom." Hobbs may have begun his career with a *nobless oblige* stance, expecting his work to be received thankfully by those in need, but later in life he acknowledged that the work of social scientists can generate questions and even reluctance in those it is supposed to help. There was considerable humility in his claims. He acknowledged tentativeness, the limits of knowledge, the importance of nuances, and the necessity of individual applications in the study of human affairs.

¹This expression comes from John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action (New York: G. P. Putnum's Sons, 1929,1960), p. 204.

²Ibid.

At the dedication ceremony, the remarks of the speakers provided pictures of Hobbs as others who had known and worked with him saw him. Joe B. Wyatt, Chancellor of Vanderbilt University; Willis Hawley, Dean of Peabody College; H. Carl Haywood, then Director of the John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt; Jerome S. Bruner, then of the New School for Social Research (whose remarks were read by Susan W. Gray, Professor of Psychology, Emerita at Peabody); Julius B. Richmond, then Acting Director of the Division of Health Policy Research and Education at Harvard; and Alexander Heard, Chancellor, Emeritus of Vanderbilt, each created a picture of a potent exemplar of the social scientist working in the public interest and connected with the immediate, practical concerns of the larger society.

As such an exemplar, Nicholas Hobbs stands as a worthy subject for an intellectual biography. He was an avowed innovator who worked to establish new institutional forms for educating troubled children, for strengthening families, for training teachers and mental health professionals, and for converting knowledge from the biological and medical sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities into material that could be used in the making of policy. Hobbs's work and thought are worthy of examination and recapitulation for two reasons.¹ First, his ideas were influential both within his discipline and within the larger society. As a scholar who explored fundamental questions about how social institutions could be redefined to serve society more effectively, Hobbs helped to create the context in which such institutions are embedded. Second, Hobbs's career is representative of a social scientist working within the American liberal, reformist tradition. His ideas are a reflection of his times. His career offers material for an

¹Robert Allen Skotheim, in American Intellectual Histories and Historians (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), argues that "influence" and "representativeness" are the two measures to apply when considering whether or not an individual is a proper subject for an intellectual biography.

illuminating case study of an individual who is committed to investigating a conglomerate of problems, issues, and methodologies, all of which remain key today.

The speakers at the dedication ceremony presented Hobbs as an individual who held the conviction that psychology, and the social sciences in general, could serve to counteract forces toward dehumanization in modern society. They held Hobbs up as a model of the social scientist who thought creatively and who uncovered, fantasized about, and personally explored significant social problems. A most striking characteristic of the Hobbs who was portrayed on that day, at the end of his life, was the way he viewed and stated the problems he believed the social sciences should address. He posed problems in such a way as to create a frame of reference with limits broad in concept and time span. In his work, synthesis was as important as analysis, and social problems were only meaningful when conceived as unitary wholes rather than parceled into components that fitted neatly into the domains of academic disciplines and service-providing agencies. He believed and acted on Einstein's declaration that the formulation of a problem is often more important than its solution. For Hobbs, the application of social science knowledge to human problems was not a matter of finding answers—for that assumes answers exist, waiting to be discovered—but rather of opening up a topic for debate.

Hobbs held and acted on the liberal and democratic belief in the possibility of improvement of the individual and of society, but his vision was not utopian. He did not subscribe to the notion that social progress was inevitable, that social problems would fix themselves with the passage of time, but he possessed abiding faith in the reformist power of ideas, in the tractability of the human condition, and in the capacity of the social sciences to serve human purposes. His political sympathies inclined toward the left, and he made untempered commitments to the Kennedy presidency and to promoting racial equality in the institutional contexts in which he worked. Nevertheless, Hobbs was not

an active partisan or participant in social movements that turned political, such as civil rights or women's liberation, but a generator of knowledge as a "sensitizing device."¹

At the dedication ceremony, Julius Richmond ascribed Erik Erikson's concept of "a sense of generativity" to Hobbs's activities. As a generator of knowledge, Hobbs contributed to the establishment of concepts with which to handle ideas and to communicate, both within and without his discipline. These concepts included an empirical investigation of ethical standards for psychologists, the "natural" child care worker, the Re-ED model, and public interest psychology. Central to his sense of generativity were his advocacy efforts and his ability to position himself to be where the decisions were made. Hobbs believed it is entirely proper for a social scientist to function in an advocacy role regarding public welfare of. More specifically he often was able to anticipate trends in child care and research programs by virtue of his strategic participation in national policy deliberations. For example, in the late 1950s, he was vice-chairman of the Joint Commission on Mental Health and Illness, established by Congress, whose recommendations contributed to the great transition from institutional care to community care for the mentally ill in this country. In the early 1960s he served on the President's Panel on Mental Retardation and helped draft the report that led to legislation funding programs for the training of personnel to improve the care of retarded persons. In the early 1970s he directed the Project on the Classification of Exceptional Children, sponsored by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, which gave rise to far-reaching reforms in the ways exceptional children are labeled and served.

Hobbs possessed confidence in others that was born of his general attitudes toward human beings, and this attitude is at the heart of both his public work and his private

¹The notion of social science knowledge as a "sensitizing device" comes from Jeanne Guillemin and Irving Louis Horowitz in, "Social Research and Political Advocacy," in Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Studies, eds. Daniel Callahan and Bruce Jennings. (New York: Plenum, 1983), pp. 187-211.

actions. He possessed faith in the ability of people to solve problems and to grow when given an opportunity to do so. In his view, the systematic efforts of the social sciences to study both human beings and the larger society represented liberating forces. His vision of the help-giving process had the goal of finding approaches to assistance that would increase rather than decrease the independence of recipients. He rejected the social science maxim that the highly trained professional define problems in ways that require only the activity of other highly trained professionals for their amelioration. In his view, people were not the objects of the technical control of professional experts, but living, deciding participants in a continuing effort to place social science knowledge and social institutions in the service of human purposes.

Hobbs's Style

What Hobbs said cannot be separated from the way he said it. The literary and stylistic aspects of his arguments and writings contributed to his success at getting his ideas heard and pursued. He was able to lead others to see the world in new ways through the persuasiveness of his innovations and the appeal of his gentle and refined style. He was representative of a class of academicians whose members tried to integrate the humanities with the social sciences, to balance the general statements of social science with the concern for the individual found in literature, and who demonstrated a willingness to step outside the academic areas in which they had been trained and recognized.

He appreciated good writing and was acutely sensitive to the abominations of language that careless writers produce. When one reads a sentence by Hobbs, one's reaction, as often as not, is to observe how gracefully he had rendered complicated ideas understandable at no cost to their complexity. He labored over many drafts of his published writings and public utterances to create polished prose and insisted that his

students do the same. "Read more novels!" was his admonition to a doctoral student whose writing lacked clarity and grace. He urged other students to read Strunk and White's The Elements of Style and to read good psychology writers—Edwin Boring, Gordon Allport, and George Miller were among those he cited—and reflect upon the skills they demonstrated.

Hobbs spoke slowly and chose his words carefully. His words were frequently drawn out and the space between them was often long. When he delivered speeches, he spoke to his audience neither out of some personal soliloquy nor as an academic specialist plying his trade.

A body of "lore," a kind of mythology, grew up around Hobbs, even while he was still alive, and Hobbs himself cultivated its growth.¹ He had taken to heart the advice he received early in his career at Peabody from his older colleague, Harold Benjamin, "Cultivate your idiosyncracies," and in later years he encouraged his younger colleagues and friends to "have style." He selected his clothing carefully and frequently sported a beret and a bow tie. He wanted to carry a cane, but he thought he had to grow old enough to qualify as an *éminence grise* before he could carry one with the proper panache. (It was a sad irony that when he finally reached what he considered to be the proper station in life to carry a cane, his poor health made the cane a necessity rather than an affectation.) He eschewed big cars, preferring the beat-up Volkswagen beetle he had purchased on his first trip to Europe in 1956. When the beetle was squashed in a collision with an ambulance in the late 1960s (there were no reported injuries), Hobbs replaced it with a sports car. He liked pomp and circumstance and thought it important to mark with ritual relatively commonplace events such as meetings of academicians. When the

¹H. Carl Haywood, a longtime friend and colleague of Hobbs's at Peabody, used the term "lore" to label the collected body of anecdotes about Hobbs that was established and maintained by those who knew him; interview 20 May 1987 in his office in Nashville, Tennessee.

members of one of the many "advisory" groups he had established gathered in Nashville, he always organized a banquet and invited speakers. He took great pleasure in strenuous outdoor activities like hiking and canoeing, and stemware for the wine was often among the supplies on his camping trips.

The width, breadth and purposefulness of his recreational interests mirrored his professional interests. He had a life-long love of classical music that led him to go beyond listening appreciatively and to engage in systematic study of some of the chamber works of Mozart and Beethoven. He studied French as an undergraduate at The Citadel and worked doggedly throughout his life to maintain a reading, writing, and speaking facility with the language. When he received an honorary degree from the University of Paul Valery in Montpellier, France in 1978, he gave his acceptance speech in French. He kept bees, but without much success, and cultivated roses. For a time, before he married, he painted, but he did not take up painting again until the 1970s.

He found humor easily and frequently in his daily life, and his expressions of humor were wry and subtle. He liked puns and other word games, and for years he and his longtime colleague at Peabody, Susan Gray, played a vocabulary game in which they tried to stump each other by casually dropping impossibly obscure words into the conversation. Like professors in the venerable old schools of the East, he preferred that his students address him by the title "Mr." rather than "Dr." His penchant for ritual and formality did not extend outside the university setting. He preferred that those with whom he came into contact at Re-ED schools call him "Nick" rather than "Mr. Hobbs." He somehow bridged the distance between academic social scientist and practical mental health worker. He could talk to both scholars and child care workers.

There was close correspondence between Hobbs the private man and Hobbs the public exponent of the highest social values. As a courtly and genteel southern gentleman, he was gracious and warm with those with whom he came into contact in his

professional life and always demonstrated kindness and solicitude toward his subordinates. He was effusive with his praise, and, in the eyes of some, his praise became devalued because it was proffered so unsparingly. As an administrator, he was non-directive to a fault. His approach was to hire competent people and then give them a relatively free rein. As a rule, he tried to facilitate, to remove obstacles, rather than to direct. Hobbs had a quiet way of wielding power. At the dedication ceremony, H. Carl Haywood observed that Hobbs had always been adept at doing what Harry Truman used to refer to as "getting other people to do what they ought to do anyway."

It was difficult for him to say "no," to find fault, and to weather confrontations. One element of the Hobbs lore is a well-known story about his distaste for confrontation. According to this story, Hobbs, who was Chairman of the Division of Guidance and Human Development at Peabody at the time, called into his office a member of the faculty whose job performance had been unsatisfactory to tell him that his contract would not be renewed. In the course of their conversation, Hobbs failed to get the point across, and the member of the faculty stayed on for another year thinking that his chairman thought highly of his work.

Hobbs believed that people ought to work together and was great for collaborating and conferring, but his actions, perhaps inadvertently, often belied his convictions. In meetings, he was always careful to speak last and appeared to listen respectfully to others, but his remarks, which were meant to appear to be impromptu, were always carefully prepared in advance. This behavior revealed a tension between his faith in participatory democracy and collaboration as decision-making strategies and his strong convictions. He often made his mind up in advance and was so wed to his vision that he would fail to pay heed to obstacles, details, and the legitimate, but uncongenial, views of others.

Hobbs began his career as a psychologist in the summer of 1946 as an assistant professor of clinical psychology in the Department of Guidance at Teachers College, Columbia University. When he came to Teachers College, he was still in the thrall of Carl Rogers. Rogers had been a new professor at The Ohio State University before the War when Hobbs had been there as a graduate student, and for a time, the excitement Hobbs found in Rogers' early work with client-centered, non-directive therapy persuaded Hobbs into abandoning educational psychology. As a Rogerian, Hobbs concentrated on non-directive group therapy, and he even worked on a quantitative system for analyzing and evaluating group-therapy sessions. While the period during which he concentrated on the Rogerian approach to psychotherapy lasted only a few years, the influence of Rogers' system was lasting. Even after Hobbs had concluded that individual and group psychotherapy were labor-intensive enterprises that only made a small dent in the immense mental health problem in America, he valued the lessons Rogers had taught him. Chief among these lessons was the belief that helping another is not a rational, planful undertaking in which problems are diagnosed and then solved by the helper's application of "techniques," but a more active and intuitive process of "living through" and "learning about" with another, a process in which time is the primary healing agent.

Helping others, focussing on strengths rather than on weaknesses—through individual and group psychotherapy, through institutional innovation, through public policy study, or through the model he presented of a person committed to justice and caring in social relationships—was Hobbs's top priority. As Murray and Adeline Levine observe, when professionals in the helping professions become interested in concepts of positive mental health, they become interested in the whole quality of American life.¹

They retain an interest in the distressed individual, but as helpers, they work to

¹Murray and Adeline Levine, A Social History of the Helping Professions: Clinic, Court, School, and Community (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970).

influence schools, families, social agencies, community life, and governmental policy. Hobbs's professional persona conformed to this concept of helper as polymath. As he matured, his role evolved from that of a healer to that of an educator, a social critic, a reformer, and a policy planner.

The South

Hobbs's commitment to the South was strong and enduring. He knew when he took the job at Teachers College that would return to the South at the first opportunity, and his wife, Mary Thompson Hobbs, knew this when she married him in New York in 1949. While many ambitious southerners of his generation moved northward and eastward to seek opportunity, Hobbs was among those who felt a special obligation to remain close to home and to work to bring the South up to some kind of parity with rest of nation. He had a keen sense of the shortcomings of the South—racial prejudice, inequality of opportunity, undeveloped educational and mental health systems—but he also appreciated certain aspects of the community of values in the South that contrasted to the burgeoning urban homogeneity and mass culture of twentieth-century America. In a letter to a fellow southerner, Terry Sanford, then President of Duke University, Hobbs made a succinct statement of his reasons for working in the South: he believed that "diversity is important and that it is often possible to generate greatest power where resources seem, on the surface, to be least available."¹

¹Nicholas Hobbs to Terry Sanford, 17 May 1965. Nicholas Hobbs Papers, Special Collections, University Archives in the Jean and Alexander Heard Library at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee (hereafter, Hobbs Papers)

Precipitating Himself Into Just Manageable Difficulties

The title of this dissertation is taken from the principle of "just manageable difficulties," Hobbs's principle of a design for a life, which appears in a number of his published works and public utterances and which has become a prominent element of the lore surrounding him. The principle came to be known by the acronym "JMD", which was a play on the concept of "just noticeable differences," "JND," established by the nineteenth century German psychologist, Gustav Fechner. Even while he conducted experiments in his laboratory, which were models of precise measurement and careful control, Fechner was preoccupied with philosophical questions. He sought a psychology which would reconcile science with religion and the body with the mind, and he hoped to express the unity of these dichotomies mathematically.¹ With his JND principle, Fechner tried to relate measurable changes in the physical world to human experience. Central to this principle was the concept of "threshold"—the notion that the human body has fixed and specifiable sensitivities to changes in the world.

Hobbs was attracted to Fechner's effort to wed scientific rigor to human compassion, and he set in motion the practice of honoring Fechner by declaring once a year at Peabody a "Fechner Day" to commemorate the alleged day that, Fechner, having taken ill, had stayed home from work and established the JND principle. Apart from the similarity of the acronyms, Hobbs's principle had little to do with Fechner's. Central to Hobbs's JMD principle was the importance of dissonance as a stimulus of achievement and source of growth. This principle informs not only Hobbs's design of his own life, but also his hopeful and strongly felt ideas about helping others.

¹Marilyn E. Marshall discusses Fechner's work in "Physics, Metaphysics, and Fechner's Psychophysics," in The Problematic Science: Psychology in Nineteenth-Century Thought, eds. William R. Woodward. and Mitchell G. Ash (New York: Praeger, 1982), pp. 85-87.

Life is always highly problematic and what you become will rest in no small measure on the kinds of problem situations you get yourself into and have to work yourself out of. It is exceedingly difficult for a person to take thought and alter the quality and character and direction of his life. However, he can choose the direction he would like his life to take and then put himself deliberately in situations that will require the evolution of himself toward the kind of person he would like to become.

It is deep in the nature of man to make problems for himself. Man has often been called the problem-solver, but he is even more the problem-maker. Every noble achievement of men—in government, art, architecture, literature, and, above all, in science—represents a new synthesis of the human experience, deepening our understanding and enriching our spirit. But each such noble achievement creates new problems, often of unexpected dimension, and man moves eagerly on to face these new perplexities and to impose his order upon them. And so it will be, world without end.

To know a person, it is useful to know what he has done, another way of defining what problems he has solved. It is even more informative, however, to know what problems he is working on now. For these will define the growing edge of his being.

We sometimes think of the well-adjusted person as having very few problems, while, in fact, just the opposite is true. When a person is ill or injured or crushed with grief or deeply frightened, the range of his concerns become sharply constricted; his problems diminish in scope and quality and complexity.

By contrast, the healthy person, the person healthy in body and mind and spirit, is a person with many difficulties. He has a lot of problems, many of which he has deliberately chosen with the sure knowledge that in working toward their solution, he will become more the person he would like to be.

Part of the art of choosing difficulties is to select those that are indeed just manageable. If the difficulties chosen are too easy, life is boring; if they are too hard, life is defeating. The trick is to choose trouble for oneself in the direction of what he would like to become at a level of difficulty close to the edge of his competence. When one achieves this fine tuning of his life, he will know zest and joy and deep fulfillment.¹

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "The Art of Getting into Trouble," a commencement address to the graduating class of the Peabody Demonstration School, 29 May 1971. (Typewritten). Hobbs Papers. This passage was quoted by Hobbs in "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-Ed," in Teaching Children with Behavior Disorders, eds. James M. Kaufmann and Clayton D. Lewis (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1974), pp. 164-165.

Hobbs practiced what he preached. It is a most remarkable accomplishment that throughout his career he retained the requisite intellectual freedom, energy, and courage to undertake new challenges, to pursue his vision of psychology and society, and to precipitate himself into just manageable difficulties of his own choosing.

CHAPTER 2

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: 1915-1946

This chapter traces the first thirty years of Hobbs's life, beginning with his youth in South Carolina, continuing through his undergraduate and graduate studies in the 1930s and his time in the Army Air Forces during World War II, and ending with his acceptance of his first academic position at Teachers College, Columbia University in the summer of 1946.

Youth

Robert Nicholas Hobbs was born on 13 March 1915 in Greenville, South Carolina, the third of the five children of Caswell Owen Hobbs, a native of North Carolina, and his wife, Alberta Jones Hobbs. Their only daughter was their first child and Nick, or Nicky as he was known to his family and friends, was the second of the four sons. Caswell, the senior Hobbs, was a successful businessman who amassed a sizeable fortune through a number of enterprises. He also was a restless, energetic man who was not content to forge a career and establish a household in a linear fashion. He moved his family in and out of a number of houses in Greenville because he liked to buy large, tumbledown old homes, renovate them while his family lived in them, and then move on. No single business undertaking captured his full attention for long; he owned cotton fields and invested in other forms of real estate, ran a department store, and operated an automobile dealership. It seems that he was motivated in this speculative business activity not so much by the prospect of turning a profit as by the adventure of setting new and

challenging tasks for himself—of "precipitating himself into just manageable difficulties of his own choosing."¹

Despite the frequent moves and the mercurial quality of his father's business ventures, Nick's family occupied a secure place in the registry of South Carolina gentry. His father was a prominent member of the Greenville community who sat on the board of a local bank and appeared in a book written in the 1920s about South Carolina's millionaires.² Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs, adhering to the social requisites of families of their standing, were correct, genteel, and good (rather than devout) Baptists. Mrs. Hobbs especially took pains to instruct her children in the social courtesies, and Nick learned these lessons well.

The family summered in the Blue Ridge Mountains, where Nick and his brothers spent "long, languid, and adventuresome summers, pretty much on . . . [their] own."³ Nick went to camp in the mountains, and, as an older camper, he worked as a counselor, repaired the camp's canoes, and took care of an electric generator. Other boyhood jobs included work in a drug store and in an ice cream plant. These "purposeful endeavors," as he referred to boyhood jobs years later, were important to him as a child and served as a source of his belief that "disturbed children need help in restoring purpose to their lives, in gaining a sense of the future."⁴ As an adult, he would look back to this heritage from childhood as an important influence on his work with children.

¹The recollections and observations of Mary Thompson Hobbs, Nicholas Hobbs's widow, offered in interviews on 18 May and 13 October 1987 and on 1 February 1988 at her home in Nashville, Tennessee, provide much of the information about Hobbs's childhood, his high school and college years.

²*Ibid.*

³Nicholas Hobbs, "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-ED," in Teaching Children with Behavior Disorders, eds. James M. Kauffman and Clayton D. Lewis (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1974), p. 146. The article is Hobbs's personal account of some of the ideas and events that he believed contributed to Project Re-ED's theoretical structure.

⁴*Ibid.*

With the coming of the depression, the circumstances of the Hobbs family were greatly reduced. Caswell lost much of his wealth, but he retained the sense of *nobless oblige* with which persons of his stature viewed their responsibilities to the community. His response to the failure of the bank on whose board of directors he sat was to give much of what was left of his own money to needy depositors.¹

With their circumstances reduced, the Hobbs family moved to nearby Spartanburg, and the teen-aged Nick faced a future in which money for college would not be available. Nick had always attended public schools, and, while his grades did not distinguish him as a top student, he was a popular and well-respected one. He was president of the 1932 class of Spartanburg High School and editor of the school's literary magazine. He also was an avid reader and learner, but much of his reading and learning was directed toward matters that captured his interest and that were not directly related to his school work. Literature was his major interest throughout high school and his undergraduate years at The Citadel, and he took pleasure in reading widely and in honing his skills as a writer.

From the age of about 15 he knew he wanted to become a teacher, and in public school, in college, and again in graduate school, he was profoundly influenced by outstanding teachers who served as his role models. In 1965, a return visit to Spartanburg to speak before the County Mental Health Association evoked memories of one such model, his fifth grade teacher, Miss Riley, who used to thunder at him: "Nicholas, don't let the sun go down on your ignorance!" He averred that "Many a sun . . . [had] gone down since those delightful days, and . . . [he still found himself] struggling with the same problem."² An early interest in the scholarly life, rather than an

¹Mary Thompson Hobbs, interview at her home, 18 May 1987.

²Nicholas Hobbs, speech presented to the Spartanburg County Mental Health Association, Spartanburg, South Carolina, 28 January 1965. (Typewritten). Hobbs Papers.

interest in children, was the source of Hobbs's first attraction to a teaching career.

Children did not become central to him until he had begun his career after World War II as a freshly-minted assistant professor at Teachers College, Columbia University.

With money for college no longer at hand, Nick had to look to an academic scholarship for support. He was able to attend The Citadel, the military college of South Carolina, in Charleston, on a State of South Carolina beneficiary Scholarship, which he won in a competitive examination. Although The Citadel was a military college located in the deep South, it was not a bastion of conservative Southern thought. When Hobbs enrolled there in the fall of 1932, it had long been established as a college of choice for the scions of South Carolina gentry.¹ Military life never appealed to Hobbs, but if the terms of his scholarship had not stipulated that he attend The Citadel, Hobbs might very well have chosen to go there anyway.²

One should distrust any easy generalizations about the South in the 1930s. Perhaps, however, one can arrive at some tentative conclusions about the social-cultural milieu in which Hobbs spent his high school and college years by drawing on broad statements made by observers of the South during the years between the wars. The members of what came to be known as the Fugitive-Agrarian group of poets at Vanderbilt University, which included John Crowe Ransom, Alan Tate, and Robert Penn Warren, articulated one such set of broad statements.³ They became spokespersons for a Southern tradition, rich in contradictions, that had long been in the consciousness of the Southern gentry. This tradition consisted of a community of values that the Fugitive-Agrarian group held

¹Mary Thompson Hobbs, in an interview conducted on 18 May 1987, recalls that her husband characterized The Citadel in this way.

²Ibid.

³Ben Forkner and Patrick Samway discuss the Fugitive-Agrarian group in their introduction to A Modern Southern Reader (Atlanta, Georgia: Peachtree, 1986), a collection of poems, fiction, and non-fiction pieces that Forkner and Samway edited.

up as preferable to the burgeoning mass culture and urban homogeneity they saw emerging in twentieth-century America. These values were rooted in a love of the land, and among them were a strong family unit, the development of a legal system that respected differences existing in various parts of the United States, and the expressive use of language. According to this tradition, the South possessed a rich heritage in which European principles of culture continued to flourish.¹

The Hobbs family and many of the other families whose sons attended The Citadel were steeped in this tradition. They accepted the acquisition of literate, secular knowledge of Western culture as the paramount aim of schooling and they were keenly open to literature, art, and music. But this interest in acquiring knowledge and becoming "cultured" was not socially neutral. They occupied positions of prestige in a society with rigid class and racial distinctions, yet they had faith in the possibility of social progress and harbored a Jeffersonian vision of a society founded not on race or class but on personal merit.

In The Mind of the South, published in 1941, W. J. Cash observed that the changes that occurred in the South as a result of the depression contributed to the strengthening of these Jeffersonian ideals. The Southern gentry greeted President Roosevelt and his omnibus program of social legislation, known as the New Deal, with great enthusiasm because Roosevelt's ideas brought hope, in the form of improved economic conditions, to Southerners who were reeling from the social forces of the depression. With the arrival of the New Deal, a new kind of progressive upper-class Southerner emerged during the 1930s, one who no longer viewed the Northern liberal as the enemy.²

¹ Ibid.

² W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South, excerpted in The Modern Southern Reader, eds. Ben Forkner and Patrick Samway, pp. 465-80.

The generation of young Southerners coming of age in the 1930s, of which Hobbs was a member, was profoundly affected by Rooseveltian ideals. In the eyes of Hobbs's generation, the New Deal demonstrated the reformist power of such liberal social policies as massive spending programs, rational, problem-oriented, centralized planning, and emphasis on democratic values. For these young people, Roosevelt's program presented a compelling realism and a refutation of racism, poverty, and other negative legacies of the Old South. Cash observed that this generation of youth

was probably the soberest-minded the South had ever known. The colleges still swarmed with those who dreamed hopefully of acquiring riches as Babbitts, of course; but the more intelligent sort were aware that they belonged to a world quite unknown to their fathers and were willing and sometimes eager to lay aside the old sentimentality and unrealism and try to understand the case.

For all their handicaps, the universities and colleges of the South were generally to become more intelligent and more useful in the thirties than they had ever been before.¹

College Years

At The Citadel, Hobbs majored in English and minored in Education and Social Sciences, edited the college's literary magazine and student newspaper, served as president of his senior class, and, upon graduating, received the Wilson Ring, an award given each year to "that Senior voted by his classmates to be the purest, manliest, and most courteous member of the class."² For one summer during his college years he worked in an ice cream factory, during another he jerked sodas in a drug store, and during a third he reported for a Spartanburg newspaper. For two years he played

¹Ibid., p. 472.

²The information about the Wilson Ring is in an undated document titled, "Record of Robert Nicholas Hobbs," which is in the possession of Mary Thompson Hobbs. The document appears to be a kind of Curriculum vitae, developed by Hobbs when he graduated from The Citadel.

football, he stood 5'11" and weighed 150 pounds, but he played not out of any real interest in the sport but out of a desire to satisfy his father's belief that membership on the football team was somehow required of all prospective Southern gentlemen. The senior Hobbs died while his son was a student at The Citadel, and after his father's death Hobbs gave up football. Years later Hobbs remarked that he wished he could take back all the hours he had spent on the football field so he could spend them on something he really liked.¹

Hobbs's work on The Shako, The Citadel's literary magazine, granted him an opportunity to articulate for the first time some of the interests and themes that would remain central in his life's work.² In the fall of 1934, early in his junior year, Hobbs's, "An Essay Composed in Stockinged Feet," appeared in The Shako. Here, he presents the thoughts of a 19-year-old who is struggling with the question of how he should use the knowledge he was acquiring in college:

We take no time to sit down and figure out who *I am*. There is no sustained thinking. There is little reading for its own sake. We are studying too much to learn. We are acquiring knowledge but unless we take care we shall have no peace and understanding. We must watch that our education become not "sound and fury signifying nothing."

...If we get out of college only the things that we are taught we might as well be back home jumping furrows. Every cadet should demand three things from his college life—Knowledge of Facts, Love of Friends, and a Shoeless Soul, and the greatest of these is a Shoeless Soul.

In "Our Heritage of Lean Years," a piece that appeared in The Shako in the summer of 1935, Hobbs draws on the lessons learned from the depression as the bases of a

¹Mary Thompson Hobbs, interview, 18 May 1987.

²The author is indebted to Mr. Herb Nath, a reference librarian at The Citadel, who collected pieces Hobbs wrote while associated with The Shako from the archives of The Citadel and made them available.

strategy for addressing questions of practical social action. Here, in an early statement of a continuing belief, Hobbs argues that the distinction between the intellective (doubt) and the nonintellective (faith) is artificial and that one cannot avoid taking a valuative position toward a social condition.

... the lean years in their trying uncertainty have given us doubt and faith. We have had the courage to doubt the sincerity of the selfish interests who wave an American flag with one hand and with the other throttle the life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness of the common man. And we have had faith to believe that this nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to equality can still attain those ideals. . . . Let us doubt—and seek everywhere for an answer to our questions, opening our minds to every argument for the good it may contain, weighing every scrap of propaganda; suffering oppression by none, allowing all forces to meet and resolve themselves in their component truth. And then we must have the faith to love that truth like life itself and the faith in ourselves to proclaim it in the face of all opposition.

In his last issue as editor, which appeared in the summer of 1936, Hobbs published, "Where Blows the Wind," a poem that captures a number of his abiding concerns, even as it reveals the overwrought sentiments and overblown style of a 21-year-old. Written in the first person, the poem places Hobbs in the outdoors, acutely sensitive to the weather and the landscape. It contains allusions to art and to the classics, and it gives early expression to the optimism, the faith in human nature, and the depth of feeling for the disadvantaged that would distinguish his work in later years. The poem reads, in part, as follows:

I walked over a hill one night
and downward toward a marsh.
A far deep bell tolled and the wind brought me its moan
and whipped my shirt to my body and cooled my eyes, sore from study. . .

I told the wind
that now man was noble and could see the truth
and love it more than life.
I told this to the wind—

the wind that had rippled silver a cup of hemlock
in days long since passed. . . .

I told the wind,
I told the wind that I loved justice and liberty and truth,
and my fellowmen, and that above all else, I loved beauty.
I told this to the wind—
the wind that had brushed a Madonna's warm lips
and pressed them to Angelo's cool canvas.

The wind heard.

The dark clouds above, torn ragged, and sere,
grew bright as if a halo would burst forth in divine gladness.
With a mighty silent sweep the wind
brushed clean a brilliant moon and laid open
my ready heart to beauty unendurable.
I stood uplifted, my being shattered in ecstasy.

Then from across the low grey marsh,
quiet now in its centuries of sleep,
from across the low grey marsh
where stood a silvered shanty,
there came a low muffled sob of a hungry child.

The silence cracked—
The wind picked up a mass of black
and hurled it across the moon.

Taken as a whole, the dozen or so pieces by Hobbs that appeared in The Shako reveal an active and imaginative mind working to discover a strategy for putting knowledge to use in the service of pressing social concerns. At the time he left The Citadel, Hobbs had not yet identified the specific issues that would drive his life-long social action, but he had painted in broad strokes the fundamental problem that would motivate his professional work for the rest of his life: defining the intricate relationship between social science knowledge, values and morality, and social problems. With one or two exceptions, his pieces in The Shako possess high seriousness; they are homilies in which the young Hobbs proclaims the importance of free argument and debate, examines the meaning of Jeffersonian democracy, decries society's inequities, and pleads for educational institutions that not only foster knowledge but also cultivate in students an

appreciation for the way that feelings interact with knowledge. These pieces give evidence of the time and energy Hobbs devoted to the activities of the mind that he valued most: engaging in sustained thinking, reading for its own sake, and exploring feelings. Hobbs's pieces also give evidence of his desire to obtain a forum for his ideas. Even as an undergraduate, he possessed a self-confidence and an assertiveness that led him to make his ideas known to others. For him, it was not enough to grapple with fundamental issues in private in his stockinged feet. He wanted his ideas to have an impact on others. And by articulating his ideas in written form in a clear and persuasive way, he hoped to become well-liked and respected and to make a contribution to the solution of pressing social problems.

Graduate Study

On 3 June 1936, within days of his graduation from The Citadel, Hobbs wrote a letter to Sidney L. Pressey, a professor of educational psychology in the the Department of Psychology at The Ohio State University.¹ "I am writing you," he began, "because I want you to help me equip myself to help education." Hobbs went on to state that he was without money for graduate school, that his applications for scholarships had brought only printed forms of refusal, and that, as a result, he was taking a "long chance" by writing Pressey.

The central paragraph of the letter read:

I know definitely what I want to do. I want to be a professor who could make a college an educational institution instead of a subject matter mill where various abstractions are ground out to multitudes en masse. Specifically, I want to be able to take students as individuals, first help them with the problems of adjustment which are so important and which are so often ignored, and then teach

¹Nicholas Hobbs to Sidney L. Pressey, 3 June 1936. Hobbs Papers.

them how to read (even College seniors do not know how), how to use a library, how to speak, and finally, I would want to be able to follow the reading of every student in the small college in order that I might see each individual's peculiar need and interest and try to lead from what he knows to those higher areas of experience which will ever remain closed to him if he is not given individual help. I want to be a teacher that [sic] can help people and not be an ossuary.

Two themes in this letter stand out. First, at the heart of Hobbs's ambition to become a college professor is an interest in students rather than in a specific academic discipline. His statements place in sharp focus his ambitions with respect to students, and he has specific ideas about what he could contribute to individual students. He assigns the pejorative label "subject matter mill" to the college in which the disciplines hold sway and contrasts it to the educational institution where he can "be a teacher that can help people and not be an ossuary." Second, Hobbs conceives of the proper college as a small, manageable community of learners. Tucked in the middle of the paragraph quoted above is a reference to the "small college" in which he hopes to "follow the reading of every student" and to "see each individual's peculiar need and interest." For Hobbs, the proper business of an educational institution extends beyond simply dealing with subject matter in classrooms. He views education as an intimate, cooperative enterprise emphasizing needs and interests rather than factual content.

Pressey's response to Hobbs's letter was perfunctory.¹ He could not offer long-term scholarship support, but he did offer Hobbs a six-week summer job as a laboratory assistant and suggested that Hobbs enroll in the upcoming summer term at Ohio State so that Pressey could become acquainted with him. Pressey suggested further that Hobbs spend some time teaching school to acquire "valuable experience" rather than go immediately to graduate school. Although his response to Hobbs's letter did not reveal

¹Sidney L. Pressey to Nicholas Hobbs, 5 June 1936. Hobbs Papers.

it, Pressey was quite taken by Hobbs's initial contact with him. In later years, when he and Hobbs had established their life-long friendship (Hobbs would write Pressey's obituary for the American Psychologist in 1980), Pressey liked to recount the story of how a young man from the South had written a letter in which he used a word, "ossuary," that Pressey did not know. According to the story, Pressey decided then and there that any young man who used such a word would have to come to Ohio State.¹

Hobbs followed Pressey's suggestions and attended Ohio State during the summer term of 1936 and again during the summer of 1937. He also found work as a high school teacher of English and political science, first for one year at Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville, Georgia and then for one year at Spartanburg High School, the school from which he had graduated. His two years as a teacher confirmed his interest in education and allowed him to help meet his family's pressing financial needs. As mentioned above, Hobbs's father had died during Hobbs's junior year at the Citadel. For a time, his concern for his family's uncertain financial status caused him to consider becoming a physician, but he felt no calling for medicine. His interest in that profession was fueled only by its earning potential, and he abandoned all thoughts of becoming a doctor when he obtained his first salaried position as a teacher.²

In the fall of 1938, supported by his savings from two years of teaching and a graduate assistantship in the Department of Psychology at Ohio State, Hobbs began his study of psychology in earnest. The reason Hobbs chose Pressey as the recipient of that momentous letter is unknown, but one item of information brings some evidence to bear on the mystery. In 1933 Sidney L. Pressey and Francis P. Robinson, both at Ohio State, published their educational psychology textbook, Psychology and the New Education,

¹Mary Thompson Hobbs, interview, 18 May 1987.

²Ibid.

and shortly thereafter Hobbs took an education course with the title, "Psychology and the New Education." It is likely that the course took its title from the Pressey and Robinson book, that the book served as the textbook for the course, and that through it Hobbs was introduced to Pressey's work.¹ Pressey had acquired a national reputation when he exhibited a prototype teaching machine at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in 1925. His textbook on educational psychology was a kind of blueprint for putting learning theory into practice, and his stated intent in writing the book was to place the naturalistic study of children and the learning of school subjects on center stage in the discipline of educational psychology, moving animal experimentation and work in the psychological laboratory off to the wings. His ideas must have made quite an impression on the young Hobbs.

At Ohio State, Hobbs worked closely with Pressey as a teaching assistant in Pressey's unconventional educational psychology course. The course, which operated as an informal laboratory and had students work collaboratively in small groups, attracted a great deal of attention at the University and had many visitors. Hobbs's other teaching responsibilities as a graduate student extended to a good half of the courses at Ohio State that had to do with children. In addition to Pressey, Hobbs worked with Carl Rogers. When he joined the Ohio State faculty in 1940, Rogers obtained his first full-time academic appointment. He had just published his first book, The Clinical Treatment of

¹Mary Thompson Hobbs is unable to shed light on the question of how her husband happened to write to Pressey. She is unaware of the course with the same title as Pressey's book, but she recalls that her husband had told her that one of his professors at The Citadel had suggested that he contact Pressey about graduate school. In a letter to the author dated 6 December 1987, James G. Harrison, Professor Emeritus of English at The Citadel and Hobbs's major professor, indicates that he does not know how Hobbs happened to contact Pressey. Thomas M. Stephens, Associate Dean of the College of Education at Ohio State, who knew both Pressey and Hobbs, also was unable to shed light on the question in a telephone interview conducted on 1 November 1987. In "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-Ed," Hobbs states only that he wrote Pressey of his aspirations to go to graduate school and makes no mention of how he happened to decide to write Pressey.

the Problem Child, in 1939, and he was working on the ideas and building the theory that eventually came to be known as nondirective or client-centered therapy.¹

In 1939 Hobbs completed his Masters thesis, "Some Determinants of Ideology: A Psychological Interpretation," under Pressey's direction. Concurrent with his work on his thesis was his participation in the preparation of Pressey's book, Life: A Psychological Survey, written with J. Elliott Janney and Raymond G. Kuhlen, and also published in 1939. Pressey's book continued his work in a broadly conceived educational psychology which tried to embrace both the psychology of learning and a developmental psychology covering the entire life span. In his thesis, Hobbs cast a similarly large net. His thesis was neither a report of a carefully controlled laboratory study nor a neat analysis of test scores or survey results; rather it represented a step toward creating his own theory of human nature. The thesis was a broad, integrative undertaking, designed to create an organizational structure for all that he had read and considered in the scholarly literature of psychology and education. He drew on this literature to investigate how attitudes, beliefs, and values form and change throughout life. The version of the problem he found so compelling was that of achieving "an unassailable organization of life around dominant values of convincing worth."² For Hobbs, such an organization could be achieved only by intelligent planning, bolstered by the liberalizing influences of schooling and the guiding influences of others.

In a striking passage in his Master's thesis, Hobbs discussed what he referred to as the "problem of success." In this passage, he offered brief, descriptive sketches of two men, both "well known" to him. In the sketches, Hobbs contrasted two sets of dominant

¹Carl Rogers recalls his time at Ohio State in his chapter in A History of Psychology in Autobiography, Volume V, eds. Edwin G. Boring and Gardner Lindzey, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 343-84.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Some Determinants of Ideology: A Psychological Interpretation," (Masters thesis, The Ohio State University, 1939), p. 164.

values—"the one fame and financial success, the other, a home, study, and an institution to build, to be a part of."¹ The first sketch portrayed the prosperous educational entrepreneur, given the pseudonym "Rousseau," who was the headmaster of the military school where Hobbs had spent an unhappy year at his first teaching position.² The second sketch was a thinly disguised autobiography in which Hobbs assigned himself the pseudonym, "Elford Randolph."

Randolph was the son of a well to do [sic] merchant and cotton broker. When he was young money mattered little to his family; they were not wealthy, but there was a town house and a country place, and books, travel, and an established social position. Randolph read a great deal, and became interested in literature and writing, went to summer camps every year, had a happy childhood. Then just after the war, his father lost all of his money. This sudden economic shift only served to bring the family closer together. They were even happier than before. Randolph was the winner of a scholarship to college too, but it was for academic excellence, though he played football. His life in college showed most interest in literary activities, enjoying friendships. He graduated with honors. He, too, had chosen teaching as his life's work, and accepted a job at the school of Headmaster Rousseau. He spent just one year there; he felt that the whole thing there was sham and pretense. He did not find there what he wanted in teaching—a chance to study, to teach, and to be with intelligent, interesting people. It was strange that at the end of the first year Headmaster Rousseau offered him a job that would some day pay as much as \$15,000 a year. Randolph turned it down, accepted instead a fellowship to an eastern university. He got his doctorate there, and is now teaching in a small Southern college, making a small salary. But he has a family and a home, books, friends, and he is part of a college and a community and he is happy. Is he a "success"?³

¹Ibid., p. 156.

²Mary Thompson Hobbs, interview, 18 May 1987, recalls that her husband had recounted that his responsibilities at the military academy included the recruitment of students whose families could pay the academy's fees. This task was especially onerous for Hobbs because he came to see that the academy existed primarily to provide an income for the headmaster rather than to provide a quality education to its students.

³Nicholas Hobbs, "Some Determinants of Ideology: A Psychological Interpretation," pp. 154-155.

This passage presents a picture of the career aspirations of the 24-year-old Hobbs in 1939, a year before he was struck by the ideas of Carl Rogers. The picture of Hobbs revealed here is still quite similar to the picture revealed in his letter to Pressey written three years earlier. His ambitions continue to center on teaching and participation in the activities of a community of scholars, not on achievement and acclaim in an academic discipline. He possesses confidence in the power of psychology the "life science" to discover truths about human nature, but he does not yet assign himself the academic and professional appellation "psychologist."

Rogers' work drew Hobbs away from his focus on educational psychology and stimulated his interest in individual psychotherapy, group therapy, and play therapy with children. Like Pressey, Rogers had an antipathy toward the trend in psychology characterized by operational definitions, objective methods, and the emphasis on the concrete and the specific. Both men held theoretical orientations that contrasted with this trend and emphasized the whole spectrum of human behavior and a conception of the person as a concerned participant in either the process of psychotherapy (Rogers) or the process of learning (Pressey). Pressey's central assumptions—his concept of the social sciences as dedicated to service and his conviction that common sense, ethical insight and more complete understanding of those affected by the decisions of social scientists are essential—reinforced Hobbs's own predilections about the practical use of social science knowledge.¹

While Pressey provided Hobbs with a model of the psychologist with a service orientation, Rogers stood as a model of the psychologist as theory builder. His four-year

¹Sidney L. Pressey discusses his ideas about the service function of social science in his chapter in *A History of Psychology in Autobiography*, Volume V, eds. Edwin G. Boring and Gardner Lindzey, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 319-39.

stay (from 1940 to 1944) at Ohio State was a heady period of intense growth for Rogers, and, as a young professor with energy and new ideas who was working on the "outer edge," he attracted a "choice group" of doctoral students.¹ Rogers' work offered Hobbs a compelling picture of the salutary power of psychotherapy, and for a number of years Hobbs became an apostle for nondirective therapy. In addition, Rogers gave Hobbs his first exposure to an "intuitive psychology" whose basic elements were an appreciation of the critical role of time as a healing agent, a strong reliance on the strengths of people, the importance of the nonrational component of thinking, and the relatively minor role of insight as a source of therapeutic gain.²

Military Service

By April 1941 Hobbs had completed his language requirements, examinations, and course work. At that time, having a reserve commission in the Coast Artillery Corps Reserve, he was promoted to First Lieutenant and called to active duty as an assistant professor of Military Science and Tactics at The Citadel. In January 1942 he was transferred, at his request, to a unit in the Army Air Forces' Aviation Psychology Program, commanded by Laurance F. Shaffer, at Maxwell Field, Alabama. (Shaffer, former Chairman of the Department of Psychology at Carnegie Technological University in Pittsburgh, would become Chairman of the Department of Guidance at Teachers College, Columbia University after the war.) Hobbs's assignment in this unit was to develop and validate tests of interest, temperament, and personality that were part of a

¹In "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-ED," Hobbs refers to his experiences with Rogers at Ohio State. He uses the expression "outer edge" to describe the work in which Rogers was engaged for his entire career. Rogers recalls his time at Ohio State in his chapter in A History of Psychology in Autobiography, Volume V, and uses the word "choice" to describe the small group of graduate students who worked closely with him.

²In "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-Ed," p.147, "intuitive psychology" is the term Hobbs uses to label Rogers' work.

large battery of tests for the classification of aircrewmembers as pilots, bombardiers, and navigators. In September 1942 he was selected to head a small research detachment at Tyndall Field, Florida working on the problems of selection, training, and evaluation of flexible gunners, those who manned the turrets and hand-held guns of multi-engine bombers. The nearly three years Hobbs spent in flexible gunnery were rich in many types of experiences that centered on improving methods of selection and training. In May 1944 he became the director of research at the Army Air Forces' Central School for Flexible Gunnery at Laredo, Texas, a position requiring the coordination of the research and developmental activities of about 250 scientists and technical personnel. A year later he was given command of the psychological services branch of the Army Air Forces' convalescent hospital at Cochran Field, Georgia. In this assignment he was again under the command of Laurance F. Shaffer. In February 1946 Hobbs was discharged as a Lieutenant Colonel.¹

During the war, Hobbs was a participant in the "psychological insurgency" that provided a welter of opportunities and new prestige for psychologists with applied rather than academic interests. Almost two-thirds of the male psychologists in the United States under the age of 38 entered military service during the war, a higher service rate than that of the general male population of the same age, and the holders of doctorates served in the same proportion as those with less advanced degrees.² As the beneficiary of an unprecedented demand for its services, professional psychology made contributions which were significant not only to practical military aims, but also to general

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Personal History Data," 16 January 1950. (Typewritten). Hobbs Papers.

²Lorenz J. Finson, in, "The Psychological Insurgency: 1936-1945," Journal of Social Issues 42 (January 1986): 21-33, uses the expression "psychological insurgency" to label the professional expansion that psychology experienced in the years preceding and during World War II. Donald S. Napoli, in, Architects of Adjustment: The History of the Psychological Profession in the United States (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat, 1981), briefly discusses the history of the Army Air Forces Aviation Psychology program.

psychological research. The Army Air Forces' Aviation Psychology Program grew in size and importance as a solution to the problem of how to distinguish potential pilots from potential navigators and bombardiers became ever more pressing. The role of clinical psychology in the war effort also grew as more and more men entered combat. In the spring of 1942 there were no psychologists serving in military hospitals because the military considered the psychological problems of men in combat to be personality defects rather than wounds of battle. Until manpower needs finally sparked a concern for treatment late in 1943, soldiers with psychological disorders simply had been discharged. By the end of the war hundreds of clinical psychologists were serving in military hospitals, correctional institutions, and basic training centers.¹

Like many psychologists who served in the military, Hobbs viewed military service as both a responsibility and an opportunity. He wrote Pressey in October 1942 that he had never thought he could enjoy the Army so much and that he felt fortunate to get work that was "fascinating and important."² The military introduced him to the burgeoning establishment of professional psychology and granted him his first opportunities to conduct applied work in testing and selection and to practice psychotherapy in a clinical setting. Hobbs's work in test construction focused on tests of interests, and he originated a test designed to measure the interests likely to be associated with success in bombardier, navigation, or pilot training. This test, called the Technical Vocabulary Information Test, was based on the assumption that one's technical or specialized vocabulary will usually reflect the nature of one's interests, and that previous interests are an important factor in aircrew training. The test was printed and incorporated in the

¹ Ibid.

² Nicholas Hobbs to Sidney L. Pressey, 14 October 1942. Hobbs Papers.

various versions of the battery of tests that were given to over one million men by the end of the war.¹

Under Hobbs's direction, the program in the selection, training, and evaluation of flexible gunners at Laredo was unique in the Army and had few parallels in the other services or in civilian activities.² It was a cooperative research program which was handsomely funded, and it combined the endeavors of a varied group of specialists from such disciplines as physics, mathematics, mechanical engineering, psychology, and statistics, as well as administrative personnel and professional writers and artists. Under Hobbs's direction, the program conducted a wide range of activities, including the construction and validation of selection and achievement tests, studies of learning and of curriculum construction, studies of the transfer of training from various practice procedures to ultimate skill in flexible gunnery, and studies of the emotional adjustment of gunners after combat.³

After he left flexible gunnery, Hobbs's work at the convalescent hospital afforded experience in clinical psychology and reinforced the interest in individual and group psychotherapy that he had developed with Rogers at Ohio State. His work in clinical psychology also provided him with a setting for the report, "Psychological Research and Services in an Army Air Forces Convalescent Hospital," that he would submit to Ohio State, at Sidney Pressey's urging, in lieu of a traditional dissertation. Pressey had long been a proponent of "acceleration," believing that students—whether they are first graders reading primers or doctoral students conducting research—should not be asked to

¹Donald S. Napoli, Architects of Adjustment: The History of the Psychological Profession in the United States.

²Hobbs himself makes this assessment of the program he directed in a memorandum to Harold E. Burt, Chairman, Department of Psychology, The Ohio State University, 9 March 1946. Hobbs Papers.

³Ibid.

waste time performing tasks that they already had demonstrated they could do.¹ Hobbs's report was primarily a descriptive account of the interrelated functions of service and research in a program of applied psychology, the goal of which was to speed the return to health of men disabled by combat. His purpose was to illustrate the thesis that psychologists working in applied fields should constantly seek to make their services more effective by engaging in a concurrent program of research. One of the chief components of his report was an investigation of a technique for the quantitative analysis and evaluation of group psychotherapy.

First Academic Appointment

Upon his return to civilian life late in February 1946, Hobbs went back to Ohio State to complete his work on his dissertation and to weigh employment possibilities for the 1946-47 academic year. The question of whether to pursue clinical or educational psychology confused his search for employment, but after talking with Pressey and corresponding with Rogers, who had moved to The University of Chicago, he decided to seek an academic position in clinical psychology. He had already received such an offer from Laurance F. Shaffer at Teachers College, and other offers from psychologists with whom he had worked in the military—from Frank A. Geldard of the Department of Psychology at the University of Virginia in clinical psychology, and from Wayne Dennis of the Department of Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh in educational psychology—would soon be forthcoming. Hobbs wanted to get settled into a clinical position that would afford him opportunities to teach, engage in counseling, and conduct research—opportunities that he hoped would build a solid foundation for the

¹Thomas M. Stephens, interview, 1 November 1987, states that Pressey often recounted the "deal" he had initiated with the graduate school at Ohio State that led to the acceptance of Hobbs's report about his work in the military in lieu of a traditional dissertation.

administrative position to which he aspired. He also wanted to become identified with a college or university in the South to whose growth he might contribute over a long period of years.¹

In letters written shortly after his discharge from the military, he discussed his conviction that a diverse group of psychologists and other social scientists could lend some assistance to the solution of the problems of peace just as the cooperative research group at Laredo, Texas, of which he had been a member, had done to the problems of war.² Hobbs gave voice to his general ideas about how social scientists could marshal their efforts to help solve pressing national and international problems. He wrote that he felt deeply that the social scientists who had done so much to win the war must not withdraw to their universities and leave everything to political leaders. Moreover, he expressed the belief, shared by many social scientists, that social problems had grown beyond the power of traditional, hard-headed political practice to solve and now required the expertise of social scientists who formerly had been concerned only casually with such problems.

Although Hobbs did not want to leave the South, the position at Teachers College appealed to him because it granted him the counseling, teaching, and research responsibilities he sought. It offered him work at a child guidance center, and placed him in proximity to the myriad opportunities in New York to learn about clinical psychology.³ The other disadvantage of the position arose primarily from the great size of the institution and the large number of students with whom Hobbs would work. Shaffer

¹Hobbs outlines his career ambitions in a letter to Frank A. Geldard of the Department of Psychology at the University of Virginia, 12 March 1946. Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs to Roger W. Russell, Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh, 19 March 1946; to Carl R. Rogers, University of Chicago, 20 March 1946. Hobbs Papers.

³Nicholas Hobbs to Roger Russell, 19 March 1946. Hobbs Papers.

sympathized with Hobbs's concern regarding size and the concomitant difficulty in establishing close relationships with students and gave Hobbs assurances that he would be protected from excessively large enrollments in his classes.

In the middle of March 1946, Hobbs accepted the offer from Shaffer. The following June he was awarded his doctorate by Ohio State, and on 3 July he began his duties as assistant professor in the Department of Guidance at Teachers College. His salary was \$4500 for the ten-month academic year, supplemented by \$750 for the six-week summer session, a handsome starting salary that only a few schools—Harvard, the University of Chicago, and, possibly, Stanford—could match.¹ His immediate responsibilities were to teach courses in individual testing, to supervise advanced students doing counseling in the Guidance Laboratory, and to advise doctoral students in their dissertation work.²

At the age of 31, Hobbs entered the profession of psychology in a climate of great possibility and of great optimism. Insistent social problems clamored for solution, and psychologists and other social scientists were eager to prove their worth as problem solvers. The faith of psychologists, of policy makers, and of the members of the general public in the power of psychology to solve social problems placed immense service demands on the discipline. In 1946, two psychologists, John G. Darley and Dael Wolfle (the Executive Secretary of the American Psychological Association), noting these demands, observed that "it seems as if the ivory tower had been literally blown out from under psychology."³ In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the concerns of many psychologists were being extended beyond the individual patient to the well-being of the

¹Hobbs made this claim as he recalled his early career in an interview with Samuel Ashcroft, Professor of Special Education, Emeritus, Peabody College, 1 January 1983. The author is indebted to Prof. Ashcroft for making the tape of the interview available.

²John K. Norton, Director, Division of the Organization and Administration of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, to Nicholas Hobbs, 8 March 1946. Hobbs Papers.

³John G. Darley and Dael Wolfle, "Can We Meet the Formidable Demand for Psychological Service?," *American Psychologist* 1 (June 1946): 180.

community at large, and popular demand for the services of the mental health guild swelled. Hobbs was an enthusiastic participant in this movement.

CHAPTER 3

THE PERIOD OF INVENTION, 1946-1961: ESCAPING THE DEMANDS OF ROUTINES AND REVERTING TO SIMPLER WAYS OF EXPERIENCING

It seems that productive people who are also creative have the ability to let themselves go, to escape the binding demands of daily routines, and to cut free from the web of expectancies that gets woven about us by our families, friends, colleagues teachers, professors, bosses, audiences, and people in general. Creative people can revert to simpler ways of experiencing, to fresher ways of perceiving. They can throw away the common templates that are used to order the world and confidently seek simpler, newer ones. Now this, of course, is intensely personal business . . .

Nicholas Hobbs, 1960¹

This chapter examines Nicholas Hobbs's work during the period that begins in the summer of 1946, when he arrived at Teachers College, Columbia University, and ends in the spring of 1961, when, as principal investigator of the Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children (Re-ED), he received a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to establish residential schools for troubled children. This fifteen-year period is designated as Hobbs's period of "invention" because these years saw the first appearance and the development of his ideas about: (1) helping others, particularly troubled children—who became the focus of his attention during the latter part of this period; and (2) his own role as a social scientist working on practical social problems in an academic setting—a role in which he specialized his work according to topic and, above all, to problem, not according to the organization of academic disciplines. In addition, during this period Hobbs gave consideration to matters of value in his work,

¹"Motivation to High Achievement," in Working with Superior Students: Theories and Practices, ed. Bruce Shertzer.(Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1960), pp. 263-4.

and, in so doing, unbound himself from a commitment to traditional positivist assumptions that give preeminence to establishing the "facts" and that demand verification of theoretical ideas.

"Invention"—the term originates with Hobbs himself. He used it in the speech delivered in August 1982, a few months before his death, in which he presented an account of his life's work.¹ In the speech, Hobbs offered the term to describe one aspect of his work with and for children. "Invention" also serves as one of the three major themes of Hobbs's professional life, and these themes cut across the various substantive areas of his interest and the various kinds of scholarly activity, policy development, and institutional service he undertook. The term "invention" has another function: Here it serves as a label for the first fifteen years of Hobbs's professional life.

The passage quoted above is Hobbs's statement of his principle of sustained creative accomplishment—of invention. The passage comes from an article, written near the end of his period of invention, about applying psychological knowledge about motivation to teaching gifted children. It not only presents Hobbs's ideas about the special abilities of people who are creative and productive, it also describes his own behavior during this period. Ironically, the passage can be read as a retrospective account of his own abilities at this early stage.

In the passage, Hobbs gives emphasis to two abilities of productive and creative people; their ability to "let themselves go" or "cut free from the binding demands of daily routines," and their ability to "revert to simpler ways of experiencing" or "throw away the common templates that are used to order the world." These abilities set the productive, creative person apart from others, and, as Hobbs states in the last portion of the passage, this process of setting one's self apart is an "intensely personal business." For Hobbs,

¹See chapter 1 for a discussion of the speech.

achieving the status of an "outsider," one who retains a large measure of independence and remains tentative and skeptical about the value of academic disciplines and psychotherapeutic schools, is a necessary precondition for invention. Hobbs established this precondition in his own career by constantly looking for the *simpler*, more fundamental questions that lurked under the surface of the issues that most concerned the psychological establishment. The word "simpler" appears in two places in the quoted passage—"simpler ways of experiencing"; "simpler templates that are used to order the world." For Hobbs, achieving simplicity in experiencing and ordering the world is the key to identifying fundamental questions that are good targets for investigation.

The abilities to step outside routines and to simplify one's way of seeing as emphasized in this passage also require as catalysts both a degree of self-confidence and a compelling vision of means and ends. Hobbs possessed these qualities. Like the creative, productive people about whom he wrote in the quoted passage, he was confident in his ability to get things done. Although, in many respects, he deliberately set himself outside the established circles of his profession, Hobbs knew how to work within the establishment and how to negotiate the elaborate structures of academic and professional institutions. He also knew how to persuade others to do what he thought they should do; he possessed charm, refinement, the ability to build a clear and cogent position with respect to the issue at hand, and the verbal facility to express his position with grace. As to ends, Hobbs acted on his deeply felt ideas about the role of the social scientist and about the uses of psychology in the service of pressing human problems.

During his period of invention, Hobbs paid particular attention to three questions that lay at the heart of three prominent issues for professional psychology. The first of these issues dates to the years following World War II, when rival schools of psychotherapy battled over the issue of the relative effectiveness of their techniques. Eschewing the

issue of techniques, Hobbs concentrated on the question of how to produce individual professional help providers and how to create communities that could help people master their lives. The fundamental question for Hobbs here was not achieving technical competence, rather it was understanding the meaning and practice of helping others.

Similarly, when the profession of psychology set out to become more rigorous scientifically and entered into competition with the medical-psychiatric establishment as a source of mental health knowledge and as a provider of mental health care, Hobbs focussed on the question of how to reconcile interests in scientific rigor and in the growth of the profession of psychology with a desire to promote procedures that make the value commitments of psychologists more explicit in their daily work. The fundamental question here was bringing "values into significant operation" in applied social science.¹

Finally, during a period when psychologists were concentrating on the adjustment problems of returning military veterans, Hobbs fixed his attention on the problems of making schools, mental health institutions, and various other community agencies more responsive to the special needs of children whose intellectual gifts or whose emotional disorders or intellectual deficiencies reduced their capacity to achieve health, growth, and the realization of their potentialities. The fundamental question here was establishing ways to engage children in "learning experiences in more constructive living."²

Hobbs's attention to these three fundamental questions provides both the contexts for his acts of invention and the material for major organizational divisions of this chapter.

¹This phrase comes from a letter to William Workman, an old friend from South Carolina who had written Hobbs after he had seen an article in the New York Times about Hobbs's work on the American Psychological Association's committee on ethical standards for psychologists, 3 January 1952. Hobbs Papers.

²This phrase comes from Hobbs's review of Harry Stack Sullivan: The Psychiatric Interview, ed. Helen Swick Perry and Mary Ladd Garvel, in Contemporary Psychology 1 (February 1956): 44.

Historical Context: 1946-1961

Hobbs spent his four years at Teachers College, a year at Louisiana State, and the first years of his tenure at George Peabody College during the period from 1945 to 1955. Historian Eric F. Goldman has labeled these years the "crucial decade." What made the decade crucial, in Goldman's view, was that both international and domestic issues became the battleground for liberals and conservatives who were looking for an answer to the fundamental question of how to define America. In the years following the war there was a new prosperity and a new optimism in the nation, but lurking below the surface was an uncertainty about the future and a fear that the pendulum might swing again, that boom might be followed by bust, peace by war. During this period, lower-status groups enjoyed greater economic and social opportunities than they had ever known, but widespread strikes and shortages, the "Bomb," and the Russians posed threats to the prospect of continued national progress. Goldman views this decade as the final period in the "half-century of revolution" during which Americans experienced jolting breaks with tradition and responded by developing a broad consensus about the value of continuing social change in domestic affairs and of coexistence and containment on the international scene.¹ For Goldman, these two issues were actually parts of a larger problem—"a world-wide struggle of poor people or men of lower status to achieve more income and more of a sense of human dignity."²

The mental health movement in the United States during the years following the war was one aspect of an emerging domestic consensus about the value of continuing social change. During this period, psychology became increasingly important and society

¹Eric F. Goldman, *The Crucial Decade—And After: America, 1945-1960* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956, 1960).

²*Ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

became more willing to adopt psychological ways of thinking and to accept the results of psychological research. This was not a movement which was invisible to those who were caught up in it; a number of psychologists who were writing during the postwar years also commented on the movement.¹ As a movement, it was vast and vaguely defined, but the increased willingness of the community to accept responsibility for the emotional well-being of its citizens was its driving force. Fillmore Sanford, the Executive Director of the American Psychological Association (APA) in the 1950s, attributed the growth of this movement to three factors: (1) the tendency to conceive of human behavior in new naturalistic terms that had replaced earlier theological or moralistic theories of behavior; (2) the American belief in the improvability of society; and (3) the rising level of aspiration for health and well-being.²

In Sanford's view, the activities and interests of professional psychologists were not the prime propellants of the social movement that brought mental health issues to the nation's attention. The stimulus for this movement did not move from the "top downward"—that is, from professional psychologists "down" to the general populace—rather, it moved from the "bottom upward," propelled by the broad popular consensus about the value of continuing social change which Goldman recognizes. One group of psychologists was an enthusiastic participant in this movement.³ It was made up of those

¹Robert R. Sears, "Clinical Training Facilities: 1947," American Psychologist 2 (June 1947): 199-205; Fillmore H. Sanford, "Across the Secretary's Desk," American Psychologist 6 (February 1951): 42-44; "Psychology and the Mental Health Movement," American Psychologist 13 (February 1958): 80-85.

²Fillmore H. Sanford, "Psychology and the Mental Health Movement."

³The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), a division of the American Psychological Association, was a major organ of this subculture of psychologists. The society established its journal, the Journal of Social Issues, in 1945, and on the masthead of each issue the society's Statement of Purpose appeared. In Volume 6, Number 4, 1950, the Statement of Purpose read, in part: "The SPSSI is a group of several hundred social psychologists and allied social scientists with a particular interest in research on the psychological aspects of key social issues. The society believes it has an obligation to help get scientific knowledge into the bloodstream of applied social action by building as many bridges as possible between theory and

who were critical of their profession's concentration on the individual patient while it ignored the problems of the community at large. These psychologists wanted to break the prevailing institutional paradigm for mental health care that called for treatment in large hospitals where patients with mental illnesses, like those with physical illnesses, would get "better." They were interested in programs of prevention that assumed a public-health rather than a clinical frame of reference. In addition, they acknowledged that professional helping roles could no longer be limited to psychologists and psychiatrists, but also included counselors, social workers, special educators, nurses, and child care workers.

In 1953 there were an estimated 22,000 psychologists in the United States, about one-half of whom held membership in the APA.¹ The majority of these psychologists were concerned primarily with individual psychotherapy and with achieving independence from and parity with the medical-psychiatric establishment.² According to Seymour Sarason, Carl Rogers' book Counseling and Psychotherapy, published in 1942, had a great impact on the formation of these concerns. The book "defined (and made extraordinarily interesting) the problems of people in terms of individual psychology: Problems were personal or narrowly interpersonal and for all practical purposes independent of the nature and structure of the social order."³ In addition, the

practice in group, community, national, and international living." Hobbs was an early member of the society and published "Some Reflections on Empirical Investigations of Ethics, in Volume 6, Number 4, 1950, pp. 56-60.

¹Dael Wolfle, "Comparisons Between Psychologists and Other Professional Groups," American Psychologist 10 (June 1955): 231-237. Wolfle defines psychologists as "persons with diverse educational backgrounds employed in work in which the majority of workers have a bachelor's degree or some higher degree in psychology."(p. 231)

²Seymour.B.Sarason, "An Asocial Psychology and A Misdirected Clinical Psychology," American Psychologist 36 (June 1981): 827-836; Fillmore F. Sanford, "Psychology and the Mental Health Movement."

³Seymour B. Sarason, "An Asocial Psychology and A Misdirected Clinical Psychology," p. 830.

book helped rekindle the controversy about the relative efficacy of the various modes of individual treatment and helped make individual psychotherapy, in Sarason's words, a kind of "mental aspirin" for popular consumption.

Rogers' book also promoted the growth of a movement within the mental health professions which developed rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s; the movement is known as the "humanistic" or "third-force" approach. (Humanists viewed their system as an alternative to the the first two "forces" in psychology, psychoanalysis and behaviorism.) In attempting to establish their own bailiwick, the humanists reacted against what they considered to be two dangerous forms of determinism, that of the behaviorists, which held that human beings function deterministically in response to their environment, and that of the psychoanalysts, which took the position that behavior is determined by biological forces, past events, and unconscious forces. Beginning in the early 1950s, the work of Rogers, and of Abraham Maslow, helped foster a lively debate about the fundamental needs which drive human behavior, the methods of clinical work with troubled people, and the nature of the therapist-client relationship. The humanists granted axiomatic status to the assertion that self-realization is a person's primary goal in life. Their position regarding the nature of human beings both emphasized the exercise of conscious choice and free will and the influence of the present and the future on behavior.¹

In Sigmund Koch's view, the drive of the profession of psychology during the years after the war toward rapid institutionalization, greater rigor according to the methods of the natural sciences, and an elevation in status that would rival the medical-psychiatric establishment was the root cause of the profession's failure to meet pressing human problems. According to this view, psychology's

¹John B. Shaffer, Humanistic Psychology (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978).

institutionalization preceded its content and its methods preceded its problems. . . . The 'scientism' that many see and decry in recent psychology was thus with it from the start. From the earliest days of the experimental pioneers, man's stipulation that psychology be adequate to science outweighed his commitment that it be adequate to man.¹

The Boulder Conference on Training in Clinical Psychology, held at Boulder, Colorado in the summer of 1949, established the position of the psychological establishment regarding the proper conduct of social scientific undertakings, a position that confirmed psychology's commitment to the model of the natural sciences. The conference gave birth to the Boulder concept of the psychologist as scientist-professional, with the scientist component of this dual role assuming precedence over the professional component. But, as Charles Hersch points out, many psychologists in the decade after World War II found the prevailing "scientism"—the scientific attitude that kept theory distinct from fact and divorced disinterested intellectual pursuits from pressing and immediate service demands—difficult to reconcile with the facts of life they encountered in their clinical work. For these psychologists, the time-honored distinction between practitioner and researcher, which the Boulder Conference had reified, disintegrated: They were torn between a view of knowledge as a disinterested ordering of the universe and knowledge as a tool urgently needed to address the human problems they encountered in their day-to-day work.²

Hobbs waged his own personal battles over the same questions with which the profession of psychology was concerned on a national scale. On one front, his

¹ Sigmund Koch, Psychology: A Study of a Science, 3 Vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), vol. 3: p. 783.

² Charles Hersch, "From Mental Health to Social Action: Clinical Psychology in Historical Perspective," American Psychologist 24 (July, 1969): 909-916.

commitment to Carl Rogers' client-centered system, which made intrapsychic processes and the problems of the individual paramount, stood in conflict with his long-standing interest, articulated as early as his undergraduate days at The Citadel, in applying the knowledge and methods of the social sciences, especially those of psychology, to the tasks of understanding and influencing the social order. On a second front, he struggled with the question of how to practice a psychology that would, in Koch's words, be "adequate to science as well as adequate to man." Hobbs appreciated the importance of carefully controlled experiments, of rigorous methods for the collection of data and the testing of hypotheses, but he also knew that there must be an element of imaginative art in the work of social scientists and that they must pose problems and reach conclusions not only on the basis of data but also on the basis of the human interests, intentions, values, and judgments that cannot be factored out of any scientific inquiry.

Biographical Sketch: 1946-1961

Teachers College

Hobbs came to Teachers College, Columbia University in the summer of 1946 and remained until the summer of 1950. In that first summer session, Hobbs taught a course on vocational testing. Enrolled in the course was Mary Thompson, a woman from Missouri who had just returned to school to continue a Masters degree program in clinical psychology that she had begun some years earlier. Ms. Thompson, who was a few years older than her instructor, had her graduate study interrupted by a wartime stint in the women's auxiliary of the Coast Guard and was just short of completing the requirements for her degree. When she first returned to her studies, she was uncertain about whether she wanted to continue beyond a Masters degree in clinical psychology, but events unfolded in such a way that she decided to pursue a doctoral degree at

Columbia University. Chief among those events was making the acquaintance of Nicholas Hobbs. Hobbs came to play an ever increasing role in life, becoming first a member of her doctoral committee and later, in May 1949, her husband. In those last months before the wedding, Ms. Thompson was under considerable pressure to complete her dissertation by the May wedding date because Columbia had a rule that would have prohibited Hobbs from serving on her doctoral committee as her husband.¹

When Hobbs joined the five-person Program of Psychological Services in the Department of Guidance at Teachers College as an Assistant Professor, he found the Program embroiled in the national effort of clinical psychology to assert itself as a academic and professional entity with its own high standards, credentials, and special expertise—an entity that could challenge the hegemony of the medical-psychiatric establishment as a provider of new mental health knowledge and effective mental health care.² The work of psychologists in testing, selection, training, and therapy during World War II had stimulated a rapid expansion of the profession, and the department at Teachers College, like departments across the country, was struggling to establish graduate programs, attract and retain the requisite faculty, and identify fields of specialization within the discipline to which it could make distinctive contributions.³ Before the war, the Program of Psychological Services had offered a masters as well as a doctoral degree, but after the war the program limited its degree offerings to three doctoral degrees, the Ph.D. and the Ed.D. in Clinical Psychology and the Ed.D. in School Psychology. Among the courses and seminars Hobbs taught were Techniques of

¹Mary Thompson Hobbs, interview held at her home, Nashville, Tennessee, 18 May 1987.

²Seymour B. Sarason, in "An Asocial Psychology and a Misdirected Clinical Psychology," pp. 827-36, discusses the budding rivalry between psychology and psychiatry as providers of mental health services and generators of knowledge about mental disorders.

³Nicholas Hobbs to Sidney L. Pressey, 31 October 1946. Hobbs Papers.

Counseling, Individual Psychological Testing, Psychology of Adjustment, Personality Development and Mental Hygiene, Mental Hygiene for Teachers, Techniques of Personnel Work, and Advanced Theory of Psychotherapy. In addition, he supervised advanced students in psychological testing and individual counseling, directed the research of doctoral candidates, conducted play therapy with children, and maintained a small counseling practice working with adults, both individually and in groups.¹

During his four years at Teachers College, Hobbs entertained a number of job offers—offers that give evidence of the rapid postwar expansion of the profession of psychology which created a large number of faculty positions in psychology departments across the country. Carl Rogers, who had left Ohio State during the war and taken a position at The University of Chicago, tried on two occasions to bring Hobbs to Chicago. Rogers' first offer was appealing to Hobbs, but it came in August 1946, just after Hobbs had taken the position at Teachers College, and he expressed regret that the offer had not come before he had made the commitment to Teachers College.² In the following year Rogers made another offer to Hobbs, but by that time Hobbs had become caught up in the task of reestablishing the program in clinical psychology at Teachers College, and nothing short of an offer of a challenging position at a college or university in the South would have induced him to leave New York. Hobbs said as much in his

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Biographical Data," 1 January 1948. Hobbs Papers; "Personal History Data," 16 January 1950. Hobbs Papers.

²These offers came from institutions in the North, Midwest and West. Among them were the letters from: Harold Anderson, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology at Michigan State University, 29 November 1946; John G. Darley, Director of the Student Counseling Bureau at the University of Minnesota, 16 December 1946; Wayne Dennis, Chairman of the Department of Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, 17 February 1947; Arthur W. Combs, Professor of Psychology at Syracuse University, 26 March 1947; and Frederick B. Davis Professor of Psychology at George Peabody College for Teachers, 1 October 1948. Peabody offered a faculty position without administrative responsibilities. Rogers' invitations to Hobbs to join him at The University of Chicago were expressed in letters dated 7 August 1946 and 20 February 1947. Hobbs Papers.

letters of reply to the departments that had sought his services. For example, in a letter to James H. Elder, Chairman of the Department of Psychology at what was then the State College of Washington in Pullman, Hobbs wrote: "I have a deep and enduring motivation to return to the South. It is practically a tropism. I have not considered for very long several possibilities in the North and West because of this rather basic assumption that I have made for my life."¹ It is interesting to note that, although he had a basic motivation to return to the South, Hobbs never actively sought a specific position in the South. Instead, he placed his trust in the operation of the network of psychologists with whom he had worked in the military, in the myriad contacts he made while directing the development of the APA's code of ethics, and in the conditions of the job marketplace for psychologists that made competent psychologists such valuable commodities. He was confident that when the right position in the South became available, his name would come up, and he would be a strong candidate for it.

Louisiana State University

The right position became available in 1950 when Louisiana State University (LSU) offered Hobbs the position of head of the Department of Psychology. The offer of this position induced Hobbs to leave Teachers College, where other offers had not, because it promised him an opportunity to contribute to the building of a germinal program in the South. That LSU had "almost nothing . . . but a clean slate and determination to move ahead," was the source of the position's appeal to Hobbs.² He viewed it as "a situation less stable than exists at most universities."³ The department was housed in a basement

¹Nicholas Hobbs to James H. Elder, 28 October 1949. Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs to Arthur Irion, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois, 11 May 1950. Hobbs Papers.

³Nicholas Hobbs to Robert H. Blake, Department of Psychology, University of Texas, Undated (written during the late spring or early summer 1950). Hobbs Papers.

and its entire faculty had resigned two years previously due to internal friction. On the other hand, in Hobbs's view, the university's president was strong and effective and committed to building the Department of Psychology. Moreover, Hobbs believed the president had established a workable relationship with the administration of the State of Louisiana and that the president would be able "to resist the depredations" of politicians such as Huey Long.¹

When he arrived on campus in Baton Rouge, Hobbs's ambitions for the Department of Psychology at LSU were great; he wanted to preside over the building of a well-rounded and imaginative program that would become recognized as *the* center for the training of psychologists in the South.² To this end, Hobbs envisioned a program which would balance a due regard for the traditions of psychology as practiced in leading universities with an emphasis on the cultural, social, and economic currents which were indigenous to LSU and to the region it served. The most significant of these currents were the South's transition from an agricultural to an agricultural-industrial economy, the growth of urban centers, and the problems of "Negro-white" relationships.³ In Hobbs's view, these currents placed urgent demands on psychology as a profession and created opportunities for significant service for the Department of Psychology at LSU.

He was ambitious not only for himself and for his department, but also for the profession of psychology. With regards to the department, his main objective was to establish a "stimulating and sustaining group" which would be responsible for its own direction and in which "each member could operate with [a] maximum number of degrees

¹Ibid.

²Nicholas Hobbs to Cecil G. Taylor, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Louisiana State University, 14 February 1950 and 9 March 1950. Hobbs Papers.

³Nicholas Hobbs, "A Plan for the Development of The Department of Psychology, Louisiana State University," 1 December 1950. Hobbs Papers.

of freedom." The task of administering such a department interested him because he believed the problems of administration were "in essence no different from other problems of interpersonal relationships." His interest centered around the conviction that psychological principles which are known to be effective in helping people realize themselves fully could be applied in a group undertaking such as an academic department to produce an environment that would be richly satisfying for all.¹

Hobbs never realized the fertile promises of the situation at LSU. A few months after he assumed his chairmanship, during the December holidays in 1950, a "palace revolution" occurred which swept out many of the university's chief administrators, including the president, and replaced them with people whose vision was more congenial with that of the athletic director's. Mary Thompson Hobbs recalls that the administration had been at loggerheads with the athletic department over the question of whether to spend money on building a new library or on enlarging the football stadium. During the December holidays, while the university was closed, the athletic director moved to mobilize his supporters on the university's governing board and succeeded in having the president replaced by a retired general from the military. This event left Hobbs without the source of support that had been primarily responsible for luring him to LSU and caused him to begin casting about for job opportunities elsewhere in the South.² This sudden shift in the mission of LSU must have been a crushing blow to Hobbs, but there is very little in his surviving correspondence that reveals his feelings about the event.

¹Nicholas Hobbs to Robert H. Blake.

²Mary Thompson Hobbs, interview, 18 May 1987.

George Peabody College for Teachers

Hobbs's first contact with Peabody occurred in November of 1947 when he received a letter from a former colleague in the military, Frederick B. Davis of Peabody's Department of Psychology. Davis had edited a report published by the Government Printing Office, The A. A. F. Qualifying Examination, Report No. 6, to which Hobbs had contributed while in the Army Air Forces, and he wrote to inquire if Hobbs would be interested in teaching at Peabody in the 1948 summer session.¹ The summer teaching position never became available, but in the fall of 1948 Davis contacted Hobbs again about taking a position at Peabody, this time as a member of the Department of Guidance and Counseling.² In his reply, Hobbs indicated his strong desire to return to the South and stated that he was performing a balancing act between discharging his obligations at Teachers College and locating an opportunity in the South that would be "really challenging."³ It appears that the position at Peabody did not offer the requisite challenge because there is no further record of correspondence between Hobbs and Peabody until 1951, and Hobbs remained at Teachers College for two more years.

The debacle at LSU created the circumstances which led Hobbs to reconsider Peabody, and Peabody, for its part, offered Hobbs an administrative position that presented a greater challenge than the offer of the regular faculty position had presented three years earlier. When Hobbs came to Peabody, it was a well-known private college for teachers that was trying to reclaim some of its lost prestige. In the years preceding the war, the college had experienced an erosion of its special status as the institution of choice for prospective teachers in the South. It had sustained reduced enrollments, an

¹Frederick B. Davis to Nicholas Hobbs, 25 November 1947. Hobbs Papers.

²Frederick B. Davis to Nicholas Hobbs, 1 October 1948. Hobbs Papers.

³Nicholas Hobbs to Frederick B. Davis, 20 October 1948. Hobbs Papers.

inability to attract and retain a strong faculty, and an uncertainty about its mission as a private institution of teacher education in the face of growing programs for teacher education in state-supported universities.

Hobbs was one of the four men brought to Peabody as Division chairmen in the early 1950s, and these four newcomers, who came to be known as "The Four Horsemen," were given the mandate to return Peabody to a position of prominence. Harold Benjamin, author of The Saber-Tooth Curriculum, came to Peabody as chairman of the Division concerned with the social foundations of education; Willard Goslin, who had been a major figure in the post-war school reform movement as the progressive superintendent of the Pasadena, California schools, took over the Division concerned with the administration of schools after being forced out of his position at Pasadena; William VanTil became chairman of the Division concerned with curriculum and instruction; and Hobbs took the position of chairman of the Division that was named the Division of Human Development and Guidance.¹ In taking this position, Hobbs seized an opportunity similar to the one that had lured him to LSU—an opportunity to preside over the building of an academic division in a college in the South. In taking this position, he also found the institutional home in the South that he had long sought, and he remained at Peabody or at its larger neighbor, Vanderbilt University, for the rest of his career.

When Hobbs arrived at Peabody, he finally found his long-sought "educational institution," rather than a "subject matter mill where various abstractions are ground out to multitudes en masse," that he had described to Sidney L. Pressey in a letter in 1936

¹Interviews with Susan Gray, held at George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, 15 April 1987; Julius Seeman, held at Peabody, 15 April 1987; Mary Thompson Hobbs, 18 May 1987; Samuel Ashcroft, held at Peabody, 14 July 1987; and Jack Allen, held at his home, Nashville, Tennessee, 12 October 1987. These individuals, all long-time members of the Peabody faculty, are the chief sources of information about Peabody in the 1950s and 1960s.

(see chapter 2). In 1983, over thirty years after he arrived at Peabody, Hobbs recalled how Peabody's President, Henry H. Hill, in a telephone conversation, had tried to induce him to come to Peabody. Hill, irritated because Hobbs had not yet made the decision to come to Peabody, had said: "Hobbs, you've got to make up your mind. Are you going to stay down there [LSU] and eat shrimp, or are you going to come up here and do something important?"¹

Peabody's Division of Human Development and Guidance was composed of a Department of Psychology and a Department of Special Education, both of which had administrative ties to the college's child study center. When Hobbs came to Peabody, the Department of Psychology was well established, but Special Education was a new discipline. In fact, the first generation of doctoral students in Special Education was about to graduate from a handful of other institutions.² Under Hobbs's leadership, the Division, with its bifocal concern with education and psychology, was avowedly interdisciplinary. Hobbs tried to combine the research orientation of psychology with the applied, service orientation of special education. In a mission statement for both disciplines, he stated: "... the schism that has grown between psychology and education must be closed for the benefit of both. Education needs to re-establish contact with its basic sciences; psychology needs closer affiliation with the public school, the largest and most significant of learning laboratories."³ To this end, Hobbs brought to the college a

¹Nicholas Hobbs, Remarks From the Dedication: The Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development, (Nashville, Tennessee: George Peabody College for Teachers, 14 January 1983), p. 21.

²H. Carl Haywood, formerly Director, The John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Education and Human Development, Vanderbilt University, currently Professor of Psychology and Neurology, and a longtime colleague of Hobbs's, presents a sketch of the history of the Division of Human Development and Guidance in his remarks at the dedication of the Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development, Remarks from the Dedication: The Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development, pp. 7-9.

³Nicholas Hobbs, "The Image of a Department of Psychology," The Peabody Reflector 32 (January-February, 1959): 16.

group of ambitious and talented young psychologists and special educators with a wide range of interests. The group included Lloyd Dunn, the progenitor of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and Phil Scoggin, who had worked with Roger Barker on some of the early ideas about ecological psychology. Hobbs also stimulated faculty interest in grant writing, and much of the research conducted in the Division was supported by external funds. He was so successful at encouraging members of the faculty of his Division to establish contacts with the federal government and with other institutions that many of the faculty came to refer to themselves as "itinerant" professors and joked that they saw each other only at airports.¹

As the chairman of an academic Division, Hobbs acted on the principles of administration he had first articulated at LSU. His strategy was first to recruit good people and then to remove whatever obstacles to creative work they might encounter. A proponent of the nondirective approach in counseling, he aimed to employ the approach in administration as well.² His persuasiveness was the source of his effectiveness as an administrator. Susan Gray, his colleague at Peabody for almost 15 years, remarks that he kept his commitments as well as anyone she ever knew and that once he persuaded you to do something he would support you unstintingly.³ There was, however, a tension between his desire to act as a nondirective facilitator of the work of the faculty in his division, on the one hand, and his commitment to his clear and enduring vision for the Division of Human Development and Guidance, on the other. He was so wed to the concept of interdisciplinary work and to his conviction that children and families must be

¹Samuel Ashcroft, interview, 17 July 1987.

²Susan Gray, H. Carl Haywood, Samuel Ashcroft, Jack Allen, and Julius Seeman are among Hobbs's longtime colleagues at Peabody who portray his administrative style in this way.

³Susan Gray, interview, 15 April 1987.

the central concern of the Division that he often found it difficult to steer clear of an administrative posture that promoted this vision to the exclusion of any other. Hobbs acknowledged this tension in 1958 at the symposium, " Problems, Opportunities, and Preparation of Psychologists for Various Kinds of Administrative Positions," held at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association. He stated that the administrator's "most challenging job is to help a group create a climate in which each participant feels himself free to realize his own potential, to achieve autonomy, to dare to think otherwise, to change, to be most fully himself. . . . to precipitate himself into just manageable difficulty."¹ He went on to state, however, that groups characterized by high morale and good feelings are not necessarily productive and that "it is possible for an administrator to create a group climate in which individuals anesthetize each other with acceptance, warm each other with wooly good feeling, . . . and never get anything done."² To guard against this state of affairs, Hobbs believed that the effective administrator must help the group establish and maintain a challenging and long-range conception of where it wants to go. Establishing a climate in his Division in which there was an acceptable balance between individual autonomy and his own galvanizing vision for the division was Hobbs's constant challenge as an administrator.

While he worked to build the Division of Human Development and Guidance during the 1950s, Hobbs also increased his professional activity outside Peabody. He remained active in the American Psychological Association. In addition to his work as chair of the APA's Committee on Ethical Standards until 1953, he sat on its Board of Directors from 1952 to 1955, chaired its Policy and Planning Board from 1953 to 1956, and was elected

¹Hobbs's contribution to the symposium was published as "The Psychologist as Administrator," in the Journal of Clinical Psychology 15 (July 1959): 237-244. This passage is quoted from that article, p. 240.

²Ibid.

President of the Southeastern Psychological Association in 1957 and President of the APA's Division of Clinical Psychology in 1959. He also went on leave from Peabody, first to serve as a visiting professor in the guidance program at Harvard University in the spring of 1954 and, later in that same year, to direct a study of mental health facilities in the South for the Southern Regional Education Board in Atlanta. In addition, during the 1950s Hobbs began his work with various national commissions sponsored by the federal government. This work included his position as Vice-Chairman of the Joint Commission of Mental Illness and Health, established by Congress in 1955, and his memberships on the Fulbright Committee on the International Exchange of Persons, beginning in 1955, and the Committee on Training in Clinical Psychology of the National Institute of Mental Health, beginning in 1956. This work also gave him a foothold in the federal establishment, laying the foundation for his major undertakings in the 1960s and 1970s in the service of troubled children and families.

Throughout this period, Hobbs strengthened and enlarged the network of psychologists and other professionals from which he received intellectual sustenance. His papers contain a large amount of correspondence between Hobbs and individuals with whom he had worked in the military, in the APA, on federal commissions, and in various other settings outside academe.¹ This correspondence includes many invitations to Hobbs to hold workshops, give speeches, sit on panels and committees, join professional groups, and write books.

Hobbs taught courses with broad purviews and used his teaching both to reinforce his grounding in the traditions of his discipline and to address the troublesome and complex human problems that engaged him at various times. During his years at

¹The papers to which reference is made here are those collected at Special Collections, Vanderbilt University.

Peabody he taught a course on American psychology that was one of the four components of the "core" of the masters-degree curriculum. He also taught courses in personality theory and in guidance; the bibliography for this latter course ran to nine single-spaced pages. From 1956 to 1960, he was a visiting lecturer at the annual session of the Institute of Humanistic Studies for Executives at the University of Pennsylvania, and his lectures there granted him occasions to pursue his interest in ethics, a topic to which he had devoted much time and attention since his appointment to the APA's Committee on Ethical Standards in 1947.

Hobbs had a keen interest in teaching and delighted in the challenges that bright students could pose, but his administrative duties and his myriad activities outside Peabody drew him away from students and reduced the amount of time he was able to devote to teaching. His assigned teaching load was never as heavy as the loads of many of the other members of the faculty, and he often had to cancel class sessions when other duties called him away from Peabody. Nevertheless, he worked hard at his teaching, when he could, and demanded a high standard of performance from his students.¹

In the early 1950s, Hobbs entered into agreements, if not formal contracts, with at least three publishers to write textbooks. In 1953 he began work on a book with the working title, The Behavior of Small Groups, for Harcourt, Brace; he entered into an agreement with Allyn and Bacon for two books, one on human development and one a general psychology textbook; and he entered into a contract with John Wiley & Sons for a book about psychotherapy.² The Hobbs Papers also contain a manuscript, dated June

¹ Jack Allen, Professor Emeritus at Peabody and a close friend of Hobbs's, interview, 12 October 1987; and Susan Gray, Professor Emerita, Peabody, interview, 15 April 1987.

² The Harcourt, Brace book is mentioned in a letter to James M. Reid, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 17 October 1953. The Allyn and Bacon books are referred to in a letter to Donald W. Jones, Editor-in-Chief, College Division, Allyn and Bacon, 4 January 1957. The John Wiley & Sons book is mentioned in a letter to Gordon S. Ierardi, Editor, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 6 July 1953. Hobbs Papers.

18, 1960, of what appears to be a draft of the introduction to a textbook on personality through the life span. No reference to a title or to any agreement for the publication of the book accompanies the manuscript. Hobbs eventually had to remove himself from whatever obligations he had made to these publishers, and he never completed any of the books. As he stated in a letter to his editor at John Wiley & Sons, there always seemed to be "something more pressing to do."¹ This pressure to get things done started to take its toll in the mid-1950s when Hobbs first mentioned in his correspondence his increasing difficulty in giving some semblance of order to his life.² In a memorandum to Henry H. Hill, President of Peabody, in April 1955, Hobbs stated: "I feel increasingly drained, increasingly less effective as a teacher, and increasingly in need of intellectual refreshment. . . . I mainly want to read to improve my courses and to improve my research skills."³ This need for refreshment became a refrain that Hobbs repeated on many occasions in subsequent years. As he laid his professional plans, Hobbs always tried to adopt a view for the long term, and when he found himself so mired in the daily demands of his professional life that he could not see beyond the next meeting in Washington or the next delivery of a conference paper, he sought a period of withdrawal from commitments.

This biographical material provides the ground for Hobbs's involvement with three questions that lay at the heart of three prominent issues for professional psychology.

First, while rival schools of psychotherapy battled over the issue of the relative

¹Nicholas Hobbs to Gordon S. Jerardi.

²Nicholas Hobbs to Charles A. Jones, Associate Editor, Allyn and Bacon, Inc. 5 May 1955, Hobbs Papers. Nicholas Hobbs to Ernest R. Hilgard, Department of Psychology, Stanford University, 13 April 1954. Hobbs Papers.

³Memorandum to Henry H. Hill, 6 April 1955. Hobbs Papers.

effectiveness of their technique, Hobbs, eschewing the issue of techniques, concentrated on the question of how to produce individual professional help providers and how to create communities that could help people master their lives. Second, when the profession of psychology set out to become more rigorous scientifically and entered into competition with the medical-psychiatric establishment as a source of mental health knowledge and as a provider of mental health care, Hobbs focussed on the question of how to reconcile interests in scientific rigor and in the growth of the profession of psychology with a desire to promote procedures that make the value commitments of psychologists more explicit in their daily work. Finally, during a period when psychologists were concentrating on the adjustment problems of returning military veterans, Hobbs fixed his attention on the problems of making schools, mental health institutions, and various other community agencies more responsive to the special needs of children whose intellectual gifts or whose emotional disorders or intellectual deficiencies reduced their capacity to achieve health, growth, and the realization of their potentialities.

Helping

Hobbs's initial attraction to the Rogerian system as a graduate student had lured him away from his earlier emphasis on a "situation-centered" psychology that was rooted in the ideas of John Dewey and the pragmatists.¹ He had read John Dewey at The Citadel, and Dewey's ideas about the proper relationship between scientific knowledge and

¹Nathan Caplan and Stephen D. Nelson, "On Being Useful: The Nature and Consequences of Psychological Research on Social Problems," *American Psychologist* 28 (March 1973): 199-211. The authors discuss two competing approaches to defining problems, each of which sets in motion different interpretations of the cause and solution of psychological problems. According to this concept, one can view problems in situation-centered terms, making a "system-blame" interpretation and concluding that the causes of problems reside in the larger social context. Or, one can assume a "person-centered" orientation, making a "person-blame" interpretation and concluding that the causes of problems reside in individuals.

problems of society contributed to the formation of his life-long commitment to putting knowledge to use in the service of human needs.¹ At Ohio State, Sidney Pressey nurtured Hobbs's "system-centered" view, but the profound impact of Carl Rogers, who arrived on campus three years after Hobbs began his work with Pressey, caused Hobbs to define psychological problems in "person-centered" terms. Defining problems in this way led Hobbs to the position that psychological disorders have their origins in personal or narrowly interpersonal problems. It follows, then, that effective intervention takes the form of therapy. This position stood in sharp contrast to the conviction he had forged in his youth that the problems of people were chiefly attributable to the nature and structure of the social order. This contrast may not have been explicit for him, but his early career was marked by a tension between his concern with understanding social systems for the purpose of influencing them and his concern with understanding individuals for the purpose of helping them.

Hobbs initially felt attracted to Teachers College because the position offered him an opportunity to work in clinical psychology's fast-paced sphere of activity in New York. But almost as soon as he made his appearance in this setting, he found himself moving away from it. He was steeped on the tenets of Rogers' nascent client-centered approach to psychotherapy and was attracted to many of the ideas of the behaviorists. This orientation made him anathema to the rival camps of psychoanalysts that dominated the New York scene.² This status as an outsider lacking close affiliation with any particular

¹In June 1935, while he was at a R. O. T. C. training camp at Fort Barrancas, Florida, Hobbs engaged in an exchange of correspondence with Lt. Col. John W. Lang, a member of the faculty of The Citadel. Lang had read Hobbs's columns in The Shako, the college's student literary magazine, and his letter to Hobbs expressed his opposition to what he labeled Hobbs's "liberal," "immature," and "seditious" views. These letters are collected in the Hobbs Papers, and in the letter from Lang dated 20 June 1935 Hobbs made handwritten notes in which he referred to John Dewey as "our outstanding philosopher."

²Years later, Hobbs recalled that during his time at Teachers College "there was not a behavior modifier in sight." Nicholas Hobbs, "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-ED," in Teaching

New York group granted Hobbs freedom to explore the terrain of the discipline and to develop theoretically in directions that were not tightly constrained by any form of psychological orthodoxy.

In the course of this exploration, Hobbs examined the question of what it means to be a helper, and a set of contrasts emerged in his thought. One of these contrasts became, for him, the central dilemma of the person who aspires to help others, and he expressed it as the discrepancy between "power and the personnel point of view"—between, on the one hand, what would-be helpers actually say and do when they address the problems of those who come to them and, on the other hand, the value commitments that would-be helpers profess.¹ In a second contrast, Hobbs argued for a shift in emphasis in the training of helpers away from a concern for mastering techniques and toward a concern with understanding the attitudes and values that are essential for the person who aspires to help others. A third contrast in Hobbs's thought about helping others juxtaposed the roles of two kinds of helpers, "one an articulate interpreter of man and the other an articulate interpreter of the society in which he lives."²

The dimensions of helping that make up each of these contrasts are not clearly distinct from one another, but taken as a whole, they serve as a set of pervasive leitmotifs about the training of helping professionals and the process of helping in general. In the following pages, the problems of wielding power in human relationships, of putting

Children with Behavior Disorders, eds. James M. Kaufmann and Clayton D. Lewis (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1974), p. 148.

¹The phrase, "power and the personnel point of view" is the title of a paper Hobbs delivered at the meeting of the Mississippi Education Association in Jackson, Mississippi on 15 March 1950 and at the meeting of the Louisiana College Association in Ruston, Louisiana on 3 March 1951. The typewritten manuscripts of these papers are in the Hobbs Papers.

²This phrase comes from Nicholas Hobbs, "Social Scientists in the Field of Guidance," in Perspectives on Guidance, ed. Nicholas Hobbs (Nashville, Tennessee: Bureau of Publications, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1956).

one's values into everyday practice, and of becoming a socially effective, as well as a technically competent, helper are infused in the discussion of Hobbs's work as a client-centered therapist, of his ideas about insight as a source of gain in therapy, and of his position regarding the use of formal psychometric instruments as tools for understanding and helping people.

Power and the Personnel Point of View

Hobbs possessed deep faith in the dignity of people and in their capacity to achieve health, growth, and the realization of their potentialities, and this faith was the source of his commitment to ideas which he believed were profoundly important. Phrases drawn from the language of the "humanistic" movement in mental health, such as "personnel point of view," "democratic philosophy," "non-directive or client-centered therapy," "development of self-responsibility," and "respect for the integrity of the individual," represent efforts to communicate these ideas, although Hobbs admitted that these phrases had come to sound pretentious and to "suffer from a kind of verbal inflation" which reduced their vitality as expressions of value commitments. For Hobbs, the personnel point of view and the aspirations associated with it are difficult to put into everyday practice because forces that lead helpers to seek power and exercise authoritarian methods operate both at the individual level, within helpers themselves, and at the institutional level, within the hospitals, schools, clinics, and other agencies in which helpers serve. He believed that it is inevitable that helpers deal with the question of power. This situation creates a dilemma for helpers, with the "personnel point of view" as one nodal point and "power" as the other. Only by recognizing this dilemma, by refusing to rest on easy assurances that they are living up to their value commitments, can persons who

aspire to help others avoid contradicting the democratic principles they espouse and respond with real appreciation to the struggles of others.

A guiding principle in Hobbs's "personnel" approach to helping was his confidence in the capacity of people to be responsible for themselves, although he acknowledged that this confidence was a most difficult attitude for helpers to acquire because so much of their training assumes that other people possess only limited competence to work out their own destinies. He believed that self-direction was to be preferred over direction imposed by therapist, counselor, agency, or institution. For him, the chief challenge to the ostensible helper is coming to the conviction that others are far more knowing and wise in choosing directions for themselves than a helper could ever aspire to be. When the helper acts on this conviction, the goal of helping, in Hobbs's view, becomes one of providing a "an experience that helps a person to feel his humanness, in all its evil and its good, and to grow in stature and the ability to solve problems by virtue of a new-found freedom."¹

Hobbs recognized that helpers are in positions of considerable power. The sources of this power lie in the possibilities of control over the lives of others that come with the phenomena of the dependent relationship, of transference in therapy, and with psychology's increasing ability to use the tools of science to replace philosophical speculations about the nature of human behavior with predictions of behavior. Other sources of such power are the institutional and social pressures that invite helpers to behave in non-democratic ways. Hobbs was reluctant to entrust helpers with powerful psychological tools because he believed the institutions in which helpers serve have only imperfectly incorporated the democratic values of the larger society. For Hobbs, respect for democratic process was central to the helping process, but institutionalized authority,

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Power and the Personnel Point of View," unpublished manuscript of a paper delivered at the meeting of the Mississippi Education Association, Jackson, Mississippi, 15 March 1950. Hobbs Papers.

exercised by the teacher in the school, the doctor in the hospital, and the therapist in the therapy session, creates a tension between power and the personnel point of view which poses an ever present threat to the good intentions of the would-be helper.

Attitudes and Values Versus the Mastery of Techniques

This discussion of the helper's experience of tension between the exercise of power and the establishment and maintenance of a personnel point of view suggests the attitudes, values, and characteristics that Hobbs saw as essential for the person who aspires to help others. In considering what it takes to be an effective helper, Hobbs believed that giving attention to the value commitments implicit in the phrase "respect for the individual" was a more central concern than technical competence.

In the summer of 1948, when he was 33 and had been at Teachers College for two years, Hobbs articulated the principle that would become fundamental to his position regarding helping, that techniques are of secondary importance and "grow out of and are demanded by" the helper's "personal philosophy," "attitudes toward people," and "orientation to human relationships."¹ He believed that if helpers succeed in applying a few basic principles to their work—confidence that most people can be responsible for their own lives, humility about how much a person can do for others, refusal to define goodness of adjustment for other people, and respect for the right of others to "the strength-giving act of making and living by their own choices"—there would be little need for the kinds of technical things—diagnosing and testing, developing predetermined plans, posing specific questions, evaluating and interpreting what is said—that helpers had been expected to do.

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Reason, Anxiety, and Well-Being," in Great Human Issues of Our Times, ed. Henry Hill (Nashville, Tennessee: Bureau of Publications, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1954), p. 76.

An Interpreter of the Individual and an Interpreter of Society

Hobbs believed that aspiring helpers must engage in a "dialectical process" in which they concern themselves with the specific problems of the individuals with whom they work and at the same time become "social philosophers" who have some knowledge of how complex social currents affect the lives of those in need of help.¹ This dual role of would-be helpers emphasizes their responsibility both to (1) giving adequate aid to others, and (2) contributing to the development of a society in which all individuals have maximum opportunities for fullest self-realization.

This theme of social action was pervasive in Hobbs's writings during his period of invention, as it was throughout his professional life. His conception of the helper as an "interpreter of society" centered on the helper's responsibility to aid in assessing the social currents relevant to the life plans of those with whom they work. For example, in "The Compleat Counselor" Hobbs noted society's demand for help in solving problems stemming from the need for well-educated policy- and decision-makers in all manner of major enterprises. He was distrustful of society's evolution toward a technocracy in which specialists play central roles and believed that those in the helping professions could help technicians add wisdom and an appreciation of human strengths and human decency to their technical competence. Hobbs also noted the growing demands on helping professionals that stemmed from changes in family life, in sexual mores, and from democratic reforms which had increased the range of opportunities and aspirations of blacks and women. It was his conviction that those in the helping professions had failed to give proper attention to societal trends and issues such as these and had limited their social interests too strictly to personal adjustment problems of clients or patients.

¹These quoted phrases come from Hobbs's article, "The Compleat Counselor," Personnel and Guidance Journal 36 (May 1958): 594-602.

For Hobbs, the person in the helping profession is "the mediator at once of upward mobility of individuals and of society's search for security through fullest utilization of its human resources."¹ This is another expression of his conception of the dual role of the helper, a role that is both remedial and preventive. The helper works remedially in so far as he or she attends to the manifest problems of needy individuals and aids in the maximum development of individual potential. The helper works preventively as a social critic and kibitzer who helps to establish an environment in which the likelihood of individual development is increased.

Hobbs's conception of the helper as an "interpreter of man" centered on the helper's capacity to see the world as those who seek his or her help see it. He believed the key to this capacity is establishing and maintaining relationships in which helpers communicate acceptance, respect, and understanding of the persons with whom they work, but he appreciated how difficult this task can be for highly trained helping professionals:

We have all learned so well the attitudes of our basic science that we can hardly resist imposing our values on others, to measure them by some standard, to define goodness of adjustment, to be the expert who can tinker with external pressures and circumstances so that the individual is led to choose the path that we perceive as being best for him. And this we can do quite subtly.²

In Hobbs's view, the chief challenge for helpers was to relinquish the privileged position that grants them the expertise and the special judgment with which they can impose standards and choices on others. To do this, helpers and the persons with whom

¹Ibid., p. 598.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Guidance and Some Recent Developments in Psychological Theory," Canadian Journal of Psychology 3, (February 1949): 70.

they work must get "close to each other."¹ This phrase comes from an article published in 1959 in which Hobbs urged faculty and students in institutions of higher education to find ways to "get close to each other" as a means to encourage learning. This is the only place this phrase appears in Hobbs's published writings, but its message, that creating situations in public schools, in universities, in therapy sessions, in all kinds of human enterprises in which people are able to get close to each other, was the cornerstone of Hobbs's strategy for helping. For Hobbs, such situations do not necessarily require small classes or intimate disclosures. They do require, however, that all involved—teachers, professors, therapists and their students and clients—create an atmosphere in which they determine, mutually, an image of what they hope to accomplish.

Hobbs acknowledged that attaching the label "social philosopher" to the helping professional was a little pretentious, but he used the label to suggest the "sense of dimensionality" that the effective helper should possess.² In his view, this sense of dimensionality, which he hoped training programs for those in the helping professions might foster, would broaden the interests of aspiring helpers and lead them to draw understanding from a range of disciplines—philosophy, sociology, social psychology, anthropology, economics. In "The Compleat Counselor," Hobbs uses George Kelly's personal construct theory to illustrate another aspect of this sense of dimensionality.³ He wanted those who aspire to help others to become aware of what Kelly calls "the range of

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "The New American Scholar," In Preparing College Teachers: A Project Report, eds. A. D. Albright and John E. Barrows (Lexington, Kentucky and Atlanta, Georgia: The University of Kentucky and The Southern Regional Education Board, 1959), p 106.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "The Compleat Counselor," p. 601.

³In "The Compleat Counselor," Hobbs cites George Kelly's book, The Psychology of Personal Constructs, (New York: Norton, 1955). Kelly's personal construct theory asserts that individuals construct systems with which they order the elements of their experience. These systems, or constructs, not only impose order on past experience, they also serve as the filters through which individuals perceive and order new experiences.

convenience" of their constructs. This "convenience" was anathema to Hobbs because it threatens to foster commitment in helpers to some personal construct system that becomes unassailable and that imposes strict limits on their world view. Hobbs knew that reinforcement theory, client-centered therapy, psychoanalytic theory, logical positivism, and other systems for construing the world become the world itself. His antidote to this narrowing of vision was to argue for developing in aspiring helpers a sense of dimensionality, permitting them to remain detached from convenient ways of ordering the world.

Client-Centered Therapy

These principles of effective helping—developing a sense of dimensionality and remaining detached—mirror the statement of Hobbs's principle of sustained creative accomplishment cited at the beginning of this chapter. In the statement, Hobbs cites the abilities to "throw away the common templates that are used to order the world," to "revert to simpler ways of knowing," as keys to becoming the kind of independent, creative social scientist who, in his opinion, is in too short supply. Hobbs acted on these principles during the fifteen-year period under discussion as he gradually loosened his commitment to Carl Rogers' client-centered practice of individual and group therapy.¹ This loosening of commitment occurred as the client-centered approach attracted converts, asserted itself as a "third-force" among therapeutic paradigms (an alternative to the psychoanalytic and behavioral schools), and became increasingly institutionalized during the 1950s. Two factors operated to reduce Hobbs's ties to the client-centered approach. First, his evolving "sense of dimensionality"—his determination to remain

¹The term "client-centered" applies to the way in which the therapist attempts to see the client's problems through the client's eyes and to understand the client's personal meanings of events. Rogers' approach also is often labeled "non-directive." Hobbs appeared to use the two terms interchangeably.

unencumbered by "the common templates that are use to order the world"—led him to distance himself from any psychological dogma. Second, his increasing interest in the action research of Kurt Lewin and the ecological psychology of Roger Barker, combined with the continuing influence of John Dewey, stimulated his interest in the social role of the social scientist.

Hobbs's work at Teachers College with the client-centered system concentrated on group therapy. Initially, he directed his attention to a portion of his doctoral dissertation, that which reported on his work in the psychological services branch of an Army Air Forces convalescent hospital during the summer and fall of 1945 on the quantitative analysis of group therapy sessions. In an effort to determine which therapeutic techniques were most effective in group work, Hobbs used a rough experimental procedure that was one of the few such studies he ever conducted. He had made phonograph recordings of therapy sessions and then analyzed the recordings to arrive at categories both descriptive of the techniques used by group leaders and the statements made by patients. Using these empirically determined categories, Hobbs concluded that less formal, client-centered, inductive techniques for conducting group therapy were superior to traditional and more formal, lecture-discussion techniques.

Hobbs's subsequent work with client-centered group therapy was more richly descriptive in character, and it took its place among the undertakings he had conducted for his masters thesis and doctoral dissertation and that he would conduct many times later in his career. His thinking was wholistic, not atomistic. Rather than focus on specific problems that were amenable to controlled, experimental study, Hobbs engaged in broad, integrative thinking about questions that seemed to him to be fundamental. His published writings during the late 1940s and early 1950s reflect his concern with understanding attitudes and values rather than with polishing techniques and conducting

experimental studies. He wrote about the interrelationship between personality theory and therapeutic practice and about directing the background of understanding and skills of therapists more effectively toward working with normal people in natural settings. In his own work as a therapist, Hobbs conducted group-therapy sessions with such disparate groups as college students, members of gangs from Harlem, and married couples "who were seeking ways of enriching their lives together by gaining greater understanding of themselves and of each other."¹

After he left Teachers College, Hobbs did little work as a therapist. It was a change in interest rather than a disenchantment that led him away from a focus on the Rogerian system of psychotherapy. He had acquired something valuable from Rogers' thought; it had strengthened his faith in the philosophical concepts of individual responsibility, of respect for the integrity of the individual, and of confidence in the capacity of the individual to be responsible for himself or herself. It had given him a way to translate these concepts into a helping procedure that was consistent with what he believed the helper should be. Once armed with the working principles of the client-centered approach, however, he became more interested in applying them to endeavors that lay beyond the traditional one-to-one relationship between the helper and the helped.

Action Research

The "action research" of Kurt Lewin provided Hobbs with a means both to extend his ideas about helping from a person-centered to a situation-centered orientation and to take

¹In two articles written during his time at Teachers College, "Group Psychotherapy in Preventive Mental Hygiene," Teachers College Record 50 (December 1948): 170-178, and "Group-Centered Psychotherapy," in Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory, ed. Carl Rogers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951), pp.278-319, Hobbs referred in passing to his work with gang members from Harlem. The quote about his work with married couples comes from a memorandum he wrote to Lawrence Shaffer, the head of the Department of Guidance at Teachers College, 14 March 1950. Hobbs Papers.

into account the value implications of his work.¹ Lewin conceptualized and practiced inquiry as an intervention process. This approach charges research with both theoretical and practical implications and requires the researcher to pay attention to both the psychological attributes of the individual and to factors in the field of the person. Lewin believed that work with applied implications need not be limited to studying behavior in a specific, problematic setting. What is important is that the work emphasizes individual-level processes and their relation to situational factors, reducing the distances that separate the basic from the applied and a concern with the individual from a concern with the social.

Lewin's action research takes an "ecological" perspective, rejecting the views that: (1) the community is an uncompromising set of conditions to which everyone must adjust, and (2) that psychological disorder has its origins in the isolated individual.² This ecological perspective acknowledges the great complexity of relationships between persons and their environment and holds that to understand the behavior of an individual one must know the totality of forces operating in that individual's psychological "field." The total field of naturally occurring human behavior, as perceived both by the individual in question and by others rather than the elements of the field in isolation, is the focus of studies done by action researchers.

In an article published in 1981, in which he takes a retrospective look at action research as practiced in this country since World War II, Nevitt Sanford states that

¹Lewin introduced the concept of "action research" in his articles, "Action Research and Minority Problems," *Journal of Social Issues* 2 (January 1946): 34-46; and "Group Decision and Social Change," in *Readings in Social Psychology*, 1st ed., eds. Theodore M. Newcomb and E. Hartley (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1947).

²Roger G. Barker, *Ecological Psychology: Concepts and Methods for Studying the Environment of Human Behavior* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1968). Here Barker discusses the work he and his colleagues at the University of Kansas began in the late 1940s on the development of ecological psychology

research projects that attempt to solve problems and to collect data of scientific value simultaneously have never been in fashion. Sanford recalls that when Washington created new federal funding agencies after World War II action research was condemned to a "sort of orphan's role" in social science, for the separation of science and practice had already been institutionalized.¹ Perhaps this status as an orphan was part of the appeal that the action research approach held for Hobbs.

Alfred Marrow, Lewin's biographer, argues that on the abstract level Lewin's greatest contribution "may have been the idea of studying things through changing them and seeing the effect. This theme—that in order to gain insight into a process one must create a change and then observe its variable effects and new dynamics—runs through all of Lewin's work."² The theme ran through Hobbs's as well, especially in his work with troubled children beginning in the mid-1950s. Both the action research model and the principles of ecological psychology became parts of Hobbs's mental provisioning. Hobbs acknowledged his debt to Lewin and to the ecological psychologists in many of his later published writings and oral presentations, particularly from the 1960s and 1970s in his discussions of the Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children.

Insight, Learning, and the "John Dewey Idea"

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Hobbs launched an attack on the widespread notion that insight is the central process in psychotherapy. At Teachers College, he found himself in a clinical setting that was dominated by a variety of brands of

¹Nevitt Sanford, "A Model for Action Research," in Human Inquiry, eds. Peter Reason and John Rowan (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), pp 173-181.

²Alfred Marrow, The Practical Theorist: The Life and Work of Kurt Lewin (New York: Basic Books, 1969), p. 235, quoted in Nevitt Sanford, "Whatever Happened to Action Research?," Journal of Social Issues 26 (April 1970): 4.

psychoanalysis—promoted by the followers of Freud, Jung, Adler, Rank, Reich, Horney, Fenichel, Sullivan, and others. It was from this setting that he became increasingly alienated.¹ In the eyes of the analysts, Hobbs, with his client-centered approach, was merely a "counselor," and perhaps even a "behaviorist," not a bona fide "psychotherapist." In response to his colleagues' tendency to discount nonanalytic therapies, Hobbs wrote:

. . . I am made uncomfortable by the acceptance of the easy dichotomies set by psychoanalytic theory. I am not sure that "fundamental reorganization of personality structure" is operationally different from making "a better adjustment" to a life situation, except, perhaps, in degree. I distrust the pat differentiation between the conscious and the unconscious, and would urge again a relativistic concept more in keeping with psychological theory. . . . [I] would urge a careful rephrasing that would emphasis [sic] relative rather than absolute differences between the functions of the counselor and the therapist.²

In the face of the chorus of inharmonious voices from the various psychoanalytic camps, the "John Dewey idea that you just don't really learn much or move yourself forward or untangle emotional problems by self-examination, by insight, and by the usual psychoanalytic, elaborate process" gradually rose to the surface of Hobbs's thought about the therapeutic process.³ This idea led him to the position that would become

¹Hobbs recalls the clinical psychology landscape at Teachers College during the late 1940s in "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-Ed," in Teaching Children with Behavior Disorders, eds. James M. Kauffman and Clayton D. Lewis (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1974), pp. 173-181.

²Nicholas Hobbs to Edward S. Bordin, Bureau of Psychological Services, University of Michigan, 30 October 1950. Hobbs Papers.

³ In an interview with his longtime friend, Samuel Ashcroft, Professor of Special Education, Emeritus at Peabody College, conducted on 1 January 1983, Hobbs used these words to describe the assumption about the psychotherapeutic process that had emerged 35 years earlier. In the late 1940s, when Hobbs was first expressing his ideas about the the central healing role of doing things rather than talking about them, he never credited Dewey as their source. This failure to acknowledge Dewey might be attributed to the firm place Dewey occupied in Hobbs's intellectual genealogy. Perhaps Hobbs had assimilated Dewey's ideas so completely that he was

central to his Re-ED philosophy—that children, as well as adults, learn new ways of facing the world not simply by talking about them but by engaging in purposeful endeavors and by experiencing difficulties and surmounting them.

The "John Dewey idea" about canceling the separation in science of knowledge from overt action and about the primacy of action and experience over talk and the use of symbols is an important wellspring of Hobbs's thought in two ways. First, it contributed to the formation of Hobbs's position that worthwhile social scientific knowledge is only worthwhile if it can be translated into action in the service of pressing human problems. Second, it served as the source of his conviction that in therapy people cannot be simply talked into sturdy personalities.

In The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action, published in 1929, three years before Hobbs entered The Citadel, Dewey took the position that knowing is neither the result of the exercise of the rational powers of mind isolated from practice nor the result of the acquisition of some knowledge which exists prior to, or apart from, the knower. Rather, knowing is a mode of practical action which has an experimental nature. Dewey states that

. . . ideas are worthless except as they pass into actions which rearrange and reconstruct in some way, be it little or large, the world in which we live. To magnify thought and ideas for their own sake apart from what they do (except, once more, esthetically) is to refuse to learn the lesson of the most authentic kind of knowledge—the experimental . . . To praise thinking above action because there is so much ill-considered action in the world is to help maintain the kind of a world in which action occurs for narrow and transient purposes.¹

unaware of the point at which they had begun their existence. At any rate, there is no record that Hobbs ever acknowledged Dewey until years later when he referred to the "John Dewey idea" in the interview conducted just weeks before his death.

¹ John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1929, 1960), p. 138.

Hobbs's first expression of his position regarding the minor role of insight as a change agent in therapy is in a paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in 1949.¹ He elaborated the position in a number of subsequent published pieces, among them his review of a collection of Harry Stack Sullivan's writings and his chapter in a book about various approaches to psychotherapy.² Hobbs used the term insight to mean the largely rational process by which individuals use language to become aware of cause-effect relationships in their behavior—aware, that is, of the significance of their behavior and of the likely consequences of various possible actions. In his view, the occurrence of insight in therapy is not necessarily a precursor to change in behavior. Hobbs's alternative hypothesis holds that insight is an "epiphenomenon," not a cause of change in behavior but simply an indicator (and not a necessary one) that behavior changes have occurred. In addition, he held that direct efforts to promote self-understanding in talk therapy are futile because "deep and comfortable understanding" is not a promoter of adjustment but a symptom of adjustment.³

If the efforts of therapists to promote insight in their clients do not change the behavior of their clients, then what, in Hobbs's view, does? While acknowledging his debt to Freud in making known the nonrational origins of many of the difficulties from

¹An abstract of the paper, titled "Insight in Short-Term Psychotherapy," appeared in the program of the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in American Psychologist 4 (July 1949): 273.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Curing Unreason by Reason," review of Harry Stack Sullivan, ed. Helen Swick Perry and Mary Ladd Garvel; and The Psychiatric Interview, by Harry Stack Sullivan, in Contemporary Psychology 1 (February 1956): 44; Nicholas Hobbs, "Client-Centered Psychotherapy," in Six Approaches to Psychotherapy, ed. J. L. McCary (New York: Dryden Press, 1955), p. 31.

³This phrase comes from "Client-Centered Psychotherapy," in Six Approaches to Psychotherapy, ed. J. L. McCary (New York: Dryden Press, 1955), p. 31.

which persons suffer, Hobbs believed the psychoanalytic prescription is unlikely to be effective because it holds that the cure for unreason is reason. This, for Hobbs, is the paradox: "Psychoanalysis has let us know that no man ever reasoned his way into a neurosis, yet it seems to insist that he should reason his way out."¹ Hobbs argued that people do not develop maladjustments and neuroses through lack of understanding but through concrete learning experiences that are hurtful, that start early in life, and that involve relationships with a very few important persons. These concrete experiences cause pain when they occur and they cause pain when they are recalled, so much so that people repress, evade, and distort their recollections and thus perpetuate their difficulties with others.

For Hobbs, therapy can help, not by promoting understanding or insight but by offering concrete and immediate learning experiences in more constructive living that are as compelling as the learning experiences that originated and maintained the client's problematic way of living. One such compelling primary learning experience which can replace old problematic ways of behaving with new and healthy ones is the healing experience of intimacy with a therapist. Such an experience might set off what Hobbs referred to as a "chain reaction of constructive interpersonal relationships" that can ultimately be of more use in building a sturdy personality than the "somewhat confined learnings" of the therapy situation in which achieving insight is the goal.² Learning theory is central to Hobbs's conception of the variables that operate in the therapeutic encounter. He construed progress in therapy as a process of learning characterized by

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Curing Unreason by Reason," review of Harry Stack Sullivan, edited by Helen Swick Perry and Mary Ladd Gawel; and The Psychiatric Interview, by Harry Stack Sullivan, in Contemporary Psychology 1 (February 1956): 44-55

²Hobbs describes the healing effects of intimacy with a therapist in "Client-Centered Psychotherapy," p. 33.

increasing differentiation of the perceptual field.¹ Such differentiation occurs through the continuing engagement with life as it is lived, not as it is talked about.

Although the focus of Hobbs's thought about therapy is on behavior, and he holds up behavior change as the goal of therapy, he should not be construed as a behaviorist in the Skinnerian sense. Hobbs viewed behavior as the product of differentiation of one's perceptual field, and held that all elements of the field are in dynamic relationship with each other. Thus, behavior is not simply a matter of making specific responses to specific stimuli but of responding to the basic human motivation to grow and develop in ways that are sustaining of the self. Moreover, an individual does not simply respond passively to what the world offers. Rather, individuals respond selectively to available stimuli according to the perceived significance to the self of those stimuli.

Testing and Selection

During his time at Teachers College Hobbs continued work on the testing and selection of the members of aircrews that he had first conducted while serving in the Army Air Forces during World War II. He conducted this work in 1946 and 1947 under contract with the American Institute of Research (AIR), a private research institute in Pittsburgh, and in so doing he continued his collaboration with some of the psychologists, including John Flanagan, with whom he had worked in the military.²

¹Hobbs's broad theory of how people learn incorporated the concept of the perceptual field, which he took from Arthur W. Combs and Donald Snygg, Individual Behavior: A New Frame of Reference for Psychology (New York: Harper, 1949). At the time this book was published, the concept of the perceptual field and the use of the term perception to refer to acts of knowing, understanding, or forming ideas—of any differentiations the individual makes in his or her perceptual field—were not widely accepted by psychologists.

² According to Donald S. Napoli, in Architects of Adjustment: The History of the Psychological Profession in the United States (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1981), Flanagan accepted a major's commission in 1941, thus becoming the first psychologist to serve as such in the Army Air Forces. During the war years he directed the Army Air Forces' Aviation Psychology Program, the program to which Hobbs had been assigned. After the war, he joined the Department of Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh.

Hobbs concentrated on the problem of predicting success in commercial airline piloting, a subset of the larger problem for personnel psychologists of how tests might be used to uncover the critical differences in personality qualities between good and poor performers of any complex work task. For Hobbs, many of the requirements for the job of commercial airline pilot, such as knowledge of flying regulations and fundamental psychomotor skills, lent themselves to ready definition and measurement. These were the routine attributes that pilots acquire, with little variation in level of mastery, through practice and the process of on-the-job selection, and they enabled a pilot to get a plane off the ground, fly it from one point to another, and set it down smoothly. Hobbs was more concerned with additional attributes, such as judgment, carefulness, emotional control, and motivation, that could be crucial to safe flying when engine problems, hazardous weather conditions, or other forms of trouble necessitate quick decisions. These attributes, less amenable to definition and measurement than knowledge of procedures and psychomotor skills, appeared to Hobbs to be most critical in differentiating between good and poor pilots.¹

Hobbs's contribution to a solution to this differentiation problem was an incomplete sentences test designed to measure some of the personality qualities considered relevant to successful airline piloting. The test consisted of the beginning words or phrases of sentences which were presented to the subject with the instruction to complete each sentence. Hobbs favored a relatively unstructured instrument of this type, instead of some formal personality inventory, because he thought the qualities to be measured were less well defined than are the qualities presumably measured by established tests of aptitudes. Interviews with pilots and with other airline personnel provided the basis for

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "The Development and Validation of an Incomplete Sentences Test for the Selection of Airline Pilots," 1947. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

the analysis of the personality factors important in the job of the airline pilot, and the personality factors identified in this way became guides for the development of items that formed the incomplete sentences test. In the interviews, Hobbs posed the question that he considered to be the basic question of the researcher in personnel studies: "What are the critical differences between good and poor performers of your job?" On the basis of their responses, the following personality qualities were assumed to be critical: a degree of emotional control which minimizes debilitating anxiety in emergencies; an interest in flying; a favorable attitude toward administrative responsibilities; loyalty to the job and the employing company; well-conceived professional plans; and an ability to establish and maintain good relationships with colleagues.¹

Although the first version of Hobbs's test was designed to predict the success of prospective airline pilots, few of the its 50 items addressed personality factors that were specific to airline piloting alone. A year or two later Hobbs developed a 60-item version of the test with broader implications as a personnel selection instrument. He believed that the test's emphasis on such commodious personality attributes as judgment, motivation, carefulness, and emotional control qualified it as a "sensitive and revealing instrument, when used in a not too ambitious [sic] fashion," that could be useful in making personnel decisions in such professions as school teaching.²

While the phrase, "when used in a not too ambitious [sic] fashion," might have been deliberately ambiguous, it reveals something about Hobbs's position regarding the appropriate use of tests in personnel decision making and, more generally, of the entire psychometric enterprise. In his view, too much was asked of formal psychological tests as tools, not only in the selection of personnel, but also as means to understand and help

¹Ibid.

²Nicholas Hobbs to R. H. Faust, Chance Vought Aircraft, Stratford, Connecticut, 29 March 1948. Hobbs Papers.

people. He believed that psychologists, in their zeal to compare one individual to a large group of individuals, fail to appreciate the usefulness of the "self" as an integrating concept. In an article in which he offered guidance workers some suggestions for practice, he wrote:

If some mischievous gremlin should rob applied psychologists of all concepts based upon the frequency distribution, we would have to close up shop. We would not know what to do with the unique person, the single instance of a peculiar phenomenon, the unrepeatable self that is our client. Fortunately, we do not need to strip ourselves of the externalist, normative techniques that we possess; but we do need, it would seem, to develop new techniques for the greater understanding of the self.¹

This position, which Hobbs began to formulate in the late 1940s, achieved its full expression some 12 to 15 years later when Hobbs took on the tasks of devising selection procedures for Peace Corps volunteers and for teacher-counselors at his Re-ED schools. He worked toward a multifaceted approach to selection that would capitalize on individual differences in readiness to perform the task under consideration, be it piloting a commercial airliner, teaching troubled children to work cooperatively during a camping trip, or digging a well in an African village. His approach to selection also emphasized applicants' life histories and the wide range of their experiences that came from the applicants themselves and from other people who knew the applicants. In formulating this approach, Hobbs drew on the principles of Karl Lewin's model of action research and on those of the ecological psychologists. He thought any effective selection procedure should identify those people whose life experiences had prepared them in substantial measure for the professional role they sought. For Hobbs, a formal

¹ Nicholas Hobbs, "Guidance and Some Recent Developments in Psychological Theory," p. 70.

instrument such as his Incomplete Sentences Test functioned as one of many sources of information about an individual.

The problems of putting one's values into everyday practice, of wielding power in human relationships, and of becoming socially effective, as well as technically competent, were central to Hobbs's thought about effective helping. Helping, in his view, meant acting as an agent of change in personal relationships with others. In addition, helping meant practicing social science as an agent of change of society. In considering what it takes to be an effective helper, both on the individual and on the societal level, Hobbs believed helpers must guard against the assumption that the ever more sophisticated methodology of the social sciences would rescue them from the need to give attention to value commitments.

Bringing Values into Significant Operation

"How is science to be accepted and yet the realm of values to be conserved?" For John Dewey, this question posed the "main problems for modern philosophy."¹ Reconciling science and values was also a central concern for Hobbs as well. In his view, institutionalized social science had failed to accord to values their proper methodological role. In an article published in 1950, in which he reviewed his work as director of the American Psychological Association's project to develop a code of ethics, he states that standard methodological practice, with its strict adherence to both value neutrality and to the ideal of the disinterested scholar, constrains social scientists who would be willing, given the opportunity, to assume explicitly value-oriented positions in their work. Hobbs declares that he is

¹ John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action, p. 41.

inclined to believe that there is no particular reluctance of social scientists to concern themselves with the study of values, except a natural reluctance to continue climbing after the rungs of methodological ladders have given out.¹

The question of "method," of building the additional rungs on the methodological ladder that would lead psychologists both to become aware of what Hobbs called the "value situations" in their work and to become more committed to discriminating the "ethically better" in their choices, is central to the pragmatic traditions of William James and John Dewey. For Dewey and James, as well as for Hobbs, method involves a way of living, of being a participant in the search for values in the course of experience. For Dewey, "method" is "intelligence in operation," and the application of method means replacing a "quest for certainty" in which the discovery of final, fixed laws is the objective with a "search for security by means of active control of the changing course of events."² For James, the pragmatic method means "*The attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'categories', supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts.*"³ James, like Dewey, construes method not as a solution but as a "program for more work," and as an "indication of the way in which existing realities may be *changed*."⁴

Hobbs occupied a place among social scientists who found in pragmatism a method that granted them freedom from what James refers to as "abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad *a priori* reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems,

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Some Reflections on Empirical Investigations of Ethics," Journal of Social Issues 6 (April 1950): 57.

²John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action, p. 204.

³William James, "What Pragmatism Means," in Essays in Pragmatism, ed. Alburey Castell (New York: Hafner, 1948), p. 146.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 145.

and pretended absolutes."¹ This method, however, charged him with the responsibility for defining ethical behavior through his own actions, without the antecedent authority of immutable Truth, Beauty, and Goodness for guidance. Benne and Swanson, who discuss this tradition, point out that pragmatism states that the "good" is determined through consideration of means and ends, and that one particular end is chosen according to its own "means value" in promoting other ends.² In Benne and Swanson's view, this means-ends formulation moved the discussion of values and ethics away from a priori, standardized decisions assumed to have universal validity and toward a concern with problem solving that would be of greater usefulness in satisfying specific human desires. This tradition asserted that values change as human environments and needs change. Values, then, are not fixed and final but standards to be used and shaped in the human process of choosing.

Ethical Standards for Psychologists

The question of how to establish these standards became central for Hobbs during the late 1940s and early 1950s as he conducted a time-consuming and empirical investigation of ethical standards for psychologists. At a time when the profession of psychology was attempting to assume a position that would rival the medical-psychiatric establishment as a provider of mental health services and source of knowledge, he was asked to direct the profession's effort to develop a code of ethics. To do this, he was not content to bring together a panel of "elders" to deliver prescriptions which would merely reflect prevailing

¹Ibid., p. 144.

²Kenneth D. Benne, and G. E. Swanson, "The Problem of Values and the Social Scientist," Journal of Social Issues 6 (April 1950): 2-7. Benne and Swanson were the guest editors of the special issue of the Journal of Social Issues devoted to the topic "Values and the Social Sciences" in which this article and Hobbs's "Some Reflections of Empirical Investigations of Ethics" were published.

tendencies in the attitudes and practices of psychologists with respect to ethical standards; rather, he called on the rank and file membership of the American Psychological Association to provide descriptions of "critical incidents," drawn from their own professional lives, in which they had encountered ethically troublesome and ambiguous issues. He used these descriptions as the raw material for a code of ethics that would meet his prime criteria for success—that the code would actually unsettle psychologists and make a difference in what they did. Hobbs conceived of this effort as one in applied social science, and in carrying it out he tried to mobilize as many psychologists as he could. His purpose in this mobilization effort was to stimulate his professional colleagues to "get their own values into significant operation" as they reacted to his proposals.¹ He also conceived of this empirical investigation of ethics as an unfolding process whose product, a published "Code of Ethical Standards for Psychology," would do more than simply report on current practice.

The investigation of an ethical code for psychologists provided Hobbs with a context for addressing the problem of "method"; that is, for connecting the problem of values with the problem of intelligent action. In June 1947, Carl Rogers, Hobbs's former professor, and then president of the American Psychological Association, appointed Hobbs to the Association's Committee on Ethical Standards for Psychology. The Committee, with Edward C. Tolman of the University of California, Berkeley as its first chairperson, was charged with the task of drafting a broadly conceived code of ethics that would guide psychologists in their range of activities and professional interests that had expanded as a result of their work during World War II. In the years preceding the war psychologists had concentrated on academic research and instruction; during and after the

¹Nicholas Hobbs to Kenneth D. Benne, College of Education, University of Illinois, 30 June 1950. Hobbs Papers.

war they became increasingly involved in clinical and consulting services in institutions, government agencies, schools, businesses, and private practice as well as in research that drew them outside both the laboratory and the testing hall. This increased activity in the applied domain led psychologists into new situations in which they faced new kinds of ethical dilemmas—dilemmas which, in the eyes of the APA leadership, the existing collection of unsystematized codes of ethics, chiefly concerned with the guidance of teaching and research in academic settings, did not address adequately.

In 1948 Hobbs succeeded Tolman as the committee's chairperson, and under his direction the committee devised a plan for drawing up a code. Hobbs, at 33, was the youngest and perhaps least established member of the committee, but his special attributes—the elegance and clarity of his writing, the zeal with which he approached his first opportunity to work for the profession of psychology on an issue of national significance, and the power of his ideas about a method for developing a code that would make a difference in what psychologists actually did—must have impressed his older colleagues.¹ For Hobbs, a code of ethics could be of value only in so far as it could have an impact on the behavior of psychologists. He was convinced that a code of ethics drawn up by a group of the "elders" of the profession, without the involvement of the rank and file whose behavior the code was intended to guide, would hold little currency. Moreover, he believed that unless proper care were taken, a code of ethics ran the risk of

¹The members of the committee when Hobbs became its chairperson were: Stuart W. Cook, a psychologist with the Commission on Community Interrelations of the American Jewish Congress in New York; Harold A. Edgerton of Richardson, Bellows, Henry & Company, Inc. (representing business and industry); Morris Krugman, a guidance counselor with the New York city schools; Helen D. Sargent, a clinical psychologist at the Winter Veterans Administration Hospital in Topeka, Kansas; Donald E. Super, a member of the faculty of Hobbs's department, the Department of Guidance, at Teachers College; and Lloyd N. Yepsen, of the New Jersey State Department of Institutions and Agencies (representing state agencies).

becoming a mere protective device for psychologists, designed to shield them from public scrutiny and to minimize competition from other professions.¹

Involvement and specificity were the key ideas in Hobbs's solution to the problem of developing a code of ethics that would actually change the behavior of psychologists. In the period of about three years during which the committee worked on the code, about half of the 7500 members of the APA contributed either descriptions of "critical incidents" in which they had made decisions that seemed ethically critical or other ideas to the committee, and the great majority of the membership discussed the code in some organized discussion group, meeting, or seminar. As to specificity, the committee built the code on over a thousand critical incidents which gave emphasis to good practices and to ambiguous cases rather than to obvious violations of ethical standards. With this empirical data, the committee developed principles that could be illustrated very concretely and be applied to specific situations encountered in the work of psychologists.²

The development and application of a code of ethics established a procedure for finding values in the course of experience. In so doing, the code stood as an example of the application of the pragmatic method, a method which relied less on the technical decisions of the social sciences than on individual perspicacity—on asking good questions about what needs to be done and on selecting the right problems. Hobbs rejected what Martin Rein refers to as the technician's approach to decision making—the

¹Nicholas Hobbs to William Workman, 3 January 1952. Hobbs Papers. Hobbs first outlined his ideas for developing a code of ethics in a memorandum to Edward C. Tolman, dated 12 December 1947. Hobbs Papers. This memorandum, written shortly after Rogers appointed Hobbs to the committee on ethical standards and before Hobbs became the committee's chairperson, proposed a method for developing a code for psychologists, recommended research techniques involving widespread participation, and suggested a number of criteria to guide the application of a code of ethics. These early ideas of Hobbs's were adopted.

²Nicholas Hobbs to William Workman.

belief that all problems have unique solutions deriving from purely technical considerations.¹ He appreciated the necessity for moral choices and was able to see what was truly significant in his work on a code of ethical standards for psychologists and, later, his work in the service of troubled children.

Helping Children: Learning Experiences in Constructive Living

When Hobbs assumed the position of chair of the Division of Human Development and Guidance at Peabody in 1951, the college was entering a period of revitalization and organizational restructuring. Four new Divisions, of which Hobbs's was one, emerged, each with a new chair, and each with a mandate from the administration to create a profile that would distinguish it from state-supported teacher education institutions in the South. Under Hobbs's "gentle but persistent prodding," the Division of Human Development and Guidance—an academic division in which psychologists, educators, and counselors with both basic and applied orientations were collected—tried to identify what Hobbs referred to as the "great challenges of American life" with the intention of "shaping a program that will help American education prepare people for those challenges."² The program—the mission—which Hobbs prodded his Division to take on was the study of the problems of socially vulnerable children, concentrating on emotional disturbance, mental retardation, and sensorimotor disorders. During the 1950s and 1960s the prevailing climate at the college was middle-class, modest in its fiscal policy, and warm

¹Martin Rein, Social Policy: Issues of Choice and Change (New York: Random House, 1970).

²In his remarks at the dedication of the Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development (see the discussion of this dedication ceremony in chapter 1), H. Carl Haywood, Hobbs's longtime colleague at Peabody, used the expression "gentle but persistent prodding" to describe Hobbs's efforts to direct the work of his Division toward the problem of socially vulnerable children. Remarks From the Dedication: The Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development, p. 7. The two quoted phrases by Hobbs come from a handwritten piece titled "The Function and Future of Peabody," which he likely wrote for the purpose of stimulating discussion at a faculty meeting. It is dated 12 December 1954 and is collected in the Hobbs Papers.

in terms of human relations. In these ways Peabody stood in contrast to its larger neighbor, Vanderbilt University.¹ The focus on children also distinguished Peabody; during the 1950s most psychological research in academic settings in the United States addressed the adult adjustment problems of war veterans.²

Hobbs thought of Peabody in the 1950s and 1960s as a "community of scholars" and often referred to the college as "Camelot."³ The college was a special place for Hobbs for two reasons: It provided him with a secure institutional base which, as he states in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the creative and productive person requires; and it granted him the requisite freedom to pursue worthwhile problems of his own choosing. That Hobbs chose the problems of socially vulnerable children is not surprising. By building his academic division as a center for the study of needy children, Hobbs placed himself and his colleagues outside the prevailing research and service interests of the psychological establishment. He valued this status as an outsider. Second, his interest in children was a natural outgrowth of his experiences at Teachers College. Although he had been estranged from the large contingent of psychologists at Columbia who possessed a psychoanalytic orientation, Hobbs had made contact with a number of people whose interests in children corresponded with like interests he had first developed as a teenager. The work of Virginia Axline, the pioneer of play therapy with troubled young children, presented a model for Hobbs of a psychologist who concentrated on the special problems of children. Ruth Strang's work with gifted

¹Julius Seeman, Professor of Psychology, Emeritus at Peabody, came to Peabody in 1953. He offered this view of Peabody in an interview on 15 April 1987.

²Seymour B. Sarason, "An Asocial Psychology and a Misdirected Clinical Psychology."

³Samuel Ashcroft, interview, 17 July 1987.

children provided another such model and stimulated Hobbs's interest in establishing special opportunities for the gifted in the community at large.¹

A third source of Hobbs's interest in children was his conviction that a central fact of his time was the creation of a permanent, angry, and alienated underclass of young people. He was confident, however, that the application of both scholarly research and practical attention to the task of strengthening old institutions and establishing new ones could reduce the likelihood this underclass would appear. In Hobbs's view, protecting children from the worst effects of poverty—poor health care, crime, incomplete education, alienation, anger, lack of nourishment for minds and bodies, and an inability to obtain and keep jobs—does not occur by broad governmental fiat. Rather, it occurs child by child, in families, schools, churches, playgrounds, and streets. His Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children (Re-ED) grew out of this view. It was designed to address the unmet needs of troubled children in a way that departs from traditional patterns of care for adults, a way which capitalizes on the myriad opportunities that interaction with adults in school programs and in daily living offer for the "re-education" of children who are experiencing troubles.

In Hobbs's view, helping children meant engaging them in "learning experiences in more constructive living."² The term "re-education" is rich with suggestions about Hobbs's ideas about helping children who are in such serious trouble that they need residential care. Re-education makes the teaching and learning enterprise central and gives it a strong psychological emphasis. The term also conveys Hobbs's assumption

¹In a tape-recorded interview with his longtime friend and colleague, Samuel Ashcroft, Professor of Special Education, Emeritus, Peabody College, on 1 January 1983, three weeks before Hobbs's death, Hobbs was asked to recall the ideas and individuals that had influenced him over the years.

²This phrase comes from "Curing Unreason by Reason," Hobbs's review of Harry Stack Sullivan, edited by Helen Swick Perry and Mary Ladd Garvel; and The Psychiatric Interview, by Harry Stack Sullivan, p. 44.

that "school is near the center of a child's life and that it is the natural fulcrum for efforts to help children in trouble."¹

The term "re-education" did not originate with Hobbs; rather, it appears that he appropriated it from two sources, both of which emerged in the years following World War II. One of these was a body of literature from France about the residential treatment of troubled and retarded children. A second source was the body of psychological literature in which "re-education" is construed as a task of acculturation which arises when an individual or group is out of step with the larger society. The August 1945 issue of the Journal of Social Issues, the journal of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (a division of the American Psychological Association) has "Problems of Re-Education" as its theme. In this issue, the contributors address such "re-educative" objectives as the reduction of racial prejudice, alcoholism, and delinquency and the peaceful use of atomic energy. For Kurt Lewin and Paul Grabbe, the editors of the theme issue, the processes of learning and development which govern the acquisition of behavior that is considered correct and realistic, and the processes which lead to behavior that is considered asocial are essentially the same. Re-education is designed to bring deviant individuals into concert with the values and standards of behavior of the society at large. It is a process of fostering membership in an "in-group," a group in which members "feel belongingness." In the view of Lewin and Grabbe, accepting membership in a group is the mechanism by which the individual who has taken to alcoholism, for example, accepts a new system of values and beliefs.

¹ This passage comes from a draft of Hobbs's report on his visits in a number of Western European countries to clinics, public schools, institutions, and research centers that were concerned with the problems of retarded and disturbed children. He made the visits in the autumn of 1956 as a member of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health. A typewritten draft of the report, titled "Programs for the Care of Mentally Deficient and Emotionally Disturbed Children in Europe," is in the Hobbs Papers.

This conception of the re-education process raises a specter of social control that seemingly stands squarely at odds with Hobbs's belief in the primacy of individual choice, in one's fundamental right to "precipitate oneself into just manageable difficulties of one's own choosing." Re-education, so conceived, may conjure up images of totalitarian societies which brook no dissent. In 1945 and later in 1961, when Hobbs appropriated the term, "re-education" had not yet acquired the moral and political connotations that it now possesses. The members of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues were psychologists who were interested in placing the knowledge of their discipline in the service of pressing human problems. Edward M. Haydon, a sociologist who worked in programs for juvenile delinquents in Chicago, offers a more specific application of the concept of re-education, one which might have inspired Hobbs:

There can be no assembly-line procedure in successful programs of re-education of delinquents. The work must be carried on in intimate face-to-face relationships. There is no ready-made pattern or formula which can be passed on from community to community. Each locality must work out its own solution . . .

The real test of programs of re-education in relation to delinquency is what happens to the delinquent. To affect the delinquent, the program must emanate from the delinquent and his associates. They are the ones who must be permitted to do the planning, managing, and financing. Those who would help in such an endeavor must come down off the pedestals of professional training, superior economic status, and adulthood, and throw in their lot with those whom they see to influence. . . . Only through this procedure will they be able to use their advantages in life for the common welfare. In so doing, they will find that their own re-education is just as significant as their re-education of others.¹

¹Edward M. Haydon, "Re-education and Delinquency," Journal of Social Issues 1 (August 1945): 32.

Gifted Children

The process of re-education as it is described here corresponds to the basic components of Hobbs's conception of the helping process—a commitment to learning, growing, getting people close together, and establishing intimate relationships with others. This description of the re-education process also accords with Hobbs's ideas about the importance of making room for adaptation to local conditions by discarding preconceived programs based on standards imposed from the outside.

Hobbs's concern with the problem of increasing the opportunities of gifted children was an early example of his interest in setting the adjustment problems of individuals within the context of the community. He believed the community must be increasingly willing to accept responsibility for the emotional well-being of its citizens; therefore, instead of focusing on individual counseling or on programs in schools, Hobbs cast the problem of serving the gifted in terms of the human resources of the larger community. In a chapter titled, "Community Recognition of the Gifted," Hobbs made suggestions about how communities might recognize their potentially prominent fellow citizens.¹ For Hobbs, the problem of improving the opportunities of gifted children was linked to the meanings of two basic concepts in American life, equality and equity. He argued that the time-honored democratic principle that human beings are "created equal" does not mean that they possess equal capacities, but rather that they are to be granted full equality in the pursuit of self-realization. He abjured the leveling tendencies in modern mass society which prevent the full expression of the differences between people, the right of people to be themselves, and the full realization of capacity. In his view, these tendencies are usually economic and social—they rarely take the form of laws against attending medical

¹This chapter appears in *The Gifted Child*, ed. Paul Witty, (Washington, DC: American Association for Gifted Children, 1951).

school or studying painting, for example—and they have the unwitting effect of making self-realization impossible because they reduce opportunities for free choice.

Hobbs urged communities to provide opportunities for children to discover outstanding abilities through experience and to demonstrate outstanding abilities through performance. He believed all children should be allowed to sample a wide range of activities, to engage in some activity of their own choosing, and to explore their chosen activity to the limits of their abilities. He recommended identification through performance, rather than through formal testing, because he believed that with performance such considerations as economic or social status would be minimized in deciding who could pursue opportunities for higher learning. In "Community Recognition of the Gifted," Hobbs also gave accounts of how specific communities provided opportunities for children to explore avenues of self-expression. Among these were programs for fostering expression in art in Worcester, Massachusetts, for encouraging musical activity in a boys' choir in Dayton, Ohio, and for promoting the writing of poetry in Dallas, Texas.

The Genesis of Re-ED

Hobbs retained his interest in the special problems of gifted children through the 1950s, but in the latter part of the decade this interest was eclipsed by his studies of the residential treatment of emotionally disturbed children in the South and of alternative institutional arrangements for children in several Western European countries. These studies were the source of a number of ideas that were to influence his Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children (Re-ED).

In 1954 Hobbs was named the director of a survey of needs and resources for mental health training and research in the sixteen southern states participating in the Southern

Regional Education Board (SREB) compact. The SREB was established in 1949 under an interstate compact ratified by a group of southern states for the purpose of assisting colleges and universities develop educational programs that would contribute to the solution of the special social and economic problems of the South. While the survey had the training of mental health professionals and the conduct of research in mental health as its major concerns, its most important outcome, as far as Hobbs was concerned, was what it uncovered about mental health services, particularly the services accorded the increasing numbers of children who were being admitted to state hospitals.¹

Hobbs's work on the survey for the SREB took him to mental health facilities throughout the South, and what he saw in these places made a profound impression. He saw severely disturbed children housed with psychotic adults on wards where the despair of both staff and patients was palpable. He saw well-meaning staff members unable, for want of training, to do any more than simply act as custodians and maintain order. He saw specialized treatment facilities constructed and equipped but standing empty for want of staff. In Hobbs's view, these circumstances had grown up in the South and throughout the entire nation not out of a lack of concern or even out of a lack of money but out of a lack of feasible models for effective service programs for disturbed children.

The SREB survey loosened Hobbs's commitment to the approved psychiatric model for the treatment of disturbed children, one in which individual psychotherapy reigned supreme, and convinced him that the hospital could not serve as the institutional paradigm for a much needed national mental health program. Such a labor-intensive model incurred

¹Hobbs describes the gradual emergence of the outlines of the Re-ED plan in a number of published articles and speeches, among them: "How the Re-ED Plan Developed," in Conflict in the Classroom: The Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children, eds. Nicholas J. Long, William C. Morse, and Ruth G. Newman (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1965), pp. 286-96.; "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-ED"; The Troubled and Troubling Child (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982); and a speech at the biennial meeting of the American Re-Education Association, August, 1982 (see chapter 1 for a discussion of this speech).

high costs, required large numbers of highly skilled professionals, and yielded uncertain results. Although no good solutions to the problem of what to do for emotionally disturbed children were apparent to him in 1954, Hobbs came away from his SREB survey with a fervent interest in the problem and a strong conviction that what was required was a full-blown reconceptualization of the problem.¹

Hobbs's first step toward this reconceptualization occurred two years later when the Mental Health Study Act of the United States Congress established the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health. The Act directed the Commission to evaluate the resources and needs of the mentally ill and to make recommendations for a national mental health program. In its 1961 report, the Commission concluded that the absence of a strong public call for humanitarian reforms for the treatment of the mentally ill bespoke the point that we in the United States had not done as well as we knew how for the humane care of the mentally ill.² In addition, the Commission made recommendations regarding the role of communities in patient care and what was then referred to as the problem of "manpower" in mental health professions. The Commission called for an end to the isolation of large mental hospitals from the service agencies of local communities. It also called for broader conceptions of what constitutes mental health treatment and of who can provide such treatment. It allowed that certain psychiatric, medical, and neurological examinations must be performed by physicians or specially trained personnel. The Commission acknowledged that "depth psychotherapy" must be practiced only by those with appropriate training. It suggested, however, that a wide array of services combining elements of psychiatric treatment and client counseling, of "someone to tell one's troubles

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "How the Re-Ed Plan Developed," and "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-Ed."

²Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, Action for Mental Health (New York: Basic Books, 1961).

to," and of "love for one's fellow man" could be carried out by nonmedical mental health workers with the requisite aptitude, training, experience, and competence.¹ The thrust of the Commission's position regarding manpower in the mental health positions was that nonmedical, nonspecialists need not be relegated to mere custodial work. Regarding the treatment of troubled children, the summary report of the Commission recommended

pilot studies in the development of centers for the re-education of emotionally disturbed children, using different types of personnel than are customary. In view of the shortage of manpower—in the fields of social work, psychiatry, psychology, and nursing—it is desirable to find alternative patterns of care for large groups of emotionally disturbed children both of normal and retarded intelligence. It is suggested that a system of schools and training programs for Re-Education of emotionally disturbed children be established on a research basis.²

The work of the Joint Commission contributed to the context from which Hobbs's ideas about serving troubled children emerged. The work also bore his imprint. As vice-chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Commission, Hobbs participated in a study of programs for retarded and disturbed children in several Western European countries. Observations of these programs during his tour of Italy, France, England, Scotland, Belgium, and Holland in 1956 promoted Hobbs's process of reconceptualization by offering him models of institutional arrangements that could serve as alternatives to the prevailing hospital model in America. Years later he acknowledged the value of his visits to these European programs in words that recall the theme of this chapter: The visits had served to "invite invention and expand . . . [his] sense of the possible."³

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "How the Re-Ed Plan Developed," p. 26.

²Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, Action for Mental Health, quoted in Nicholas Hobbs, "A Brief History of Project Re-Ed," Mind Over Matter 14 (March 1969): 11.

³Nicholas Hobbs, "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-ED," p. 153.

The idea that was to influence Re-ED most profoundly was borrowed from Europe where the "éducateur" played a key role. The éducateur, a professional with no counterpart in mental health services in the United States, combined the duties of recreation worker, teacher, and counselor to play a central role in the operation of children's mental health facilities in France. The idea of the éducateur galvanized Hobbs's thinking about the problem of what to do for emotionally disturbed children in the United States because it suggested a pattern for a new professional group in mental health that might be adopted to help solve the mental health manpower problem in this country. Éducateurs were not highly trained and specialized members of a guild, such as psychiatry, social work or nursing, who relied on professional knowledge and technical skills in their work with children. Instead, they were carefully selected individuals who had received condensed and highly specific on-the-job training and whose personal attributes suggested that they might work effectively with children.

Hobbs encountered the term "re-education" in a book published in France in 1953 by Robert Lafon, a professor of neurology and psychiatry of the faculty of Medicine of the University of Montpellier in France. Since the publication of Lafon's book, the term re-education (in French "rééducation") has appeared frequently in literature in the French language about the treatment of troubled children.¹

¹Hobbs met Lafon during his 1956 tour of residential treatment facilities for troubled children in France, Scotland, Italy, and other Western European countries and maintained contact with him for years thereafter. Lafon was also president of the Union Nationale des Associations Régionales de la Sauvegarde de l'Enfance et de l'Adolescence, a private society, supported largely by government funds and responsible for the care of all kinds of exceptional children in France. His book, *Psycho-Pédagogie Médico-Sociale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953), presented an educational approach to the problems of the troubled child, French style.

The rééducation literature includes the work of M. Henri Joubrel, a major figure in France's rééducation movement and formerly president of the International Association of Workers for Maladjusted Children (IAWMC), C. Busnelli, and Jeannine Guindon, all of whom spoke on the subject of rééducation at the 5th Congress of the IAWMC in Rome in 1960. The proceeding of the Congress are cited in T. Dobrenic, "The Status and Role of the Specialized Educateur," *International Journal of Mental Health* 2 (Spring 1973): 60-70. Other works by Guindon include: *Le Processus de Rééducation des Jeunes Délinquants par l'Actualisation des Forces Vitales du Moi Autonome* (Montreal: Sciences de l'Homme, 1969) and *Les Étapes de la Rééducation* (Paris:

In the early 1960s the European *éducateur* would appear in American form as a "teacher-counselor" in the first of Hobbs's Re-ED schools.¹ With the *éducateur* as his model, he conceived of the teacher-counselor as something of an around-the-clock therapist or surrogate parent whose chief responsibility was to translate the many commonplace daily contacts of adults with children into therapeutically meaningful experiences for them. In his view,

when children and adults interact, regardless of how trivial the situation may seem, whether it is getting up or going to bed, brushing teeth or shining shoes, eating or playing, there is an invitation to learning—or, more accurately, there is an inevitability of learning—about self and others, about the things that therapists struggle to bring to life in formal therapeutic relationships.²

The model provided by the teacher-counselor opened up a source of well-meaning and skilled child care workers that could ameliorate the problem of personnel shortages for children's treatment programs. As stated above, this manpower issue in the field mental health had moved to center stage in the aftermath of the 1960 report to the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health. As the 1960s began, the Commission's report helped create a receptive climate for Hobbs's ideas. This occurred in a context in which disaffection with many of society's institutions was increasing. The time was ripe for the entry of Hobbs's fundamentally different conception of the problem of the troubled child, and in March 1961 The National Institute of Mental Health granted two million dollars to George Peabody College for Teachers and the states of Tennessee and

Fleurus, 1970), both of which are cited by Guindon in "The Reeducation Process," International Journal of Mental Health 2 (Spring 1973): 15-26.

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "How the Re-ED Plan Developed," and "A Natural History of an Idea: Project Re-ED."

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Programs for the Care of Mentally Deficient and Emotionally Disturbed Children in Europe." (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

North Carolina to establish what came to be known as Project Re-ED. With this grant, Hobbs was able to apply his inventiveness to the problems of making schools, mental health institutions, and various other community agencies more responsive to the special needs of children whose intellectual gifts or whose emotional disorders or intellectual deficiencies reduced their capacity to achieve health, growth, and the realization of their potentialities.

Generativity

The mechanism which played an important role in Hobbs's inventiveness was what Julius Richmond, referred to as Hobbs's "sense of generativity."¹ This generative capacity, this capacity to "raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life, to foster reconsideration of that which is 'taken for granted,' and thereby to furnish new alternatives for social action,"² emerged in Hobbs's work during the period under discussion.

Kenneth J. Gergen's discussion of generative theory offers a way to conceptualize Hobbs's work as a social scientist intent on applying theory to matters of practical social concern.³ According to Gergen, a generative orientation assumes contemporary social phenomena to be temporary, unstable, and subject to change—to be, in short, historically situated. This assumption can liberate social scientists from the strictures of prevailing patterns of thought, and, once liberated, they may consider alternatives that challenge common assumptions about social phenomena. Generative theory also offers an

¹Richmond made this reference in his remarks at the dedication ceremony of the Nicholas Hobbs Human Development Laboratory (see chapter 1).

²Kenneth J. Gergen, "Toward Generative Theory," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 36 (November 1978): 1346.

³Kenneth J. Gergen's work on generative theory appears in "Toward Generative Theory" and in Toward Transformation in Social Knowledge (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1982).

alternative goal toward which social scientists might employ their skills. Rather than demanding that social scientists create and report "new" knowledge, a generative orientation engages social scientists in the task of furnishing increased utility for what is already known. For Gergen, the chief question confronting the generative theorist is not "How true or accurate is the theoretical account?" but, rather, "What function is theory to play in the human arena?" or "What forms of activity is a theoretical account designed to sustain, create, or destroy?" With this concern with tracing the practical consequences of ideas, generative theory echoes the pragmatic method.

Gergen calls attention to two properties of social theory closely aligned with generative capacity. First, generative theorists do not approach what they are investigating as if they were simply unbiased observers of the "facts." In contrast, they acknowledge value orientations, and intuition, which are inevitable in any theoretical account, as the prime movers of their investigations. In Gergen's view, the problem of what to do with the valuational implications of their work stands as a major challenge for generative theorists. Because the expression of values is inevitable in any theoretical account, the task for the theorist becomes not avoiding any expressions of value, but avoiding expressions that, upon reflection, are uncongenial to the theorist. Generative theorizing, therefore, demands that theorists avoid any attempt to remain value neutral and that they confront directly the valuational implications of their work. With the question of the fidelity of theory to objective reality relegated to the wings, the chief criterion, in Gergen's view, for appraising generative theory is rooted in the value one places on the goals of theory.

A second property of theory with generative capacity is its disengagement from the traditional positivist approach of the natural sciences, an approach that focuses on reliable observation, description, and explanation. In contrast, generative theory may actively

shape the system of socially constructed reality both from within and from without the disciplinary boundaries of the social science arena. In so doing, it acquires some truth value that does not require empirical verification. In Berger and Luckmann's terms, theory with generative capacity may become "socially objectivated as knowledge."¹

Gergen cites the shaping effects of Freudian theory as a case in which a theoretical account serves ends that lie beyond the boundaries of the discipline of psychology and actually influences thought within the culture more generally. He states that aberrant or deviant behaviors, once commonly viewed as expressions of inferior character, of the presence of evil, or of lack of willpower, have been reconceptualized as a result of the general acceptance of psychoanalytic theory. Today these behaviors are commonly viewed as the products of personality dynamics over which individuals have little control, and society's responses to these behaviors, which formerly were punitive, now take the form of treatment.

Hobbs's inventiveness may be seen to have been informed by a generative orientation, which reduces the distinction between theory and practice in his work. As a theorist/practitioner who was intent on application, Hobbs pursued the problems he chose—serving emotionally disturbed children, investigating the role of insight in behavior change, to name but two—with an arsenal of personal knowledge and deep convictions to which he sought to fit theory that would generate solutions to practical problems. His ideas made an impact because they came to be endowed with a truth value that is substantially independent of any direct empirical verification. This impact has come about because Hobbs made his value positions explicit and others have either shared these positions or have been "won over" to them by the power of his ideas and

¹ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1967).

rhetoric. Hobbs's cardinal achievement as an inventor was not his uncovering of new "facts," but his exercise of a practical imagination. In this way, he granted increased utility for what was already known and stimulated increased concern for pressing human problems. Moreover, the range of particulars to which Hobbs's ideas apply—his investigation of the meaning of helping, his contribution to the development of a code of ethics for psychologists, and his creation of a model for serving emotionally disturbed children—altered prevailing conceptual agreements both within his discipline and, to a lesser extent, within the culture more generally. They also pointed to fresh alternatives for action.

CHAPTER 4

THE PERIOD OF ENGAGEMENT, 1961-1975: UPSETTING EQUILIBRIA,
EXPRESSING COMPETENCE, AND REVEALING CONFUSIONS

As many experiments indicate, man does indeed seek tension reduction, equilibrium, knowledge that he is on the right track. But this is only part of the story, the part that yields to experimentation. It is equally clear, though elusive to experimental demonstration, that man seeks tension, delights in upsetting equilibria, and loves to get himself lost, just for the fun of setting things right again. Order itself is ultimately boring; the *achieving* of order is man's dish. It is the process of mastery, of expression of competence, not the product thereof, that brings cognitive and aesthetic satisfaction. Scientist and poet alike work to bring order from disarray, to achieve elegance and simplicity in formula or metaphor, but each achieved simplicity reveals new and intricate confusions.

Nicholas Hobbs, 1966¹

This chapter examines Nicholas Hobbs's work during the period that begins in the spring of 1961, when, as principal investigator of the Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children (Re-ED), he received a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to establish residential schools for troubled children. The period under examination ends in the summer of 1975, when Hobbs stepped down from his position as Provost of Vanderbilt University and assumed a dual appointment as Professor of Psychology and of Preventive Medicine. This fourteen-year period is designated as Hobbs's period of "engagement" because during these years Hobbs's work as a builder of new kinds of helping institutions gave powerful expression to his conviction that engagement is a condition that is ineluctably associated with professional activity. For

¹"The Art of Getting Students into Trouble," in *The College and the Student*, eds. Lawrence E. Dennis and Joseph F. Kaufmann (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1966), p. 205.

Hobbs, to work as a social scientist is to be concerned with social purposes and engaged in advocacy for social policies made on the basis of perceived social needs rather than on the basis of research that is presumed to be objective.

"Engagement" is a term that Hobbs himself applied to his professional life. He used it in a speech delivered in August 1982, about five months before his death, to describe one aspect of his work on behalf of children.¹ Engagement also serves as the second of the three major themes of Hobbs's professional life. In this chapter, the term engagement has another function: It serves as the label for the fourteen years of Hobbs's professional life from 1961 to 1975.

The passage quoted at the outset of this chapter is a rich statement of the ideas that drove Hobbs's work during his period of engagement. The passage is about human nature, and it presents Hobbs's view regarding the life experiences that people value most. The passage is also about what work as a social scientist means for Hobbs, and it can be read as a description of Hobbs's own behavior during the period under discussion.

In the passage, Hobbs emphasizes the importance of action, of the daring and passionate application of intelligence and will to the process of living, and he accords central roles to "disarray" and "intricate confusions" as spurs to action. He had immense confidence in the capacity of both children and adults to learn from experiences, to establish and maintain meaningful relationships, and to achieve an enduring sense of self-worth. But he believed that this process can unfold only through living a life in which difficulties are met and resolved, with each resolution revealing new difficulties. This emphasis on the active life and on the living through of problems has great implications for Hobbs's position regarding how a person in a helping profession might be of service to others. In Hobbs's view, one does not help another by offering insights as an expert

¹See chapter 1 for a discussion of the speech.

with a privileged perspective on the problem at hand; rather, one helps by engaging another in learning experiences that lead to more constructive living. Hobbs's language makes it clear that the learning experiences that he had in mind were not the tidy stimulus-response sets that emerged as the fundamental units of the therapeutic system of the behaviorists in the years following World War II. Instead, Hobbs issued a clarion call for the strenuous life, for the healing and nurturing value of the experiences of "upsetting equilibria," "expressing competence," and "revealing confusions"—experiences that unfold over time and have a quality which is not entirely rational and purposeful but also passionate, playful, and fun. These were the central elements of his formula for successful and zestful living, and this formula applied equally well to troubled children as to ambitious psychologists.

Three phrases from the quoted passage stand out as keys to understanding Hobbs's engagement, and they appear in the title of this chapter. From 1961 to 1975 Hobbs did indeed "upset equilibria," "express competence," and "reveal confusions." He worked skillfully within both the academic and the professional establishments of mental health and, at the same time, circled around them from the outside probing them with ideas, questions, and challenges at points where he believed they were soft and vulnerable.

Historical Context: 1961-1975

Historical periods can be characterized by the prevailing social and economic conditions as well as by the intellectual and political spirit of the times. These characteristics influence both the identification of the mental health and educational problems that help define a specific period and the approaches of social scientists and policy makers to treating these problems. During the 1960s, large segments of the population possessed a spirit that commingled a growing skepticism about the wisdom of experts, technicians, and managers with an increased faith in the ability of social

institutions to mold society to the shape of some consensual notion of the commonweal. In addition, a good many Americans in the 1960s were galvanized by such conditions as the deterioration of urban life, racial unrest, increased alienation and militance among youth, the women's movement, the protracted war in Vietnam, and turmoil in the emerging nations of the developing world.

These conditions caused many people to become weary of old ways of thinking about problems and solutions, and this weariness was manifest in many forms. A radical counter-culture appeared which was both anti-cognitive and anti-intellectual in mood. The members of this counter-culture launched an attack against the hegemony of rationality and of the scientific world view and of the use of the conceptual tools of science for reforming society. They were angry at America in the 1960s, and it was their goal to restructure what in their view was a deeply flawed society.

The human potential movement expressed a second response to conditions of the 1960s. Its adherents retreated from the public arena and turned to those areas of life that seemed more likely to enhance personal happiness. Chanting, meditating, transcending, and using drugs became the preoccupations of people who looked inward and sought a "mind-cure" for the social and economic realities of life.¹

Reform activities growing out of the American liberal tradition were expressions of a third kind of response to the conditions of the 1960s. Liberal reformers avoided the excesses of the counter-culture and the human potential movement and took a middle path that featured the conviction that political and institutional structures were worth maintaining. They shared many concerns with the more severe critics of society. Like the radical left, they condemned the gap between what people needed and what the system provided; like the members of the human potential movement, they brought

¹This discussion borrows from William Proefriedt's analysis of the human potential movement in the 1960s which he presents in "Self-Fulfillment and Educational Reform," Teachers College Record 85 (Winter 1983): 205-224.

personal values and practices into the debate about social institutions. But they were unique in that their goals were not, as a rule, mere exercises in abstract thinking. Rather, the goals of the 1960s-style liberals represented what were thought to be workable solutions to pressing human problems, and to a great degree, these liberals drew on and distilled the work of researchers in the social sciences.

The social diagnosis and prescription that denoted the liberal vision of American society in the 1960s provided the context for Hobbs's work during his period of engagement. This liberal vision encouraged Hobbs and many of his fellow social scientists, mental health professionals, and academics to become more useful to society. Moreover, this vision permitted the successful entry of Hobbs's ideas into the field of mental health and into the social sciences as a whole.¹

Liberalism in the 1960s preserved the feeling of alarm at the differences between the rate of the development of technology and the rate of the growth of human wisdom—differences which the historian Eric F. Goldman views as the "problem that had beset reform-minded men and women since the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution."² Added to this was a rekindling of a sense of the public interest, attributable, at least in part, to President Kennedy's leadership, . This "qualitative liberalism" as it emerged in the 1960s possessed the themes and values that are still equated with liberalism today.³ Walter Truett Anderson enumerates some of these:

. . . an appreciation for diversity and free discourse, a belief that people are capable of learning from history and making

¹The concept of the "entry" of innovative ideas into a historical period comes from George Kubler's book, The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

²Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 409.

³Qualitative liberalism is a term coined by the historian Arthur Schlesinger. It is cited by Allen J. Matusow in The Unraveling of America: The History of Liberalism in the 1960s (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 8.

progress, a conviction that the healthy society . . . is one which is reducing the gap between its poorest and its wealthiest members, and an insistence that compassion has a place in politics.¹

Hobbs was the beneficiary of successful entry during these years because his ideas meshed with the liberal, reformist vision that prevailed among many social scientists, academics, and mental health professionals. Three of the central concerns of these groups—the practice of social science in the public interest, the conditions in universities, and the modes of mental health services—receive special attention here.

The 1960s as an Historical Period

The 1960s can be viewed as, in Fredric Jameson's phrase, a "determinate historical situation," which was concurrent, more or less, with the decade from which it takes its name.² Jameson argues that an historical period

must be understood not as some omnipresent and uniform shared style or way of thinking and acting, but rather as the sharing of a common objective situation, to which a whole range of varied responses and creative innovations is then possible, but always within the situation's structural limits.³

According to Jameson, the simplest and most universal formulation of the common objective reality of the period "remains the widely shared feelings that in the 1960s, for a time, everything was possible: that this period, in other words, was a moment of universal liberation, a global unbinding of energies."⁴

¹Walter Truett Anderson, "Editor's Introduction: The Crisis in Liberalism," in Rethinking Liberalism, ed. Walter Truett Anderson (New York: Avon, 1982), p. 19.

²Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the 60s," in The 60s Without Apology, eds. Sohnya Sayres et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 178.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 207.

The question of how to mark the beginning and the end of the 1960s remains open. Both Allen J. Matusow and Fredric Jameson note some of the "conditions of possibility" for the social forces of the period to develop as they did. The diminishing obsession with the Cold War granted many Americans freedom to look at their social and political institution with a more critical eye. Increased affluence created revenues for the large-scale federal social programs that took shape during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Events in Cuba and in the emerging nations of Africa demonstrated that the fundamental restructuring of society was not merely a historical concept but a real and achievable event. Finally, there was the Kennedy presidency from 1961 to 1963. The inauguration of Kennedy can be viewed as the nodal point which separated the 1950s from the 1960s. For Matusow, Kennedy was crucial to the formation of the character of the 1960s, for Kennedy's "heroic poses, his urgent rhetoric, his appeal to idealism and the nation's great traditions . . . inadvertently helped arouse among millions a dormant desire to perfect America."¹

Fredric Jameson locates the end of the 1960s around 1973. In the political sphere, the end of the draft and the withdrawal of most of the American forces from Vietnam in 1973 resulted in the disappearance of much of the mass political activity of the 1960s and of the antiwar movement. In the economic arena, the Arab oil embargo spelled the end of the faith of Americans in continued, unbounded prosperity. On a more general cultural level, large segments of the community of social scientists, mental health professionals, and academics embraced the emerging structuralist thinking of Piaget and Levi-Strauss and despaired of employing social institutions and science for the benefit of the general population. They came to believe that poverty, inequality of opportunity, and the mindless, impersonal forces that swallow up individual lives were controlled by remote, impassive, underlying societal structures. Their response was to turn away from the

¹ Allen J. Matusow, The Unraveling of America: The History of Liberalism in the 1960s, p. 127.

public arena, away from social diagnosis and prescription, and to emphasize rationality, objectivity, and analysis in their work.¹

Practicing Social Science in the Public Interest

Upon the election of President Kennedy, social scientists armed with sophisticated theories and models and survey methods moved into the public policy arena with unprecedented impact. In Daniel P. Moynihan's view, these social scientists constituted "a striking echelon of persons whose profession might justifiably be described as knowing what ails societies and whose art is to get treatment underway before the patient is especially aware of anything noteworthy taking place."² Moynihan cites the exponential growth of knowledge during the 20th century as a major influence on the growth of the policy-making role of the social sciences. This growth was both the product of and the catalyst for the identification of social problems and the development of prescriptions for treating them. The increase in the resources available for social reform kept pace with this growth in knowledge. According to Moynihan, in 1956 the federal government contributed four million dollars to social science research; in 1966, 44 million dollars; and in 1969, 59 million dollars. The rapid growth of both the numbers of professions involved in social reform and social welfare undertakings and of the size of their memberships also influenced the growth of the policy-making role of the social sciences. Moynihan refers to this increase in the demand for people qualified to teach and conduct research at universities as the "general triumph of the graduate school" as a major avenue for entry into professional careers.³

¹Howard Gardner, in The Quest for Mind, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), discusses the impact of the structuralist world view on American social scientists in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

²Daniel P. Moynihan, Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 23.

³*Ibid.*, p. 32.

Daniel Callahan and Bruce Jennings note that the prevailing climate of liberal opinion during the early years of the 1960s was marked by confidence that a stable, effective government predicated on the application of a science of human behavior was finally becoming a practical possibility.¹ President Kennedy, in a speech delivered in 1962, articulated this view:

The fact of the matter is that most of the problems, or at least many of them that we now face, are technical problems, are administrative problems. They are very sophisticated judgments which do not lend themselves to the great sort of "passionate movements" which have stirred this country so often in the past. Now they deal with questions which are beyond the comprehension of most men.²

This position became known as the "end of ideology thesis," after the title of the book by sociologist Daniel Bell, which was published first in the early 1950s and again in revised form in 1962.³ According to this thesis, a stable ideological consensus had been achieved that embraced the basic tenets of welfare state liberalism: minimum standards of social welfare entitlements, equality of opportunity, and extension of rights and services to the disenfranchised and disadvantaged. No more debate about ends was thought to be necessary, for political issues had become administrative problems amenable to technical solutions. The role of social scientists working as policy analysts was thought to be objective and value neutral, and their expertise was based on the use of the empirical methodologies of the natural sciences. According to Callahan and Jennings, the ethical questions that sparked debate—the elimination of personal bias, accurate reporting, and

¹Daniel Callahan and Bruce Jennings, "Introduction," in Ethics, The Social Sciences, and Policy Studies, eds. Daniel Callahan and Bruce Jennings (New York: Plenum, 1983).

²A portion of President Kennedy's speech, which he delivered to the White House Economic Conference, is quoted in Daniel Callahan and Bruce Jennings, pp. xv-xvi.

³Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties, revised edition (New York: The Free Press, 1962).

the painstaking collection of data—were limited to the application of scientific methodology. Larger ethical questions—for example, the antidemocratic implications of the position that governance should be left to experts because it ostensibly dealt with technical issues beyond the comprehension of the average citizen—received little attention.

The blithe liberal notion that many of the nation's most intractable social problems were on the road to being solved was expressed by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., historian and advisor to President Kennedy, that "There are still pools of poverty which have to be mopped up; but the central problem will be increasingly that of fighting for individual dignity, identity, and fulfillment in an affluent mass society." In addition, John Kenneth Galbraith, economist and diplomat, remarked that poverty was "no longer a mass affliction, [but] more nearly an afterthought."¹

Almost as soon as it was articulated by President Kennedy, the end of ideology thesis came under attack. Michael Harrington's book The Other America: Poverty in the United States, published in 1962, provided concrete and compelling insights into the plight of the nation's disadvantaged, a plight which had been all but invisible to liberal policy makers.² Gerald Howard reports that Harrington's uncovering of the existence and plight of the poor had a great impact on two fronts: it sparked the social conscience of liberals who believed that the theories they proposed were proven remedies to complex problems; it served as a stimulus for a resurgence of radicalism in the 1960s.

¹ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. "The New Mood in Politics," Esquire 53 (January 1960): 58-60; and John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958). Both of these statements are quoted in Gerald Howard, "The Politicization of Culture," in The Sixties (New York: Pocket Books, 1982), p. 36.

² Michael Harrington, The Other America: Poverty in the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

Psychology and the Problems of Society

At its annual meeting in 1969 the American Psychological Association (APA) broke with its tradition of emphasis on scientific developments in the discipline and directed its attention to an investigation of psychology's usefulness to society. The theme designated for the meeting was "Psychology and the Problems of Society." The meeting was important as a forum in which major figures in psychology made statements, under the aegis of an influential professional collective, about the practice of psychology in the public interest. Twenty-two speakers addressed their remarks to the subject of using psychology as a means to promote human welfare rather than advancing psychology as a science.¹ Their addresses are viewed today as documents both of the perspective held in the 1960s by many social scientists regarding the role of psychology in effecting change in social policy and of the liberal reformist vision which fueled the activities of many social scientists.

Korten et al. discuss the various positions presented at the APA meeting regarding appropriate ways for psychologists to bring about social change. Some psychologists called for direct action in the political arena and urged their colleagues to apply their expertise to influence directly those in power. Others believed psychology's chief obligation was to the public at large rather than to the makers of policy.

George A Miller, in his presidential address to the APA, took this latter position. He believed psychology must work to change the self-concept of Americans "not through the technological products it [psychology] places in the hands of powerful men, but through its effects on the public at large, through a new and different public conception of what is humanly possible and what is humanly desirable."² He cited understanding and

¹These addresses are collected in Frances F. Korten et al., eds. Psychology and the Problems of Society (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1970).

²George A. Miller, "Psychology as a Means of Promoting Human Welfare." in Psychology and the Problems of Society, eds. Frances F. Korten et al. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1970), p. 10. Miller's scientific work had a great impact on cognitive psychology.

prediction as goals more worthy for psychology than social control, and he exhorted psychologists to become concerned less with the exercise of power by a governing elite and to become more concerned with the diagnosis of problems and the development of programs to promote human welfare. For Miller, the central question for psychologists was: "How can we foster a social climate in which some new public conception of man based on psychology can take root and flourish?"¹ Miller's solution was to "give psychology away."

Our responsibility is less to assume the role of experts and try to apply psychology ourselves than to give it away to the people who really need it—and that includes everyone. The practice of valid psychology by nonpsychologists will inevitably change people's conception of themselves and what they can do."²

John R. Kramer took the position that direct political action was the appropriate way for psychologists to bring about social change. He called upon psychologists to "abandon the peace and superscrupulousness of paper presentation" and to become "technocrats of change."³ Kramer recommended collective as well as individual tactics by which psychologists could acquire political capital: attacking in the courts all conditions imposed upon grants and contracts with the federal government which limit psychologists' freedom to report the strengths and weaknesses of federally-sponsored social programs; establishing personal contacts with lawmakers; contributing to political

Among his major works is the article, "The Magical Number Seven Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information," Psychological Review 63 (1956): 81-97.

¹Ibid., p. 15.

²Ibid., pp. 15-16.

³John R. Kramer, "The Social Relevance of the Psychologist," in Psychology and the Problems of Society, eds. Frances F. Korten, et al., pp. 35-36.

campaigns, and hiring APA staff to serve as watch dogs of the federal agencies that develop and implement social legislation.

The statements of Miller and Kramer about bringing psychology to bear on socially relevant problems represent two aspects of the liberal disposition on the 1960s. That these statements were made at the meeting of a large professional organization is significant in two ways. Miller and Kramer were invited speakers. Miller was an especially well-known figure and significant social scientist, while Kramer was Executive Director of the National Council on Hunger and Malnutrition. The positions they articulated performed the dual functions of both shaping and reflecting the opinions of psychologists. The statements were both calls to action and expressions of the political and intellectual spirit that prevailed among psychologists.

Conditions in the Universities

During the 1960s, matriculation at a university or college became a more common experience than it had ever been for young adults in this country.¹ Between 1960 and 1970 the number of students enrolled in institutions of higher learning nearly doubled. Many of the members of this burgeoning student population either lacked direction or were enrolled in school primarily to avoid the military draft. Many were predisposed to accept a radical critique of the university, attacking the curriculum and declaring courses irrelevant and grades both meaningless and arbitrary. Many of them made the university the target of political activism, charging it with being too big and too impersonal and with complicity in the activities of a military-industrial complex which was draining America of its wealth. On many campuses protest became a normal extracurricular activity.²

¹The following discussion of campus issues in the 1960s draws on William L. O'Neill, Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971).

²O'Neill reports that during one two-week period, from June 1 to June 15, 1968 there occurred 221 major demonstrations at 101 colleges and universities involving nearly 40,000 students.

Large numbers of the more radical students rejected the authority of the faculty—authority that was based on the disciplinary knowledge that faculty possessed and students did not. As a result of these developments, consensus regarding the meaning and purpose of a liberal education was damaged.

Student activism elicited a range of responses from the professoriate. While many members of the professoriate reacted to this critique leveled by their students with hostility or indifference, others reacted with sympathy and with puzzlement. On the one hand, these sympathetic members of the faculty sought community with their students, but on the other, they feared the destructive potential of student radicalism, and they were repelled by student anti-intellectualism and "generational exclusiveness."¹ The self-dramatization, asocial narcissism, and abdication of adult responsibility manifested by many students troubled faculty as well. But, they believed that many students had identified correctly the deepest problems of society and made genuine personal and political commitments to social justice. The angry and insistent questions of their students caused many members of the professoriate to lose confidence in the traditional principles of education which they were supposed to enforce. Faculty members also raised questions of their own about academic standards and about the social responsibilities of the university.²

New Directions in Mental Health Services

Murray Levine and Adeline Levine identify two rival schools of thought regarding mental disturbance, a rivalry that reflects a nature-nuture duality.³ The "situational"

¹This term is O'Neill's, p. 284.

²William Proefriedt, in "Self-Fulfillment and Educational Reform," makes these observations about how faculty viewed their students in the 1960s.

³Murray Levine and Adeline Levine, A Social History of the Helping Services: Clinic, Court, School, and Community (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970).

school ascribes a person's mental problems to exposure to poor societal conditions, while the "intra-psychic" school holds that persons have difficulties as a result of weaknesses and failings, not as a result of the social situation in which they find themselves. The two components of this duality also correspond to the two competing interpretations of the cause and solution of psychological problems presented by Caplan and Nelson.¹

According to them, one might view problems in situation-centered terms, making a "system-blame" interpretation and concluding that the causes of problems reside in the larger social context. Or, one might assume a "person-centered" orientation, making a "person-blame" interpretation and concluding that the causes of problems reside in individuals.

Levine and Levine note that beliefs about the etiology of psychological disorders determine prescribed modes of help.

[S]ituational modes of help, demanding as they do the questioning of the social environment and change in the social environment, will flourish during periods of political or social reform. . . . Then society is ready for change, and will accept change. Intra-psychic modes of help will be prominent during periods of political or social conservatism, for the intra-psychic mode tends to support the status quo by placing the onus of both the problem and the change on the mind and emotions of the individual.²

During the 1960s, assumptions changed about important issues in mental health. Those who are deemed to be in need of institutionalization, the causes of their problems, the possibilities for their participation in society, and the role institutions ought to play in their treatment were all brought into question. Psychological problems came to be attributed to poverty, unemployment, discrimination, weak family structures, and poor

¹Nathan Caplan and Stephen D. Nelson, "On Being Useful: The Nature and Consequences of Psychological Research on Social Problems," *American Psychologist* 28 (March 1973): 199-211.

²*Ibid.*, p. 8.

schools—all of which were problems of living, not biological disorders. This situation-centered view of the causes of psychological problems provoked efforts to effect social rather than biological remedies.

The 1961 report of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Mental Health expresses one such situation-centered view. Armed with the report, President Kennedy directed his attention toward the perennial social question of how to treat people who manifest criminal behavior, psychoses, physical impairments, and developmental disabilities. He called for a new approach to mental health care which placed responsibility for the treatment of the troubled and needy on society as a whole rather than on the expertise of the doctor in the mental health institution. The problems of individuals were laid at the doorsteps of what were viewed as the nation's faulty institutions, and the institutions implicated included the courts, the schools, the family, and certain industrial organizations and governmental agencies.

Kennedy proposed a new national program of mental health services that would take mental health services away from large, centralized medical institutions and place them in agencies situated in local communities. In an address to Congress in February 1963, Kennedy outlined the dimensions of the centralized mental health establishment in The United States, noting that the nation's mental institutions housed 800,000 patients, of whom 600,000 were mentally ill and 200,000 mentally retarded. Every year, according to Kennedy's figures, one million and a half people came under the care of institutions for the mentally ill or the mentally retarded. In the majority of these cases, the care-giving institution was a large, custodial state hospital. The average amount expended on the care of each patient in this chain of hospitals was four dollars per day. Nearly one-half of the 530,000 patients in the state mental hospitals were in institutions with over

3000 patients, and 45 percent of the patients in these hospitals had been hospitalized continuously for at least ten years.¹

Kennedy recited these figures to illustrate his position that the nation's centralized system of mental health care was inadequate. To reform this system, he proposed a legislative package that would provide federal grants to states for the building of community mental health systems, for the improvement of care in large state institutions, and for the funding of basic research programs. In addition, he called for a national program to combat mental retardation which would revolve around a federally-funded system of 10 centers for research in human development.

Of particular concern to the proponents of the community mental health approach was the incidence of juvenile delinquency and emotional disturbance among low-income youth.² In 1960 a report on juvenile delinquency prepared by the Children's Bureau of the National Institute for Mental Health proposed that the federal government undertake a series of research and demonstration projects. In 1961 Congress set aside 30 million dollars to fund an effort to reduce juvenile delinquency. Here again a "system-blame" orientation prevailed. The social-scientific view of the problem held that juvenile delinquents act under the same impulses as any young people. They quite naturally seek viable social roles, but they are forced to seek them within a context of poverty and despair. This cycle of poverty and despair into which each generation of the poor entered was identified as the underlying cause of delinquency, and the federally initiated programs to reduce delinquency poured large sums of money into a wide range of local programs.

¹These figures come from President Kennedy's "Address to Congress on Mental Illness and Mental Retardation," delivered on 5 February 1963. A typewritten manuscript of the address is in the Hobbs Papers.

²Allen J. Matusow, The Unraveling of America: The History of Liberalism in the 1960s.

The various reform initiatives in the field of mental health—the community mental health movement, the establishment of a network of human development research centers, and the myriad local undertakings to combat juvenile delinquency—permitted the successful entry of Hobbs's activities as an institution builder. The flood of federal legislation providing funds for a wide array of mental health programs was the mechanism for this entry.

Biographical Sketch: 1961-1975

Hobbs was at once a beneficiary of this federal largesse and a percipient architect of the social policy that made federal funds available. He skillfully positioned himself into influential positions on various boards, commissions, and panels which contributed to the development of national policy. He was vice-chairperson of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, established by Congress in 1956 to evaluate the needs of the mentally ill and the resources for their care and to make recommendations for a national mental health program. From 1962 to 1964 he was a member of the President's Panel on Mental Retardation, and from 1963 until 1966 he served on the National Child Health and Human Development Council. In 1967 he was appointed to the National Advisory Mental Health Council, an advisory board to the Surgeon General on matters of research, training and community mental health supported by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). From 1966 to 1969 he was the vice-president of the Joint Commission on the Mental Health of Children, an advisory body established by Congress to make recommendations regarding national policy for the care of troubled children. In addition, during the early 1970s he held memberships on the United States National Commission to the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and on the Advisory Council on Child Development of the National Academy of Sciences.

Hobbs thrust himself onto the national stage in other contexts as well. In 1961 he served as president of the Division of Clinical Psychology of the American Psychological Association, and five years later he served as president of the APA. He was the first director of selection and research for the Peace Corps from 1961 to 1963. In 1972, at the behest of Elliot L. Richardson, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), he became the director of the Project on Classification of Exceptional Children. The project was sponsored by HEW and its objectives were to increase public understanding of the problems associated with the classification and labeling of handicapped, disadvantaged, or delinquent children; to provide a rationale for public policy regarding labeling and its consequences; and to improve the performance of those who work with exceptional children.

During his period of engagement, Hobbs severed ties with old institutional bases and created new ones. In 1966 he gave up his position as Chairman of the Division of Human Development at George Peabody College for Teachers and spent the 1966-67 academic year as a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Palo Alto, California. Also in 1966 he was appointed Provost of Vanderbilt University, but he did not assume this position until the summer of 1967 when he returned from California. From 1967 to 1970 he divided his time between his appointment as Provost and his position as Director of the newly created John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Education and Human Development at Peabody. Hobbs and Alexander Heard, Vanderbilt's Chancellor, agreed on a formula for the allocation of his time and salary between the two institutions according to which Vanderbilt would bear 80% of his compensation.¹ Hobbs left the Kennedy Center in 1970, ending nearly 20 years of affiliation with Peabody. In 1975 he left the Provost's office and took a dual appointment at Vanderbilt in the Department of Psychology and in the School of Medicine

¹Alexander Heard to Nicholas Hobbs, 2 March 1966. Hobbs Papers.

as Professor of Psychology and Preventive Medicine. At that time he also became Director of the Center for the Study of Families and Children at the newly created Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies.

Hobbs was a skillful creator of favorable audiences in the federal government and in the world of foundations, a result of much dogged activity as a suppliant to the funding agencies in Washington. The Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children was the result of one period of supplication. As stated in the preceding chapter, Hobbs was a member of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health that made sweeping recommendations for reform in the nation's program of mental health care. These recommendations were reported in 1961 in a document titled, Action for Mental Health. The report bore the imprint of Hobbs—it made specific recommendations for "pilot studies in the development of centers for the re-education of emotionally disturbed children, using different types of personnel than are customary"¹—and it set the stage for federal support of Project Re-ED.

Developing the Re-ED Proposal

Early in 1957 the vague notions of a re-education program for troubled children began to coalesce into a formal proposal. Hobbs had conducted a study of programs for retarded and disturbed children in several Western European countries during the preceding fall, and at a meeting of the Council on Mental Health Training and Research of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in Louisville he had much to report about what he had learned.² He was encouraged by the response he received to the concept of the *éducateur*, which he had imported from France, and to his plea for bold

¹Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, Action for Mental Health (New York: Basic Books, 1961), quoted in Nicholas Hobbs, "A Brief History of Project Re-ED," Mind Over Matter 14 (March 1969):11.

²See chapter 3 for a discussion of Hobbs's tour of residential schools in Western Europe.

measures to attack the problem of providing for disturbed children. Hobbs received more encouragement at the meeting of the Training Committee of NIMH in Washington in March 1957 and again at a meeting between the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health's Committee on Studies and its Board of Directors in Rockport, Massachusetts in the summer of 1957.¹

Twelve years later, Hobbs wrote that these meetings gave impetus to a "process of invention in which literally hundreds of people were to share in making the Re-Ed [sic] schools a reality."² This statement reveals the collaborative nature of the process of developing the Re-ED grant. Hobbs was both the prime instigator and grand synthesizer of ideas for the development of the Re-ED project, but, as this process of development unfolded between 1957 and 1961, he functioned as anything but the isolated theoretician. With his quiet enthusiasm, his compelling vision of bold measures, and his skill at marshalling facts illustrating the urgency of the the problem of providing for troubled children, Hobbs mobilized support for Re-ED. During these years, groups consisting of clinicians in psychiatry, social work, and psychology, academicians, informed citizens, and staff members of federal and state agencies concerned with mental health programs met intermittently at Peabody College in Nashville, at the SREB in Atlanta, and at NIMH in Washington. Hobbs viewed these meetings as testing grounds for his ideas, and those in attendance grappled with such practical questions as what the proposed schools might be like, how they would be staffed and how the staff would be selected and trained, under what organizational umbrellas they would be operated, how the over-all project would be evaluated, and how much money would be required to establish the schools and permit them eventually to become self-sustaining.

¹ Hobbs reports on this series of meetings in "A Brief History of Project Re-ED."

²*Ibid.*, p. 11.

Wilbert W. Lewis and William C. Rhodes, both of whom participated in the early development of Re-ED, report on long, loose conversations, often held late at night and fueled by good bourbon, in which Hobbs used others as sounding boards for his ideas.¹ These conversations illustrate further the collaborative nature of the process of developing the Re-ED proposal. Rhodes, a psychologist who was on the Peabody faculty until he joined the staff of NIMH shortly after the Re-ED proposal obtained funding, told of the times he spent with Hobbs traveling back and forth to meet with NIMH officials. Lewis, a former doctoral student of Hobbs's who became the director of Peabody's training program for the teacher-counselors of Re-ED schools, tells a story, which has become part of the "lore" associated with Hobbs; it is about how Hobbs's ideas caught the attention of NIMH. In the spring of 1957, Hobbs, acting "very professorial [sic]," floated his ideas about transplanting European ideas to the United States with Joseph M. Bobbitt, Associate Director of NIMH. The conversation occurred shortly before Robert Felix, Director of the Institute, was to speak to the meeting of the Training Committee of NIMH. At the meeting, Felix announced that he had had a conversation with Bobbitt the night before and learned of a wonderful new idea about providing services for troubled children. He heartily endorsed the embryonic Re-ED plan and declared that Hobbs must pursue it. Years later, Hobbs recalled that as a result of this serendipitous event, "what had been an interesting idea became a real possibility . . . and an enormous challenge."²

Two years of Hobbs's politic activity within his network of mental health professionals ensued before he first sought funding from the SREB for the development of schools for the re-education of emotionally disturbed children. Given his life-long

¹Rhodes told the story of some of his exchanges with Hobbs in an interview conducted by Alice Shannon, the former principal of Cumberland House School, one of the two original Re-Ed schools. The interview appears in AREA News: The Newsletter of the American Re-Education Association 1 (Fall 1982): 3-7. Lewis talked about the development of the Re-ED proposal in an interview conducted at his office in Nashville, Tennessee on 15 June 1987.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "A Brief History of Project Re-ED," p. 11.

commitment to strengthening mental health and educational institutions in the South, it is not surprising that the SREB was the first agency whose support he solicited. In March 1959, a committee to review Hobbs's plan met for the first time under the auspices of the SREB.¹ The report of this committee was sufficiently encouraging to lead Hobbs to submit a proposal to the SREB in July 1959. The proposal called for a number of Southern states to collaborate in establishing a complex of schools and training programs to provide care for children not disturbed enough to be hospitalized but too disturbed to be cared for as out-patients or in the public schools.² This ambitious proposal suggested that the participating states be responsible for the operating costs of the schools while NIMH fund the training of workers and the evaluation of the plan and the SREB coordinate its training and research components.

The prospects for SREB involvement in Re-ED were bright in the summer of 1959, but by the fall of that year Hobbs had concluded that the "SREB plans for centers for re-education for emotionally disturbed children are grinding to a slow halt."³ Hobbs attributed this collapse in negotiations to "a couple of people on the Council who feel that all of the world's problems either must be solved under the supervision of psychiatrists or simply left unsolved," and he reported that he was "working on a more modest endeavor somewhat outside of SREB and involving Kentucky, Tennessee, and NIMH."⁴

This "more modest endeavor" was finally approved by NIMH in March 1961. The NIMH grant gave two million dollars to Peabody College and to the states of Tennessee

¹This meeting is mentioned in Mental Health Forum 2 (May 1959), published periodically by the Southern Regional Program in Mental Health Training and Research of the SREB.

²A five-page, unpublished document titled "A Plan for the Development of Centers for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children" and dated 8 July 1959 is in the Hobbs Papers. The plan is presented as a tentative outline of a full-blown proposal, the specific character of which would be determined by the judgment of the people responsible for the development of the plan.

³Nicholas Hobbs to Charles R. Strother, Department of Psychology, University of Washington, 1 October 1959. Hobbs Papers.

⁴Ibid.

and North Carolina for an eight-year demonstration project with Hobbs as its principal investigator.¹ The project consisted of a program at Peabody to train teacher-counselors to staff two pilot schools: Cumberland House in Nashville and Wright School in Durham. The first group of trainees was recruited in the spring and summer of 1961. Cumberland House opened in the fall of 1962 and Wright School in the winter of 1963.

The Peace Corps

Hobbs learned of NIMH's approval of his Re-ED proposal on 9 March 1961. A few days later, on a Friday in the middle of March, he received an unexpected phone call from John Darley, the Executive Director of the American Psychological Association. Darley, who was serving as a talent scout for Sargent Shriver, the Director of the newly established Peace Corps, asked Hobbs to become the Corps' first Director of Selection, giving him only a short time to respond to the request. Hobbs accepted this summons to Washington on one condition, that research be conducted on the selection process to evaluate its effectiveness. Shriver approved this condition, and on 18 March, Hobbs assumed his position with the Peace Corps. He hastily arranged a six-month leave from Peabody and moved with his wife and nine-year-old son to Washington, where he worked full-time for the Peace Corps through the summer of 1961. He also hastily extricated himself from his duties as principal investigator of Project Re-ED. His first impulse had been to negotiate with officials at NIMH to try to postpone the awarding of the Re-ED grant, but after some discussion all concerned in Nashville and in Washington

¹Hobbs scaled down his aspirations for his re-education plan after negotiations with the SREB ended. In the first scaled-down plan, Kentucky was to join Tennessee as the participating state. However, Kentucky withdrew from consideration before NIMH approval was obtained, and Georgia expressed interest in joining Tennessee. Georgia followed Kentucky as a Re-Ed dropout when it rejected a stipulation on which Hobbs would not compromise. Georgia would not allow its Re-ED school to be racially integrated.

decided the project's administrative machinery could withstand the principal director's six-month absence.

Some months after going to work for the Peace Corps, Hobbs told the story of the summons from Shriver:

I was leading quite a tranquil life in Nashville some seven months ago. As a matter of fact, I had ordered some bees. I'd been reading for several years about bees and had finally decided I would order some. I first went to Sears where I purchased a hive, and then ordered a batch of bees. By the time they came, I'd already been summoned, as it were, and the bees came addressed to Nicholas Hobbs, Bees Corp.

The summons had come somewhat abruptly, about a week before. I was sitting at my desk one Friday afternoon, bothering no one, when a call came from Washington and a crisp voice from the New Frontier asked me if I would be willing to let my name be submitted as one of a panel of possible Directors of Selection for the Peace Corps and then they waited for me to say yes or no, like, "Would you have lunch with me today?" I said, "Well, why don't you tell me a little bit about it", somewhat apologetic for need of information, and the voice said, "Well the Peace Corps, you've heard of that". I said, "Why, yes sir". They said, "Selection, you've heard of that". "Yes". "Well, will you do it?" "Well, I need to talk to my two bosses; give me 30 minutes", I said. "Take 20". Within 20 minutes I had called back and the following Tuesday was at work in Washington.¹

¹Hobbs recounted this story in his informal remarks at a Counseling Center Directors Conference sponsored by the Peace Corps in the fall of 1961. The source for this passage is a typewritten transcript of his talk that is in the Hobbs Papers. Hobbs also recounted the events surrounding his decision to work with the Peace Corps in a number of interviews: with Louise Davis, the author of "The Great Weeder Outer," an article about Hobbs which appeared in The Nashville Tennessean Magazine, Sunday, 17 December 1961, pp. 10-11, 22; with William McHugh, conducted on 18 December 1968 in Nashville, Tennessee for the John F. Kennedy Library of the National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC; and with an unnamed interviewer in Who's Who in the Peace Corps (Washington, DC: United States Peace Corps, 1962): p. 6. This last interview is cited by Gerald T. Rice in The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985). The author is indebted to Mary Thompson Hobbs for allowing him access to the transcript of this interview. Mary Thompson Hobbs, in interviews conducted at her home in Nashville, Tennessee on 18 May 1987 and 13 October 1987, also provided information about Hobbs's earliest involvement with the Peace Corps.

By the time Hobbs returned to Peabody in the fall of 1961, he had given up his position as Director of Selection and had become Director of Research. During the spring of 1962 he arranged another leave from Peabody and returned to the Peace Corps on a full-time basis for a few more months. In June and July 1962, he traveled to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and to the Philippines for the Peace Corps, and in May of the following year he made a brief visit to Nigeria.

President Kennedy had charged Shriver with the responsibility for forming a task force on the Peace Corps in the summer of 1960, and on 1 March 1960 Shriver submitted a detailed report to the President recommending that the Peace Corps be established immediately. Thereafter, events unfolded quickly. Within days, Kennedy created the Peace Corps by Executive Order, and the following September he signed the Peace Corps Act, approving legislation that had been rushed through Congress granting the Peace Corps more permanent status.¹ That same month the first group of volunteers began their overseas assignments.

On 2 March 1961, Shriver began a nationwide search for talented people to fill positions on the Peace Corps staff. According to Gerald T. Rice, Hobbs was recommended to Shriver on the strength of Hobbs's work on selection methods in the Air Force during World War II.² Louise Davis, in her article in a Nashville newspaper about Hobbs's work in the Peace Corps, also attributes the summons of Hobbs to the Peace Corps to his war-time experiences in helping determine how men accepted by the Air Force would be assigned specific tasks.³ On 29 June 1961, Tennessee Senator Estes

¹Sargent Shriver presents a brief history of the events leading up to the establishment of the Peace Corps in Point of the Lance (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

²Gerald T. Rice, The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps.

³Louise Davis, "The Great Weeder Outer." It is likely that Hobbs himself was Davis' source for this information. It is uncertain, however, whether he was the source for her report that Hobbs was selected to direct selection for the Peace Corps after Shriver had narrowed the search down to "the top five psychologists in the country."

Kefauver shed more light on the process by which Hobbs's appointment with the Peace Corps was made. Kefauver noted that John Darley, the Executive Secretary of the American Psychological Association, had been asked to recommend four psychologists for the post of Director of Selection and that Sargent Shriver had selected Hobbs from among those recommended.¹

The position with the Peace Corps disrupted Hobbs's personal and professional life and took him from his work with Project Re-ED at just the time when his years of effort to get the project underway had finally been rewarded. That he accepted the job as Director of Selection is evidence of his attraction to Shriver's insistence on making the Peace Corps a "different" type of government agency. In his preliminary report to the President on the Peace Corps, Shriver asked for "great flexibility to experiment with different methods of operation."² Shriver offered a vision of a large and independent agency distinguished by broad-based participation in decision-making, a brash approach to problem-solving, and a determination to steer clear of red tape and traditional bureaucratic methods of management. Shriver demanded total commitment, intellectual daring, and boldness from the members of his staff. He wrote: "There will be little tolerance of a 'tomorrow' philosophy or an 'it can't be done because it hasn't been done before' attitude."³

Hobbs caught the excitement of the Peace Corps. His statements about the formative months of the Peace Corps and those of Shriver and Rice reveal an atmosphere fraught with tension, disarray, and intricate confusions. Time was short and new and unanticipated problems reared up daily. These conditions energized rather than

¹Senator Kefauver mailed Hobbs the text of his remarks about him in a letter dated 30 June 1961. The letter is in the Hobbs Papers.

²Shriver is quoted in Gerald T. Rice, The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps, p. 44.

³Shriver is quoted in Gerald T. Rice, The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps, p. 109.

therefore, was not to serve as good ambassadors for the United States, or to win friends and influence people, but to do their jobs—helping to plant and harvest a corn crop, dig a well, or build a school. Finally, Hobbs believed effective volunteers were inveterate learners and their interest in the Peace Corps was an extension of a pattern of "intellectual adventuresomeness."

On 28 March 1961, a few days after he had arrived in Washington, Hobbs convened a conference of advisors with experience in the problems of personnel selection. Twenty-one of the 22 individuals invited on short notice attended, representing several volunteer agencies, the branches of the military, the National Institutes of Health, the American Psychological Association and other professional associations. The conference set in motion the general procedure for selection of Peace Corps volunteers that would be used with little change until 1969, when a change in the directorship of the Peace Corps brought a reduction in the role of psychological assessment in the selection of volunteers. At the conference, it was decided that the Educational Testing Service would devise the first Peace Corps Placement Test and that the American Institute of Research would develop a biographical data bank and a personal inventory questionnaire. Hobbs made decisions about testing and selection quickly, and on 27 May 1961 and again on 5 June, just over two months after the initial testing conference, the first testing of applicants occurred. On those two days, over 5,000 tests were administered.¹

Peabody as an Institutional Base

During the first few years of the 1960s, Hobbs engaged in a variety of activities that called him away from the Peabody campus. As has already been noted, he served as President of the Division of Clinical Psychology of the APA in 1961, held memberships

¹Accounts of the Peace Corps' formative months appear in the First Annual Peace Corps Report (Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1961/62); and in Brent Ashabranner, A Moment in History: The First Ten Years of the Peace Corps (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971).

debilitated Hobbs because they required him to engage in a process of achieving order in the service of what was, for him, an important new institution. He viewed his assignment as an opportunity both to serve in some significant way and to develop his thinking about promoting mental health as opposed to treating mental illness. The task with which he had been charged provided him with an opportunity to study able, motivated people as they functioned in challenging, novel situations. As a social phenomenon, the Peace Corps provoked Hobbs's interest in "the broad sweep of development of human societies, and particularly in instrumentalities for effecting social change."¹ "[To] me," he wrote, "the big, exciting question of the Peace Corps is how do you account for its existence at all?" "How," he asked, "could such an idealistic enterprise arise in a materialistic culture, such an arduous undertaking in a people said to have gone soft?"² His response to these questions—his "social-psychological accounting" for the phenomenon of the Peace Corps—centered on the relationship of the Peace Corps to the society that produced it and on the character of the individuals who became Peace Corps volunteers.

Hobbs viewed the Peace Corps as an outlet for the altruistic and service impulses of people whose interest in the Corps represented many of the best aspirations of society. Chief among these was idealism, a desire to make a contribution to others. Tempering this idealism, and transforming it into usefulness, was a dimension Hobbs labeled "tough-minded disenchantment." This was the dimension that converted volunteers' lofty ideals and visions of heroics into realistic appraisals of what they would face in their assignments. He also concluded that volunteers had a high need for affiliation, that their central concern was with people with whom they worked. The task of the volunteers,

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "A Psychologist in the Peace Corps," *American Psychologist* 18 (January 1963): 49.

²*Ibid.*, p. 48.

on a number of federal commissions and national advisory boards, and took two periods of leave to work for the Peace Corps. Despite all this activity elsewhere, Hobbs set new tasks for himself at Peabody. In the academic term after he returned from his stay with the Peace Corps, he worked to revitalize his teaching, initiating two new courses, Contemporary Psychology and History of Psychology, which opened up new areas of interest for him.¹ Contemporary Psychology was an omnibus course which Hobbs conceived as "an intelligent persons' guide to what the behavioral sciences have to say about man."² A student in the course recalls that Hobbs ranged widely in the course and assumed that his students would share his own curiosity, skepticism, and interest in ideas.³ During one term, the reading list included Freud's General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, Rollo May's Existential Psychology, and B. F. Skinner's Walden Two, as well as Camus' The Stranger and plays of Eugene O'Neill. Among the suggested topics for a term-paper assignment were: Psychoanalysis and Eugene O'Neill, Psychoanalysis and Literary Criticism, Psychology and Utopias, and Indeterminacy in Physics and the Freedom of Man.

Establishing the John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Education and Human Development and serving as its first director were Hobbs's primary projects at Peabody during the first years of the 1960s. The impetus for the creation of the Kennedy Center was Public Law 88-164, "The Mental Retardation Facilities and Mental Health Centers Construction Act of 1963," enacted by Congress as a result of the recommendations of

¹In a Faculty Information Form, dated 12 December 1961, Hobbs mentioned these two courses in his response to a question about changes in his teaching. Hobbs Papers.

²This statement appears from Hobbs's syllabus for Contemporary Psychology, dated 20 June 1966,. Hobbs Papers.

³Robert Slagle described the course in Contemporary Psychology in an interview conducted in his office in Nashville, Tennessee on 16 June 1987. In the early 1960s, Slagle was a student in Peabody's training program for Re-ED teacher-counselors. He later worked in Re-ED programs for a number of years and became a close friend of Hobbs's.

the President's Panel on Mental Retardation. Hobbs was a member of the Panel, and at the time the law was enacted he had become well wired into the network of private foundations and federal agencies that supported mental health research and training. The Kennedy Center grew out of Hobbs's long-standing interest in building a program in education and mental health in the South. A persistent theme in his work at Peabody had been the identification of pressing national problems to which psychology and education could contribute solutions, and he believed mental retardation was one such problem.

In May 1964, Hobbs submitted his proposal for a mental health research center at Peabody to the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation, and in May of the following year the Foundation awarded one million dollars to Peabody for the establishment of the Kennedy Center. With that award, and additional support in the form of grants from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the United States Office of Education, and the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Kennedy Center became one of twelve national centers devoted to research and training in mental retardation and related aspects of human development. In the spring of 1968, the Kennedy Center's buildings opened on the Peabody campus. Their construction was funded by grants from the Kennedy Foundation and the National Institutes of Health and by a contribution from Peabody.¹

Hobbs's proposal for the Kennedy Foundation stated that the major thrust of the Center would be "identifying, understanding, ameliorating conditions arising from cultural deprivation in children."² This passage states clearly that the mission of the Center was twofold—acquiring new knowledge and putting such knowledge to use in the service of a pressing human problem. It is clear also that the Center was chiefly

¹In his forward to the 1965-66 Annual Report of the Institute on Mental retardation and Intellectual Development, one of the five institutes comprising the Kennedy Center, Hobbs sketched the history of the Center. This report is in the Hobbs Papers.

²This phrase appears in "A Proposal to the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation for the Establishment of the Center for Research on Human Development," p. 14. (Typewritten) The proposal is dated 25 May 1961 and is collected in the Hobbs Papers.

concerned with culturally deprived children—with children identified either as retarded or as potentially at high risk to become retarded as a consequence of inadequate opportunities to learn—rather than with children whose retardation stems primarily from physiological abnormalities. The proposal noted three major sociological developments that had brought greater urgency to the problem of the culturally deprived: desegregation in the schools, the immigration to urban centers of large numbers of poor rural families, and decreasing demands within the job marketplace for persons with limited vocational skills and poor intellectual ability. The proposal noted further that these developments were especially significant in the South, making the problem of the culturally deprived especially acute in this part of the nation. The "all-inclusive question" Hobbs hoped to pursue at the Kennedy Center was "what type of families, under what socio-economic conditions, react in what ways, to what type of culturally deprived children, with what effects in the children?"¹

The Move from Peabody (across the street) to Vanderbilt

In addition to the Peace Corps, Re-ED, the APA, new teaching challenges, and the Kennedy Center, in the early and middle years of the 1960s Hobbs became engaged in the battle over Peabody College's corporate and fiscal independence, a battle that ultimately led him to leave Peabody. Hobbs had long been a proponent of increased cooperation between Peabody, Vanderbilt (its larger neighbor located across 21st Street), and some of the other institutions of higher education in Nashville, a position that earned him the enmity of many of the members of the Peabody faculty and administration and of the College's Board of Trustees.²

¹Ibid., p. 15.

²Information about Hobbs's engagement in the question of Peabody's relationship with Vanderbilt comes primarily from the following sources: Mary Thompson Hobbs, in interviews conducted on 18 May 1987 and 13 October 1987; Jack Allen, Professor Emeritus at Peabody and a longtime colleague of Hobbs's, in an interview conducted at his home in Nashville,

When Felix Robb, who had succeeded Henry Hill as President of Peabody (Hill brought Hobbs to the College in 1951), resigned in 1966 to take a position with the Southern Regional Education Board in Atlanta, the presidency was offered to Hobbs. He declined the offer because he believed he would not, as President, receive the requisite support from all quarters at Peabody to do what he really wanted to do—pursue a course that would allow the College to "exploit to the fullest the resources of Vanderbilt, Fisk, Scarritt [a small Methodist college adjacent to Peabody], and Meharry [a predominantly black Medical College], and, in turn, to share complementary resources with its neighbors."¹ John M. Claunch, who succeeded Robb as President in 1967, joined with those at Peabody who viewed sharing complementary resources with neighboring institutions as a threat to the College's corporate and fiscal independence. The position of Claunch and his allies centered on their conception of institutional loyalty. They viewed the establishment of the Kennedy Center and the aggressive pursuit of other federal and foundation grants by Hobbs and other members of the faculty of the Division of Human Development as threats to the institutional autonomy of Peabody. In the eyes of Claunch and those shared who his view, Hobbs's efforts to cooperate with other institutions and to woo external sources of funding gave evidence of his selfish desire to promote his own interests over those of Peabody. For Hobbs, Claunch's position was an "intransigent, isolationist policy" that revealed a "failure to grasp the economics of higher education in America today."² Hobbs believed cooperative alliances were essential to the

Tennessee on 12 October 1987; Samuel Ashcroft, Professor Emeritus of Special Education, in an interview conducted at his office at Peabody on 14 July 1987; and Paul R. Doeckel, Professor of Psychology and Special Education, in an interview conducted at his office at Peabody on 16 April 1987.

¹This phrase comes from Hobbs's letter to John M. Claunch, President, George Peabody College for Teachers, 5 December 1967, Hobbs Papers. This letter, written after Hobbs had taken the position of Provost at Vanderbilt, presents a summary of his position with respect to the institutional status of Peabody.

²*Ibid.*

survival of Peabody because, without them, the College would be unable to attract grants from both foundations and the federal government. Such grants, in his view, were essential supplements to income from tuition, endowment bequests, and annual giving programs, but they would be forthcoming only when Peabody had joined with its neighboring institutions to eliminate the needless duplication of programs and services.¹

Rustication

Hobbs had long been a proponent of granting students and faculty a period of refreshment and renewal—of "rustication"—in which they would be expected simply to read, following only the directions of their own needs for knowledge.² He also referred to such a period as "going to Woolesthorpe," a term he took from the life of Sir Isaac Newton.³ In Hobbs's view, a period of "rustication," of "going to Woolesthorpe," would provide faculty and students with practice in the habit of learning on their own, a habit they are expected to acquire without adequate opportunities to do so.

¹In 1979 Peabody and Vanderbilt merged. Peabody became George Peabody College for Teachers, Vanderbilt University. Hobbs wrote a memorandum, dated 19 February 1979 and marked "Confidential," to Chancellor Heard of Vanderbilt and President Fields of Peabody in which he sketched his concepts of mission and program for Peabody as a college of education within a larger university. The memorandum does not address matters of funding or corporate structure as they applied to the Peabody-Vanderbilt relationship. The memorandum is in the Hobbs Papers.. It appears that Hobbs played no formal role in effecting the merger.

²Hobbs used the term "rustication" in "The Compleat Counselor," Personnel and Guidance Journal 36 (May 1958): 602. He suggested that undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty be freed of all classes and commitments for an academic term or longer to engage in genuinely independent study, not guided readings or special projects.

³Hobbs discusses "going to Woolesthorpe" in "The Art of Getting Students into Trouble," in The College and the Student, eds. Lawrence E. Dennis and Joseph F. Kaufmann (Washington, DC: American Council on Education), pp. 202-205, and in "The New American Scholar," a paper presented to the Vanderbilt Chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, 14 December 1967, a few months after he had returned from the Center for Advanced Study. (This paper is not to be confused with the article of the same title published in 1959. The typewritten manuscript of the paper is in the Hobbs Papers.) He recounts how a great plague had swept England in 1650, causing the universities to be closed down. Newton, then an undistinguished student at Cambridge, went home to his mother's cottage at Woolesthorpe and there, without any interference from his professors, invented the calculus and started his great work on other projects.

By the mid-1960s, the prolonged battle over the governance of Peabody and the strenuous demands imposed by the formative problems of the Peace Corps, by the Kennedy Center, and by Project Re-ED had taken a toll on Hobbs. Early in 1966 he was appointed Provost of Vanderbilt, but his appointment was not to become effective until the summer of 1967. He had arranged to spend the intervening period, from September 1966 to June 1967, "rusticating" as a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California. Shortly after he arrived at the Center, he described his plight and his plans:

I am stale and empty and ignorant. The only saving grace is that I think I've sense enough to know it, and the marvelous thing is that I have an opportunity to do something about it. I can't do a decent job running the Kennedy Center unless I know more about recent work in mental retardation. I must know more about the problems of higher education if I am to be of use to Peabody and Vanderbilt, and I expect to remain active nationally but to do so I must know what I am doing. Once you get a reputation it is easy to be a great expert, even if you don't know what's going on. I'd like not to join that numerous group. I see my nine months here as an investment in capital improvement that should pay off over the next decade.¹

Provost of Vanderbilt

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade." This is the account Hobbs gave his friend, Samuel Ashcroft, of his decision to accept the offer from Vanderbilt University to become Provost.² Vanderbilt's offer came after a nationwide search had uncovered two other candidates, both of whom turned the position down. The position granted Hobbs both a route of escape from the "hysteria whipped up" at Peabody and an opportunity to pursue his vision of inter-institutional and cross-disciplinary cooperation from a new

¹Nicholas Hobbs to Sargent Shriver, 30 September 1966. Hobbs Papers.

²Samuel Ashcroft, interview, 14 July 1987.

vantage point.¹ The hysteria over the question of Peabody's institutional autonomy had "so marred the spirit of accord and hope" that Hobbs had tried to foster among the institutions involved that he decided he could not retain his position at Peabody.²

In July 1966, shortly after his appointment as Provost was announced, Hobbs wrote to Sargent Shriver and his wife, Eunice Kennedy Shriver:

The announcement of my joint appointment at Vanderbilt and Peabody has created a stir. The major reaction by far is one of enthusiastic approbation—on both sides of the street.

. . . I think my job is going to be an impossibly difficult one but thoroughly challenging, and I think I can manage it. The big task will be to select with discretion the problems I work on and not to get programmed by what comes across a desk.³

The problems Hobbs selected raised fundamental questions about the mission and the responsibilities of the University. He approached his new position with a boldness to transgress, to break conventions. In his office, he kept a Magic Marker board, and it was always filled with ideas and questions which he would quickly write down and just as quickly wipe out.⁴ He had boundless faith in the power of individual initiative—in inspiration, leadership, advocacy, persuasion, politiking, participation, and debate—to stimulate reform. He pushed departments to ask questions of application and relevance and to be cognizant of consequences of knowing and of their responsibilities to the

¹Hobbs to John M. Claunch, 5 December 1967. Hobbs Papers. Although Hobbs stepped down from his position as Chairman of the Division of Human Development, he did not completely sever his ties with Peabody. He retained his appointments as Professor of Psychology and Director of the Kennedy Center until 1970.

²*Ibid.*

³Nicholas Hobbs to Mr. and Mrs. Sargent Shriver, 11 July 1966. Hobbs Papers.

⁴James F. Kilroy, formerly Chairman of the Department of English at Vanderbilt and now Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, knew Hobbs quite well. He discussed Hobbs's years as Provost in an interview in his office at Tulane, 8 April 1988.

community, both on national and local levels. He questioned the rigidity of the boundaries that divided the academic disciplines. He pressed for the marshalling of "our research resources horizontally across departments and schools to attack major problems where national needs coincide with our own resources and research interests."¹ As a model for inter-institutional cooperation, Hobbs envisioned a kind of consortium involving Peabody, Vanderbilt, Fisk University, Meharry, and Scarritt. He referred to this as the Nashville University Center, and after he became Provost he obtained a grant from the Ford Foundation to assist in exploring possibilities for mutual advantage of the five institutions through various kinds of cooperative efforts, ranging from warehousing and purchasing to academic programming.

Hobbs understood that a large part of what constitutes education occurs outside the formal curriculum. He understood, also, that the goals of students and of the faculty and administration are, to a great degree, the same. Writing just after the shooting of students by the National Guard at Kent State University, he expressed his instinctive sympathy for the anxieties of the young and his belief in the importance of taking student views seriously: "I guess," he wrote, "the events of the past week convince me more than ever that the now generation has a deeper sense of morality and a deeper sense of personal commitment than I see on the horizon generally, and they just may possibly be our salvation, if salvation is to be had."²

Hobbs also perceived the importance of talking with students about many aspects of university affairs:

¹Hobbs presented his proposal for marshalling Vanderbilt's research resources at a retreat for the University's faculty and staff held in March 1969 at a state park near Nashville. The proposal appears in a chapter by Hobbs titled, "Strategies and Programs for the Development of the University in the Centenary Decade," pp. 91-122, in "Proceedings of the Conference on Academic Planning," Montgomery Bell State Park Inn, 6 and 7 March 1969. (Mimeographed) Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs to Henry Hill, President Emeritus, George Peabody College for Teachers, 13 May 1970. Hobbs Papers.

With the keenness of vision that is the peculiar property of hindsight, it is astonishing that we were so obtuse as not to see in the student the competent and committed ally that he is in the making of a university. We need to remember that channels of communication were opened at the insistence of students whose methods ranged from violation of custom to violation of law. The danger now is that with the strange new quiet so evident on most campuses, we will forget the lesson learned with such travail in the past three or four years. . . . I fear a return of the student to a passive and uninvolved role with the consequent loss of community that is so vital to what we are trying to do.¹

Both Chancellor Emeritus Alexander Heard and James F. Kilroy believe Hobbs was largely responsible for Vanderbilt's escaping the worst ravages of the student unrest in the late 1960s and early 1970s.² He accomplished this by listening to students and granting them some voice in decision-making. One day he canceled all classes and arranged a program of informal seminars in dormitory lounges to which all students and members of the faculty were invited. He also sought out junior members of the faculty and scheduled regular get-togethers over breakfast with small groups of them. Kilroy reports that Hobbs once remarked to him that he enjoyed the "audacity" of young members of the faculty.³

In all of this, Hobbs faced a University that was very different from Peabody, where he had been such an effective catalyst for change. In Peabody, Hobbs had an institutional home that would perpetuate his vision, offer him protection and prestige, and serve as a training ground for recruits who would share his vision. During the 1950s and early 1960s, Peabody had been a relatively open system that had been tolerant of new

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "The Governance of Universities," in The Prospects for Higher Education, ed. Nicholas Hobbs (Atlanta: Southern Newspaper Publishers Association, 1972), p. 57.

²Alexander Heard, interview, , conducted at his office on the Vanderbilt Campus, Nashville, Tennessee, 21 May 1987. James F. Kilroy, interview, 8 April 1988.

³James F. Kilroy, interview, 8 April 1987.

ideas, of outsiders, and of those who worked on the margins of their disciplines. Vanderbilt in the late 1960s and early 1970s was an institution whose faculty was characterized by adherence to traditional roles, disciplinary specialization, and conformity.¹ As a rule, the central commitments of the members of the faculty were to research in their disciplines and to train graduate students, while concern for the education of undergraduates and considerations of the immediate, practical consequences of their work were of secondary importance.

In this atmosphere, Hobbs's ideals, ambitions, and cross-disciplinary view of the issues met with a mixed response. The things that had worked for him at Peabody—his charm and ability to project a concept persuasively, his disrespect for disciplinary boundaries, his concern for the social consequences of the University's research activities, and his orientation as an advocate rather than a disinterested scholar—were viewed by some at Vanderbilt as either woolly idealism or oily manipulation. Hobbs felt secure in his position as a well-established scholar and was not threatened personally by his detractors. He remarked that if he had had no enemies, that would have meant he was not doing anything.² He used the word "disheartened" to label his feelings about what he considered narrow "turf" concerns both within and between academic divisions, and he believed such concerns flowed from a lack of imagination and from selfishness.³ When he concluded that he had done all he could do as Provost, he resigned. In his letter of resignation, written in February 1974 and suggesting an effective date of 30 June

¹Interviews with Alexander Heard, Chancellor of Vanderbilt while Hobbs served as Provost and now Chancellor Emeritus, 21 May 1987; Paul R. Dokecki, conducted on 16 April 1987; Frank A. Sloan, Centennial Professor of Economics, Chairman of the Department of Economics and Business Administration at Vanderbilt University, and Director of the Health Policy Center of the Vanderbilt Institute of Public Policy Studies, conducted at a restaurant in Nashville, Tennessee on 17 June 1987; and with Erwin C. Hargrove, formerly Director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies and now Professor of Political Science, conducted at his office on 15 April 1987 provide much of the material for this brief portrait of Vanderbilt during Hobbs's tenure as Provost.

²James F. Kilroy, interview 8 April 1988.

³Alexander Heard, interview, 21 May 1987.

1975, he looked ahead, one month short of his 60th birthday, to what his professional life would hold after eight years in the Provost's office:

I find it attractive to contemplate a rounding-out period for my professional career in which I would return to pursuits of long interest and satisfaction: children, public policy as it affects family life and child development, research, teaching. If these interests can find expression in relationship to an emerging program of interdisciplinary studies, so much the better.¹

A Grand Strategy

During his period of engagement, Hobbs put into action many of the ideas that he had first articulated in the 1950s—ideas about new and more effective institutional forms for providing social services to the needy, about preparing mental health professionals for helping roles, and about making values operational in the work of social scientists. He entered the 1960s with his sensibilities already well formed and thus experienced the period in ways which those who started out in the 1960s did not and could not. He took great pleasure in the liberating process of discovering what he, his profession, and the institutions with which he was affiliated could accomplish. Like so many in the 1960s, he had faith that great social problems could be solved. Even in retrospect, this faith cannot be considered naive, for he never lost his scholarly mooring or his sense of historical context.

Hobbs always kept in mind a "grand strategy for attack"; one that would be implicit in his continuing efforts to identify the emerging forces in society that impinge on the profession of psychology, on the functions of universities, on the welfare of troubled children and their families, and on the varieties of persons suited to enter the helping

¹Nicholas Hobbs to Alexander Heard, Chancellor, Vanderbilt University, 14 February 1974. Hobbs Papers.

professions.¹ This "grand strategy" contained a number of themes: value commitments, aspirations for children and families, conceptions of a desirable social order, and judgments about the proper role of government, of private agencies, and of individual initiative in family life and child development. His highest priority was the development of human resources—an enterprise that reflected what he viewed as the "quickenened national concern for the development of human potential."²

Appreciating Hobbs's strategic sophistication is important to understanding his approach to helping children. In the 1960s, he discovered that those from the various disciplines who were interested in social policy ironically had more in common with each other than with their colleagues in their respective academic disciplines. As stated previously, he skillfully positioned himself into nodal points of influence on various boards, commissions, and panels which contributed to the development of national policy. He advocated collaborations between mental health professionals and other professional groups to solve problems in which the mental health effort overlaps with education, city planning, religion, welfare, architecture, and corrections. He promoted such collaborations, arguing that "maximum variability in the problem-solving effort" of social scientists could prevent the premature fixing of patterns of thought and action.³ Working toward a broad national policy—a public philosophy—that would encourage diversity, community-based care, and individual attention, he called for pluralistic solutions appropriate for a pluralistic society.

¹In "Research in Mental Retardation: Prospects and Strategies," American Journal of Mental Deficiency 64 (September 1959): 229-39, Hobbs referred to a "grand strategy for attack" that might both start and nurture the debate among all those concerned about the social purposes of scholarly and professional activity while also underscoring the importance of fundamental and prior planning.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Opening Remarks: Conference on the Professional Preparation of Clinical Psychologists," Chicago, September, 1965. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

³Nicholas Hobbs, "Research in Mental Retardation: Prospects and Strategies, p. 230.

In addressing his colleagues in the profession of psychology, Hobbs repeatedly stated his view of the compelling national need to which the profession could contribute, the need to give sustained attention to the special needs of children and their families.¹ This concern with the mental health of children was part and parcel of his concern with the quality of national life. Many of the products of his pen created during his period of engagement have a quality of courage and daring that gave powerful expression to his social purposes. In "Mental Health's Third Revolution," he explicitly states his social purposes:

... the mature profession does not simply respond to the needs of society but claims a role in determining what society should need and how social institutions, as well as individual professional careers, can be shaped to the service of an emerging social order. The responsible professional person becomes the architect of social change.²

Ethical concerns were at the heart of Hobbs's thought. He perceived that the purposes of psychology and of the other helping professions, their methods, and their topics of study do not automatically identify, define, and organize themselves. Therefore, to serve social purposes, psychologists and other professionals in the helping professions must pass judgment on what is established in their professions and in society. They must be particularly alert, he believed, to situations in which inherited institutional arrangements and patterns of practice have come into conflict with emerging societal conditions.

¹Hobbs made a number of calls for clinical psychology to devote itself primarily to the problems of children. Among these were his remarks at the Conference on the Professional Preparation of Clinical Psychologists; his article, "Strategies for the Development of Clinical Psychology," Newsletter: Division of Clinical Psychology of the American Psychological Association 16 (Spring 1963):3-6; and his presidential address to the Seventy-Fourth Annual Convention of the APA, New York, 3 September 1966, published as "Helping Disturbed Children: Psychological and Ecological Strategies."

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Mental Health's Third Revolution," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 34 (October 1964): 822.

Hobbs believed that the process of inquiry in the social sciences engages the lives of people; therefore, it must meet moral as well as scientific standards. In a number of published pieces exploring the relationship between ethics and social science, he expressed his conviction that moral and ethical inquiry is inextricably bound up with scholarship and professional activity. In his most complete statement of this position, "Ethics in Clinical Psychology," he attacks what he refers to as the Cartesian dichotomy that gave birth to the time-honored assumption that the practice of science is a value-free and objective study of a reality that unfolds independently of the person studying it. Simply put, Hobbs asserts that this dichotomy is "a fiction."¹ In contrast, he argues that the assumptions underlying the ethical standards of clinical psychological practice are the same as those underlying the scientific enterprise in all its guises. In short, his point is that there are no ethical standards for clinical psychologists apart from those of all psychology, all science, and all ethics.

The Dilemma of Determinism

In "Ethics in Clinical Psychology" Hobbs presents his position regarding the two major philosophical problems involved in ethics and clinical psychology.² First is the conflict of the psychologist as scientist and as clinician with respect to the issue of determinism, a conflict which, for Hobbs, is the "most exquisite dilemma" and one of the "existential impossibilities" of his profession. He allows that, as a scientist, the psychologist must assume that behavior is lawful, that cause-and-effect sequences can be discovered, and that specific interventions will elicit predictable outcomes. On the other

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Ethics and Clinical Psychology," in Handbook of Clinical Psychology, ed. Benjamin B. Wolman (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 1507-1514.

²While Hobbs addresses his thoughts specifically to clinical psychologists in this piece, one can assume that his ideas about the centrality of ethics to clinical practice and scientific inquiry apply to all disciplines within the social sciences and to all clinical professions.

hand, he appreciates, as a clinician, the phenomena of life which deny determinism—the anxiety, the guilt, and the "palpable sense of freedom and responsibility" with which those who seek his help live.

The second major issue that the clinical psychologist must face is the "criterion problem." As Hobbs poses it, the issue is: "By what criterion can one establish the validity of any system of ethics."¹ This, like the dilemma of determinism, is a problem with no satisfactory solution, in this case because none "of the various criteria for the adequacy of ethical systems is entirely satisfactory in the absence of a criterion for criteria."²

Hobbs's working solutions to the unsolvable problems of determinism and of establishing criteria for an ethical system are pragmatic ones. With regard to the issue of determinism, freedom, and responsibility, he sees a useful model for psychologists in the legal test for responsibility of those accused of crimes. According to this test (known as the Durham rule and established in 1954), expert witnesses cannot fulfill their duties simply by expressing conclusions or attaching diagnostic labels denoting mental disorders. Rather, the test requires expert witnesses to offer as much information as they can about how and why those accused act as they do. Hobbs perceives that this legal test allows the jurist both to be more responsive to new knowledge in the social sciences and to assert working propositions—not immutable truths—which are subject to change as knowledge advances. Citing the example of the jurist, Hobbs argues that "the clinical psychologist's choice of a position with respect to the issue of determinism should be determined pragmatically by the requirements of the problem at hand and by his or her own role at a particular time."³

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Ethics and Clinical Psychology," p. 1509.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 1511.

Hobbs did not approach the tasks he set for himself within the limits of the specific problem alone; he also applied standards for the relative importance of problems. For him, social science was not just another tool for reaching decisions in a society where ethical dilemmas had been resolved through consensus, leaving only technical problems unsolved. He decried the technical approach to decision making, believing that insofar as deep-seated social problems come to be viewed, erroneously, as technical problems, the necessity for moral choices diminishes. He is unabashed about expressing his own value judgments, declaring: "The expression of value judgments by an individual suggests that the profession [of psychology] itself is ultimately individuals [sic] and that the free expression of personal biases should be encouraged . . . as a means of testing their merit in a common market of ideas."¹

The Criterion Problem: Social Utility and Aesthetic Appeal

By what criteria did Hobbs judge "merit in a common market of ideas?" In a number of speeches and published pieces he proffered "social utility" and "aesthetic appeal" as the criteria for judging merit—construed both as the vigor and significance of a profession, a university, and of social institutions and as the adequacy of the educated person's scholarship and involvement in society.

In a piece addressed to his colleagues in the APA's Division of Clinical Psychology, he asserts that the "ultimate criteria of a good profession is social utility."² With respect to a helping profession such as psychology, utility means effectiveness in responding to social opportunities and pressures. For Hobbs, chief among these opportunities and pressures are: (1) promoting the "health, wisdom, and strength" of children; (2) making clinical services more efficient by discovering alternatives to individual psychotherapy;

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Strategies for the Development of Clinical Psychology," p. 3.

²Ibid.

and (3) establishing new patterns of research that would both acknowledge scholars who synthesize, criticize, and interpret the findings of experimenters and reward experimenters who test specific hypotheses.

With respect to how the university should relate itself to the larger community, utility means inventing ways to maintain two-way communication between even the most basic or sequestered scholars and the policy makers and practitioners in state legislatures, police forces, labor unions, or schools for troubled children. Moreover, utility means effective application of knowledge to pressing human problems. Hobbs tempered this emphasis on application, however, with an appreciation for the importance of keeping social impulses in check. He recognized that a chief strength of the university is its capacity to grant scholars protection from demands that their work yield immediate returns so that they might continue the intrinsically valid quest for knowledge.

For Hobbs, this engagement with both the larger society and with detached inquiry was an inherently moral enterprise. In a memorandum to Alexander Heard, then Chancellor of Vanderbilt University, written shortly after Hobbs became Provost, Hobbs states:

. . . the university must assume a substantial amount of responsibility for a reconstruction of the moral order. I define morality of course in the most comprehensive of terms, as pertaining to a rational and affective response to the consequences of knowing. Thus the task touches all aspects of the life of the University, but especially its intellectual life.¹

In another context, he expands this line of thinking:

¹Nicholas Hobbs to Alexander Heard, 12 November 1968. Hobbs Papers. This is a private statement of a position Hobbs also presented in a number of public contexts, among them were: "The Idea of the University," Vanderbilt Alumnus 53 (July-August, 1968):9-12; "The New American Scholar," a paper presented to the Vanderbilt chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, 14 December 1967. (Typewritten); "The Divinity School and the University," 21 December 1967. (Typewritten); and "Errants Thoughts on Ethics and Related Matters," 6 October 1969. (Typewritten). All are collected in the Hobbs Papers.

I've gotten interested in the need for colleges and universities as part of their enterprise to disturb the equilibrium of the system. I'm not talking about political activism, but the nature of the scholarly or scientific enterprise. Upsetting the equilibrium should be a consequence of effective scholarly work. I've felt the universities have not been sufficiently sensitive to the consequences of the knowledge generating responsibility they have. There has been a tendency to say it doesn't matter—just turn out the article, write the poem, produce the work of art, give the lecture, make the discovery, and that's it. It seems to me insufficient. Universities should, as faculties should, administrations helping faculties should, (a moral judgement [sic] you see) pay attention to the consequences of knowing.¹

With this call for attention to the "consequences of knowing," Hobbs appears to set forth for consideration a pragmatic criterion, that of social utility, as the ultimate criterion for judging the merit of a university or of a profession. In another context, however, he states that utility is merely a short-run criterion:

The criterion of success in these most human of efforts is not the discovery of truth, though man may call it thus. Nor is it consonance among explanatory systems, for accord depends much on purpose, not alone on fact. The short-run criterion for the worth of a construct system is its utility in furthering particular human enterprises; the long-run criterion is neither truth nor utility but esthetic appeal, a sense of rightness between man and his world.²

Hobbs also maintains that: "Utility cannot be ignored but it is too boring to be central."

He holds that the "criterion will ultimately be an aesthetic one. Once basic needs are

¹Nicholas Hobbs, remarks at a Counseling Psychology Professional Issues Seminar, 9 December 1972. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Errant Thoughts on Ethics and Related Matters," 6 October 1969, p. 11. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

satisfied, this is the great mover of men: to make order out of disarray, to achieve elegant simplicity, to live with style."¹

These statements reveal Hobbs's belief that, while concern for social purposes may serve as the "great mover" of the social institutions that promote effective functioning in people, the "great mover" of people is aesthetic appeal. These statements also recall the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter in which Hobbs describes the aesthetic experience as the process by which order, simplicity, and equilibrium are achieved, albeit provisionally. In modulating social utility and aesthetic appeal in a balanced fashion, Hobbs's ideas mirror those of John Dewey.² In Art as Experience, Dewey represents the aesthetic experience as the product of a state of disparity or of disequilibrium which has been successfully relieved. He further describes it as an experience in which a union of dualities is achieved—art with science, past with present, spiritual with material, person with environment, knowing with acting. Dewey makes the aesthetic distinct from the practical, or pragmatic, and from the intellectual, but he holds that their distinctiveness does not place them in opposition to each other:

The enemies of the esthetic are neither the practical nor the intellectual. They are the humdrum; slackness of loose ends; submission to convention in practice and intellectual procedure. Rigid abstinence, coerced submission, tightness on one side and dissipation, incoherence and aimless indulgence on the other, are deviations in opposite directions from the unity of experience.³

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "The House of the Educated Man," a talk to honors students at George Peabody College for Teachers, 18 May 1966, p. 6. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers. (In Hobbs's manuscripts, (a)esthetic is spelled both with and without the "a.")

²As stated in chapter 3, Hobbs first read Dewey while an undergraduate at The Citadel and referred to Dewey's work throughout his life.

³John Dewey, Art as Experience, (New York: Minton, Balch, 1934), p. 40.

For Hobbs, as for Dewey, the appeal of the aesthetic, of achieving "a unity of experience," stimulated an interest in ending the divorce of scholarship from practice which he found in the university. The appeal of the aesthetic played another central role in Hobbs's thought: It served as the the foundation of his ideas about the goals of social institutions attempting to help people with problems in living.

Delivering Mental Health Services

The ideas about delivering mental health services that Hobbs put into action during his period of engagement emerged as a component of what he referred to as a "public health" approach to mental health care—an approach which placed responsibility for the treatment of the troubled and needy on society as a whole rather than on the expertise of the doctor in the mental health institution. He described this profound change in the provision of mental health services in "Mental Health's Third Revolution," a direct assault on the hegemony of medicine in the field of mental health.¹ Hobbs cited a number of developments as evidence of this turning away from a clinical model toward a public health model: increased interest in children; growth in social psychiatry; greater concern for the mentally retarded; a proposed system of comprehensive community mental health centers; and a new concept of care that redefines the responsibilities of mental health professionals, granting teachers, social workers, welfare and correctional workers, and other professionals opportunities to work collaboratively with psychiatrists and psychologists in areas of overlapping concern.

Irving Goffman's work helped Hobbs appreciate the consequences of definitions and metaphors in mental health.² Hobbs appreciated both how definitions evoke institutional

¹Hobbs delivered this paper at the annual meeting of the American Association of Orthopsychiatry in May 1964. The paper was published under the same title in the Journal of Orthopsychiatry.

²In his book, Asylums (Chicago: Aldine, 1961), Goffman contends that mental health institutions force those who would be served by them to behave in a manner consonant with the prevailing definitions and ways of talking about problems that form the character of institutions. In a number

forms and how institutions can evoke behaviors from the people they would serve that validate the definitions. He knew that hospitals can teach patients to perceive themselves as sick, that correctional institutions can make inmates criminals, and that institutions for the mentally retarded can cause people to become less able to learn than they might otherwise be. Hobbs gave eloquent expression to this knowledge, which served as the foundation of his mental health program:

In our efforts to help, we carry a heavy burden of outmoded meanings, of semantic insufficiencies. Mental disorders are somehow qualitatively different from other disorders. To call a broken bone broken never widened a fracture. To pronounce spots measles never increased the number of spots, probably. But to say a person is mentally ill is to require him, in some measure, to behave so. Thus mental hospitals tend to confirm people in their illness, and mental health centers tend to make patients of people who might otherwise, with help from us, be about the business of living; not patients at all but people with problems they can somehow learn to manage, or at least manage better. In the field of mental health, definitions are enormously important. They have ineluctable consequences, and they should be chosen with care, and with deep concern for the expectations they generate, both for our own conduct and for the behavior of the person we seek to help.

. . . A much better accounting of observed events in the phenomenon we call mental disorder can be gained by assuming that such disorders are always social in character, residing in a set of people, not simply in the person traditionally called the patient. . . . Mental disorder may then be productively defined as evidence of social discord—of dissonance between the way a person behaves and the way people expect him to behave. Intervention strategies must, in consequence, involve all the people who have expectations of a person and who contribute to the variance in his behavior, as well as the person himself.¹

of his published pieces, Hobbs cited Goffman's book as a source of his ideas about the power of definitions and metaphors in mental health.

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "On the Eve of Greatness," a speech delivered at the dedication of the Dede Wallace Center, Nashville Tennessee, 13 November 1970. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

This systems analysis of the plight of the person in need repudiates the "illness" metaphor for mental disorder. Hobbs perceived that mental disorders are not the private misery of the individual. Rather, they contribute to and grow out of a breakdown in the normal systems of community support in which individuals hold membership—the school, the work setting, and, most crucially, the family. Hobbs was not the first to offer this argument, but he was one of the few to state it as a working proposition, as a blueprint for new intervention strategies. His purpose was to find new patterns for providing mental health services through the social systems in which people participate.

Community-Based Mental Health Care

This community-based approach to mental health care was a dimension of the national trend toward a public health model that first emerged in the 1950s. A stimulus for this trend was the report of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, established by Congress under the Mental Health Study Act of 1955, which recommended that large mental hospitals be replaced by an array of community-based services. The concept of the comprehensive community mental health center grew out of the Commission's recommendations, and in 1963 Congress authorized funds for establishing community mental health centers. Shortly thereafter, all 50 states, following the federal lead, began drafting their own legislation regarding community mental health services.¹

Hobbs was a protagonist in the national movement toward community-based care. He served as vice-chairman of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health. In addition, as president of the American Psychological Association, he spearheaded the Association's efforts to promote community-based mental health care. In 1966, Hobbs and M. Brewster Smith, who was then a professor of psychology at the University of

¹In The Community and The Community Mental Health Center, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1966, co-authored by M. Brewster Smith, Hobbs recounts the events that led up to the creation of federal and state programs for community-based mental health care.

California, Berkeley and former vice-president of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, wrote "The Community and the Community Mental Health Center," the official position paper of the APA. Hobbs and Smith addressed the paper to community leaders to guide them in determining how their communities might respond to the opportunities opened by new federal and state legislation. Hobbs and Smith take the position that the ultimate decision-making power with respect to mental health care must be relegated to individual communities, not to mental health professionals who would assume positions as "guardians of mental health." The goal of the public health approach, as Hobbs and Smith conceive it, is an end of the separation of troubled persons from society. This, they hoped, would lead to the treatment of persons in their own communities and the expansion of services to include not only treatment but prevention and detection as well.

Hobbs and Smith's notion of the comprehensive community mental health center ends the byzantine complexity of the prevailing multi-agency mental health system and proposes a total mental health system that reflects a "continuity of concern" for troubled individuals in their involvements with society. At the heart of their program is a proposal for a new role for mental health professionals as members of the staffs of community mental health centers, a role that has them work as consultants to schools as well as to business, industry, the courts, churches, welfare agencies and other institutions not normally thought to provide mental health services. In performing this role, the professionals on the mental health center staff are not cast as experts who know best how the institutions of the community should operate. Rather, they contribute special perspectives and competencies to the community's endeavor to marshal its own resources.

In articulating the APA's position with respect to community-based mental health care, Hobbs and Smith were not unmindful of how great variations among communities

in the United States could affect the actual delivery of services. They are especially concerned with problems peculiar to rural areas and to communities of disadvantaged and uneducated people in urban settings, both of which lack traditions of strong mental health services. They declare that the most advanced mental health services cannot continue to be a middle-class luxury and call for an end to the prevailing pattern of relationships between the mental health helper and the helped, a pattern "governed by an affinity of the clean for the clean, the educated for the educated, the affluent for the affluent."¹

The Futures of Children

Hobbs's engagement with the problems of children was conducted on two levels: (1) a policy level, at which he worked to produce practical suggestions that would lead to changes in public policy, administrative regulations, and legislation at the federal and state levels; and (2) an "ecological" or practical level, at which he addressed parents, teachers, Re-ED staff members—the people who work directly with children—to offer recommendations for reforms in procedures for serving needy children.

The Futures of Children, subtitled, "Categories, Labels and Their Consequences," was the product of Hobbs's endeavor to work at a broad, policy level—to influence public policy for exceptional children by ordering what was known about the entire matter of classification and intervention of such children. The book was Hobbs's report of the Project on Classification of Exceptional Children, a joint effort involving ten federal agencies that had been undertaken at the request of then Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Elliot L. Richardson. Ninety-three individuals, including psychologists, pediatricians, educators, administrators, lawyers, parents, and psychiatrists, served on the Project. They worked for two years, from 1972 to 1974, to produce a critical review of procedures for classifying and serving exceptional

¹Ibid., p. 14.

children in this country. Hobbs was the director of the Project and the general editor of its two-volume report, Issues in the Classification of Children, published in 1975.

In The Futures of Children, Hobbs quotes heavily, giving generous credit to the contributors to the Project, but the book is clearly a testament to his commitment to developing public policy on the welfare of children. In it, he explores what happens when children are labeled emotionally disturbed, delinquent, retarded, or learning disabled. He examines the kinds of care they receive and investigates how labeling affects not only the children themselves but their families as well. Based on the study of the Project on the Classification of Exceptional Children, Hobbs's work is at once a powerful indictment of the prevailing system for providing services to exceptional children and a rich sourcebook for thoroughgoing reform.

As one reviewer of The Futures of Children observes, one hears in the book the voice of Hobbs the researcher, stating: "If we had to put one problem area first, it would be the need for new knowledge."¹ One also hears the voice of Hobbs the humanist, who emphasizes his ultimate priority, support of the normal socializing agencies responsible for the welfare of exceptional children, especially the family and the school. Hobbs proposes that the school become the agency with primary responsibility for most exceptional children, for the school is the most normal and least stigmatizing locus for such services as speech therapy, psychotherapy, special diets, and remedial instruction.

One of the themes of Hobbs the humanist is that many of the problems seen in exceptional children arise from society's treatment of all children:

Our nation provides inadequately for exceptional children for reasons linked to their being different; it also provides inadequately for all children. There is urgent need for a quickened national conscience and a new national policy with this as a goal: to nurture well all of our children, in

¹Leopold Lippman makes this observation in his review of The Futures of Children in The American Journal of Mental Deficiency 80 (February 1975): 238-239.

body, mind, and spirit, that we as a people may grow in wisdom, strength, and humane concerns.

Current national policy for human-resource development emphasizes crisis intervention, correction, and repair after the damage is done. . . . the nation cannot neglect children, nurture them in violence, and expect them to grow up to be good citizens, concerned with the well-being of their fellow man.¹

In his policy proposals, Hobbs emphasizes the continuity of the development process in all children. He believes that most exceptional children have needs in common with all children. These include the "need to grow and learn, to accept themselves and to establish rewarding relationships with others, to read, write, spell and cipher, and to understand the world they live in."² He does not think of help for children in terms of adult productivity or social pathology. He is interested in the development of competent, complete human beings. Regarding emotionally disturbed children, Hobbs appreciates that most disorders are not bizarre or extreme. Rather, they are like the disorders that appear in most children at some time in one or more of the stages of the development process. Children judged emotionally disturbed display more disorders, at greater intensity and in more situations, and they lack the capacity to compensate. He is confident that sustained, coordinated efforts on behalf of troubled children, not quick fixes, which often are intrusive and aversive, will reap benefits. His confidence is tempered by recognition of the myths that operate to confuse perceptions about needy children. He rejects, for example, the notion that early intervention will inoculate children against later troubles. He rejects, also, the notion that intervention during adolescence is doomed to failure because of the overwhelming influence of early experiences.

¹Nicholas Hobbs, The Futures of Children (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975), pp. 14-15.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Classifying Children: A Summary of the Final Report on the Classification of Exceptional Children," Children Today 4 (July-August 1975): 22.

Another of Hobbs's themes is the need to replace a single, all-encompassing diagnosis with a multiaxial assessment of a child's social, emotional, and behavioral functioning across settings. He knows that children, unlike adults, seldom seek help for themselves, and that they rarely are able to report on their own problems. Therefore, to learn about their problems, the would-be helper must obtain reports on the child from multiple sources because the behavior of the child varies across settings. This variability can make the classification of a child within a single diagnostic category inaccurate and, in turn, can lead to commitment to a treatment program that defines and confirms the child as delinquent, retarded, or emotionally disturbed. As an alternative, Hobbs does not seek an end to all classifying, for he perceives that a system of classifying is essential to organizing services for needy children. He calls, instead, for an end to the careless application of simplistic labels that obscure the individual differences among children.

Hobbs's reforms in classification and intervention stress the services required by a child, shifting the focus of policy away from the limitations of the individual child and toward a more practical "ecological" strategy. This means abandoning the view that the child is the sole focus of assessment and intervention. The problem, then, resides not in the child but in the small ecological system—the community—in which the child participates. This community consists of parents, siblings, teachers, friends, and the other people important in the life of a child. Assessment and intervention focuses on the child's relationships with these significant others, and the goal becomes making the community work more effectively, not simply changing the child.

Re-ED: A Deliberate Effort at Social Engineering

The Project for the Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children (Re-ED) was Hobbs's "deliberate effort at social engineering."¹ Re-ED was designed both to help a

¹Hobbs characterized Re-ED in this way in "Child Psychology and Developmental Deviations," August 1965. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

troubled child and to help restore to effective operation the community—the ecological system—of which the child is a part. Accordingly, parents, teachers, and other members of the child's ecological system were not viewed as "sources of contagion" but as collaborators in improving the system.

Life Is To Be Lived Now

Hobbs felt little need to specify in advance the essential components of the good child care worker or the adequately functioning child, preferring a more open-ended position—one that allowed the criteria for "goodness," "effectiveness," or "adequacy" to emerge in the living through of situations. He perceived that effective living is intrinsically uncertain and problematic, and he often cited George Kelly's term, "skating on the edge of doubt," to express the notion that experience must constantly be reconstrued to make it orderly, to make it serve particular human purposes at particular times.¹

One of Hobbs's oft-cited "principles" for Re-ED was: "Life is to be lived now." He believed this principle could guide the troubled child as well as the uncertain psychologist who would help that child. In a talk to the staff of a Re-ED School, he recounted how uncertainty and attention to the press of immediate experience prevailed in the early days of Re-ED.

When we submitted our application to NIMH for the Re-Ed [sic] schools, they had the usual site visit and a team of experts came to Nashville, and there was one sociologist on this visiting team that kept asking a terribly embarrassing question. He kept asking "what do you mean by re-education" [sic] and I have to tell you that we just didn't know. We thought that we could do better than what was being done for children in state hospitals in any state in the nation. . . . All we had to go on was a lot of confidence that people like you can do a great job with kids, and we have had staff figuring out how to do that. . . . One of the first

¹Paul R. Docecki, in an interview on 16 April 1987, noted Hobbs's debt to Kelly.

things, really the most important, is that life is to be lived right now. We really don't look backward, we don't retreat, we don't try to repair something so that life can be caught up again. . . . And the programming for children should be that way. The great days, those days that simply sing with joy, with kids being great, with all problems vanishing, those marvelous days are days when the program is really going and kids are living to the hilt from the time their feet hit the floor in the morning until they fall in bed exhausted at night. These are days that have some characteristics that are terribly important; they have purpose to them, they have futurity, looking forward to something, they have meaning, they have significance. I am doing something for someone, I am doing something important.¹

This passage reveals much about what Hobbs sought from his own work and about what he hoped to offer troubled children. Demonstrating competence, contributing to the amelioration of social problems, and experiencing joy—living life "to the hilt"—these were his notions of the aesthetic, as it is experienced both by staff members and by students in a Re-ED school.

Hobbs understood that the proper concern of a school for troubled children is not education in a formal sense, and still less preparation for later life, but the present lives of children. The task of the good school—one that would help troubled children—is to provide experiences in living: joy, just manageable difficulties, opportunities for interaction between children and their peers and between children and adults, opportunities to become good at something. In Hobbs's view, self-realization, authenticity, competence—the qualities he believed children needed to develop—are always products of living, not preludes to it. They are acquired "not by looking inward and backward, but in the living of this hour and of this day on as favorable terms as possible, . . . and in experience examined, . . . and in hope for the future."²

¹This passage appears in a typewritten manuscript labeled "DRAFT," dated 23 August 1973, of a presentation Hobbs made to the staff of the Lakeside School. Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Remarks at the Dedication of the Treehouse," a school for troubled children in Elkhart, Indiana, 15 February 1973, pp. 3-4. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers

In developing his thoughts about the criteria by which mental health programs are to be judged, Hobbs acknowledged his debt to Thomas J. Szasz, who an active and influential participant in the debate about the psychosocial, legal, and ethical dimensions of mental illness. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Szasz argued that the phenomena called mental illness be removed from the category of illnesses and be regarded as "expressions of man's struggle with the problem of *how* he should live." He argued further that "Our adversaries are not demons, witches, fate, or mental illness. We have no enemy whom we can fight, exorcise, or dispel by 'cure.' What we do have are *problems in living*—whether these be biologic, economic, political, or sociopsychological."¹

Like Szasz, Hobbs believed that "cure" is a meaningless concept in mental health, resulting from the assumption that troubled people are "ill" and from a preoccupation with individual psychotherapy and with the intrapsychic life of those in need of help. With respect to his work with troubled children, he believed matters of style in setting goals are as important as matters of content and employed a metaphor of competence and self-fulfillment rather than of illness and pathology to express goals. He urged those who work with troubled children to "find a definition of our goals that will be both rich in metaphorical texture and evocative of the best that is in us all."² There was an aesthetic component to his notion of goals—to design programs for children with a high expectation of normal behavior, of zestful, purposeful, and joyous living. There was also a utilitarian dimension. Hobbs advocated the acquisition of middle-class values and ways of behaving by troubled children, arguing that the "issue is largely one of

¹Thomas Szasz, "The Myth of Mental Illness," American Psychologist 15 (February 1960): 117, 118.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Reeducation, Reality, and Community Responsibility," in Research Contributions from Psychology to Community Mental Health, ed. J. W. Carter (New York: Behavioral Publications, 1968), p. 16.

improving the child's social stimulus value to adults on whom he must depend for support and instruction."¹ Among these approved values and ways of behaving are: good manners and language, cleanliness, bookishness, willingness to work, and the need to achieve.

Behaviorism

Behaviorism offered Hobbs the techniques of programmed learning and of constructing reinforcement schedules, both of which were of great use to Re-ED as means of modifying children's behavior in various situations. These techniques were useful tools for modifying behavior in such a way that children might better attend to tasks aimed at increasing their cognitive competence in some skill area and for teaching certain basic skills prerequisite to more complex levels of functioning. With respect to setting standards for the psychological health of children and adults, however, Hobbs found behaviorism wanting. He rejected behaviorism's view of the nature of the human being because he believed behaviorism excluded feelings, beliefs, and cognitive processes and treated people not as creative actors but as reacting mechanisms. In his critique of behaviorism, Hobbs was careful to distinguish B. F. Skinner's metapsychology from the concept of the person proffered by "Skinnerians."

The source of my antipathy for Skinnerians is that they call themselves, unabashedly, Skinnerians. I distrust them as I do Freudians, Rogerians (I'm afraid I may have been one, in my youth), Anabaptists, and wheat germ enthusiasts. They are true believers who have moved beyond the discipline of doubt. Skinner is no Skinnerian. His apostolic disciples do him no honor.²

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Child Psychology and Developmental Deviations," August 1965, p. 12. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs to John M. Throne, Professor of Education, Indiana University, 19 March 1968. Hobbs Papers.

Skinner and Hobbs were well acquainted, and Hobbs's respect for Skinner, both as an advocate for youth and as a psychologist of great stature, led him to invite Skinner to serve on the national advisory committee to the John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development at Peabody.

The Competent and Caring Community

Community is central to Hobbs's conception of the mission of Re-ED. He conceived of the Re-ED school as a model of the competent, caring community, a conception that has much in common with the ideas of John Dewey. Hobbs, like Dewey, conceived of the business of the school as providing children with experiences in living. For both Hobbs and Dewey, learning is living; it occurs most effectively in live contexts that set real problems. Dewey proposes that children develop competencies rather than simply receive what he calls "object-lessons" for the sake of acquiring information.

We must conceive of work in wood and metal, of weaving, sewing, and cooking, as methods of living and learning, not as distinct studies.

We must conceive of them in their social significance, as types of the processes by which society keeps itself going, as agencies for bringing home to the child some of the primal necessities of community life, and as ways in which these needs have been met by the growing insight and ingenuity of man; in short, as instrumentalities through which the school itself shall be made a genuine form of active community life, instead of a place apart in which to learn lessons.¹

Hobbs also insisted that true learning only occurs when children experience education within the fabric of experience, when they acquire competence in such things as reading, baseball, and contributing to a camping trip. With his Re-ED schools, he intended to "test the optimistic hypothesis that if children are challenged to live constructively, that if

¹John Dewey, The School and Society, revised ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 14.

they are given an opportunity for a constructive encounter with other children, with decent adults, with nature, they will come off well—and they do, most of the time."¹

This emphasis on community and on meaningful learning in the lives of troubled children gives evidence of Hobbs's desire to keep the metaphorical texture of the Re-ED school as near to normal as possible. He did not want children who were having trouble at school or at home to be sent off to some radically different kind of experience, such as they might find in a large psychiatric hospital, so that they might be prepared to return to their normal world. He knew that the decision to refer a child for residential treatment is usually made at a low point—when the family and the community support systems are especially fragile, not necessarily when the problems of the child are especially severe.

Time is an Ally

Time was an issue of importance in the process of re-education. While a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Hobbs wrote:

What to make of time may well be the most important practical and theoretical decision confronting a staff responsible for designing a program to help disturbed children. Time is a practical commodity: it is stuff to be used in particular ways, to do things to make a difference in the lives of children. Time is also the concept most relevant to existential being, to beginnings and endings, to comings and departures, to what one is and might become, to birth and death. An awareness of the significance of time in human affairs is one of the most exacting criteria of maturity.²

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Child Psychology and Development Deviations," pp. 7-8. A nearly identical phrase is in "Helping Disturbed Children: Psychological and Ecological Strategies," p. 1109.

²This passage appears in a typewritten draft of chapter three, titled some "Some Theoretical Issues" and dated 10 February 1967, of a book about Project Re-ED that Hobbs began while a fellow at The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California. The chapter is in the Hobbs Papers. The book was finally published as The Troubled and Troubling Child (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982), and the quoted passage appears on pages 257-258.

Re-ED claimed time as an ally in the therapeutic process. A major component of Hobbs's Re-ED philosophy was his belief that in life things tend to get better rather than worse. With Re-ED he tried to avoid creating an institution that would hinder what he considered the normal restorative process of living. He understood that the lives of children have tremendous forward thrust, and he appreciated how providing nothing more than a "benign sanctuary for a child in a time of crisis" could be therapeutic.¹

The Natural Child Care Worker

Hobbs believed in the existence of natural child care workers, persons whose life experiences and personal attributes make them especially attractive to troubled children as models of the competent, caring adult. He expressed this belief in his Presidential Address to the American Psychological Association, stating that he was

almost sure the thesis is true, that no amount of professional training can make an adult worthy of the trust of a child or capable of generating it. This ability is prior to technique, to theory, to technical knowledge. After seeing the difference that teacher-counselors in our schools have made in the lives of children I am confident of the soundness of the idea that some adults know, without knowing how they know, the way to inspire trust in children and to teach them to begin to use adults as mediators of new learning.²

In Hobbs's view, such knowledge is not likely to be altered by professional training, and, with respect to effectiveness with troubled children, it weighs more heavily than professional knowledge and technical skills. This position caused Hobbs to emphasize selection over training in the preparation of Re-ED teacher-counselors and

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "The Process of Re-Education," a paper delivered at the first annual workshop for the staff of Project Re-ED, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, 1 September 1963. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs, Presidential Address to the Seventy-Fourth Annual Convention of the APA, New York, 3 September 1966, published as "Helping Disturbed Children: Psychological and Ecological Strategies," American Psychologist 21 (December 1966):1110.

to try to devise selection procedures that would take advantage of individual differences in readiness to work with troubled children. In selecting and training teacher-counselors in Re-ED schools, he hoped to establish a new approach for staffing mental health programs. In his view

Re-ED represents an explicit break with the predominant philosophy of developing professional people, a philosophy that minimizes individual differences and relies most heavily on extended and expensive periods for training to assure competence. The Re-ED position represents an effort to test the hypothesis that, in providing professional services to children, a substantial measure of competence can be achieved by maximizing the contribution of individual differences while limiting professional training to a calculated minimum.¹

For Hobbs, natural child care workers and the effective Peace Corps volunteers are cut from the same cloth. They are highly idealistic, they have a desire to do something that "makes a difference," but they are not merely nice people with romantic notions about serving others. They are tough minded. They appreciate the challenge posed by spending day after day with troubled and troubling children or by serving for two years in a hot, dusty, poverty-stricken village. In his Presidential Address to the American Psychological Association, Hobbs offered an eloquent description of this kind of person:

. . . a decent adult; educated, well trained; able to give and receive affection, to live relaxed, and to be firm; a person with private resources for the nourishment and refreshment of his own life; not an itinerant worker but a professional through and through; a person with a sense of the significance of time, of the usefulness of today and the promise of tomorrow; a person of hope, quiet confidence and joy.²

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "How the Re-ED Plan Developed," in Conflict in the Classroom: The Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children, eds. Nicholas Long, William C. Morse, and Ruth G. Newman (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1965), p. 291.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Helping Disturbed Children: Psychological and Ecological Strategies," pp. 1106-1107.

Hobbs conceived of his Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children as a "case study" in institution building in the service of children who were in trouble at home or at school.¹ As an alternative to existing institutional arrangements for troubled children, particularly the mammoth mental hospital, Re-ED was an organizational structure for providing mental health services that meshed smoothly with the context of social inquiry and service that was emerging in this country during Hobbs's period of engagement.

Interpretive or Practical Social Science

The works of Bruce Jennings and of Robert Bellah provide a means of placing Hobbs's work within this larger context of social science inquiry and service that were conducted during the years 1961 to 1975. During these years, according to both Jennings and Bellah, an approach to social inquiry emerged that stood in contrast to the prevailing "technical" social science that took as its model the methods and assumptions of the natural sciences. Jennings labels this approach "interpretive" and Bellah labels it "practical" social science.² Interpretive or practical social science rejects as a fiction the so-called value-neutral tradition of technical social science, in which "hard" evidence remains unsullied by human interests and intentions, and asserts that social inquiry rests on moral as well as intellectual assumptions. According to this approach, social inquiry is conducted from within a "practical context of communicative action" that is consciously

¹Hobbs referred to Re-ED as a "case study" in "Helping Disturbed Children: Psychological and Ecological Strategies," pp. 1105-1115.

²Bruce Jennings discusses interpretive social science in "Interpretive Social Science and Policy Analysis," in Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Studies, eds. Daniel Callahan and Bruce Jennings (New York: Plenum, 1983), pp. 3-35; and Robert Bellah discusses practical social science in "Social Science as Practical Reason," in Ethics, the Social Sciences, and Policy Studies, pp. 37-64.

related to ethics, values, and judgments.¹ Bellah distinguishes between practical and technical social scientists:

Practical social scientists do not claim the degree of scientific precision to which technological science aspires, partly because they do not think it possible in the study of human affairs. This means that there is a considerable humility in their claims. They do not offer definitive findings but only judgments informed by inquiry, quite fallible and containing many links that cannot be conclusively demonstrated. In this practical social scientists do not claim to be strikingly different from or superior to those who are addressed, whether ordinary citizens or decision makers. Such scientists see themselves precisely within the process of practical reason, where prudence and judgment must operate because scientific demonstration is not possible. They see their role, nonetheless, as a worthy part of the common life of a free society.²

Hobbs conceived of his role this way—a way that recalls George A. Miller's injunction to psychologists that they repudiate their ascribed roles as privileged experts and "give psychology away."

In Jack Conrad Willers' view, assuming an interpretive or practical orientation rejuvenates an older conception of social science as public philosophy.³ Such a conception moves specialized social science beyond a mechanistic concern with discovering factual information and manipulating outcomes. In contrast, the idea of social science as public philosophy produces what Willers calls a "synoptic view," which is at the same time philosophical, sociological, and historical.⁴ Accordingly, social

¹Robert Bellah, "Social Science as Practical Reason," p. 56.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

³Willers discusses the idea of social science as public philosophy in "Interpretive Social Inquiry as Future Educational History," a paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Southern History of Education Society, Knoxville, Tennessee, 14 March 1987. (Typewritten); and in "Ethics in Educational Policy Analysis," the Presidential Address to the 1986 annual meeting of the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society. (Typewritten).

⁴Jack Conrad Willers, "Interpretive Social Inquiry as Future Educational History."

science conceived as public philosophy draws on the past as well as the present and integrates knowledge with reference to social goals rather than to academic disciplines or institutional arrangements.

Interpretive social inquiry as public philosophy is replete with what Bellah calls, "extrascientific considerations." It makes assumptions about precisely the matters about which Hobbs was concerned: the welfare of children and their families, the development of human resources, conceptions of a desirable social order, and judgments about the proper role of government, of private agencies, and of individual initiative in family life and child development.

CHAPTER 5

THE PERIOD OF REFLECTION, 1975-1983: MAKING CHOICES "AS KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING GROW"

As knowledge and understanding grow, the most astute, sensitive, and responsible professional people must begin making choices in advance of and at odds with established ethical standards. New circumstances will require new kinds of ethical and moral decisions. The true professional person must accept private responsibility for the constant reconstruction of what is right.

Nicholas Hobbs, 1978¹

This chapter examines Nicholas Hobbs's work during the period that begins in the summer of 1975 when he stepped down from the position of Provost of Vanderbilt University to assume a dual appointment as Professor of Psychology and of Preventive Medicine. Shortly thereafter, he became Director of the Center for the Study of Families and Children at the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies. The period under examination ends with Hobbs's death in January 1983. This eight-year period is designated as Hobbs's period of "reflection" because during these years Hobbs turned more and more toward reflection and consolidation, toward an attempt to draw on accumulated knowledge and understanding with which to confront values to be served by public policy.

"Reflection"—like "invention" and "engagement," the themes of the two preceding chapters—is a term that Hobbs himself applied to his professional life. He used it in a speech delivered in August 1982, a few months before his death, to describe the third of what he considered to be the three major themes of his work on behalf of children. These

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Ethics of Behavior Control," in Working for Children: Ethical Issues Beyond Professional Guidelines, ed. Judith Mearig (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978), p. 25.

terms have a personal dimension; they capture the spirit of Hobbs's approach both to establishing new social structures and to strengthening old ones in support of troubled children. In addition, these terms serve as a set of major themes of his professional life. In this chapter, the term "reflection" has been appropriated to serve as the label for the last eight years of Hobbs's life.

The passage quoted at the outset of this chapter is the product of Hobbs's long reflection about what it means to be a professional. In it, he reveals his primary interest late in life: the intricate relationships between science, psychology, values, and morality. He pursued this interest within the public policy arena, specifically, in his work on issues in child and family policy. At the age of 60, after years of rich and varied professional activity—as Provost of Vanderbilt, Chairman of the Division of Human Development at Peabody, President of the American Psychological Association, Director of Selection and Research of the Peace Corps, and Principal Investigator of Project Re-ED—he devoted his attention to the enduring theme of his life's work: making social science more responsive to the needs of socially vulnerable children and their families.

In Hobbs's view, accepting "private responsibility for the constant reconstruction of what is right" required helping professionals to consider both pragmatic and theoretical developments in which ethical and moral issues must be addressed. To discharge this profound responsibility on a pragmatic level, with families and children as the focus, Hobbs worked to influence public policy in an effort to foster socialization patterns that allow individual autonomy. On a more theoretical level, this responsibility required him to attend to issues involved in the ethics and morality of the control of human behavior—issues that he believed inevitably enter into decisions made by professionals in their efforts to help others. Hobbs's decisions revealed both his willingness to trust people to be responsible for their own children in a world of their own making as well as his faith

in a democratic society and in the importance of enhanced protection of the family in relation to the state.

Hobbs's notion that what is right undergoes "constant reconstruction" recalls the pragmatists' contextualism that defines ethical behavior through considerations of means and ends, without the antecedent authority of some immutable standard as a guide. According to this line of thinking, one finds values in the course of experience, and as experiences build upon each other and knowledge grows, values also undergo reconstruction.

In the passage, Hobbs presents private responsibility as an integral component of "true" professionalism. In balancing private responsibility with professionalism, he traversed the boundary between the private and the professional, between the subjective and the ostensibly objective, value-neutral arena of social science. Hobbs understood that professional persons who commit themselves to helping others, either as scholars in the policy realm or as clinicians in direct care, engage in an ethical enterprise that requires them to go beyond simple adherence to formal standards of professional functioning. He believed that true professionalism requires helping professionals to take positions about what kind of society they regard as a good society, on what is a good family, a good education, a good outcome of childrearing. Taking such positions does not empower professionals to prescribe for those that they would help. True professionals value life experiences more than credentials and act according to an ideal of service rather than in the interest of greater power or status.

In his work in the public policy arena, Hobbs conceived of policy considerations as "should" considerations applied to actual or potential social practices.¹ The "shoulds" to be considered included: "What should be done to solve a perceived problem of inequity?

¹John C. Masters, Hobbs's successor as Director of the Center for the Study of Families and Children at the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, reports in "Psychology, Research, and Social Policy," *American Psychologist* 39 (August 1984): 851-862, that Hobbs conceived of policy considerations in this way.

How should a proposed solution be implemented? What will tell us whether we should continue to implement a policy or whether we should modify or rescind it?"¹

In order to assume private—and profound—responsibility for the reconstruction of what is right, Hobbs believed professionals must fashion value commitments, develop aspirations for children and families and conceptions of a desirable social order, and make judgments about the proper role of government, of private agencies, and of individual initiative in family life and child development. These were the issues upon which Hobbs reflected during the last years of his life, years during which he entered the public policy-making arena out of principle. In doing so, he acted on his "just manageable difficulty" principle of a design for living, with the challenge of making a difference in the policy arena offering him another just manageable difficulty of his own choosing.

Historical Context: 1975-1983

The Crisis in Liberalism

During the years from 1975 to 1983 a number of observers commented on the growing sentiment in society that questioned the validity of the liberal assumption about the central role of the state in promoting the quality of private life.² Beginning in the early 1970s, liberalism—at least in its 1960s guise—went out of style. Not only was the liberal creed subjected to increasingly vitriolic censure from both the Right and the Left,

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 851-852.

² Among the social scientists who express a loss of confidence in the appropriateness of a scientific-rational model for problem definition and problem solving in the social realm are: Seymour B. Sarason, "The Nature of Problem Solving in Social Action," *American Psychologist* 33 (April 1978): 370-380; William Bevan, "A Sermon of Sorts in Three Plus Parts," *American Psychologist* 37 (December 1982): 1303-1322; David Mathews, "Practicing the Art/Perfecting the Science of Making Public Policy," *National Forum* 69 (Winter 1979): 3-8; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Family and Nation* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1986); Burton Mindick, *Social Engineering in Family Matters* (New York: Praeger, 1985); and W. Norton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson, *Broken Promises: How Americans Fail Their Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

but liberals themselves became increasingly uncertain about the myriad objectives of social welfare legislation and about the nature and solution of persistent social problems. In 1979 Irving Kristol noted a disillusionment creeping into public discussion about the nation's ability to solve its social problems and asked "Where have all the answers gone?"¹ Before endeavoring a reply, he proffered another question: "Where did all those questions come from?" With this second query, Kristol not only expressed the sharp decline in faith in the capacity of scientific methods and rational analysis to solve social problems but, more fundamentally, he questioned the capacity of social science even to contribute to a discussion about the public interest. This decline of faith occurred both within the community of social scientists as well as outside, among policy makers and the general public.

The failure of the big ideas that shaped social policy in the 1960s and early 1970s contributed to the collapse of the liberal consensus about public responsibility for the welfare of private individuals. The War on Poverty and The Great Society, the two massive social programs of the 1960s, had failed to fulfill their promises. Poverty and inequality of opportunity appeared evermore entrenched and intractable as features of American life, and this stark realization provoked confusion and disenchantment among liberals. This "crisis in liberalism," as Walter Truett Anderson labels it, continues unabated.²

One crisis for liberals that emerged during the middle years of the 1970s is the increasing conservatism of the nation's political climate. The Reagan Administration has tended to label social scientists liberals and to use this label as one way to justify reductions in the federal government's initiative in developing and maintaining social

¹Irving Kristol, "Where Have All the Answers Gone?" National Forum 69 (Winter 1979): 12-14.

²Anderson discusses the condition of post-1960s liberalism in "Editor's Introduction: The Crisis in Liberalism," in Rethinking Liberalism, ed. Walter Truett Anderson (New York: Avon, 1982), pp. 1-21.

research and social service programs. From its first days in office, the Reagan Administration has cut federal funding for social science research and social service more drastically than in any other area. A comparison of Carter's 1982 "continuation" budget with Reagan's spring 1981 projections for fiscal 1982 reveals cuts in funding of 84% for the National Institute of Drug Abuse and Alcoholism, 74% for the National Institutes of Mental Health, 27% for the National Institute of Education, and 50% for health and social programs generally.¹ There is additional evidence of the ambivalence, and even hostility, toward the social sciences' role in public decision making. Federal Judge David L. Bazelon quotes the Supreme Court decision in the 1978 case of *Ballew vs. Georgia* challenging the "wisdom—as well as the necessity—of . . . heavy reliance on numerology derived from statistical studies."² Ohio Representative John Ashbrook characterized social scientists working in the public policy arena as "the foolish fringe folly of researchers who use our tax money like the dilettante squanders his inheritance."³

Among social scientists, the crisis in liberalism has led to what Seymour Sarason has called a "burnt-child reaction."⁴ As a consequence, Sarason notes that, beginning in the mid-1970s, many social scientists either retreated from the world of social action or scaled down their claims to credibility. Social problems that they had once viewed as very difficult, but nevertheless solvable in what Sarason calls the "once-and-for-all-you-don't-have-to-solve-it-again" fashion, have come to be viewed as (dare one say it) intractable.⁵

¹This figures are cited by Daniel B. Fishman and William D. Neigher in "American Psychology in the Eighties: Who Will Buy?" *American Psychologist* 37 (May 1982): 533-546.

²David L. Bazelon, "Veils, Values, and Social Responsibility," *American Psychologist* 37 (February 1982): 115.

³ This statement in quoted by Daniel B. Fishman and William D. Neigher in "American Psychology in the Eighties: Who Will Buy?" p. 534.

⁴Seymour B. Sarason, "The Nature of Problem Solving in Social Action."

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 378.

Critiques of Liberalism from the Left and the Right

In this climate, the traditional conservative critique of liberalism has acquired greater cachet. Sketching with broad strokes, Daniel Patrick Moynihan contrasts liberal and conservative social agendas.¹ Conservatives criticize the far reaching social reform agenda of liberals for failing to emphasize the proper normative stance. In contrast to liberals, conservatives emphasize values in the outcomes of public decision making for children and families but refuse to acknowledge the need for comprehensive social policy. They charge that liberals will be coercive about matters that affect large groups and classes and permissive about granting liberties in the conduct of private life. Conservatives resist the coercions the liberal agenda imposes on large social groups but think of prescriptions for family morality, for example, as matters of discipline and virtue, not coercion.

The leftist critique of the liberal agenda for social reform charges liberal policy makers with imposing values from above. According to this critique, liberal social scientists working in the realm of public policy are anti-democratic agents of social control. Ignoring the economic and class realities of American life, liberals are unwilling to undertake the radical measures for reform that are necessary to reduce inequality of opportunity.

Both the Left and the Right level an additional charge at liberalism. They decry the uncertainty and tentativeness of the contemporary liberal agenda for social reform as weak and indecisive.

¹Moynihan presents his view of how conservative and liberal ideas about social policy differ in the mid-1980s in Family and Nation.

A New Style of Liberalism

These critiques from both the Left and the Right are aimed at a notion of liberalism that, if it ever existed at all, existed only in the minds of the most sanguine proponents of the role of the federal government as the patron of the "high priests" of the social scientific model of problem definition and solution in social action. Neither the Left nor the Right acknowledges the new approach to social action that no longer accepts as an article of unquestioned faith the capacity of social science to abolish social problems by achieving unitary solutions that cover all contingencies.

The lessons of the 1960s have given many liberal reformers an increased sense of realism about the complexities, limitations, and subtleties involved in the application of social research to efforts to meet human needs in the social arena. This provides liberals with a vision of human needs that serves as a response to the charge from the Left that liberals fail to pay heed to the economic needs of those whom they would help. Walter Truett Anderson expresses this position regarding human needs.

There is a considerable body of theory on the subject of human needs. . . . It is a subject worth paying more attention to than we do, because even the most cursory exploration of it brings one into the presence of a truth about which American culture—and American politics—is curiously uninformed: namely, that a large portion of what people need is social or symbolic. People need such things as self-respect—things that government can in many ways protect or destroy, and which are well within the realm of public policy discussion—but which have no necessary connection with material goods, with anything at all in the realm of economics. This is a good thing to keep in mind when the touchy subject of limits arises, because it turns out that some things are limited and some are not. There is a limited amount of chromium in the world and there are limits to how much water can be drawn out of an aquifer in a given period of time, but there are no necessary limits on the quantity of decency, sanity, or plain human happiness that can be generated within a society that is capable, such as ours certainly is, of producing enough of the basic commodities for all its members.¹

¹Walter Truett Anderson, "Editor's Introduction: The Crisis in Liberalism," pp. 11-12.

Liberalism that emphasizes social needs stands in stark contrast to a 1960's-style of liberalism that in Anderson's words became "so entranced with the image of the national government as an agency for social change that . . . [it became] insensitive to real criticism of the shortcomings of centralization."¹ This emergent form of liberalism reflects a renewed appreciation for other venues of social reform, particularly the local communities, as alternatives to the grand national stage. Moynihan characterizes this increased interest in the community as concern for "the smaller and the nearer rather than the greater and the more distant."² David Mathews credits this change in the focus of liberal reformers—from ambitious, national projects to projects that concentrate on the family, the neighborhood, and the school—as the wellspring of a revisionist undertaking in public policy.³ In the mid-1970s, promoters of this revisionist public policy attached to it a label that had been in use in social psychology for over thirty years. Dubbed the "ecological" approach, this "new" approach to both developing and implementing public policy was the foundation of Hobbs' ideas about the value of community-based services for the needy in the community.⁴

In Mathews' view, this ecological approach synthesizes the two traditional views, which Mathews admits are oversimplifications when expressed as polar opposites, about

¹ Anderson discusses the condition of post-1960s liberalism in "Editor's Introduction: The Crisis in Liberalism," in Rethinking Liberalism, ed. Walter Truett Anderson (New York: Avon, 1982), pp. 1-21. This passage appears on p. 19.

² Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Family and Nation.

³ David Mathews, "Practicing the Art/Perfecting the Science of Making Public Policy."

⁴ Drawing on the work of Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, authors of To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1977), Mathews would reform public policy by taking an ecological approach that makes the family, school, neighborhood, and community the instruments of social action. Psychologists Karl Lewin in the 1940s and Roger Barker in the 1950 were the first to apply the term "ecology" to issues in the social realm. (See chapter 3 for a brief discussion of ecological psychology.)

the plasticity of society—that is, its responsiveness to the exercise of human intelligence and will. One tradition is that of the reformers who conceive of society as amenable to change. Those with the counterview take a deterministic position and hold that society is subject to laws which resist human intervention. The ecological perspective on the problem of making public policy, with its emphasis on the interrelationships and bonding structures between families, neighborhoods, schools, and the other components of an individual's social ecology, is a synthesis of the two traditional views. According to Mathews, this bounded perspective both encourages and limits change and allows one to avoid facing a forced choice between determinism and the doctrine of plasticity.

Ironically, this focus on the social ecology of communities is congenial with the anti-government, anti-bigness mood of those who attack the impersonality, unresponsiveness, and excessive interference of the social policy agenda of social scientists. In Berger and Neuhaus' terms, the basic concept of the ecological approach is the "mediating structure." Mediating structures are defined as "those institutions standing between the individual in his private life and the large institutions of public life."¹ These large institutions of public life are called "megastructures," of these, the most important is the modern state. Also included are large corporations, big labor, and the bureaucracies that administer wide sectors of society. Mediating structures such as the family, the school, and the neighborhood figure prominently in the lives of most people and are the key targets of public policy grounded in an ecological perspective. In Berger and Neuhaus' view, the goal of an ecological public policy is to utilize mediating structures to provide needed government services, but to do so without producing government oppressiveness.

¹Peter L. Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy, p. 2.

Issues in Child and Family Policy

Even as liberalism has gone into eclipse and as the capacity of social science research to contribute to problem solving in the social realm has come increasingly into question, families and children have remained the focus of considerable attention by social scientists and policy makers. Gary B. Melton attributes the staying power of issues in child and family policy to the strength of the value positions that the myriad interested parties hold with respect to how families and children *ought* to fit into society.¹

Evidence of the continued currency of the child and the family as policy issues comes from the designation of 1979 as The International Year of the Child and 1980 as The International Year of the Family. Further evidence comes from the public policy initiatives of the Carter Administration in the late 1970s, which conducted a White House Conference on Families in 1979 and pledged itself to a "strong, understandable, well-considered, deeply committed pro-family policy."² A definition of what this meant was never forthcoming, for, as Daniel Moynihan notes, public policy initiatives under Carter were paralyzed by accusations from both the Right and the Left that past efforts to strengthen families had only made matters worse. As a consequence, no unifying ideas appeared, and no legislation was enacted.³

Moynihan has argued that the calls for coherent and consistent family policy are responses to the expansion of the modern state, making it impossible to ignore the complex and sometimes contradictory impact on children and families of a host of social and economic programs. No government, according to Moynihan,

¹Gary B. Melton, "The Clashing of Symbols: Prelude to Child and Family Policy," American Psychologist 42 (April 1987): 345-354.

²This statement is quoted in "Saving the Family," Newsweek, 15 May 1978, p. 68.

³Daniel Patrick Moynihan discusses the failure of the Carter Administration to establish comprehensive family policy in Family and Nation.

however firm might be its wish, can avoid having policies that profoundly influence family relationships. . . . The only option is whether these will be purposeful, intended policies or whether they will be residual, derivative, in a sense concealed ones. . . . *A nation without a conscious family policy leaves to chance and mischance an area of social reality of the utmost importance, which in consequence will be exposed to the untrammelled and frequently thoroughly undesirable impact of policies arising in other areas.*¹

Efforts to establish a "conscious family policy" pose questions that bristle with perplexities about the limits and possibilities of public responsibility for children and families. "[I]f the state must assume some responsibilities for children," Grubb and Lazerson question how it can "discharge those responsibilities when childrearing is still considered a private responsibility."² Robert M. Moroney asks how public policy might support the family as the fundamental unit of society without diminishing or threatening parental authority, thus creating dependency in state sponsored support.³

Issues in child and family policy receive special attention here because these issues were a chief concern of Hobbs's during his period of reflection. The brief sketches presented above, of both the ecological perspective in public policy and the interest in families and children of those who assumed this perspective, are designed to place Hobbs's work within a context of social scientific thought about the relation of the family to the state. Hobbs's work on this subject receives more attention later in this chapter.

¹Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Foreword to Nation and Family, by Alva Myrdal, reprint ed., (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), quoted in W. Norton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson, Broken Promises: How Americans Fail Their Children, p. 237.

²W. Norton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson, Broken Promises: How Americans Fail Their Children, p. 6.

³Robert M. Moroney, Shared Responsibility: Families and Social Policy (New York: Aldine, 1986).

Biographical Sketch: 1975-1983

When Hobbs stepped down from his position as Provost in July 1975, he was eager, after eight years as a university administrator, "to move beyond clinical work, research, and institution-building and try to bring to bear the knowledge of the social sciences, particularly, on the formulation of public policies affecting families and children in the nation."¹ He looked forward to these post-Provost years as a "rounding out period" in his professional career during which he could establish a program of interdisciplinary studies in which his long-standing interests in promoting the welfare of children could, as he put it, "find expression."²

The Project for the Re-education of Emotionally Disturbed Children (Re-ED) also was a chief concern of Hobbs during these years.³ Near the top of his agenda was the book about Re-ED that he had begun while a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Studies at Palo Alto, California during the 1966-1967 academic year.

When Hobbs stepped down from the position of Provost of Vanderbilt University, he assumed a dual appointment as Professor of Psychology and of Preventive Medicine. Chancellor Alexander Heard offered Hobbs the title "Distinguished Professor" in the Department of Psychology, but the offer was voted down by the members of the faculty of the department. Their message was that Hobbs was not their kind of psychologist.⁴

¹Hobbs sketched this outline of his intentions in "Governments, Families, and Children in Israel and Western Europe," pp. 1-2, a report on his travel-study program from May to November 1975 that was sponsored by the Ford Foundation. The typewritten manuscript of this report is dated 1 March 1976 and is in the Hobbs Papers.

²These phrases come from a memorandum from Hobbs to Alexander Heard, Chancellor, Vanderbilt University, 14 May 1974. Hobbs Papers See chapter 4 for a longer quotation of Hobbs's statement to Heard about his post-Provost professional plans.

³Robert Slagle, a long-time associate of Hobbs's in Re-ED circles, reports that when Hobbs left the Provost's office he stated that he wanted to devote much of his attention to Re-ED for the rest of his life. Interview conducted in Slagle's office in Nashville, Tennessee, 16 June 1987.

⁴Information about Hobbs's appointment in the Department of Psychology comes from Hans Strupp, Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Vanderbilt University, in an interview in his office in Nashville, Tennessee on 14 July 1987, and Lottie Strupp, Assistant Director for Administration, Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, in an interview in her office in Nashville, Tennessee on 14 July 1987.

As Hans Strupp, Distinguished Professor of Psychology, put it, Hobbs, in the eyes of the members of the Psychology faculty, was "on the soft side of social science" and many at Vanderbilt "looked down their noses at Hobbs's scholarship."¹ With the lines between the "hard" and the "soft" cultures" in psychology becoming ever more sharply drawn—not only at Vanderbilt but also elsewhere around the country—it is not surprising that Hobbs was greeted this way.²

The Center for the Study of Families and Children

Although the denial of a distinguished professorship was a blow to him, Hobbs's departmental affiliation was only of secondary importance. His primary institutional home after leaving the Provost's office was the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies (VIPPS) and more specifically, the Center for the Study of Families and Children (CSFC), one of the components of the Institute. This Center became the locus at which his interests in children and families could find expression.

The Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies was the outcome of the efforts of Chancellor Heard and of Hobbs to establish an administrative entity that would concentrate on problem-oriented education and research as one aspect of what they considered the university's responsibility to the larger society. As it was originally envisioned, the Institute would

have a programmatic arrangement that cuts across school and departmental lines, and be organized to bring together talent from various disciplines, departments and schools as may be

¹Hans Strupp, interview, 14 July 1987.

²Gregory A. Kimble, in "Psychology's Two Cultures," *American Psychologist* 39 (August 1984): 833-839, argues that scientific and humanistic cultures exist within psychology and identifies six of the dimensions that he believes define the conflicting values of these cultures.

required to address a particular problem of public policy not elsewhere assumed or assigned within the University.¹

The Institute grew out of the university's Urban and Regional Planning Center, an organizational entity that was already in place when Vanderbilt's Board of Trust approved funding for ten years at a total amount of \$800,000 to \$1,000,000. In December 1974, Heard appointed Hobbs the first Acting Director of VIPPS for the 1974-1975 academic year. Robert L Knauss, Dean of the School of Law at Vanderbilt, succeeded Hobbs as Acting Director, and in 1976 Erwin C. Hargrove, a political scientist from Brown University, became the first permanent Director of VIPPS.

The Center for the Study of Families and Children was one of several divisions of VIPPS. Established early in 1976 with a two-year grant of \$120,000 from the Foundation for Child Development in New York, headed by Hobbs's friend Orville G. Brim, and bolstered in July 1977 by an additional \$100,000 from the Needmor Fund of Toledo, Ohio, CSFC became Hobbs's bailiwick within the larger Institute. The foundations that provided this "seed money" did so out of faith in Hobbs, not out of interest in funding specific projects. From the outset, CSFC sought general support, not support for specific projects, and for a time funds were forthcoming with no strings attached.² Hobbs had become a skillful creator of favorable audiences in the world of foundations. That he was able to pursue a vision for CSFC in those early years is testimony to this skill; for in the mid-1970s the political climate in the nation militated against large-scale policy undertakings such as CSFC. Both the Nixon and the Ford

¹"Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy," draft dated 15 July 1974, in a Memorandum for Robert L Knauss, Dean of the School of Law and Chair of the Advisory Committee on Urban Affairs, Vanderbilt University, to Chancellor Alexander Heard. The memorandum is dated 18 July 1974 and was reprinted in an article titled "Hobbs Acting Director of Institute for Public Policy Studies (formerly Urban and Regional Development Center), Vanderbilt Gazette, 18 December, pp. 4-5. Hobbs Papers.

²Lottie Strupp, interview, 14 July 1987, and May W. Shayne, formerly Liason Officer for CSFC and currently Research Associate at VIPPS, interview at her office in Nashville, Tennessee, 21 May 1987, are the chief sources of information about the early orientation of CSFC.

Administrations had cast the debate over the role of policy makers in family matters along classic ideological lines, resisting any programs of intervention on the grounds that they would be "family weakening."¹ President Nixon's rhetoric was especially illustrative of the ideological nature of the family policy debate; in 1971, in his veto of a comprehensive child development program he lambasted programs of family policy for promoting a "Sovietization of the American family."²

Once seed money was obtained, the Center for the Study of Families and Children found it increasingly difficult to obtain funds for general support of the Center—funds that would allow Hobbs to pursue activities as he saw fit, without the constraints imposed by the stipulations attached to specific projects. Eventually, he had to propose specific projects to external funding sources in order to obtain support. Two projects became the major undertakings of CSFC. One, supported by a \$400,000 award from the Carnegie Foundation in the fall of 1977, focussed on child care and parent education and resulted in the publication of Strengthening Families. The second, funded initially in 1978 by a grant from the Office of Maternal and Child Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, studied ways to guide action in developing a comprehensive system of care for chronically ill children. Out of this project came the book, Chronically Ill Children and Their Families, subtitled "Problems, Prospects, and Proposals from the Vanderbilt Study." Although each of these books was a collaborative enterprise, Hobbs was listed as the primary author, and both were published after his death.

The Strengthening Families project was the arena in which Hobbs's long-standing ideas about the value of collaboration were put to the test. While the project succeeded in producing a comprehensive analysis of programs designed to help parents raise their children effectively, it generated the kind of strife that Hobbs had never experienced at

¹"Saving the Family," Newsweek, 15 May 1978, pp. 63-90.

²May W. Shayne recalled President Nixon's remark in an interview conducted in her office in Nashville, Tennessee on 21 May 1987.

George Peabody College for Teachers during the years when he and his colleagues referred to the College as "Camelot."¹ At Peabody and in Re-ED circles, Hobbs had enjoyed a great deal of success in creating teams, but at VIPPS many of his colleagues were firmly grounded in specific academic disciplines and did not hold the mission orientation that had driven so much of the work at Peabody. Hobbs's experience at VIPPS mirrored his experience as Provost. He tried to stimulate the change process through launching big, "cross-cutting" undertakings rather than through discipline-based consultation, which was more traditional for social scientists interacting with policy makers.² In doing so, however, he encountered resistance from those who shared neither his cross-disciplinary view of the issues nor his orientation as an advocate rather than a disinterested scholar.

In addition to this fundamental ideological conflict, there was another source of strife within the Strengthening Families project, a source that did not mine so deeply into the bedrock of underlying values. The goal of the project was to identify ways in which policies affecting families could be designed to help parents maintain and enhance their capacity to make intelligent choices in the interest of their children. In Hobbs's view, the public schools should play a central role in this undertaking, for they, among all the "regular" socializing agencies with which a family comes into contact, are best situated to provide the crucial services of child care and parent education. Others working on the project did not share this view of the pivotal position of the public school, arguing that

¹Paul R. Doeckel, Professor of Psychology and Special Education at George Peabody College for Teachers, Vanderbilt University, interview at his office in Nashville, Tennessee, 16 April 1987, and May W. Shayne, interview, 21 May 1987, as participants in the Strengthening Families project are key sources of information about the unfolding of the project. Others sources are Erwin C. Hargrove, formerly Director of VIPPS and now Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University, interview at his office in Nashville, Tennessee, 15 April 1987, and Frank A. Sloan, Centennial Professor of Economics, Chairman of the Department of Economics and Business Administration, and Director of the Health Policy Center at VIPPS, interview at a restaurant in Nashville, Tennessee, 17 June 1987.

²Hobbs used the term "cross-cutting" in many of his writings about his activities in the policy realm to describe the interdisciplinary approach that he favored.

child care and parent education can be provided more effectively by a variety of agencies, with no single agency assuming a central role.

This internecine conflict surrounding some of Hobbs's work at the Center for the Study of Families and Children has caused some to question his decision to enter into the policy arena. Some of his former colleagues at VIPPS still argue that he was out of his element in the policy arena because his work was not sufficiently empirical, objective, or specialized. Many who take this position reject Hobbs's vision of interdisciplinarity and advocacy with respect to policy studies. Those aspects of Hobbs's work that for these individuals give evidence of his bias, intransigence and naiveté, are, conversely, for his supporters, remarkable testimony to his passion, commitment and compelling vision.

International Activities

In May 1975, some weeks before his resignation as Provost became effective, Hobbs headed out the door of the Provost's office and boarded a flight to Europe. He had obtained support from the Ford Foundation to make a grand tour of programs in Western Europe and Israel to learn more about programs for strengthening families for child rearing responsibilities and to assess the applicability of the programs to the United States. In his view, many of the countries he intended to visit—his itinerary included Israel, Greece, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, Belgium, and Great Britain—had "mature" programs and policies for families and children that reflected a long history of public concern for the well-being of the family. "Somewhat more personally," as he later stated in the report on his travels, he "saw the experience as an opportunity for self-renewal," in preparation for a new phase in his career after a period of eight years in university administration.¹ The need for renewal, refreshment, and rustication was a recurring theme in Hobbs's professional life. This trip of nearly six

¹Hobbs made this observation in "Governments, Families, and Children in Israel and Western Europe," 1 March 1976, p. 1. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

months not only granted him a much needed respite from the rigors of university administration, it also put him back into close contact with direct care programs for needy children and their families.

Hobbs returned from this trip having been struck by the commitment in the majority of nations he visited to the principle that the state has an obligation to provide health and social service on a universal basis. The relative equity of access to health and social services by all people in these countries was what impressed him most. Equity in access, achieved through sustained programmatic efforts and prevention rather than through sporadic intervention and crisis care, was the ideal toward which he hoped this country might strive. He was not so naive as to believe that a European model could be relocated intact in the United States. He acknowledged that the countries studied were able to invest in comprehensive health and social service programs as a result of the substantial socialization of their economies, and he appreciated that such socialization could never be implemented in the United States. Nevertheless, he believed that in designing programs in this country policy makers should take advantage of the experience of the countries he had visited.

Not surprisingly, Hobbs had an idea for a strategy to facilitate a two-way professional exchange program that would enable policy-makers and scholars in the United States to avail themselves of what other countries had already learned. He envisioned an international network of child development research centers, and even before he embarked on his tour of European programs he floated this idea with the United States Commission for the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).¹ His initial proposal, titled "An International Network of Child Development Research Centers," called for the establishment of a network that would be

¹He sent a proposal for this network, dated 23 December 1974, to John E. Upton, Executive Secretary, U.S. Commission for UNESCO. A copy of the typewritten proposal is in the Hobbs Papers.

a cooperative endeavor of UNESCO, the U.S. Commission for UNESCO, and the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies. This proposal came on the heels of a resolution calling for such a network, passed most likely at Hobbs's instigation at a UNESCO-sponsored conference on child development at the University of Illinois in March 1974. In the proposal, he presented a tentative and incomplete summary of how the International Network might operate. It would accomplish its purposes by establishing a multilingual newsletter and holding periodic conferences to facilitate the exchange of information. In addition, it would encourage the conduct of cross-cultural studies and the transnational identification of potential research collaborators. Most importantly, perhaps, Hobbs hoped such a network would attract younger, not yet established scholars to the field of child development. He had little hope that well established people would regard the network as a helpful organization.¹

A review of Hobbs's efforts to establish an International Network serves as a case study of his strategy for enlisting others in the pursuit of an idea. In July 1975, he obtained \$10,000 to conduct a feasibility study and hold a small planning conference with participants from child development research centers in the United States and other countries. With this initial support, he set out contacting individuals in his large circle of professional acquaintances. A conference to consider the establishment of an International Network was finally held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in July 1976. In December 1977 Hobbs submitted his final report on the feasibility of establishing an International Network to the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO.² Hobbs's report revealed both his own commitment to the realization of the idea of the Network and his lofty optimism. The report recommended that efforts to establish the Network be pressed

¹Letter to Richard K. Nobbe, U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, Washington, DC, 18 September 1975. Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "An International Network of Child Development Research Centers," (Participation Project No. 1021-600431). (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

in light of the strong support given by leading scholars. Two and one-half years later this support had yet to be marshalled, for Hobbs wrote to the participants in the 1976 Paris conference reporting that UNESCO had not yet agreed to sponsor the Network and requesting their continued support in making the Network a reality.¹ Later in 1980, Hobbs withdrew from the project, stating that health problems kept him from giving it the sustained attention it required.² Wayne Holtzman, President of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health of Austin, Texas, took over primary responsibility for the project.

Project Re-ED Twenty Years Later

After leaving the Provost's office, Hobbs turned his attention once again to his Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children. Despite his work at the Center for the Study of Families and Children and his international activities, he accorded Re-ED a central position in his professional life. He worked to complete the book about Re-ED that he had begun a decade earlier. He visited Re-ED schools and found both continuity and change evident in their development.

The original network of Re-ED programs had consisted of a pair of schools in 1961, in Nashville and in Durham, North Carolina. By 1981, the network had grown to twenty-five schools in nine states. No single programmatic mold stood as the standard. Most schools were residential, but a few were day schools, and a few were experimenting with applying Re-ED principles to the public school setting. There also had been change in the kinds of children and adolescents that Re-ED schools served. While the original Re-ED plan had concentrated on children six to twelve years old, children as young as eighteen months and adolescents as old as eighteen years were

¹Nicholas Hobbs, memorandum to participants in the 1976 Paris Conference on An International Network of Child Development Research Centers, 2 July 1980. Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs to Wolfgang Schwendler, Division for the Study of Development, UNESCO, Paris, France, 18 November 1980. Hobbs Papers.

turning up at Re-ED schools. Re-ED schools were also serving autistic children, children and adolescents with various degrees of retardation, and adolescents with severe behavioral disturbances who had been committed from juvenile courts.

Change was also evident in the increased threat posed, in Hobbs's view, by the external bureaucracy associated with health insurance programs. Re-ED schools appeared in the early 1960s at a time when a chorus of voices was raised against the prevailing medical model for providing mental health care. Twenty years later, Re-ED, with its resolutely non-medical orientation, faced a medical establishment that had been strengthened by the growth of Medicaid and private medical insurers. This growing source of revenue induced many mental health programs to adopt a mode of treatment that would meet the standards of the accrediting commissions, thereby qualifying them for third-party payments from Medicaid and private insurers. These standards required programs to adopt many of the medical approaches that Re-ED had rejected two decades earlier. For example, labeling had always been antithetical to Re-ED, but accreditation requirements stated that children must be labelled according to the psychiatric categories disorders of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. On the labeling issue and on many others, Hobbs worked to keep Re-ED from "capitulating" to the pressures of the medical establishment.¹

Continuity in Re-ED was evident in the demonstrated usefulness of the interdisciplinary generalist, based on the concept of the *éducateur*, in programs serving troubled children and youth. This concept, imported from France by Hobbs in the 1950s has not only taken hold in Re-ED programs, it has also entered a wide range of other human service settings.²

¹Robert Slagel, in an interview on 12 June 1987, reported that Hobbs viewed compromising Re-ED principles to qualify for third-party payments as "capitulating" to the pressures of the external bureaucracies associated with insurers.

²Larry K. Brendtro, "Bridging Teaching and Treatment: The American Educateur," Journal of Teacher Education 31 (September-October 1980): 23-26; Patricia M. Daly, "The Educateur: An Atypical Childcare Worker," Behavioral Disorders 10 (November 1985): 35-41; Thomas E. Linton,

For Hobbs, change and continuity were important themes in Re-ED. He hoped to apply the principles of re-education to a wide array of situations where children and adolescents have persistent difficulties learning to cope with their worlds and to see Re-ED programs recognized as effective alternatives to more conventional psychiatric hospitals or correctional institutions. He hoped to see Re-ED become established, but not at the cost of becoming rigid and unchanging. One of the central ideas of Re-ED was that "there should be no orthodoxy, no fixed explanations, no set ways of doing things, no dogma." The basic concepts of Re-ED were not so much fixed principles as they were

working hypotheses about how to help disturbed children and their families. The result is a distinctive character or style in RE-ED schools everywhere. But the concepts have never existed as restraints on discovery, on invention. Should they become so, Re-ED will die, or worse still, will linger on simply because it is hard to do away with organizations, no matter how outmoded they may be.¹

In 1982, The Troubled and Troubling Child, Hobbs's book about Re-ED, was finally published. He had started it more than fifteen years earlier while a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Palo Alto, California but had had to put his unfinished manuscript aside when he became Provost of Vanderbilt. Of all his writings, the book was the most satisfying to him, in part because it offered precisely the kind of background and nuance that has often been absent from "harder" more rigorous accounts of mental health and educational programs.² The book is not hard social science, but a valuable, provocative, searching meditation on the causes of children's

"The Educateur Model: A Theoretical Monograph," Journal of Special Education 5 (Summer 1971): 155-190. These authors helped disseminate the éducatteur concept in recent years.

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Perspectives on Re-Education," Behavior Disorders 3 (1978): 65.

²Hobbs made this appraisal of The Troubled and Troubling Child in an interview conducted on 1 January 1983 with his longtime friend and colleague, Samuel Ashcroft, Professor Emeritus of Special Education, George Peabody College for Teachers, Vanderbilt University. Professor Ashcroft recorded this interview and made the recording available to the author.

troubles and the ways to help them. For this, it was both praised and attacked. Anthony N. Maluccio faulted Hobbs for the limited formal evaluation and follow-up research on Re-ED. In addition, Maluccio questioned whether the ostensible success of Re-ED was "due more to the fervor and dedication of the staff than to the particular strategies employed."¹ Frank M. Hewett noted that Hobbs relied "a great deal on idealistic statements, free-flowing inspirational prose, and case examples to convey the *spirit* of Re-ED," and he speculated that some readers might come away from reading the book with more spirit than substance.² Nevertheless, Hewett believed Hobbs had "reason to celebrate Re-ED, for it represents a strategy for helping troubled and troubling children that is probably more important to explore and consider implementing today than it was twenty years ago."³

Simple Faiths in Child and Family Policy

Hobbs's work on the Strengthening Families project was his major undertaking for the purpose of mobilizing the resources of the university in the interests of contributing to the formulation of public policy—to a coherent set of "shoulds" designed to help parents raise their children effectively. At the Center for the Study of Families and Children, he sought to bridge the gap between universities and legislative bodies. To do so, he did not propose to undertake traditional research or evaluation studies that might contribute to policy development if it should attract the attention of policy makers. Nor did he propose to become involved in policy merely at the level of general discussion. Instead, Hobbs aspired to engage in what he thought of as a "knowledge-transfer" operation. In his

¹Anthony N. Maluccio, review of The Troubled and Troubling Child, in Social Work 29 (January-February 1984): 83-84.

²Frank M. Hewett, review of The Troubled and Troubling Child, in Contemporary Psychology 28 (April 1983): 278.

³Ibid.

view, the "proper" task of the Center was to "invent more adequate means than we now have to transfer knowledge from producers to users."¹ His intentions were grand. He hoped to make available for policy makers, in usable form, knowledge from the biological and medical sciences, the behavioral and social sciences, and the humanities.

Hobbs's intentions in the policy arena were not limited to facilitating knowledge transfer; for, in his view, the "proper" task of a policy study center was not to avoid confrontation with value questions but to make value analysis a central element in policy analysis. He viewed the knowledge-transfer operation as a necessary but insufficient for improving the quality of public decisions about policies.

Somewhere between the laboratory and the library, on the one hand, and the legislature and ballot box on the other, policy analyst or policy maker, or both must decide what the goals are, must choose between the better and the worse outcome, and let his position be known. Otherwise, the knowledge-transfer business will be a sterile if not destructive enterprise.²

In his work at the Center for the Study of Families and Children, Hobbs took positions with respect to what kind of family he regarded as a good family and what he regarded to be a good outcome of childrearing. In his thinking about families, function was more important than form. He appreciated the value of diversity in family configurations and rejected the old ideal, rooted in Western religious traditions, that a family can be conceived only as a married couple with their minor children. He believed that foster parents, single parents, or liberated parents could care for their children adequately as long as they provided children the love and permanent structure that good

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Needed: A Knowledge Base for Public Policies Affecting Families and Children," paper for a panel on "Emerging Issues Concerning Children and Their Families," presented at the annual conference of the Council on Foundations, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri, 5 May 1977. (Typewritten) Hobbs Papers.

²Nicholas Hobbs, "Knowledge Transfer and the Policy Process," in *Child Abuse: An Agenda for Action*, eds. George Gerbner, Catherine J. Ross, and Edward Zigler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 277.

families have provided traditionally. For Hobbs, almost any mediating structure that the members of a family themselves devised was better than what either experts or the state could impose.

The family was Hobbs's focus of concern because he considered it the basic unit for the growth and socialization of children. For him, strengthening families meant empowering parents to make intelligent choices in the interest of their children. His emphasis on empowering parents revealed his appreciation for the tradition in the United States that the family is sacrosanct and immune to intrusion except in extraordinary circumstances such as severe neglect or child abuse. Hobbs was also aware of the coercive aspect of social agencies and of the often arrogant exercise of expertise by those in the helping professions. The issue of power in the helping relationship concerned him throughout his professional life. In the early 1950s he had cautioned helping professionals against contradicting in their work with their clients the democratic principles they espouse.¹ Almost thirty years later he recounted in a published interview how he had discovered his own failure to act on his faith in the capacity of people to be responsible for themselves.

I remember one time writing a sentence I was very proud of. It said something like, "We make parents full partners in our efforts to help their children." I thought that was rather advanced because at that time people didn't think much about parents. But then a young teacher spoke up and said, "Oh, don't you think that is rather arrogant?" Indeed it was. How can teachers or psychologists or pediatricians or psychiatrists make parents their partners? It seems to me that you simply have to humbly ask parents if there is some way that you as a professional person can be of assistance to them. They are ultimately responsible for their child. We must abandon the professional role of expert in recognition

¹In two papers, one delivered at the meeting of the Mississippi Education Association in Jackson, Mississippi on 15 March 1950, and one delivered at the meeting of the Louisiana College Association in Ruston, Louisiana on 3 March 1951, Hobbs discussed his view of the tension would-be helpers experience between their value commitments and what they actually say and do when they address the problems of those who come to them. This issue is discussed at greater length in chapter 3.

of the fact that the parents themselves are the experts and the rest of us must fit into that scheme and contribute to it.¹

Guiding policy that would both strengthen families and empower parents, but do so without interfering with parental prerogative, was Hobbs's challenge at the Center for the Study of Families and Children. In the course of his experience, he found a basic value position with respect to child development and the well-being of the family that had a set of what might be conceived of as "simple faiths" at its core: faith in the value of both education and of the family as society's fundamental unit; in the premise that social welfare is a collective responsibility; in keeping children well-fed and healthy; in creating institutions that demonstrate concern for socially vulnerable people; and in the assertion by would-be helpers of their moral responsibilities. As a catalog of values to be served by public policy, this is somewhat prosaic. But, it reveals Hobbs's willingness to confront value questions and take a stand about the desirable and undesirable outcomes of child and family policy.

In the course of his experience, Hobbs also found a set of simple faiths that formed the core of his "seemingly simple" principles for helping troubled children:

that young people have a tremendous desire to learn and do well, that their feelings are intrinsically valid and quite as important as their thinking, that destructive and defeating behavior must be faced, that young people can help each other sort out things and arrive at good choices, that the world is rich in things to learn, that life is to be savored at each moment, and that decent and caring adults are absolutely essential in the lives of children if they are to grow up strong in body, quick of mind, and generous in spirit. There is here no great theory, just great good sense.²

¹"Classification Options: A Conversation with Nicholas Hobbs on Exceptional Child Education," Exceptional Children 44 (April 1978): 496.

²Nicholas Hobbs, Foreword to Kids in Trouble: An Adventure in Education, by Campbell Loughmiller (Tyler, Texas: Wildwood Book Company, 1979).

In The Troubled and Troubling Child, Hobbs again favors "no great theory" in his discussion of his aspirations for the teacher-counselor, the professional who is the pivotal person in Re-ED schools. He outlines the array of roles and functions required for working with troubled children and discusses procedures for selecting teacher-counselors. But, what Hobbs writes about in this treatment of the teacher-counselor is not as important as the six-word statement that follows the treatment. After a number of pages the reader suddenly comes upon the sentence: "And that would be about it."¹

"And that would be about it" reveals how Hobbs simplified his conception of helping as his knowledge and understanding grew. This is a powerful statement of his position that the task of helping others does not yield to specialized knowledge and highly developed techniques. It is a task that requires one's full personhood. Hobbs expressed this position in its most distilled form in this, the last book of his books that he saw in print.

The Last Illness

In 1979 Hobbs first experienced prostrate trouble. He sought medical attention and was treated with antibiotics, but the physician he consulted did not perform a biopsy.² His condition did not improve, and during the following year he made references in letters (without specifying his condition) to his poor health and the consequent necessity to reduce his work activities.³ Finally, in the fall of 1980 he underwent exploratory surgery, and an advanced malignancy was found on his prostate. His doctors told him he could count on another six months of life. The following summer he experienced

¹Nicholas Hobbs, The Troubled and Troubling Child, p. 101.

²Mary Thompson Hobbs, in interviews conducted at her home in Nashville, Tennessee on 18 May 1987 and 13 October 1987, supplied much of the information about her late husband's final illness.

³Nicholas Hobbs to Wolfgang Schwendler, Division for the Study of Development, UNESCO, Paris, France, 3 June 1980; Hobbs to Schwendler, 8 November 1980. Hobbs Papers.

remission, and he wrote to a correspondent (again without specifying his condition) that his health was much improved.¹ It was not until the late summer of 1982 that it was discovered that his cancer was spreading. In August 1982, when he spoke to the attendees of the first conference of the American Re-Education Association, he looked wan and older than his 67 years, but there was no suspicion among Re-ED people that he was ill.

Hobbs neither sought sympathy nor expressed bitterness about his condition. As his health declined, he quite naturally altered his work routine. He spent more time working at home and delegated to others many of the tasks that he himself ordinarily would have performed. He hoped to see the Strengthening Families and the Chronically Ill Child projects through to completion, but he worked within the limits of his condition without placing undue demands on himself or his colleagues to finish their writing at the cost of quality. As stated above, the books that came out of these projects were published after Hobbs's death, with Hobbs as their primary author.

Only Hobbs's family and a few of his closest friends knew of the severity of his condition until it was impossible to conceal. He had decided that he did not want his cancer to become generally known for fear that others would treat him with a deference and sympathy that he would find distasteful. In October 1982 he was confined to a wheelchair, and with that the severity of his condition became generally known. When the dedication of the Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development on the Peabody campus was scheduled for the middle of January 1983, there was some concern about whether Hobbs would live long enough to participate in it. Many of those closest to Hobbs believe that he kept himself alive long enough to be present for this ceremony in honor of his long service to Peabody and Vanderbilt.

¹Nicholas Hobbs to Wolfgang Schwendler, 24 July 1981. Hobbs Papers.

At the dedication ceremony Hobbs was the last to speak. He got up from the wheelchair in which his son Tom had rolled him to the platform and was greeted with a standing ovation.¹ He said, "I love Peabody and I love Vanderbilt, and today I especially appreciate the observation that there's nothing quite so gratifying in the world as love required."² Nine days later, on 23 January 1983, he died.

¹This description of events from the dedication ceremony draws on a report of the ceremony by Jean Crawford, "A National Resource for Children: Human Development Laboratory renamed for Nicholas Hobbs Shortly Before His Death," The Peabody Reflector 56 (Spring 1983): 14-19.

²Remarks from the Dedication: The Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development (Nashville, Tennessee: George Peabody College for Teachers, Vanderbilt University, 14 January 1983), p. 21.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

[The] problem becomes one mainly of selection, of discrimination. Let us see what the intelligent person can do to extricate the worthwhile from the mass of inconsequential or misleading ideas that constantly surrounds him. ...

The whole matter shakes down to this—surrounded by a vast, relentless mass of ideas, the socially intelligent person must plan what he wants and map out the most efficient way to attain it. It is this purposeful and directed nature of his ideology that distinguishes him from the socially insensitive person.

Nicholas Hobbs, 1939¹

. . . it's possible—oh mildly daring—to anticipate major social requirements in a university and do something about them in advance. You don't have to wait until after the catastrophe has occurred.

Nicholas Hobbs, 1983²

The two statements quoted above are separated by over four decades. The first, written at the age of twenty-four, and the second, made nine days before his death at the age of sixty-five, demonstrate the essential unity of Nicholas Hobbs's thought over the course of his professional life. The passages reveal the central place of intelligent planning—of selection, discrimination, purposefulness, and anticipation—in Hobbs's conception of the practice of social science in the service of human purposes. He did not simply respond to the needs of society; rather, he "claimed a role in determining what

¹"Some Determinants of Ideology: A Psychological Interpretation,"(Masters Thesis, The Ohio State University, 1939), p. 141.

²Remarks from the Dedication: The Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development (Nashville, Tennessee: George Peabody College for Teachers, Vanderbilt University, 14 January 1983), pp. 21-22.

society should need and how social institutions, as well as individual professional careers, can be shaped to the service of an emerging social order."¹

Hobbs's highest priority was the development of human resources. He worked to create an emerging social order in which social institutions and professional roles address the unmet needs of those who concerned him most, socially vulnerable children. His Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children was a new institutional form that was designed to address these needs. But while paying attention to organizational structures, he always insisted on looking at larger meanings, at the social scientist's proper and ultimate business. In attending to such issues, he thrust himself into situations in which he had to take positions about what he regarded as a good society, a good family, and a good education.

Hobbs began his professional life with a well-defined cognitive structure, and his life's work had the effect of confirming and enriching it. To describe a cognitive structure that imposes order on experience, he borrowed the metaphor of a building.² While he acknowledged that such a structure could never be finished and that it would require constant reconstruction, he believed that every person must erect a "cognitive house" in which to live.

Hobbs's own cognitive house was remarkable in the sturdiness of its internal structure. His goals were always internalized. He worked them out for himself after elaborate deliberation and then pursued them for reasons which he articulated eloquently.

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Mental Health's Third Revolution," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 34 (May 1964): 822.

²In "The House of the Educated Man," a paper delivered at an assembly for honors students at George Peabody College for Teachers on 18 May 1966, Hobbs discussed the kind of cognitive structure he believed was suitable for the educated person. To describe this structure, he borrowed the metaphor of a house from the Roman orator, Cicero, and a theater from the seventeenth-century philosopher, Robert Fludd. A typewritten manuscript of this paper is in the Hobbs Papers,

He was at once intensely ambitious and yet almost invulnerable to pressures of the professional and academic world to proceed in prescribed directions. From early on, he had a conception both of what he wanted to become and to achieve as a social scientist and of what he should do in order to get what he wanted.

This cognitive house was not limited to the sheltering of serious, rational intellectual activity. In his design for the "house of the educated man," Hobbs also set aside room for play, for what he referred to as "a kind of intellectual rumpus room," in which he could engage in fantasy, in the production of pun and simile, and in "proportion-giving mirth and laughter." He appreciated the importance of intellectual rigor, but he also believed that there must be an element of imaginative art in the work of social scientists and that they must pose problems and reach conclusions not only on the basis of reason but also on the basis of interests, intentions, values, and judgments.

Assigning Labels

For the intellectual portraitist, the difficulty Hobbs creates is that he does not fit easily into ordinary categories. His work crosses not only disciplines but also the standard roles in both academe and in the social sciences. He had little regard for the boundaries that distinguish researchers from service providers, teachers from administrators, and scientists from humanists. The themes in this study leak, as they did in Hobbs's life, and this is one of the reasons that he makes such an interesting subject for study. Not all psychologists make suitable subjects for an intellectual portrait. With some, the bare facts of their professional lives look pale next to the brilliance of their achievements. With others, the achievements are so technical and specialized that an examination of them holds little interest for those who do not possess the same technical skills and special interests.

Nicholas Hobbs was a different kind of psychologist. There was close correspondence between Hobbs the private man and Hobbs the public exponent of a caring and competent society. Much of his thought about helping institutions and about helping relationships between individuals were projections of the type of society he hoped to realize and of the type of life he hoped to live. An examination of his work poses profound questions about human beings as social problem solvers; about the interrelationships of knowledge, values, and method; about the uses of social science; and about a complex social and political order in which all these are embedded and by which they are shaped. In pervasive ways, Hobbs's professional life provides examples of some of the most admirable commitments of the social sciences: faith in the possibility of improvement of the individual and of society; belief in the capacity of the social sciences to serve human purposes; appreciation of individuality; confidence in the ability of individuals to solve problems and to grow when given the opportunity to do so; and sensitivity to both intellect and feeling.

A number of observers have devised ways to classify people whose work does not fit neatly into the domains of the academic disciplines or of the professions. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton cite two contrasting styles of intellectual life.¹ For them, "generalizers" are individuals who are usually concerned with developing doctrines that go beyond currently available data, while "empiricists" are those concerned with extending the collection of certified facts. According to this formulation, Hobbs can be labeled a generalizer. He resisted the specialization that increasingly dominates scholarship and approached his work with a frame of reference broad in concept as well as in duration. He appreciated the importance of the knowledge-generating mechanisms

¹Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, "Friendship as Social Process: A Substantive and Methodological Analysis," in *Freedom and Control in Modern Society*, eds. Morroe Berger, Theodore Abel, and Charles H. Page (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1954), pp. 18-66.

of the social science establishment, although he believed that social scientists' insistence on knowing more and more about less and less make them reluctant to utilize available knowledge to address pressing problems. As a generalist, Hobbs, like Jerome Bruner, always preferred to commit "Type I" errors, the kind in which one says "Yes" in doubt rather than "No."¹

William Bevan, in his Presidential Address to the American Psychological Association, revives an expression used by Henry S. Pritchett in his introduction to Abraham Flexner's report on medical education published in 1910.² The expression is "professional patriotism" and it connotes regard for the honor of one's profession and concern for its efficacy. For Pritchett, and for Bevan, such attitudes enable the professional to go beyond considerations of personal gain in pursuing a career. Hobbs can be viewed as a "professional patriot" within the profession of psychology, although he did not think of himself solely as a psychologist. As a professional patriot, he assumed positions of leadership within the American Psychological Association, but his special concern for children and his rejection of the approved therapeutic model for the treatment of the disturbed—one in which individual psychotherapy reigned supreme—placed him outside the prevailing research and service interests of the psychological establishment. His patriotism led him to seek a role for the profession that would place social purposes above personal gain. He once remarked that professionals who are

¹In his autobiography, In Search of Mind: Essays in Autobiography (New York: Harper Colophon, 1983), Jerome Bruner notes preference for "Type I" errors.

²In "A Sermon of Sorts in Three Plus Parts," American Psychologist 37 (December 1982): 1303-1322, Bevan cites Pritchett's introduction to Flexner's report as the source of the concept of professional patriotism. See Henry S. Pritchett, Introduction to Medical Education in the United States and Canada, by Abraham Flexner, Bulletin of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, No. 4 (Boston: D. B. Updike, The Merry mount Press, 1910).

getting rich in the practice of their professions are probably misbehaving.¹ He asked his colleagues to question inherited institutional arrangements and patterns of practice and to shape their professional careers, as he did his own, to the service of the emerging social order.

In his Presidential Address, Bevan cited Sir Isaiah Berlin's theory of personality that posits two fundamentally opposed ways of viewing the world—ways that, according to Bevan, have given rise to fundamental differences in the intellectual orientations of psychologists. In Berlin's view, there are

those on one side, who relate everything to a single vision, one system less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel—a single, universal, organizing principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance—and, on the other side, those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some *de facto* way, for some psychological or physiological cause, related by no moral or aesthetic principle; these last lead lives, perform acts, and entertain ideas that are centrifugal rather than centripetal, their thought is scattered or diffused, . . . seizing upon the essence of a vast variety of experiences and objects for what they are in themselves, without, . . . seeking to fit them into . . . any one all-embracing, . . . unitary inner vision.²

Berlin calls members of this latter category foxes and members of the former, hedgehogs. He takes both labels from a line he quotes of the Greek poet Archilochus: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing."

Berlin acknowledges that, like all simple classification schemes, his "dichotomy becomes, if pressed, artificial, scholastic, and ultimately absurd." But, he argues that "it

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "To Invent the Future, 1976 School Psychology: A Becoming Profession," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of School Psychologists, Kansas City, 25 March 1976. (Typewritten). Hobbs Papers.

²Isiah Berlin, The Fox and the Hedgehog: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), pp. 1-2.

should not be rejected as being merely superficial or frivolous," for, "like all distinctions which embody any degree of truth, it offers a point of view from which to look and compare."¹ Thinking of Hobbs as a hedgehog, as a person who achieved a single unifying vision, exposes him to accusations from foxes of arrogance, naiveté, or bias. As Berlin notes, the quarrel between the "rival types of knowledge" is very old.² Hobbs was not a rigorous, "hard" scientist whose conclusions were based strictly on what the data revealed. His was the style of a person who believed in what Berlin refers to as the "more impalpable kind [of knowledge] that consists in the 'sense of reality', in 'wisdom'."³

It is Possible to be Both Bright and Kind

An inventory of the current status of the institutions and projects that provided contexts for Hobbs's work reveals something of his enduring contribution. The criteria that he originally established for selecting Peace Corps volunteer have been largely replaced by criteria that place more weight on technical skills than life experiences. The John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Education and Human Development at Peabody College, which now houses the Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development, has become a leader in the study of mental retardation. The Center for the Study of Families and Children of the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies appears to be rather moribund, but the recommendations contained in The Futures of Children, Strengthening Families, and Chronically Ill Children and Their Families have contributed to the intellectual foundation of public policy in both mental health and in programs for children

¹Ibid., p. 2.

²Ibid., p. 77.

³Ibid.

and families. The Re-ED model for providing services to troubled children and youth continues to resist the encroachments of the medical-psychiatric establishment and to thrive.

This inventory, however, reveals only part of Hobbs's contribution. In Re-ED circles, at Peabody, and among the psychologists and educators who were members of the national "network" of individuals who shared his commitment to serving the needs of the nation's children, Hobbs is a model of the social scientist who was devoted to serving the interests of the public. This is perhaps Hobbs's greatest legacy. He stands as a model of a social scientist whose personal appeal, compelling vision, and ability to translate ideas into action continues to inspire and to provide direction for a great number of helping professionals.

As such a model, Hobbs's work can be viewed as a bridge linking contrasting aspects of the practice of social science. This bridge metaphor has been applied to Hobbs's work by others. A plaque in the foyer of the Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development reads in part: "As a bridge between the ideal and the practical his work translates into action his commitment." Edward Zigler, Hobbs's long-time friend and collaborator in efforts to establish public policy in the service of children and families, writes, with reference to this plaque, in his dedication to Hobbs:

Nick has indeed been a bridge: a bridge linking empathy and knowledge, a bridge connecting knowledge and action; a bridge carrying students and workers, scientists and advocates to areas of new insights into how to serve our nation's children. Most of all, Nick Hobbs has been a bridge enabling troubled and troubling children to cross over into realms of new opportunities.¹

¹Edward Zigler, "Dedication to Nicholas Hobbs," *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology* 14 (March 1985): 179.

This bridge metaphor casts Hobbs's thought and work in dichotomous terms. Hobbs himself was cognizant of the dualities that he, like all social scientists, faced in his professional life. He was well aware of the rival types of knowledge to which Berlin refers, of the quarrel between those who insist on "objectivity" and precise measurement and manipulation—on the methods of natural science in the study of human problems—and those who admit ethical arguments, purposes, interests, and other normative matters into the process of inquiry. A number of dualities appear in Hobbs's work and thought. They are presented here with knowledge of Isaiah Berlin's admonition that dualities can become, if pressed, artificial and ultimately absurd. But, Berlin continues, "like all distinctions which embody any degree of truth," they can offer "a point of view from which to look and compare."¹

In their introduction to a special issue of the Peabody Journal of Education, titled "The Legacy of Nicholas Hobbs: Research on Education and Human Development in the Public Interest, Part II," J. R. Newbrough and Paul R. Dokecki portray Hobbs as a "man of balance."² In his work, Hobbs balanced the comprehensive with the particular. He applied his ideas about providing mental health services at the "micro" level of public policy, and he created settings designed to promote the forging of relationships between individual children and their peers and between children and adults at the "micro" level of his Re-ED schools. He also balanced a concern for the problems of society with a concern for the problems of individuals. He urged professional help-givers to acquire a "sense of dimensionality" with which they could become effective interpreters of both society and of the individuals they help. His thought about therapeutic intervention in the life of a child balanced a focus on environmental factors external to the child with a focus

¹Isiah Berlin, The Fox and the Hedgehog: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History, p. 2

²J. R. Newbrough and Paul R. Dokecki, "Editors' Introduction," Peabody Journal of Education 61 (Spring 1984): 4.

on the psychological processes of the child. His "ecological" approach held the community responsible for the well-being of its citizens. At the same time, his model stressed the importance of helping children on a child-by-child basis, in ways that evoke a metaphor of competence and self-fulfillment rather than of illness and pathology.

Hobbs sought ways to achieve some degree of unity with respect to other dualities. In his thought about the criteria for judging the merit of a profession, of a university, or of a social institution, he reduced the opposition between utility and aesthetic appeal. He construed the aesthetic experience as the process by which order, simplicity, and equilibrium are achieved. In his writings about the therapeutic relationships and about the practice of administration in such institutions as a university, he gave eloquent expression to strategies for balancing the exercise of power and authority with respect for the integrity of the individual and for democratic, "non-directive" processes. In his constant dealings with the public world and with pressing public issues from his private university, he achieved a certain union of the public and the private.

Hobbs was at once an "insider" and an "outsider" with respect to the institutional, professional, and academic contexts of his professional activity. He was a humanist who thrived in the military; a Southerner who first established himself in the North. He was, moreover, a skillful negotiator of the elaborate structures of academic and professional institutions and of private foundations and federal agencies. At the same time, he characterized his work as a challenge to existing practice within these contexts. Re-ED challenged the hegemony of the medical-psychiatric model for providing mental health services. His concern with the welfare of socially vulnerable children challenged the psychological establishment's focus on the adjustment problems of middle-class adults. His disrespect for the boundaries between the academic disciplines challenged the self-limiting specialization of many of his academic brethren. Throughout his career he

sought to do what he believed one must do to be productive and creative; he engaged in the "intensely personal business" of freeing himself from the "common templates that are used to order the world."

Hobbs also had a special sensitivity to, and interest in, the plight of the "outsider." Mary Thompson Hobbs recounts that her husband made a habit of zeroing in on outsiders at parties—persons who seemed to be unacquainted with the other guests—with the intention of integrating them into the group.¹ An eight-inch-high bronze sculpture sat on his desk for many years. Titled "Come Play," it represents four children engaged in play and a fifth child separated from them by a sizeable space. The four invite the outsider to join them, but the outsider remains apart, uncertain of his or her ability to fit in with the others and share their pleasure in each other's company.²

Finally, Hobbs's work juxtaposed the rational and the cognitive with the sensual and the intuitive. He appreciated the value of rational, methodical problem solving as a means of development, but he believed that immediate learning experiences in which individuals have constructive interpersonal relationships, demonstrate competence and know joy are the primary means by which a person learns and grows. In 1954 he presented a paper in which the "inescapable unity of reason and feeling" was his theme.³ In it he argued that the "great tragedy of our time" is that people in the West have "banked too heavily on

¹Mary Thompson Hobbs, interview, 13 October 1987.

²A life-size bronze-casting of this sculpture now stands in front of the Nicholas Hobbs Laboratory of Human Development on the Peabody campus. The story of this sculpture is in the program for the presentation of the sculpture, conducted on 21 October 1984. The original bronze was cast by Katherine Blackman Haven in the early 1960s after she listened to her friend Hobbs describe his Re-ED philosophy. Haven and Hobbs often discussed enlarging the sculpture, but it was not until 1982 that Haven finally undertook the project.

³The paper is titled "Reason, Anxiety, and Well-Being." It was delivered on 6 July 1954, probably at Peabody, and published in Great Human Issues of Our Times, ed. Henry Hill (Nashville, Tennessee: Bureau of Publications, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1954), pp. 65-76. It was reprinted in The Peabody Reflector (January-February 1959).

reason," have insisted that "reason is a sufficient instrument for coping with life's problems." In doing so, they have failed to appreciate that "man does not realize himself through reason but through a full savoring of experience and particularly through a courageous confronting of the anxiety in his life."¹

Hobbs's principle of "just manageable difficulties" guided his attempts to unify reason and feeling and to achieve a full savoring of experience in his life. He valued an active, planful life, but one that emphasized the healing and nurturing value of the living through of experiences.

I have come to feel that as man gets close to his own most personal problems, the role of reason is qualitatively altered. Man's meanness and man's decency is neither rational nor irrational. It just is. It is a product not of reason or of unreason but of experience in relationship with other people. Reason will never set man free from himself. A man must free himself and then he can use reason. Freedom to be reasonable is gained not by taking thought but by having experiences in intimate relationships with other people that reduce anxiety and promote a sense of well-being.²

The kinds of experiences he had in mind were those that have a quality that is not entirely rational and purposeful. These are experiences that reveal confusions, introduce dissonance, and inflame passionate commitments. These also place individuals in intimate relationships with others. "Only connect," E. M. Forester's prescription for reducing the debilitating effect of isolation and anxiety in life, might have been Hobbs's as well.³

This line of thinking was associated with Hobbs's interest in bridging the distance between knowledge and action, theory and practice. He viewed knowledge as a form of

¹Ibid., p. 72.

²Ibid., pp. 75-76.

³This remark by Forester, the British novelist and essayist, is quoted by George Howard in his introduction to The Sixties, ed. George Howard (New York: Pocket Books, 1982), p. 20.

practical action. This notion—what he referred to as the "John Dewey idea"—about canceling the separation in science of knowledge from overt action was the foundation of his life's work. He conceptualized and practiced inquiry as an intervention process and held that knowledge is of most worth when it both results from intervention in the service of pressing human problems and can be translated into action in the service of such problems.

Hobbs's success at unifying dualities, thereby forging a professional life and a type of social science that was both unified and coherent and bright and kind, is a most remarkable achievement. The social science arena in which he worked was where issues were humane and where the field of attention consisted of living persons. He contributed not only to knowledge but also to wisdom, and his legacy consists less of psychological facts than of a compelling vision of human nature through which he and those he inspired have worked to improve the lives of troubled children and their families.

His ultimate reconciliation of the opposing pressures he faced was his assertion that "It is possible to be both bright and kind." This, according to his longtime colleague Susan W. Gray, was a guiding rule he repeated frequently to students and his faculty colleagues.¹ To be both bright and kind, scientist and humanist, competent as well as caring—this was Hobbs's primary objective, his expression of full personhood. "It comes to this, I guess," he stated at the age of 39. "I have no solution to save the day, nor even to send us home tonight reassured. I think I can suggest that if we are ever to

¹Susan W. Gray, quoted Hobbs's guiding rule in her remarks at his memorial service, published in the program for the service titled Celebration of the Life of Nicholas Hobbs, Nashville, Tennessee: 30 January 1983. Mary Thompson Hobbs, in a personal communication on 8 February 1988, reports that Rue Cromwell, a former colleague of Hobbs's at Peabody, had told her that Hobbs had mentioned this guiding rule in the mid-1950s as advice with respect to teaching when Cromwell was a new member of the Peabody faculty.

be reasonable, we must first be kind, and gentle, and one with ourselves and others—and if we can do these things, there may be time for man to be human."¹

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "Reason, Anxiety, and Well-Being," p. 76.

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APPENDIX

November 9, 1981

Curriculum Vitae

NICHOLAS HOBBS

PERSONAL:

Born: March 13, 1915, Greenville, South Carolina
Wife: Mary Thompson Hobbs
Home Address: 1054 Lynwood Boulevard, Nashville, Tennessee 37215
Telephone: Office 615/322-8512, Study 615/297-3706
Present Position: Professor of Psychology, Emeritus, Vanderbilt University; Senior Research Associate, Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN 37235

DEGREES:

A.B. The Citadel, 1936
M.A. The Ohio State University, 1938
Ph.D. The Ohio State University, 1946
D.SC. The University of Louisville, 1972
D. Litt. The Citadel, 1973
D.H.C. Université Paul Valéry—Montpellier, France, 1978

APPOINTMENTS:

1936-38 Secondary School Teacher
1938-1941 Graduate Student and Teaching Assistant, The Ohio State University
1941-46 Army Air Force Psychological Research Program; 2nd Lt. to Lt. Colonel
1946-50 Head of Clinical Psychology Training Program, Teachers College, Columbia University
1950-51 Head, Department of Psychology, Louisiana State University

1951-65	Chairman, Division of Human Development, George Peabody College for Teachers
1954-55	Visiting Professor of Psychology, Harvard University
1961-63	Director of Selection and Research, The Peace Corps
1961-68	Principal Investigator, Project Re-ED, A Demonstration Project for the Re-Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children
1966-67	Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, California
1967-1970	Provost, Vanderbilt University and Director of the John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Education and Human Development, George Peabody College for Teachers
1970-75	Provost, Vanderbilt University
1975-80	Professor of Psychology and Preventive Medicine, Vanderbilt University
1975-80	Director, Center for the Study of Families and Children, Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, Vanderbilt University

MEMBERSHIPS AND HONORS:

President of the American Psychological Association, 1966; Chairman, Committee on Ethical Standards, 1949-53; Board of Directors, 1953-55, 1964-67; Policy and Planning Board, Chairman, 1956; President, Division of Clinical Psychology, 1961; American Psychological Foundation, 1970-72; Diplomate in Clinical Psychology, American Board of Examiners in Professional Psychology.

1946-50	New York Academy of Science
1953-54	Board of Examiners in Psychology, State of Tennessee Council of Psychological Resources in the South (Chairman, 1953-54)
1955-56	Southern Regional Council on Mental Health Training and Research (Vice-Chairman)
1955-61	Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health (Vice-Chairman)
1955-69	Committee on the International Exchange of Persons (The Fulbright Committee)

- 1956-60 Committee on Training in Clinical Psychology, National Institute of Mental Health
- 1960-63 Mental Health Projects Grants Committee, National Institute of Mental Health
- 1961- Scientific Advisory Committee for the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation
- 1962-64 Member, President's Panel on Mental Retardation
- 1962-65 Consulting Editor, Journal of Educational Psychology, Journal of Counseling Psychology, Journal of Abnormal Psychology, McGraw-Hill Book Company
- 1962-69 Consulting Editor, Contemporary Psychology
- 1963-66 Member, National Advisory Committee, The Hogg Foundation,,Member, National Child Health and Development Council , NIH
- 1966-69 Joint Commission on the Mental Health of Children (Vice-President)
- 1967-71 Member, National Advisory Mental Health Council, National Institute of Mental Health
- 1969-72 Chairman, Research Advisory Committee, American Council on Education
- 1969- Member, National Advisory Committee,, The John F. Kennedy Center
- 1970-75 Member, United States National Commission for UNESCO
- 1971-77 Member, Advisory Committee on Child Development, National Academy of Sciences
- 1972-75 Director, Project on the Classification of Exceptional Children
- 1973-77 Member, Commission on the Mentally Disabled, American Bar Association
- 1973-77 Member, Project on Juvenile Justice Standards, American Bar Association
- 1974- Member, Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences
- 1975-81 Trustee, Fisk University

1975-	Ford Foundation, Travel Study Awards, 1975 and 1978
1976-81	Member, The Family Impact Seminar
1977-78	Member, President's Commission on Mental Health
1978-	Member, Advisory Committee on General Academic Pediatrics, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
1979-81	Member, Select Panel for the Promotion of Child Health, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health

Other Organizations:

American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Association for Gifted Children, American Orthopsychiatric Association, Cleveland Conference, Sigma XI, Southeastern Psychological Association (President 1957), Southeastern Society of Philosophy and Psychology (Treasurer, 1955), Tennessee Psychological Association

BIOGRAPHIC LISTINGS:

American Men and Women of Science, Who's Who in America

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Bibliography in Hobbs's Curriculum vitae is incomplete and contains inaccuracies. A complete and accurate bibliography, so far as is known, appears in part III of the bibliography of this study.

VITA

John Carl Habel was born in Pontiac, Michigan in November 1949. He attended the Pontiac public schools and graduated from Pontiac Central High School in 1967. He received a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Michigan in May 1971 and an M.A. in Special Education with a concentration in the Emotionally Disturbed from Eastern Michigan University in June 1977. From 1974-1976 he spent time studying languages in Germany, France, and Italy. In the fall of 1983 he began full-time study toward a Ph.D. in Education at The University of Tennessee. This degree was awarded in December 1988.

He was an educational therapist on the Adolescent Service of Nebraska Psychiatric Institute in Omaha, Nebraska from 1977 to 1980, taught the High School Intervention Class for emotionally and behaviorally disturbed students in Knox County, Tennessee from 1980 to 1981, and served as Coordinator of the Weekend Program of the Riverbend School at Lakeshore Mental Health Institute in Knoxville, Tennessee from 1981 to 1983. While at the Riverbend School, he became acquainted with the ideas of Nicholas Hobbs.