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# THE VOICE OF A MAN

A DITHYRAMB was an ancient Greek form of poetry or song, improvised by the priests of Dionysus to express the intense feelings of devotees of Bacchus during solemn rites. A thing of immediate inspiration, it must, we are told, "have been a kind of irregular wild poetry, not divided into strophes or constructed with any evolution of the theme." Works which have a dithyrambic character, therefore, embody the insistent press of feeling, a "here and now" contention of the spirit, while symmetry, if it has claim upon the hearer, is of a subjective sort—a private, individual sequence and balance belonging only to the singer and made commanding by his art. Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* is possibly a modern dithyramb.

No one listens to dithyrambs to reach unengaged objectivity. The singer exposes his feeling, you sense his quickening heart, the mounting ardor of his intentions, and then, without having much to do with it, you find yourself his captive, your sights raised (or sometimes lowered) to the level of his vision. That is, these things may happen if his art is skilled, its movements flowing from a private order which loses nothing from the tumult of the song.

There is always the question, have you been tricked into uncritical participation in another man's cause, or have you, gratefully, been led to a height where you see more for yourself, now that the excitement has passed away? This is a way of asking about the validity of spontaneous art, of comparing the Dionysian with the Apollonian, or of wondering how much you can or ought to trust Platonic flights, as contrasted with a safe, noncommittal Aristotelian analysis.

But let us leave Plato out of it for the time being, not only because of his antagonism toward certain of the poets, his educator's distrust of jazz with "sacred" pretensions, but also because his own cunning union of what seems free inspiration with classical balance introduces paradoxes which are hard to handle here. A less complicating example would be Henry David Thoreau.

In a recent Occasional Paper of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, concerned with Civil Disobedience, Harry Kalven, Jr., a professor of law at the University of Chicago, compares the thought of Thoreau and Gandhi, although not to raise one above the other. There is a sense in which Gandhi thought about "everything" in connection with civil disobedience, while Thoreau, more or less obviously, did not. The symmetries of Gandhi's thinking, not always manifest in a particular expression, can almost invariably be found out, as a study of his complete works makes clear. Gandhi thought for himself, but he also tried to think and feel for multitudes. Thoreau thought mainly for himself, although we must add that included in Thoreau's thinking about himself are incommensurable elements which easily stretch out to the compass of Man, so that we have more an important distinction than a radical separation from Gandhian thinking. Our interest, now, is to examine what might be called the dithyrambic character of Thoreau's essay, On the Duty of Civil Disobedience, and to consider its persuasive power. Mr. Kalven is of enormous help in this. He begins:

> Thoreau and Gandhi are the two men we are all most likely to name as the major exponents of civil disobedience, and yet they are marvelously different. . . . Gandhi tests his theory against a dialectic of experience time after time, revising it and writing endlessly about it. Thoreau spends one night in jail and writes about it in a great one-shot proposition that comes out of him full-blown, not a worked-out, systematically tested theory but one beautiful burst of insight that has enormous impact.

Thoreau was a man who moved through life with the authority of an empire—but an empire of conscience only, and of high human intent. Engaged in argument, he never brought up reinforcing troops. He felt no need of them. He spoke simply as a man, and this seemed to him enough—in fact, all. If you caught him in jail, he would speak to you about how a man might behave in such circumstances and if you found him at Walden, his mind was filled with other—to him deeper—matters. Why make plans and arguments about social systems, when the life of men is so much more important than these? Why give dignity where it is not deserved? See what it means to be a man, and these small matters will easily adjust themselves. This was Thoreau's stance and spontaneous utterance, and if it sometimes seems out of balance to us, it was never so for him. But in inviting or provocative circumstances, Thoreau would free-associate widely about the implications of his life and thinking.

Take the question of what Mr. Kalven calls "the calculus of the consequences." Thoreau is willing to give it casual attention. If, he says, the issue of injustice by government is based upon no more than the obnoxious, squeaky complaint of the wheels of State, its inevitable mechanical flaws or "operational frictions," why then, he says, "Let it go, let it go." But when it comes to examples of what he will not "let go," he rides with absolutes. I will not, he says in effect, deign to "reason" with you about *this:*

> When a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty more urgent is the fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army.

Mr. Kalven calls this last sentence a "Surprise punch," reversing the familiar grounds for resistance by finding it more urgently needed when *we* are the invaders (of Mexico, in this case). Yet Thoreau also resists those who would make politics out of what he says. Ground for political action is there, but undeveloped. He wishes to influence men against doing inhuman things, but his concern for "morality" seems to stop with primary affairs. The state does not appear to him as a moral agent or a useful instrument. To him it is mainly a nuisance, and often an agent of pompous fraud.

> He doesn't understand [writes Mr. Kalven] the source of any sensible obligation to the State: ". . . we should be men first, and subjects afterward." He is proud to think that he does not rely very much on the protection of the State, and he would like not to rely on it at all. Undue respect for law is a great danger, he says: "A common and unnatural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys and all marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, aye, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power?"

Lest these hundred-year-old metaphors lose Thoreau's point for us, we add some current ones from a recent cold-war novel (*Deep Is the Blue*, by Max Ehrlich, Pocket Book). This story is concerned with the men who take the nuclear-armed Polaris submarines to sea, and the following is about one of them who is being trained to become a commander:

> It seemed to him that during this period he had begun to go through some strange and subtle personality metamorphosis. Working night and day with this infinitely complex gadgetry, learning to control and manipulate, yet fear and respect this new and unholy power, joining this new cult and pledging his dedication, had somehow created a Bill Pierce he had never known before. The long hours of study, the intense concentration, the knowledge that some day he might be called upon to unleash this horror upon humanity, seemed to disturb some metabolism inside of him. He became, in his own mind, a kind of ersatz creation, a kind of complex machine designed as an extension of another complex machine, the

> submarine itself. He became aware that in some kind of macabre and insidious way he was losing interest in everything else around him, that he was being *pulled* into this thing . . . He began to feel a slow and subtle attrition of his ordinary emotions, dehumanized.

In the same book is this moody comment on today's "heroes," the astronauts:

> But these men were the projections of a thousand other men engaged in the business of thrusting them into space, men who molded the capsules and figured out the instrumentation and used the slide rules and the drawing boards and the computers, the planners and the designers. and the doctors and the psychiatrists. The heroism of the astronauts was made possible by solid fuel and great rockets and immense launching pads and huge appropriations paid for by millions of taxpayers, by transistors and heat-resistant paint, by tubes and wiring and electrons, and a host of other complex mechanisms, all engaged in projecting the modern technological hero into what the newspapers called his moment of truth. And if you thought about it a certain way, the hero who went way out there was himself a machine thrust into space by machines for he had been examined, analyzed, honed, and trained and equipped by all these elements, and people were concerned with his reflexes under test runs, his calculated capacity to withstand vibration, the metered measure of his blood pressure under stress, the exact number of his heartbeats, and all these were duly recorded in bales of reports, charts, and memoranda. He was, in short, the *product* of all this, he had been blueprinted and fueled and checked out for all this, and the particular lance of this particular hero ran into millions of dollars and thousands and thousands of man hours.

Yet Thoreau will still say:

> Visit the Navy Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts,—a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms. . . .

The calculus of obligation to the social order affects Thoreau's thought but little. One could say that he cares too much for man to let the social *order* interest him. He does not reason with himself about the propriety of accepting punishment for his offense. With a kind of wide-eyed innocence, he simply announces his discovery that prison is the only decent place left for a decent man to be, when goings-on like war are sponsored by the State. Prison, as Mr. Kalven notes, gave Thoreau extra-territorial refuge. *There,* where no further claims could be put upon him, he was free. And there he made this laconic comment:

> I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

Yet Thoreau has no such indifference toward other men. He might secede from Massachusetts, but not from his fellows. We quote Mr. Kalven:

> Again and again he says, you can't be neutral. He has other things he wants to do, like all people, but: "If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting on another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too." This is enormously powerful. He does not want to be the agent through the State of an injustice to another, or to pursue a neutral life that may not be contributing anything to the injustice but is nevertheless lending the State its support in some form. . . .
>
> Thoreau is obviously a man who does not see himself as belonging very intensely to the community in which he was raised. He tells about having been asked for a contribution for a minister whose preaching his father attended, and what he wrote about that, I think, is what he must have meant to write with respect to society as a whole: "Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry David Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined." In other words, when did he ever join Massachusetts? Then he makes a rather charming remark, "If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in detail from all the societies which I never signed on to; but I did not know where to find a complete list."

Thoreau's own account of the short shrift he gives to many things, including argument about the political means, is this:

> As for adopting the ways which the State has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. I have other affairs to attend to. I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not every thing to do, but something; and because he cannot do every thing, it is not necessary that he should do *something* wrong.

As his final judgment, Mr. Kalven calls this essay "breathtakingly brilliant," although, "analytically, it leaves almost everything to be desired."

Perhaps so. But it remains to be determined how much and what sort of "analysis" would really contribute to a further understanding of Thoreau's point of view. It would be easy, for example, to set out levels of analysis where Thoreau could not even enter without rendering irrelevant most of what he has said. Many of the weighty problems which engage the attentions of the world would seem to him on the whole contemptible. The issues sententiously approached by modern disarmament conferences he would recognize as exercises in self-deception, if not downright hypocrisy. He would see such arguments as comparable to the dilemma of the Canadian priest who was tortured by having to decide whether or not to campaign against the brothel in his town, since this enterprise, while by definition outrageously sinful, nonetheless sustained the morals of the region by keeping down the rate of illegitimacy.

You could argue that there are whole revelations of meaning simply in noticing what Thoreau refuses to discuss, and in wondering why. In him are encountered silences similar to those with which the Zen master confronts the eager-beaver inquirer, who has to learn the vast irrelevance of his questions. Thoreau is champion of a mode of being; he stands on a height and he will not come down, although he is willing to speak of what he can see at his own elevation.

This, at any rate, is a hypothesis about Thoreau, and if we concede him genius, it may be worth looking into. As Mr. Kalven says,

> The essay is effective partly because it is not a cold, analytical balancing of the considerations that would warrant disobeying the law but a burst of simple, spontaneous insight, rather loosely handled, done with a good deal of irony, and uncomplicated by any counter considerations at all.

Careful "analyses," after all, are movable feasts. They can be set high or low, or moved around laterally, according to the focus of the age. Will you argue about whether it is right to burn a witch? No, you will not. The assumptions of the question are intolerable. Will you argue about whether *this* witch should be burned? No, still less will you argue about that. The most you will attempt is a short exposition on the nonsense about witches, if you are willing to speak at all. But the men of our time will argue long and arduously about the justification for incinerating Hiroshima, and some of them will make briefs for napalm, the scorching erasure of villages in Vietnam, and other political "chemotherapies" now practiced in behalf of the security of the free world. Yet these are activities which, for a considerable portion of mankind, fall somewhat below the moral level of a black mass.

The argument, however, goes on. In December, 1960, Herman Kahn, tough-minded paramilitary analyst of the "defense" establishment of the United States, told a pacifist interrogator that the mortality threatened by nuclear war would have to reach at least three billion lives (the total population of the world) before he would consider renouncing the present deterrence policy. And Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., then political adviser to President Kennedy, declared to the same questioner (Bradford Lyttle, of the Peace Walk to Moscow) that "morality has nothing to do with international relations," which he defined as "matters of national interest and power." He condemned the pacifism of the peace walkers as "irresponsible and immoral," but had no comment on the CIA-supported invasion of Cuba.

When these are the issues and ground-rules for debate, it is time for a dithyramb or two.

But what of the Gandhian "analysis"? There is need to distinguish between institutional resolutions and compromise settlements, in behalf of public decision, of the unsolved moral problems of an epoch of history, and the bewildered gropings and wonderings of individuals. Gandhi's investigations centered in the latter area. Not what the State should do, but what men ought to consider worthy of human beings, was the gist of his inquiry, which was so complete that it attained an awesome symmetry. "In India," as another contributor says in the same Occasional Paper, Gandhi "was constantly admonishing and cautioning and chiding and chastising people who were full of emotional enthusiasm and who entered the movement in no spirit of cool, classical resolve, who were not willing to make a detailed study of specific problems, and who tended to be less concerned with injustice itself than with the success of their own act of resistance in overcoming a crippling sense of national humiliation." That Gandhi found a comrade in Thoreau gives no occasion for surprise.

# *REVIEW*
## THE CHALLENGE OF THE PRESENT

BACK in 1938, the eminent physicist, Arthur Holly Compton, gave it as his opinion that the progress of twentieth-century science had brought modern man to the threshold of a new epoch of history—the epoch of increasing human responsibility for the future of the world. While the past, he suggested, might have been in the hands of a kindly deity who nurtured the infancy and watched over the childhood of mankind, in the present "this responsibility is being shifted to our shoulders." As science advances, he added, "this transfer of authority will approach completeness." A similar idea, although acquired by very different means, is thrust forward today by the rebel theologians of the Bonhoeffer school. As William Hamilton puts it, "In the world come of age, we can no longer be religious, if you define religion as that system that treats God or the gods as need-fulfillers and problem-solvers." And to this oddly assembled consensus may be added the voice of Buckminster Fuller, who said recently: "We are probably coming to the first period of direct, consciously assumed responsibility of man in the universe."

Well, what are our prospects for "taking over"? How should "we" go about it? Which are the reins of destiny, the significant lines of causation? On these questions there are both depressing and differing views. If you read learned studies of the human situation in the twentieth century—say, Seidenberg's *Post-Historic Man,* Erich Kahler's *The Tower and the Abyss,* Ellul's *The Technological Society,* and Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man,* the prospects will not seem good. According to these scholars, modern man is so much a captive of his irresponsible past, there seems little hope that he can break out of his institutional confinements. Pessimistic historians and cautious sociologists say, in effect, that we *cannot,* whereas the moralists and ardent humanitarians say that we *must.*

A broadly suggestive instance of this confrontation, with the emphasis on hope, is found in a recent (1965) volume published by Oxford University Press—*The Glass Curtain Between Asia and Europe,* edited by Raghavan Iyer. This book is a symposium comprised of twenty essays on the attitudes of Asians and Europeans toward one another, with a concluding dialogue on the subject between the editor and Arnold Toynbee. The temper of *The Glass Curtain* is revealed by the final interchange between these two:

> *Iyer*: It seems to me that the real enemy in both East and West is a common enemy, the crafty enemy of a subtle egotism which, when it takes collective forms, is not often seen for what it is. This enormous lack of love that prevails is fostered in the name of truth and in turn falsehoods and halftruths promote contempt and even hatred. I think we must get to the standpoint of the Stoic poet who saw the whole world as a single city. There is a basis both in East and West for a new humanism. The very word "foreigner" doesn't exist in several Eastern languages.
>
> *Toynbee*: Let us abolish it in all languages.

This book is a meticulously written and surprisingly complete study of the origin, operation, and fruit of what Edmund Taylor (in *Richer by Asia*) calls political, institutional, and cultural *delusions.* It begins with a title essay by Dr. Iyer, in which the fact of a "glass curtain" of mutual misconception and prejudice separating East and West is established in detail and beyond doubt. In a summarizing passage, he says:

> Too many Asians and Europeans still see "through a glass darkly," if they care to see each other at all. The psychological barrier seems real enough, but it is connected with a mixture of mythical and tangible differences wherein it is difficult to disentangle the myths from the facts. Repeated assertions are made about each other which, by their very nature, cannot be conclusively falsified, and indeed often induce a set of defensive and even hostile reactions that confirm inherited prejudices. The actual experience of communication is still largely conditioned by what Asians and Europeans have come to expect from mutual encounter, as a result of a legacy of contacts that were superficial for

centuries and rather painful for both in recent history. . . .

"The Glass Curtain" is a phrase with important implications—the frequent denial that there is any barrier at all, the fact that people find not only that their vision is hazy, coloured and distorted, but also that they cannot sense and touch those beyond the curtain; and, further, than even if a few thinking men shatter the curtain with their analytical tools, it is rapidly replaced as words like "Oriental" and "Westerner" are periodically redefined to suit changing prejudices. We are faced not merely with meagre knowledge or a mild suspicion of strangers but, what is worse, a seemingly invincible ignorance and a self-perpetuating sense of superiority reinforced by a basic failure in communication.

The book has five sections, of which the first is Dr. Iyer's statement of the problem. Then, in sequence, are discussions of the Historical Context, Changing Attitudes, Claims to Uniqueness, and a final section called Toward Co-Existence. Often the same question is discussed by both Asians and Europeans, and it is here that one distinction of the book appears, for these contributors, besides providing the often "unique" insight their particular backgrounds make possible, are at least as severe in exposing prejudice and delusion in their own parts of the world as they are in noting the blindness common in the opposite hemisphere. Particularly recommended are the essays by C. S. Venkatachar, Geoffrey Hudson, Wang Gungwu, Hugh Tinker, and Joseph Needham, all of which reflect the good will and understanding of men who long ago left nationalism and cultural chauvinism behind.

It is here, in this common maturity (shared, indeed, by all the contributors), that the reader finds evidence of the spirit of world or universal human community. And what is equally important, the expression of this spirit takes form in patient removal, block by block, of the various barriers to its spread. At the same time there is what seems full acknowledgement of the deep obligations of both these cultures to one another for their mutual enrichment. For example, Mr. Venkatachar pays this tribute to the men of Europe:

Not only in India but all over Asia European historians, philologists, anthropologists, and archaeologists unravelled the long-forgotten past of Asian cultures by incessant digging, exploring, researching in the midst of trackless sands and humid jungles. Western scientists and scholars added new dimensions to past history and the great traffic in civilization in Asia. Their labours reawakened the dormant and garbled memories of the Asian past and began to light up the minds of the Asian peoples. These discoveries gripped their imagination and activated their thinking. The era of awakening began, and with it a reassessment of the baffling elements of the past and the present. A new pride and self-respect sprang up. Asian societies started, in the context of their own national traditions, on the memorable journey of uniting the memory of their past with the knowledge, thought, and ideas of the modern West. This process of cultural renewal and interaction is the key to the regeneration of Asian societies and their road to further development.

Joseph Needham, distinguished biochemist and humanist scholar, redresses another balance by stressing aspects of Asian civilization little known to Westerners. The emptiness of blanket phrases such as "Oriental despotism" becomes manifest when he observes:

British speakers have been heard to maintain that since we alone understand true democracy it is our duty to impose our conceptions even by force on the non-European inhabitants at least of colonial territories—yet they admitted, upon being asked, that they had never heard of the *panchayat,* or the *asabiyah* of Ibn Khaldun; of Mencian authority for tyrannicide, the civil service examinations of the T'ang dynasty, or the *Yu Shih Pu* (the "Censorate"). In ignorance of the most elementary facts of Chinese, Indian, or Arab history, Europeans or Americans within the framework of the United Nations (so lamentably situated) think nothing of trying to impose their own concepts, the fruit of absolutely different historical developments, upon the representatives of countries which seem (to the unseeing eye) miserable and inferior because as yet they lack the full force of modern industrial power. . . .

Roman law, though a great intellectual achievement, could lead to paradoxical injustices impossible in Chinese jurisprudence. Medieval

> scholastic philosophy, spinning its webs between the stems of uncriticised premises, turned before long into the abominable dogmas of the Inquisition. . . . It is relevant and significant that Chinese history contains nothing really comparable with the European Inquisition. . . . Whatever may be said of Asian failure to develop modern natural science, it does not seem that Chinese or Arabic social philosophy, at any rate, ever lost sight of the concreteness of humanity. The world of today would do well to approach Asian humanism in a more receptive spirit.

It is plain from this book that a generous mutual understanding between East and West—or Asia and Europe—is already a vigorous growth, and what remains is to seed it in all societies. And this, of course, is the problem. Simply from the perspective which *The Glass Curtain* provides, we see that many people throughout the world are still struggling under cultural delusions which were more natural—more justified, that is, by circumstances and undeveloped historical understanding—in past centuries. What, we must ask, can bring unity out of all this multitudinous anachronism? Strong passions are at issue, deep longings, and resentments grounded in both fear and great historical injustice. Yet it has happened before and it can happen again. Great ethical vision can arouse the common humanity of whole populations, regardless of their differing maturities and even conflicting immediate interests. This is the key which none of our sophisticated sociological treatises and scholarly diagnoses propose, or even indicate, save by feeble hope or dramatic omission. It is very much to the credit of the contributors to *The Glass Curtain* that, beneath the calm of analysis and appraisal, its pages are restless with inchoate longing for such a vision.

# *COMMENTARY*
## BEYOND THE NORMS

A PASSAGE in William Glasser's *Reality Therapy* (Harper & Row, 1965) has direct application to the questions discussed in this week's Frontiers. Also engaged in work with delinquents, Dr. Glasser meets the problem of "morality" head-on:

> All society is based on morality, and if the important people in the patient's life, especially his therapist, do not discuss whether his behavior is right or wrong, reality cannot be brought home to him. It is unrealistic to ask a delinquent girl why she stole a car, why she is pregnant, why she smokes marijuana, hoping that once she discovers the reasons she will be able to resolve her conflicts and change her behavior. . . . When we point out what the patient is doing which may be wrong instead of helping him to look for excuses, he finds out that therapy is not an intellectual psychiatric game of conflict, conflict, what can be the conflict? He discovers that we really care about him, an essential step toward gaining the involvement necessary for therapy. . . .
>
> Where standards and values are not stressed, the most that therapy can accomplish is to help patients become more comfortable in their irresponsibility. Because our effort is always directed toward helping patients fulfill their needs, we insist on their striving to reach the highest possible standards.
>
> We are looking for neither conformity nor mediocrity in the guise of normal behavior. The most responsible men, such as Lincoln or Schweitzer, are those farthest from the norm. Our job is not to lessen the pain of irresponsible actions, but to increase the patient's strength so that he can bear the necessary pain of a full life as well as enjoy the rewards of a deeply responsible existence.

What occurs here is the manifest need of such men who work with the young for generalized support from the social community. They need more examples of people who go beyond the "norms." One imagines that after they mention Lincoln and Schweitzer, they have to start doing "research" to get further illustrations of human excellence and nobility. For children especially, the models of the good life cannot be left abstract. This is the final point of this week's "Children" article.

It may not be therapeutic to identify the conflicts in children's lives as "causes" of their delinquency, but it is very much the responsibility of the larger society to reduce the cultural contradictions which children can hardly be expected to, solve. Karen Horney speaks of these in *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time,* beginning with the contradiction between—

> competition and success on the one hand, and brotherly love and humility on the other. . . . We must be not only assertive but aggressive, able to push others out of the way. On the other hand, we are deeply imbued with Christian ideals which declare that it is selfish to want anything for ourselves, that we should be humble, turn the other cheek. . . .

One (doubtless inadequate) definition of a delinquent would be that he is a child who can't manage the controlled hypocrisy of seeming to succeed in both directions.

# CHILDREN
## . . . and Ourselves
### BEYOND INSIGHT AND ANECDOTE

THE more one reads in popular literature about children and children's problems, the more evident becomes the dependence of the contributing authorities on the effectiveness of the anecdote, or the fragment of case history, to make their points. These dramatic bits of human interest, rare passages isolated from the endless fugue of human development, are indeed impressive. They illustrate the coincidence, the conjunction, at just the right moment, of hungering human need and fortunate insight, so that some kind of plateau of achievement seems to be the result.

And yet, one wonders about the long-term usefulness of such communications. Is this the only way to examine the problems of the parent-child relationship? Of course, the recounting of an incident or a chain of related happenings in the life of a child may bring a shock of self-recognition to the parent-reader. For example, *Parents Magazine* for last December has this passage in an article by a psychiatrist, Dr. Graham B. Blaine, Jr.:

> . . . a mother with a brother who is an alcoholic may talk so much about her concern for this brother, and how little she wants her son to be like him, that the child begins to feel the uncle is getting all the attention and concern. If being bad merits all this loving concern, why be good, particularly if such high standards are set that the child is constantly missing the mark. If he receives no praise for being just half-way good, it may be more gratifying to be all bad.

It is easy to see how a mother who has been talking too much about the misfortune of another member of the family, using this individual to score moralistic points, might be led to see in a flash how wrong she has been in doing this. And reflection *might* lead to a basic reform on the part of the parent in relation to the values she tacitly communicates to her children. Thereafter, she may determine, there will be less *ad hoc* moralizing, less printing on the child's vulnerable psyche of one judgmental verdict after another about other people and their behavior.

In the long run, however, this "don't" psychology of admonition to parents relies hopefully on the capacity of adults to turn such counsel around and make it into some positive meaning for their own lives. And the question arises: Are they any more equal to this than their children?

Again, in the passage quoted, the point emphasized turns on the child's response in terms of "how to get along with," or "get the most out of," Mom. No doubt some part of wise parenthood takes such responses into account, yet at root this amounts to teaching the child how to manipulate the maternal cornucopia. Mom, in these terms, is really some kind of object. What about the accidental, casual, even unintentional but continuous instruction a mother affords to her child by living out a full life of her own—as subject?

Dr. Blaine touches briefly on this point:

> Parents should be sympathetic to a child's interests and hobbies even if they seem quite bizarre—for example, memorizing batting averages or studying grasshoppers. Though the hobbies may take time away from studies they stimulate a joy in learning and also help develop a feeling of competence.
>
> It is important, too, for parents to set a good example in this direction. They should not abandon their own interests in order to spend every spare moment with their children.

This seems clear enough, yet what about the genuineness of feeling at this level? Is role-playing good enough? Pseudo-interest, surely suspected by the child, can lead to ritual dialogue, a game which the child plays with a half-conscious self-indulgence that has the same weakening effect on him as the conscious condescension of the parent must produce in adults. The net of such operations can only be an exercise in hypocrisy—innocent enough at the outset, but hardly constructive over the years.

Meanwhile, the "good example" of the parents in maintaining "their own interests" will be good for little if it is carried on in only an "exemplary" way, without independent intensity. Enough has been written about their parents, by the children of the distinguished, the committed, the great, to show the extraordinary importance for the young of becoming aware of driving purpose in the lives of older people. Equally important is the child's awareness of his parents' simple integrities, which he may remember all his life.

This is a peculiarly difficult age for parents, especially if they are brought to recognize that the problems of their children are often a reflection of their own. We live in an age of fallen gods and anti-heroes. There have been enormous changes in our world within little more than a generation. Those who have even faint memories of the days before World War I will recall qualities of life and wholesome generosities to which the present generation of youth has little or no access in either feeling or idea.

This is not to suggest that the final exhaustion of nineteenth-century complacency and calm—marked by the shock which overtook the Western world in 1914—was preceded by a golden age which should fill us with nostalgia. But it was then at least possible to feel faith in the traditional ideals of Western civilization, with little skepticism and no cynicism. "Progress" was still a word bearing tidings of promise for the young, and the warm humanitarianism of the period had suffered no noticeable betrayals of the sort which in the decades since made the very language of altruism and human solidarity subject to suspicion.

While hardly "heroic," the nineteenth century was still "optimistic," and the judgment of human nature retained a Victorian glow. For all its shallowness, it was good for children.

All this, today, is gone. Perhaps it had to go. But now the positive feelings of thoughtful and kindly people have to be filtered through agonizing awareness of death camps, through memory of atomic decimation of whole cities, and past the impending threat of nuclear war. And there are other, more domestic disillusionments too numerous to mention.

There is little left in our world to help us to bring up our children to a youth filled with bright-eyed anticipation. There are terrible explanations we must make to them, sooner or later, and little to offer in the way of examples of wisdom and bravery in our time. We are hardly equipped, ourselves, to cope with all these subtle defeats. Perhaps, if we can practice a basic honesty, the children may know how to do the rest.

These are some of the reasons, one may think, why the professional advisers of parents are reduced to insights and anecdotes, to get across their practical wisdom about the needs of children. They lack cultural references for anything else, and are obliged to make-do with analysis of "encounters." For if they spoke of the need for vision, for high human inspiration, and for the heroic and the epic in the shaping of childhood attitudes, where would they get their illustrations? There is a limit to what even the best of psychiatrists can do. Obviously, the situation calls for a great deal of improvisation. We have to start looking for the heroes—even the half- or quarter-developed ones—of our time. If they do not exist, we shall have to invent them. The need of the children is very great.

# *FRONTIERS*

## Modeling for Social Good

THE logical positivist disdain for "truth" and moral values sometimes produces curious effects for social scientists who resolve to put their skills and insights to work for actual human betterment. Obviously, any effort to "improve" people or the social situations affecting peoples' lives will involve at least a few assumptions about goodness, and the scientists who make them are likely to be caught in the act of giving value judgments far-reaching consequences through techniques which influence the attitudes of other human beings. Very strange but perfectly logical challenges may be made to such scientists. Before citing an example of this from the literature of juvenile delinquency, it is of initial interest to note that the practical application of scientific knowledge in behalf of delinquents is subject to restraint. As the writers to be quoted, LaMar T. Empey and Jerome Rabow, point out in their opening paragraph:

> Despite the importance of sociological contributions to the understanding of delinquent behavior, relatively few of these contributions have been systematically utilized for purposes of rehabilitation. The reason is at least partially inherent in the sociological tradition which views sociology primarily as a research discipline. As a consequence, the rehabilitation of delinquents has been left, by default, to people who have been relatively unaware of sociological theory and its implications for treatment. *(American Sociological Review*, October, 1961.)

This paper is an account of the theory and practice of an ongoing experiment in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents conducted at Provo, Utah. The undertaking is in large part the model followed by a similar experiment in rehabilitation (described in "Children" for May 11) in the Los Angeles area. In the Pinehills (Provo) experiment as in the Silverlake (Los Angeles) experiment, the dynamic for change is "peer group interaction," which means a kind of "chain reaction" of decision-making by adolescent boys (fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen) living in community and judging and influencing one another. Here we isolate by quotation particular features of the treatment which have evoked comment (a full account of this experiment may be had by purchasing No. S-385 of the Bobbs-Merill Company's social science reprints [25 cents], 4300 West 62nd St., Indianapolis 6, Indiana):

> Pinehills is not a place for boys to do time. If, therefore, a boy does not become involved and the [peer] group is unwilling or unable to take action, authorities will. It might involve requiring him to work all day without pay, placing him in jail, or putting him in a situation where he has no role whatsoever. In the latter case he is free to wander around the Center all day but he is neither allowed to work nor given the satisfaction of answers to his questions regarding his future status.
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> Boys are seldom told why they are in trouble or, if they are told, solutions are not suggested. To do so would be to provide them structure by which to rationalize their behavior, hide other things they have been doing, and escape the need to change. Consequently, they are left on their own to figure out why the authorities are doing what they are doing and what they must do to get out of trouble.
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> Situations of this type precipitate crises. Sometimes boys run away. But, whatever happens, the boy's status remains amorphous until he can come up with a solution to his dilemma. This dilemma, however, is not easily resolved.
>
> There is no individual counseling since this would reflect heavily upon the integrity of the peer group [to whom the rehabilitative function belongs, by the definitions of the experiment]. Consequently, he cannot resolve his problems by counseling with or pleasing adults. His only recourse is to the group. But since the group waits for him to bring up his troubles, he must involve himself with it or he cannot resolve them. Once he does, he must reveal why he is in trouble or how he has been abusing the program. If he refuses to become involved he may be returned to court by the authorities. The latter alternative occurs rarely, since adults have more time than boys. While they can afford to wait, boys find it very difficult to "sweat out" a situation. They feel the need to resolve it.

Now, what possible criticisms could be made of such methods? Well, it is a very tough

situation for a boy—or for anyone at all. He seems to be framed by forces and circumstances he can neither identify nor manipulate according to past experience. Yet it is also a situation in which the boys "are granted the power to make important decisions affecting their entire lives." It is a situation in which, if he wants to stay in it, the only power-structure the boy can relate to is made up of other boys of his own age who demand that he *change*, and demand it with an urgency growing out of their feeling that their own futures depend upon the success of the rehabilitative process for them all. What other objections might be offered? From the highly sophisticated, impersonal discipline of sociology comes this criticism—rather a comment, but one which initially shocks:

> . . . the techniques used at Pinehills are reminiscent of those employed by the Communists in Korea on selected groups of American prisoners of war. One sees the leverage of the group being applied to the individual by way of public confessions, the demand for candor, the infinite patience and inscrutability of authority. There appears the "carrot and stick" technique along with the utilization of role disruption and social anxiety as motivating forces. Beyond that, one is reminded how systematically and thoroughly the integrity of psychological privacy is undermined.

This professional commentator concludes:

> What I should urge is that we once again return to the classic question of ends and means; that we must not hide from the larger, perhaps tragically futile, issues of social existence. Whether one is warped toward legitimate American society or legitimate Communist society is not the essential issue. It would be a Koestler-like dream were Empey, Rabow and some of the rest of us to find ourselves "comrades" in a Communist rectification camp. What could we say? . . . .

Drs. Empey and Rabow reply more than adequately by pointing out that the Pinehills experiment has the effect of helping the delinquent boys to make individual decisions, by leaving them nothing else to do, whereas, by contrast, the most noticeable characteristic of the returning American soldiers who had been exposed to Communist rectification "was their confusion and apathy, their lack of a personal or collective commitment to an ideology." The authors of the paper add:

> Thus, it is one thing to break a person down under intolerable stress and quite another to use this stress positively, not only to modify perceptions, but to permit a greater susceptibility for the examination of new alternatives, skills, and opportunities. . . . Increased opportunity to be conventional [as opposed to delinquent] would seem to be imperative.

In short, this rehabilitation program is founded on a method of making behavior in conformity to the norms of conventional society appear more desirable (less painful) than conformity to the "ideals" of the sub-culture of delinquency. And, in the process, there is some acceptance of individual responsibility. For these reasons, then, the method has pragmatic sanction on common-sense humanist grounds.

We should like to add a speculation. It is that beneath the professionalism of applied sociology is a deep concern for human good that somehow gets through and is felt by the boys; that secret conviction about the importance of self-reliance in Emerson's sense has an osmotic influence in at least some instances; and that an entire series of value-judgments (clandestine in relation to scientific relativism) achieve a beneficent presence which is encouraged by the voluntary lay group in Provo—the Citizens Advisory Council—which cooperated in establishing the program, as well as by the understanding and cooperative judge of the juvenile court, and even by the more impersonal but very real contribution of the Ford Foundation. In short, while there is a "morality" that equates with managing to conform to the existing society, there is also a morality to be achieved by rising to existential ethical awareness (if this can be found) in the individual, and this self-generated standard of human good is indeed, we would suggest, the original source of all those vulgarized norms and expedient persuasions which pass as the "conventional" morality of the age. It follows, therefore, that in wholly private, wholly *amateur* ventures in rehabilitation, such as the Synanon

Foundation, these higher human resources for self-determination can be explored in a free-wheeling, undogmatic, and endlessly provocative style, along with, and somehow within, application of the context-building techniques that are successful in making conformity seem more prudent than deviation.

The truly good society, it seems to us, will be a society increasingly aware of the rich reciprocities for modelling that may develop between public and private institutions—the best models finally being recognized as those which are the most spontaneous, amateur, and free.