

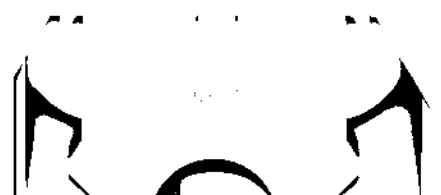
Address to Graduates
Loyola Campus
Concordia University
June 5, 1977

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A graduation is a rite of passage -- of passing from a life-style that has come to an end, of passing into a new life-style that is about to begin. During the past four years your work has been in different fields. Some of you have/attending to the humanities, others to the social sciences, others to the natural sciences. But despite these differences, what you were taught came to you by the vehicle of language, what you learnt from books came to you by words or signs or symbols. And as in the past a notable part of your activity was a matter of coming to understand meanings, coming to accept or to qualify or to reject assertions, coming to approve or disapprove proposals, so too in the new life-style that awaits you your endlessly diverse activities will still be the already familiar activities of attending to experience, understanding it, forming one's judgment, and evaluating courses of action. In brief, the new life-style will not be utterly new. When a former chairman of the department of commerce at McGill was asked why he put so much stress on language, he promptly answered: Because 95% of business is just accurate speech and writing.

Accordingly, it may not be amiss if I take as the topic of my brief address the subject of meaning. For meaning fulfils many functions and our apprehension of meaning runs through successive phases.

~~A first phase arises when we are learning to talk. Then what is overt is the learning of names for things we feel we already know. Yet in that very process there also is occurring a sharpening of attention and an increasing discrimination in perception also is occurring an advance in knowledge. The multiplicity~~



A first phase occurs when we are learning to talk. Then what is overt is the learning of names. Things we feel we already know all about. In reality, language already is sharpening our attention and teaching us to notice differences we had neglected. Soon it is transporting us into a new and larger world. For words denote not only what is present but also what is absent, not only what is near but also what is far, not only the past but also the future, not only the factual but also the fantastic, the possible, the ideal, the obligatory. So we come to live not as ~~an~~ infant^s in a world of immediate experience but in a far vaster world that is brought to us through the memories of other men