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INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

WHAT can be said about Industrial Society from the Christian point of view, assuming that such a point of view exists? Modern industry arose only in Western Europe and only when Western Europe had ceased to be Christian in all but name. It hit the common people like a hurricane, uprooting and degrading them in a manner and to a degree which no previous generation had been able even to conceive. The dark satanic mills were satanic indeed. It is enough to remind ourselves that little children, down to the age of five, were made to work in them regularly for fifteen hours a day. "Let bygones be bygones," is what one would like to be able to say, and I shall certainly not spend my space here dwelling on the unspeakable horrors of Industrial Society 150 years ago. But while bygones are bygones, origins are nonetheless origins. The origins of Industrial Society, associated as they were with a total collapse of Christian standards of behavior between men, are still with us, no matter how much the actual behaviour has been modified since then.

R. H. Tawney has shown that one of the fundamental causes—or perhaps pre-conditions—of the rise of Industrial Society was "the contraction of the territory within which the writ of religion was conceived to run." It was no longer meant to run in the fields of politics and economics, and nothing that has happened during the last 150 years or so has re-established it there. Tawney's famous comments on the intellectual developments leading up to the birth of Industrial Society are worth remembering here: "To the most representative minds of the Reformation as of the Middle Ages, a philosophy which treated the transactions of commerce and the institutions of society as indifferent to religion would have appeared, not merely morally reprehensible, but intellectually absurd." Although behaviour has changed, this philosophy still rules, if anything, more powerfully and more rarely challenged than ever. In this sense, the origins of Industrial Society are still with us, and we are all feeling their effects.

Few people, says Tawney, would deny that the exploitation of the weak by the powerful has been a permanent feature in the life of most communities that the world has seen. "But the quality in modern societies," he continues, "which is most sharply opposed to the teaching ascribed to the Founder of the Christian Faith, lies deeper. . . . It consists in the assumption, accepted by most reformers with hardly less naïveté than by the defenders of the established order, that the attainment of material riches is the supreme object of human endeavour and the final criterion of human success. Such a philosophy, plausible, militant, and not indisposed, when hard pressed, to silence criticism by persecution, may triumph or may decline. What is certain is that it is the negation of any system of thought or morals which can, except by a metaphor, be described as Christian. Compromise is as impossible between the Church of Christ and the idolatry of wealth, which is the practical religion of capitalist societies, as it was between the Church and the State idolatry of the Roman Empire."

These words were penned nearly fifty years ago. What has changed since then? Many things have changed, but not, I suggest, the idolatry of wealth. It has become, if anything, more self-sufficient and all-pervading. From being a passion of individuals it has become the central preoccupation of governments. And it has conquered, to all intents and purposes, the whole of mankind.

Well, then, is Tawney wrong when he says that it is the negation of any system of thought or morals that can be called Christian? If he is right, what is there to be said? "The saints and sages of earlier ages launched their warnings and their denunciations." Are we to do the same? Or are we to remain silent?

Denunciations are the order of the day. Everybody denounces everybody else. To mention only a few of the targets of current denunciations—restrictive practices; inefficient management;

unwillingness to change; lack of interest in applied science and technology; lack of salesmanship; immobility of labour; feather-bedding; and so forth. . . . Yes, all these are incessantly being denounced. Why? Because they are said to stand in the way of Rapid Economic Growth.

What would be the point of the Churches' adding their voices to this chorus? Is this the Churches' business? Can the Churches speak with authority on these subjects at all? I hardly think so.

In any case, if the idolatry of wealth is the negation of Christianity, a denunciation of behaviour merely because it hinders economic growth is more likely to strengthen than to weaken the idolatry. It is obvious that we shall get ourselves into a hopeless tangle unless we follow the advice so frequently given by St. Thomas Aquinas: "Distinguish!" What is there to be distinguished? Above all, the different levels at which a problem of this kind might be discussed. Do we want to discuss Industrial Society at the level of every-day functioning and, as Christians, work towards a better functioning of the system as it is? Or do we want to discuss Industrial Society at the level of principles, relating it to an authentic picture of man and measuring it against such a picture? At the former level, we might legitimately be talking about removing obstacles to economic growth. But at the latter we should be concerned with the idolatry of wealth and might even have to question the legitimacy of economic growth.

These two levels of discourse are of course interconnected. We might find, for instance, that the most important obstacle to economic growth is the obstinate refusal of practical men to consider the wider requirements of human nature. As Tawney said, "to convert efficiency from an instrument into a primary object is to destroy efficiency itself." He also drew attention to "the truism that, since even quite common men have souls, no increase in material wealth will compensate them for the arrangements which insult their self-respect and impair their freedom" and held that "a reasonable estimate of economic organisation must allow for the fact that, unless industry is to be paralysed by recurrent revolts on the part of outraged human nature, it must satisfy criteria which are not purely economic."

It is never, I suggest, the task of Spiritual Authority to work for worldly interests, because no spiritual insight is needed for this purpose and non-spiritual men, well-armed with logic, technological knowledge, accountancy, and practical experience, can perfectly well look after themselves. That restrictive practices restrict production is something everybody can understand. But to distinguish—this is again the key to all wisdom—to distinguish between those restrictive practices which "assert the superiority of moral principles over economic appetites" and those that merely serve some sectional interest, this requires a certain spiritual discernment. The same goes for the much lamented resistance to change which is said to affect managements as well as men. Even assuming that the changes which are being resisted would be economically advantageous, it requires spiritual discernment to distinguish between those that insult the self-respect of common men and impair their freedom and those that—by great good fortune, because rarely by design—do the opposite.

How arid and profitless all the discussions on technical progress have become! We are told that men must adapt themselves to technological change, but no one tells us why and everybody behaves as if change could never be other than beneficial. We are told that everybody must become much more mobile and be prepared to change his occupation several times during his working life, as if steadiness, reliability, faithfulness, and pride in real competence were virtues which could be suppressed or abandoned without loss to individuals and to society. Married women, mothers of young children, should go into factories in ever greater numbers, as if the production of goods or services was *ipso facto*, unquestionably, and in every case more important than the bringing up of children or anything else done in the home. Men must be withdrawn from agricultural work to be available for factory employment, because productivity in the latter is said to be higher than productivity in the former, as if there was no need to look after the land, to keep it beautiful and fertile—the land which was given to

man, not made by him, and which even the town-dweller needs for recreation and, as he says, "to get away from it all."

In all these injunctions there is, of course, a possible element of truth, but only an element. It is the same with the incessant call for economic growth. No one would be against growth, as a matter of principle. Equally, however, no one still capable of realistic thinking could be in favour of growth, as a matter of principle. "Growth" is a purely quantitative concept and therefore quite meaningless until defined in qualitative terms. Some "growths" are healthy, others are unhealthy, even deadly. Cancer is growth without meaning and purpose.

Industrial Society suffers today, as it has suffered from its beginning, from an almost total lack of spiritual guidance. How could it be otherwise when the writ of religion does not run in the vast fields of industry and economics, the most formative forces of that Society? But it means that Christians in industry find themselves in an almost hopeless position. They struggle on as best they can, without help or guidance from any source outside their own conscience. In all other respects they can call on expert advice, but not when it comes to the most central and difficult problems of all: how to promote, or only to protect, the spiritual well-being of their workpeople, their colleagues and themselves.

It is not easy to talk about these things because they are hardly ever talked about. The autonomy of economics is so firmly established in the philosophy of Industrial Society that to challenge it is the most certain method of getting oneself classified as a sentimentalist or a fool or worse. Tawney did challenge it; but who, today, would follow Tawney? "The phenomenon," he said, "is a curious one. To suggest that an individual is not a Christian may be libellous. To preach in public that Christianity is absurd is legally blasphemy. To state that the social ethics of the New Testament are obligatory upon men in the business affairs which occupy nine-tenths of their thoughts, or on the industrial organisation which gives our society its character, is to preach revolution. To suggest that they apply to the relations of States may be held to be sedition." These generalities, it might be said, do not help us in our daily lives in industry, even if we are ready to accept them as true. What *are* the social ethics of the New Testament when it comes to technological change, mechanisation, automation, work study, or even the directly human problems of industrial relations?

It is precisely here that Industrial Society needs help from the Churches. Take what is perhaps the most important and most central matter of all: the nature of work as affected by mechanisation and automation. Is work a necessary and indispensable requirement of human fulfilment or is it merely an unpleasant condition of survival? Is leisure preferable to work? If a man without work cannot be a real man, what kind of work is in accordance with his true inner needs and what kind of work is incompatible with them? How can Industrial Society do without a theology, or at least a natural philosophy, of work? Of course it cannot and it does not. Its current philosophy of work is the most primitive imaginable: work is an unpleasant necessity which people will accept only because of economic need; they would much prefer to be relieved of it, and they and society as a whole will benefit from any measure that reduces the "work-load" without reducing the availability of goods and services; in short, the best life is one of maximum consumption with a minimum of work.

Perhaps I exaggerate. If so, this merely serves to illustrate the fact that an agreed philosophy of work is not among the intellectual possessions of Industrial Society. Nor is there even any dialectical struggle to formulate one. Everyone tells us, no doubt with reason, that the rate of change—of change in the *work* of Industrial Society—is continuously accelerating; but no one appears to be bothered by the absence of any philosophy to guide the direction of change. A professor of Mechanical Engineering and Applied Science sets out to tell us something about "the effect of technology on leisure and the use of leisure." What has he got to say? "It cannot be long before most people have as much time for leisure (genuine leisure, not counting time for commuting and for the necessary business of eating and sleeping) as they spend on their work."

Now, is this a good thing or a bad thing? "Some people," he continues, "profess to see a threat in this tendency . . . 'Satan finds mischief for idle hands to do'." But he is not worried: "It seems to me that these fears are easily refuted." Well, are they? They may be justified or they may be unjustified, but one thing is utterly certain: they are not *easily* refuted. The professor's own refutation of these fears consists in pointing out that "a man can have a second profession in addition to that by which he makes his living, and his attainments in this second profession can be as high as in the first." Where, then, is the leisure? Where is the effect of technology on leisure and the use of leisure? Instead of one eight-hour job, people will do two four-hour jobs, and there is indeed no need to be afraid of excessive leisure.

I have quoted the professor, not for the purpose of engaging in polemics, but merely to suggest that the people responsible for change in industry, no less than the professors of mechanical engineering, are in dire need of help in these profound and all-pervading matters relating to work and leisure. We need a real philosophy of work; we cannot do without it any more than we can do without economics, statistics, accountancy, jurisprudence, technology, sociology and the natural sciences. In all these relatively simple subjects we get help from specialists; in this—the most profound and difficult one—we get none.

Man has been made for work, but not for mindless toil. The Lord God put him into the Garden of Eden and told him "to dress it and keep it." So there was work even before the fall, and the expulsion from the Garden did not mean the beginning of work, but the beginning of toil "in the sweat of thy face." More urgent than a philosophy of leisure is a philosophy of work that distinguishes the good and wholesome work from the unwholesome and degrading. To talk merely about the impact of technology and man's need to adapt himself to anything the technologists may offer means to sell out to anonymous, irresponsible, and totally unspiritual forces.

A genuine philosophy of work, I suppose, would insist that the purpose of work is threefold:

First, to enable a man to develop the gifts and aptitudes with which he has been endowed;

Second, to put man into a social context so as to help him to overcome his inborn egocentricity; and

Third, to provide the goods and services needed for a becoming existence.

The nature of any particular work-arrangement can then be measured against these three purposes, and if this measurement shows it to be unsuitable it will have to be changed. Present-day Industrial Society, of course, recognises only the third of these purposes, with the result that most of its work is a scandal and a disgrace. People find nothing strange or disturbing in the fact that most people in our factories, offices, and shops work for nothing but the pay-packet, and they never tire of devising ingenious schemes or incentive payment so that the workers should work harder or better. Ask any group of ordinary workpeople whether they enjoy their work and you will be well advised not to stay for an answer.

But man has been created to be free, to use his life for a free unfolding, a free development of his bodily and spiritual potential. To make work odious to him is to deprive him of his freedom, and what could be worse for him or for society?

Industrial Society, left to its own devices without any spiritual guidance, is unable to think beyond its own origins which, as I have said, were associated with a total eclipse of the Christian view of man, an eclipse so total that people found nothing strange in theories which talked about "the labour market" and accepted it as normal that work should be devoid of joy for the great majority of men, women, and children. The whole of history was rewritten to suggest that human existence before the invention of the steam engine and the establishment of the factory system was "a condition of war of everyone against everyone"—"no arts, no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." What a picture and what an alibi! Unable to think of work as anything other than mindless toil, Industrial Society cannot help desiring leisure as the only escape from slavery.

Automation therefore becomes the Great White Hope, in line with the traditional epitaph of the old charwoman—

> Don't mourn for me, friends, don't weep for me never,
> For I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever.

True wisdom and spiritual guidance would help us to discover another road, not to abolish work—how could it ever be abolished anyhow, no matter what the computer salesmen may tell us!—but to make it again worthy of man, joyful and creative of good. "Ah, but this would mean a loss of productivity and a reduction in the standard of life!" . . . There you are: here are the idols of Industrial Society, man-eating monsters buttressed by fear, ignorance, and cynicism.

Maybe productivity would fall, maybe it would rise. How can anyone be certain that mindless and joyless toil is necessarily more productive than joyful and creative work? Why jump to such a conclusion which is no more soundly based than were the protests of industrialists 150 years ago that any limitation of child labour would produce economic collapse?

Research and experimentation are supposed to be the master-keys to what is called "a better life." Very well, then, why not have research and experimentation with the object of re-establishing the joy and dignity of work in Industrial Society? Is space research more urgent? Or, for that matter, any research in the natural sciences? Hundreds of millions of pounds are annually spent on research and experimentation, but none of it for the object here under discussion.

There was a time when nationalisation was meant to be the great tool for research and experimentation precisely on the humanisation of work in industry. But as so often in human affairs, people set out to do a thing and then forget why they ever did set out and do not even notice it when they end up doing the very opposite. Today, people seem to think that the primary purpose of taking an industry out of the compulsive context of private, profit-seeking, competitive enterprise has been, is, and could never be anything but the achievement of higher productivity and profitability. Why should anyone have thought that the removal of the driving force of private acquisitiveness would be the royal road to greater profitability? In truth, the object of the experiment was something quite different. "Its philosophy"—to use the words Tawney used in a similar context—"its philosophy had as its centre a determination to assert the superiority of moral principles over economic appetites, which have their place, and an important place, in the human scheme, but which, like other natural appetites, when flattered and pampered and overfed, bring ruin to the soul and confusion to society." It might indeed be worth while for those concerned—professionally concerned—with the spiritual welfare of Industrial Society to reconsider the problem of nationalisation in connection with the urgent need for research and experimentation towards a humanisation and spiritual reconstruction of industrial work.

Does anyone doubt the urgency of this need? Industry is generally held to be the main formative influence in Industrial Society and cannot, therefore, be thought to have nothing to do with the glaring symptoms of social sickness which we encounter on all sides. While we are daily urged and admonished to achieve an annual growth rate of four per cent in industrial output and productivity, and this objective eludes us, our Industrial Society, without the slightest difficulty, achieves an annual rate of growth in crime of eight per cent, and even higher rates in the growth of juvenile delinquency. The rates of growth in other symptoms of frustration and escapism—vandalism, drug addiction, mental breakdown, etc.—have rarely been compiled but are undoubtedly impressive. Are we to pretend to ourselves that these are not disturbing symptoms, that they are unconnected with the kind of work people have to do in the factories and offices, and that they will disappear if only our rate of economic growth is raised to four per cent?

In short, the search must be for nothing less than a new way of life. It is not difficult to see, although it may be hard to believe, that our present way of life cannot continue for long. There is no room on this earth for continuous growth—"room" in more senses than one—and the end of an era is near when the rate of change becomes ever more hectic. Extrapolate the established growth-curves only to the end of this

century, only thirty-odd years, and, on subject after subject, you arrive at a situation which ceases "to make sense." Something will *have* to give—in depth. I have no time to detail this now. Anyone who does will be accused of indulging in "the pessimism so fashionable today." But it is not a matter of optimism or pessimism. If someone is on the wrong road, the man who tells him that the road leads to an abyss is not a pessimist.

"Yes, but"—it will be objected—"how can you be sure that there is an abyss at the end of the road?" Yes, how does one read the signs of the times? The intellectual leaders of Industrial Society are the scientists. What do our most illustrious scientists have to say today? I quote from *Man and his Future*, published in 1963:

> The world was unprepared socially, politically and ethically for the advent of nuclear power. Now biological research is in a ferment, creating and promising methods of interference with "natural processes" which could destroy or could transform nearly every aspect of human life which we value. Urgently, it is necessary for men and women of every race and colour and creed, every intelligent individual of our one world, to consider the present and imminent possibilities.

"What are people for?" asks Sir Julian Huxley, and suggests that most of them are for nothing. "It is clear that the general quality of the world's population is not very high." He wants the "Fulfilment Society" and recommends the "exciting possibilities being opened up by drugs, like mescalin, lysergic acid, and psilocybin, which can produce astonishing results in minute doses. They . . . reveal new capacities of the human psyche." Surely a splendid invitation to all and sundry to "have a go"! Drugs are going to show us the way to fulfilment, and eugenics will do even more: it will speed psycho-social evolution. "The effects of merely encouraging potentially well-endowed individuals to have more children, and *vice versa*, would be much too slow. . . . Eugenics will eventually have to have recourse to methods like multiple artificial insemination by preferred donors of high genetic quality . . . Such a policy [he adds] will not be easy to execute.

Nobel-prize-winner Professor Lederberg agrees: "I think that most of us here believe that the present population of the world is not intelligent enough to keep itself from being blown up, and we would like to make some provision for the future." What kind of provision? "Why bother now with somatic selection [as advocated by Julian Huxley and Nobel-prize-winner Professor Muller] so slow in its impact? Investing a fraction of the effort, we should soon learn how to manipulate chromosome ploidy . . . etc., etc., to accomplish in one or two generations of eugenic practice what would now take ten or one hundred." Although Professor Crick, another Nobel-prize-winner, declares that "the development of biology is going to destroy, to some extent, our traditional grounds for ethical beliefs, and it is not easy to see what to put in their place," he nonetheless does not hesitate to offer "scientific solutions" for the problems raised by genetic technology. Having suggested that "it would not be very difficult . . . for a government to put something in our food so that nobody could have children" and that "they could provide another chemical that would reverse the effect, and only people licensed to bear children would be given this second chemical," Professor Crick makes the following reassuring comment: "The question . . . as to whether there is a drive for women to have children and whether this would lead to disturbances is very relevant. I would add, however, that there are techniques by which one can inconspicuously apply social pressure and thus reduce such disturbances. So although it may turn out that society has the right to determine who should have children, and in what way, the actual technique to be used has to be judged against the background of a social complex including the amount of education. This is why I think biological education is so important, because it enables the solutions to be attained with less stress to the social system."

So much for the biologists. The utterances of the nuclear physicists are hardly less ominous. They are an extraordinary mixture of despair and aggressiveness. Eugene Rabinowitch, the editor of the highly influential *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, echoes Julian Huxley's question. "What are people for?" and answers it in his own way: "Like a cell in

an organism, like an individual in a community, like a nation in the human race, so the human race as a whole is but a tiny and expendable constituent of the evolving universe. It has no right to imagine its own demise to be the 'end of the world' any more than the death of one man can be the death of the nation." ("Man's New Outlook," *BAS* 1963,VII, 15.)

"Scientific progress," we are told, the proudest offspring of Industrial Society, must on no account be impeded or even controlled in any way whatsoever. It is assumed to be the indispensable means of raising productivity, the highest aim of a generation too greedy to be concerned with the ultimate ends of human existence or even with the preservation of this existence itself.

It is far from my intention to attack science as such or any particular scientists, who are merely the most conspicuous manifestations of a society that has abandoned all deeper insights. How could I attack the scientists when they are being saluted by the man whom this society—including even some of the most prominent Churchmen—acclaims as its major prophet: Teilhard de Chardin. "The dream," he says, "which human research obscurely fosters is fundamentally that of mastering . . . the ultimate energy of which all other energies are merely servants; and thus, by grasping the very mainspring of evolution, seizing the tiller of the world." "I salute," he continues, "those who have the courage to admit that their hopes extend that far; they are at the pinnacle of mankind; and I would say to them that there is less difference than people think between research and adoration."

To the layman it would seem that hybris and confusion cannot be carried any further. Something will have to change—in depth. Insight may be gained by wisdom or by suffering. The suffering that may be in store is enough to frighten even the most stout-hearted. The history of Industrial Society does not suggest that the required insight will be gained in time, unless there comes help from a spiritual wisdom older and more secure than the wisdom of Industrial Society.

E. F. SCHUMACHER

REVIEW
AN "IMAGINED" REALITY

ONE interesting thing about Lionel Trilling's book of essays, *The Opposing Self* (Viking, Compass paperback, $2.25), is that its theme, expressed by the title, was more or less unplanned. This is probably a better way to get at the "self" than attempting a formal investigation. Here we shall consider only two of the nine essays by Mr. Trilling.

A basic aspect of the general question takes shape at the beginning of the discussion of George Orwell, originally an introduction to an edition of *Homage to Catalonia.* The "opposing self" is that identity of a man which refuses to be consumed by the events in which he participates. The threat is illustrated by the lack of measure we feel in relation to current happenings and the ease, therefore, with which they are forgotten. Orwell's book is about the Spanish civil war—a fairly recent event by any calculation—yet its displacement by other issues is unmistakable, and its meaning is no longer inquired into. Mr. Trilling puts this well: ". . . the Spanish war lies a decade and a half behind us, and nowadays our sense of history is being destroyed by the nature of our history—our memory is short and it grows shorter under the rapidity of the assault of events."

A "sense of history" is hardly possible without a sense of self. The perspective on events that gives history form must be gotten from somewhere, and in the case of Orwell, Mr. Trilling finds, it came from a compound of qualities which a graduate student of Trilling's summed up by saying of Orwell, "He was a virtuous man." Adopting this view, Mr. Trilling speaks of the rarity of its present-day usage:

> One doesn't have the opportunity very often. Not that there are not many men who are good, but there are few men who, in addition to being good, have the simplicity and sturdiness and activity which allow us to say of them that they are virtuous men, for somehow to say that a man "is good," or even to speak of a man who "is virtuous," is not the same thing as saying, "He is a virtuous man." By some quirk of the spirit of the language, the form of that sentence brings out the primitive meaning of the word virtuous, which is not merely moral goodness, but also fortitude and strength in goodness.
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> Orwell, by reason of the quality that permits us to say of him that he was a virtuous man, is a figure in our lives.

Orwell went to report the Spanish war and remained to fight until a wound which was almost mortal. His disillusionment with the Communists grew out of his tough-minded English love of fairness and facts. He was against injustice and for the underdog, but ideological abstractions did not guide his decisions and he was sharply critical of reformers who dealt in absolutes. Mr. Trilling quotes a revealing paragraph from a pamphlet which he calls "a persuasive statement of the case for socialism in Britain":

> The mentality of the English left-wing intelligentsia can be studied in half a dozen weekly and monthly papers. The immediately striking thing about all these papers is their generally negative querulous attitude, their complete lack at all times of any constructive suggestion. There is little in them except the irresponsible carping of people who have never been and never expect to be in a position of power.

As a "virtuous man," Orwell became profoundly skeptical of intellectuals whose allegiance was to abstraction. As Trilling says: "It was as simple as this: that the contemporary intellectual class did not think and did not really love the truth." Mr. Trilling concludes this essay:

> He [Orwell] told the truth, and told it in an exemplary way, quietly, simply, with due warning to the reader that it was only one man's truth. He used no political jargon, and he made no recriminations. He made no effort to show that his heart was in the right place, or the left place. He was not interested in where his heart might be thought to be, since he knew where it was. He was interested only in telling the truth. Not very much attention was paid to his truth—*Homage to Catalonia* sold poorly in England, it had to be remaindered, it was not published in America, and the people to whom it should have said most responded to it not at all.
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> Its particular truth refers to events now far in the past, as in these days we reckon our past. It does not matter the less for that—this particular truth implies a general truth which, as now we cannot fail to

> understand, must matter for a long time to come. And what matters most of all is our sense of the man who tells the truth.

The point here, if we read Mr. Trilling correctly, is that Orwell had nourished the "opposing self" throughout his life, by insisting on as much first-hand knowledge as he could get. The substance of this self is something generated by or in the mind. It is a creation of thought, and has been so recognized since the days of Socrates. The state of civilized equilibrium that we call culture is its social form, and one might say that these essays by Mr. Trilling are intended to show the importance of literature in the development of this culture—the only nourishment the independent or opposing self can have, beyond what a man is able to make for himself.

John Keats, whose letters supply material for the essay, "The Poet as Hero," gave much thought to the role of the opposing self. A man's life, Keats thought, is a succession of individual encounters, out of which he fabricates his being. "Nowadays," says Mr. Trilling, "our theory of poetic creation holds that the poet derives his power from some mutilation he has suffered." Some "darkness of the spirit" is his inspiration, or he writes not at all. This was not Keats's view, nor was it Wordsworth's or Coleridge's; these men "thought that poetry depended upon a condition of positive health in the poet, a more than unusual well-being." "The Poet as Hero" has this characterizing passage:

> Keats was situated in a small way of life, that of the respectable, liberal, intellectual middle part of the middle class his field of action was limited to the small continuous duties of the family; his deportment was marked by quietness and modesty, at times by a sort of diffident neutrality. He nevertheless at every moment took life in the largest possible way and seems never to have been without the sense that to be, or to become, a man was an adventurous problem. The phrase in his letters that everyone knows, "life is a vale of soul-making," is his summing up of that sense, which, once we have become aware of its existence in him, we understand to have dominated his mind. He believed that life was given for him to find the right use of it, that it was a kind of continuous magical confrontation requiring to be met with the right answer. He believed that this answer was to be derived from intuition, courage, and the accumulation of experience. It was not, of course, to be a formula of any kind, not a piece of rationality but rather a way of being and of acting. And yet it could in part be derived from thought, and it could be put, if not into a formula, then at least into many formulations. Keats was nothing if not a man of ideas.

The impression given great persuasion by this essay is that what we so eagerly speak of as the "dignity of man" somehow gains its substance by such thinking—insofar as thinking is also "a way of being and acting"—and that this substance is neither the product nor even the possession of any "system" for social order. The dignity of man, when it is real, is either prior to or ahead of any system which makes a pretension to helping it along. Human dignity is what prevents a man from doing a cruel or even an indifferent thing in the name of some ideological abstraction. But this, one ought to add, is only a side-effect of the way such a man lives his life.

The insight in Mr. Trilling's criticism is well illustrated in a passage in which he defends Keats against the claim that he lacked awareness of evil. To the modern man, Keats seems to neglect evil only because his perception of it is combined with "a very strong sense of personal identity." Kafka, Trilling proposes, gains the intensity of his exposition by leaving out the "opposing self." This point is emphasized by comparing Kafka with Shakespeare:

> . . . for Kafka the sense of evil is not contradicted by the sense of personal identity. . . . Kafka's knowledge of evil exists without the contradictory knowledge of the self in its health and validity, [while] Shakespeare's knowledge of evil exists with that contradiction in its fullest possible force.

Keats, Mr. Trilling makes plain, was a man of the Shakespearean breed. In his closing words the essayist sides with the poet:

> As we see him in his letters he has for us a massive importance—he has, as we say, a historical importance. . . . The spiritual and moral health of which he seems the image we cannot now attain by wishing for it. But we cannot attain it without wishing for it, and clearly imagining it. "The imagination may be compared with Adam's dream—he awoke and found it truth."

COMMENTARY
AN UNUSUAL ECONOMIST

WE first learned of E. F. Schumacher, the economist who is responsible for our lead article, when a friend gave us a copy of his pamphlet, *Modern Industry in the Light of the Gospel* (published by the Society for Democratic Integration in Industry and available from Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N. 1). The pamphlet was reviewed in MANAS for Feb. 20, 1963. Then, a couple of months later, we obtained a collection of his papers, published under the title, *Roots of Economic Growth*, by the Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanesi, India. This work (noticed in MANAS for April 17, 1963) identified Mr. Schumacher as the son of a German economist who was educated at Bonn, Berlin, Columbia, and in Britain as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, where he studied economics and philosophy. He became a British subject and worked as an economist in various capacities, one assignment being as adviser to the Government of Burma, another as adviser on development in India. He is now economic adviser to the National Coal Board of Great Britain. An editorial note introducing an article by Dr. Schumacher in the London *Observer* for Aug. 29, 1965, dealing with the harm done to underdeveloped countries by indiscriminate application of advanced technology to their problems, notes that he was for years associated with Keynes and Beveridge, two of the most influential economists of the century. (The *Observer* article was reviewed in MANAS for March 23 of this year.) The paper published as this week's lead was presented to a group of churchmen last April, which doubtless accounts for its somewhat overwhelming challenge to the Churches.

Readers may be interested to learn that a considerable selection of books and pamphlets by and about Gandhi may be purchased in the United States from Greenleaf Books, Raymond, New Hampshire. A list of the titles available may be obtained by request. Included, for example, is Pyarelal's *Mahatma Gandhi—The Early Phase* ($9.75), reviewed in MANAS for August 17. A basic Gandhian peace-maker's library consisting of forty-one titles is offered by Greenleaf Books at $16.00 for the lot. The library includes thirty-six works reflecting Gandhi's ideas, supplemented by five titles by Western writers influenced by Gandhi. Persons on the Greenleaf mailing list receive semiannual notice of books offered. The prices are low, and are reduced as increases in sales volume permit.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

WHERE Do You Go?

THE material we have for this week is from two extremes of the education spectrum—at one end, portions of a "conversation" which took place early this year at LEAP (Lower East Side Action Project, in New York), at the other, some observations about higher education by W. H. Ferry, Vice President of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions.

LEAP was organized by Larry Cole and his wife, Michelle, to work with the Puerto Rican youth of a New York tenement district. Participating in the "conversation" (extracts reprinted from *Renewal* for March) were Paul Goodman, John Holt, Nat Hentoff, Arthur Steuer (a freelance writer), Len Chandler (a folksinger), Paul Krassner, editor of the *Realist*, who helped to start LEAP in 1969, and six teenagers involved in LEAP activities.

The talk concerns what Leo, one of the teenagers, calls a "wall of China," made up of racial discrimination separating the youth of his area from where they would like to get and what they want to do. While all agree that the barrier of prejudice is real, even among teachers, evidence of cross-purposes appears when Paul Goodman talks about education for its own sake. After John Holt says, "What I try to do in teaching kids, is give them a feeling that they don't have to be dependent upon the person in the front of the room," Goodman picks up his theme:

Goodman: What I am after is the kid who is 8 or 9 years old who, sometimes by himself and without his gang, without a teacher dragging him into a classroom, takes a walk and learns some natural history because it is interesting. He does this by himself and he learns as much as any school will teach you.

Leo: But that doesn't get you any place. You can only learn so much in the streets. Then if you get a job, you can spend the rest of your life as a bus boy or washing dishes. Then a machine comes along and takes over, and if you don't know how to push the right button, you never get anywhere.

Charlie: People are always talking about drop outs. Kids drop out because they feel they aren't learning anything. . . .

Holt: You are absolutely right. We do need better teachers, better classrooms, better equipment and books, teachers who are interested in their students. What I am trying to say is that you don't have to wait while this is being done. These things are worth fighting for.

Goodman: I don't think so.

Leo: What don't you think is worth fighting for?

Goodman: I think it simply isn't true that the way most people learn something is in a school. I think it is a mistake. It just ain't so.

What eventually comes out is that the kids want a diploma because with a diploma they can get better jobs. Larry Cole observes that school counselors in this area never suggest the possibility of a student becoming a lawyer or a doctor:

Cole: I asked the guys if they had ever been counseled in this way. Not one of them ever even heard of anybody being counseled into a profession. . . .

Goodman: You're talking about two groups and one doesn't get the same treatment as the other. But the question is, "Is the treatment worth trying for?"

Cole: At least he ought to have a choice.

Len Chandler: . . . . It isn't by mistake we are dealing with a school system like this. The ghetto is no accident. It is designed and planned. The people in control would like you to drop out in the seventh grade. They would like you to learn on your own, in the street, talking with your buddies. Because then that's all you will learn. You'll easily fall into the ghetto pattern. You get a job as grocery boy. . . . You have to play the system because they have us so messed up. Try to get a job in a firm without a doctorate or a B.A. If you are black or Puerto Rican, they won't even listen to you. . . .

Cole: I'd like to talk about tomorrow morning. What happens then? What can we do? We can get together and bomb the school over there or we can talk about something else.

Goodman: Before that, Larry, is the question of what is worth doing; not whether you get a better school or a better education. I feel we have a lot of kids here who have the same kind of garbage in their minds that any kid in Yale or Harvard has. They seem to think the same things are worth while. They have the same ambitions, want to climb up in the same way, and who needs it? . . . .

This conversation doesn't really "get anywhere," which makes it at least an honest conversation. The built-in frustrations are not hidden, the cross-purposes, the dubious goals, are exposed. Yet Larry Cole, founder of LEAP, which is a kind of school, has a proposal:

Cole: . . . we have been talking about alternatives. One thing is to get out of school and say "The hell with it." The other is to set up a school that doesn't do the kind of damage the schools are now doing. The final alternative is to stay in the system and "cool" it. I agree with Paul Goodman that the guy who stays in the system is worse off than the guy who leaves. But what about the middle approach? Setting up a school?

Say Felix, here, wants to be a draftsman. In school they will not let him have the opportunity. They send him to a high school where they don't have drafting; where guys get shot on the steps; where there is fighting as initiation. We could find a draftsman to come and teach Felix. He would be a paid teacher and he would educate Felix to go out and make it. Felix would be able to make a living. . . .

I know at least thirty kids who come here who rate well above average in any kind of culture-free symbol test, I.Q., or whatever. Now what they have been receiving in school is not bad education or any education at all. It has been anti-education. It is anti-Leo, anti-growing up, anti-being a man. . . . Everything a kid has to do with in New York City in terms of public facilities is anti-kid. The correctional institutions destroy you. The educational institutions destroy you. The welfare institutions destroy you. We can talk about a kid dropping out of school, but we must see all of these little incidents together as a total push to keep these kids submerged. What do we do about it?

Well, maybe Larry Cole's LEAP will become more of a school, if he gets help.

But Paul Goodman's warnings remain pertinent. Toward the end of "The New Technology and Higher Education," an address given at Wisconsin State College last April, Mr. Ferry says:

You will remember the theme of these remarks: the task of twentieth century education is to bring social and political imagination into workable parity with scientific and technological imagination. One wonders about the capability of higher education to undertake this task. As presently conducted, the prospect is dim indeed. There are the dragons of vocationalism, complacency, and business-as-usual in the path.

. . . There is the pathetic and greedy willingness of the university to turn itself into a nationalized industry, of which the best-known example is the research peonage in which many of our most famous institutions are held by the Defense Department. . . .

It is hard to say anything about the emerging man, Technological Man. . . . On present evidence, Technological Man will be more leisureful, better informed, physically better off than his affluent predecessors. He will have many more energy units working for him, and will be able to call on his personal computer for instruction, advice, and data. One cocoon or other will wrap him in, either the welfare state or the welfare corporation.

He will also—and I am working from present tendencies—go to church more and believe less. He will be jittery and restless, a creature of great mobility with no destination. . . .

Nat Hentoff's final comment on the dialogue at LEAP now applies more than ever:

Well, it's not the first time there has been no communication going on. I know what Paul Goodman is talking about. But I wouldn't expect you fellows to know what he means by alternatives. And this is important. . . . If you are not going to be a part of the middle class scene, where do you go? . . . .