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WEALTH, RICHES, TREASURE

If wealth and fame do in the mind abide,
Then nought but dust is all your yellow gold.

Chinese Poem

I WANT to live in such a way that bringing home small gifts is meaningful. I remember the joy I felt as a child in finding a wonderful orange in the toe of my Christmas stocking—something almost too precious to eat. When someone brought a new record home it was eagerly listened to by everyone. Now fruit and records are commonplace. Two questions come to mind: Is it possible to have too much material goods? Is it as possible to have a life of too much leisure as one of too much toil? If so, what can we do about it?

In a society that has too much material wealth, it becomes increasingly difficult to find something to give that is both simple and needed. It is easier living here with wilderness where everything has to be carried by pack or by canoe. In such a setting small things take on a greater significance.

It is unfortunate that the word "wealth" has been co-opted by the world of money, so that, in common usage, it refers to money, or to the things that money can buy—material possessions. To be successful is to be wealthy, but we also feel that to be successful is to be fulfilled.

If I store up possessions at the expense of my neighbors, I rob them, for until there is enough for all, my surplus is theft from those who have not enough. And if, in truth, "I am involved in mankinde," and I have respect and care for my social body, my definitions of success are in conflict, since monetary "success" is opposed to the wellbeing (success) of my social body. There is a way out of this dilemma: make clear our definition of wealth. The word means different things to different people. Often we use the same word to connote widely varying concepts. This is fine, just so long as we are clear as to the varying meanings.

It has been helpful to me to break the idea of wealth into three categories:

(1) Destructive, violent or false wealth;

(2) Neutral wealth;

(3) Creative, productive or non-violent wealth.

Under destructive or violent wealth, lie those possessions that enrich one at the expense of another. Here are found monetary wealth and material possessions (those things that are in such limited supply that by owning them we deprive others). This is exploitative wealth. It is usually acquired through competition, theft, warfare or inheritance, and is protected by the law with its threat of violence. Wealth of this kind is usually dependent on finite resources. Although masquerading under the title of riches, this "wealth" is in reality poverty in regard to our social body. To be poor in this sense is to be a restricter of the flow of wealth as opposed to being a creator of it.

Neutral wealth comprises those things whose possession neither helps nor hinders another. Under this heading lie such things as private learning (enjoyment of study for its own sake), things made for one's own use, playing music for your own enjoyment, collecting things that are not in limited supply such as rocks, sea shells or folk songs.

Creative or productive wealth includes all those things with which by your possession you enrich others. This includes knowledge that is shared, talents or skills that are used for the. benefit of others, and those unique and wonderful realms of wealth wherein the more you spend them the larger grows your store. Chief among them are love and friendship. Close upon them

follow kindness and care, enthusiasm, health, happiness, joy. Shared music is doubly enriching. Creative wealth is non-violent. It is based on sharing. To acquire it no one need live on the back of another.

What are *your* treasures? What are *your* jewels? What is *your* creative wealth? Contemplation of these questions is of great importance to society. Searching for these treasures and bringing them to the parlor of your mind can give great pleasure, while helping to rid the world of the cancer of a destructive, violent concept of wealth. Perhaps it would help to approach such an emotionally loaded topic as wealth obliquely, to examine ways in which it affects our daily lives. One facet of being rich is to be able to give gifts. No matter how much we manage to store up material possessions, if we are unable to give, we are poor.

> In the sphere of material things, giving means being rich. Not one who has much is rich, but he who gives much—whoever is capable of giving himself is rich—only one who is deprived of all that goes beyond the barest necessities for subsistence would be incapable of enjoying the act of giving material things. But daily experience shows what a person considers the min mal necessities depends as much on his character as it depends on his actual possessions. It is well known that the poor are more willing to give than the rich. Nevertheless, poverty, beyond a certain point, may make it impossible to give, and is also degrading, not only because of the suffering it causes directly, but because of the fact that it deprives the poor of the joy of giving. (Erich Fromm.)

To the extent that we place value on material wealth, we indirectly encourage others to collect material wealth in order to give; or, inversely, for us to be able to give such gifts, we need to save, to collect, to store up material possessions. What then are the gifts that do not demand hoarding of possessions in order to be able to give, that do not require the exploitation of others? Things that cost little but are pleasing to both the giver and the receiver. This could be a poem or a piece of music that we feel will bring pleasure—a shared meal; a recipe; knowledge of a lovely spring; a way to make shoes that are simple, beautiful and comfortable; a gift of time in helping to plant an apple tree, dig a foundation, or care for a child. The finest gifts are not material ones, they depend on thoughtfulness, sensitivity, knowledge and caring, not on the material wealth of the giver. Is there a finer gift than receiving a lovely person as a neighbor or friend?

This way of defining wealth requires rethinking many aspects of our lives: our dress, our homes, our way of living. If my home is a display of material possessions, perhaps I need to think of other decorations that can stand the test of deeper and finer thought. Rather than rare paintings and china, why not try to make our homes elegant with the presence of joy, of the search for wisdom, of caring? Are not friendships and love the finest decorations a home can have? Simplicity in design and furnishings is a beautiful backdrop for human warmth. When we set our minds in this direction, we may discover many treasures that are both non-violent and unending.

Fashion is a device to separate a fool from his money. It is a snare to enrich merchants and producers. Do we need such decoration? Can the world afford the expense? Rather than be a follower of expensive fashion, why not be a leader in simple fashion?—be clothed in purpose, direction and kindness and dress in a way that makes the best use of the world's supply of materials. Thoreau admonished us to "know your own bone." I would like to extend that to "wear your own clothes." If they are of your own make and design, so much the better, but chiefly I'm thinking of clothes you like best, ones that have a special meaning. If all would do this, we would not only save much substance by not being a slave to someone else's taste but we would feel freer for it, we would walk more easily. How much richer the visual atmosphere would be if we abolished the luxury of fashion and replaced it with the comfort and rich variety of modern folk clothing. Among our finest treasures are those jewels of the mind, the potential to discover the myriad facets and depths of truth, be they in philosophy,

husbandry or design. These are the true treasures with rewards that are ever-growing, enriching both the individual and society at large, encouraging each being to develop to his fullest potential. The condemning factor in the traditional definition of wealth was that there could be no riches without poverty. Like the two sides of a coin, one was necessary to have the other. The rich needed the poor for contrast, for status (as well as to do their work). This is an explosive definition of wealth.

It is crucial that we begin considering as wealth only those things that do not make another poorer, things that diminish no one. Power over others is possibly the worst offender. If we are to have a society in which all are free to develop to their fullest, we must learn to enjoy the satisfaction of shared accomplishment wherein we gain pleasure from the fact that *we* did this, rather than *I*.

As we become more sensitive to our social body, we realize increasingly that our neighbors' lack is our impoverishment. Louisa May Alcott grew up in a household with little material goods to spare, her mother taking in washing to make ends meet. Looking back to her childhood she remarked, "I thought we were rich as we were always giving to the poor." What a wonderful atmosphere for a child to grow in! A wise, developed, and happy populace is our most precious treasure, our greatest natural resource. The riches, the stored wealth of the human brain, that we throw away are tremendous. This is a criminal waste. While the world hungers for knowledge of how to build, raise food, and efficiently organize society, we turn our mature minds out to graze. This is one of the greatest wastes of wealth. For society at large, and for the individual, this is shameful, a stupid destruction of capital. If a person is tired and wishes to retire, fine—or if one finds so little joy in his work (itself a symptom of social illness) that he wishes to stop, by all means encourage him. But if a person enjoys work, and wishes to continue to contribute to the world's needs, we are duty bound to help him—both to help meet the needs of the world and to help those in their waning years to feel useful and needed. In many fields the mature years from sixty on are the richest in skill, perspective, concern and wisdom. We are shocked by the business man who wastes his capital or the farmer who lets his topsoil wash away; why are we less concerned with the waste of our human capital, our most valuable resource?

We waste this treasure in many ways. Each of the world's children that dies prematurely from illness, malnutrition, violence and neglect is a precious treasure lost from the world's store. Not only are we bound for humanitarian reasons to help *all* of the world's children to have a happy, creative childhood and productive adult life, but even the most short-sighted and callous of us must realize that we need all of the wisdom and talent we can muster, if we are to solve the problems facing the world—that it is both stupid and dangerous to have malnourished, unhappy, stunted people as neighbors.

To this add the minds that are stunted by an educational system that does not help people to develop to their fullest, where many children never have the opportunity to know the excitement of discovery nor the joy of creativity—a system where intellectual ecstasy not only goes unexperienced, but its very existence is unsuspected by the vast majority. We need to surround children with the finest minds we have, minds that are excited about life, about learning, about creating. On the adult level, we stifle, stunt and strangle the largest part of our intellectual and creative potentials by encouraging people to spend their lives in work they are not happy in. We tend to justify this with "Everybody does it." What an impoverished response! The sadness in this is not that we are a nation of prostitutes, selling our abilities for lucre, but that we are such *willing* prostitutes with no vision of a better way to live. And, perhaps, saddest of all, beside the stifling of our own potentials, we set the example for the next generation.

My heart rebels against my generation
That talks of freedom and is slave to riches.
That toiling 'neath each day's ignoble burden
Boasts of the morrow.

No space for noonday rest nor midnight watches,
No purest joy of breathing under heaven.
Wretched themselves they heap, to make them happy
Many possessions. . . .

What would ye gain, ye seekers with your striving
Or what vast saber raise you on your shoulders?
You multiply distresses and your children
Surely will curse you.

Oh, leave them rather friendlier gods and fairer
Orchards and temples, and a freer bosom.
What better comfort have we or what other
Profit in living?

—Santayana

If we seriously wish to design a better way of life, we must actively seek to live and work in ways that help us to develop more fully, and encourage others to see that they have a responsibility to develop to their fullest.

Imagine the effect on our surroundings if *every* person were encouraged to flower, with homes designed to meet the needs of their inhabitants, and urban centers that meet the needs of people first and of machines and deliveries second—learning centers where it is a delight to be, rather than our current brick boxes designed to meet the needs of builders and janitors.

As a world, we can no more afford to squander our human treasures than other natural resources. We allow, we encourage, we applaud people who sell their artistic talent to the advertisers—creative talent prostituted to the sale of tobacco, deodorants and automobiles, to the designing of chrome grills and perfume bottles. To the extent that we support these activities, we will continue to reap a harvest of frustration, unhappiness and illness.

Another perspective of wealth: it is that which helps us to do what we want to do better, or, that which helps us to develop more fully. Often this is not so much a matter of cost as it is a recognizing of the relative importance of things. To me, a shower is an important adjunct to creative thinking, on par with a library. Finding just the right ax or hoe can be so important to some that they spend a good deal of effort in finding the one that suits them. This can be as satisfying as seeking out the latest style car, yet costs the world much less.

Earlier in this paper success was described as the acquiring of well-being, or the acquiring of creative, productive wealth. Success, in the past, has generally been relative and competitive, with our success being measured by the failure of others. It now behooves us to think in terms of cooperative success, wherein we feel happy as the group about us succeeds, rather than individual success. After all, what does it gain us to be "successful" in a failing society?

We are accustomed to thinking in game terms, of winning and losing. This is a dangerous game to play in life, since it relegates some to be losers (often the same ones) with the immense personal and social costs this causes in insecurity, unhappiness, and the stunting of development. We need to develop a philosophy of life in which there are no losers, a world where everybody can win. To accomplish this, our yardstick for improvement needs to be our own past growth and not another's. For to use another's as our measure is to take advantage of those who have not had the same natural endowment or the opportunities that we have had.

It would help if each of us asked, "What does the word success mean for me?" We will need to do this repeatedly if we are to grow to live a life that does not exploit others. To the extent that our daily life aids society as a whole to succeed, we raise the base of our own individual success or well-being. Unless we move in this direction, we will continue to have the tawdry, short-sighted, destructive "success" that is cultural suicide.

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REVIEW
THE ROLE OF HUMANS

THE books we like to review are books which set problems in terms of issues which most people neglect. This means books by writers like Ortega y Gasset, Lewis Mumford, and Abraham Maslow, who are the writers we return to most frequently here. For example, Ortega begins his *History as a System* by making clear the distinction between scientific thinking and human thinking, drawing attention to the essentials of life that science leaves out:

> Scientific truth is characterized by its exactness and the certainty of its predictions. But these admirable qualities are contrived by science at the cost of remaining on the plane of secondary problems, leaving intact the ultimate and decisive questions. . . . The physicist refrains from searching for first principles . . . But . . . the man lodged in each physicist does not resign himself. Whether he likes it or not, his mind is drawn towards the last enigmatic cause of the universe. . . . For living means dealing with the world, turning to it, acting in it, being occupied with it. That is why man is practically unable, for psychological reasons, to do without all-round knowledge of the world, without an integral knowledge of the universe. . . .
>
> How can we live turning a deaf ear to the last dramatic questions? Where does the world come from, and whither is it going? Which is the supreme power of the cosmos, what the essential meaning of life?

This seems the right way to begin a book—going to the core of the author's intent. A.H. Maslow does the same thing. He begins his *The Psychology of Science* by saying:

> This book is not an argument *within* orthodox science it is a critique (à la Gödel) *of* orthodox science and of the ground on which it rests, of its unproved articles of faith, and of its taken-for-granted definitions, axioms, and concepts. It is an examination of science as one philosophy of knowledge among other philosophies. It rejects the traditional but unexamined conviction that orthodox science is *the* path to knowledge or even that it is the only reliable path. . . . As a philosophical doctrine orthodox science is ethnocentric, being Western rather than universal. It is unaware that it is a product of time and place, that it is not an eternal, unchangeable, inexorably progressing truth. Not only is it relative to time, place, and local culture, but it is also characterologically relative, for I believe it to be a reflection far more narrowly of the cautious, obsessional world view centered on the need for safety than of a more mature, generally human comprehensive view of life. Such weaknesses as these become especially glaring in the area of psychology, where the goal is the knowledge of persons and of their actions and works. . . . It is my impression that the weaknesses of classical science show up most obviously in the fields of psychology and ethnology. Indeed, when one wishes knowledge of persons or of societies, mechanistic science breaks down altogether. At any rate, this book is primarily an effort within psychology to enlarge the conception of science so as to make it more capable of dealing with persons, especially fully developed and fully human persons.

Books that begin in this way are books that we can learn from. They are worth reading and for this reason a pleasure to the reviewer.

This week we have in mind to give attention to a paper titled "Preserving Wildness" in the most recent of Wendell Berry's books, *Home Economics,* which came out last year (North Point Press, San Francisco, $9.95).

The paper is an essay on man's relationship with nature. He begins by establishing the polarity in present-day discussion of the subject—on the one hand, those who believe that "all creatures, including humans, are equal in value and have an equal right to live and flourish." Then he says:

> At the other extreme are the nature conquerors, who have no patience with an old-fashioned outdoor farm, let alone a wilderness. These people divide all reality into two parts: human good, which they define as profit, comfort, and security; and everything else, which they understand as a stockpile of "natural resources" or "raw materials," which will sooner or later be transformed into human good. The aims of these militant tinkerers invariably manage to be unimpeachable and suspect. They wish earnestly, for example, to solve what they call "the problem of hunger"—if it can be done glamorously, comfortably, and profitably. . .

> If I had to choose, I would join the nature extremists against the technology extremists, but this choice seems poor, even assuming that it is possible. I would prefer to stay in the middle, not to avoid taking sides, but because I think the middle *is* a side, as well as the real location of the problem.

Berry wants to be in the middle because he finds that at either extreme there are over-simplifying assumptions that are not true and won't work. Take the assumption of the nature extremists that there is no difference between the human estate and the estate of nature, "that human good is in some simple way the same as natural good." But for us to live in "the state of nature" is hardly practicable. We have to adapt nature to certain of our necessary ends. Surviving in a complete wilderness is something of a nerve-wracking experience. As a man of common sense, Berry says:

> To use or not to use nature is not a choice that is available to us; we can live only at the expense of other lives. Our choice has rather to do with how and how much to use. This is not a choice that can be decided satisfactorily in principle or in theory; it is a choice intransigently impractical. That is, it must be worked out in local practice because, by necessity, the practice will vary somewhat from one locality to another. There is, thus, no *practical* way that we can intend the good of the world; practice can only be local.

Therefore, Berry concludes:

> If there is no escape from the human use of nature then human good cannot be simply synonymous with natural good.
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> What these assumptions describe, of course, is the human predicament. It is a spiritual predicament, for it requires us to be properly humble and grateful; time and again, it asks us to be still and wait. But it is also a practical problem, for it requires us to *do* things.

There are not, evidently, a lot of simple solutions that we can rely on a wise ecologist to make for us. In case after case, we need to figure out what is the right relation to nature for *us*, and not someone in the next county or at a much greater distance. Fortunately, Berry has the habit of giving frequent illustrations, and here we go to another part of his book for one we could hardly think of by ourselves. He takes from Gary Nabhan's *The Desert Smells Like Rain* the story of two Sonora Desert oases.

> The first of these oases, A'al Waipia, in Arizona, is dying because the park service, intending to preserve the natural integrity of the place as a bird sanctuary for tourists, removed the Papago Indians who had lived and farmed there. The place was naturally purer after the Indians were gone, but the oasis also began to shrink as the irrigation ditches silted up. As Mr. Nabhan puts it, "an odd thing is happening to their 'natural' bird sanctuary. They are losing the heterogeneity of the habitat, and with it, the birds. The old trees are dying. . . . These riparian trees are essential for the breeding habits of certain birds. Summer annual seed plants are conspicuously absent. . . . Without the soil disturbance associated with plowing and flood irrigation, these natural foods for birds and rodents no longer germinate."
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> The other oasis, Kistowak, in old Mexico, still thrives because a Papago village is still there, still farming. The village's oldest man, Luis Nolia, is the caretaker of the oasis, cleaning the springs and ditches, farming, planting trees: "Luis . . . blesses the oasis," Mr. Nabhan says, "for his work keeps it healthy." An ornithologist who accompanied Mr. Nabhan found twice as many species of birds at the farmed oasis as he found at the bird sanctuary, a fact that Mr. Nabhan's Papago friend, Remedio, explained in this way: "That's because those birds, they come where the people are. When people live and work in a place, and plant their seeds and water their trees, the birds go live with them. They like those places, there's plenty to eat and that's when we are friends to them."

Well, how on earth, you may be moved to comment, can I apply a truth like that to my own highly organized life? The answer can be only, "Who knows? Maybe if you got a little less organized you could see something you could do." Not much help, or is it?

To make such problems a little more comprehensible, Berry points out that we humans are all a blend or a combination of wilderness and domesticity.

> The indivisibility of wildness and domesticity, even within the fabric of human life itself, is easy

> enough to demonstrate. Our bodily life, to begin at the nearest place, is half wild. Perhaps more than half wild, for it is dependent upon reflexes, instincts, and appetites that we do not cause or intend and that we cannot, or had better not, stop. We live partly, because we are domestic creatures—that is, we participate in our human economy to the extent that we "make a living"; we are able, with variable success, to discipline our appetites and instincts in order to produce this artifact, this human living. And yet it is equally true that we breathe and our hearts beat and we survive as a species because we are wild.
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> The same is true of a healthy human economy as it branches upward out of the soil. The topsoil, to the extent that it is fertile, is wild; it is a dark wilderness, ultimately unknowable, teeming with wildlife. A forest or a crop, no matter how intentionally husbanded by human foresters or farmers, will be found to be healthy precisely to the extent that it is wild—able to collaborate with earth, air, light, and water in the way common to plants before humans walked the earth. We know from experience that we can increase our domestic demands upon plants so far that we force them into kinds of failure that wild plants do not experience. . . . To be divided against nature, against wildness, then, is a human disaster because it is to be divided against ourselves. It confines our identity as creatures entirely within the bounds of our own understanding, which is invariably a mistake because it is invariably reductive. It reduces our largeness, our mystery, to a petty and sickly comprehensibility.

"Human nature," Berry says, "partakes of nature, participates in it, is dependent on it, and yet is different from it." How is it different? Human nature is apparently self-created, to a remarkable degree. You wouldn't speak of the moral responsibility of grass, horses, dogs, snakes, or any kind of animal. But humans must make themselves what they become. This is the difference between man and the animals. We are largely self-created, as Pico della Mirandola declared five hundred years ago. Berry puts it in other terms which have the same meaning:

> To take a creature who is biologically a human and to make him or her fully human is a task that requires many years (some of us sometimes fear that it requires more than a lifetime), and this long effort of human making is necessary, I think, because of our power. In the hierarchy of power among the earth's creatures, we are at the top, and we have been growing stronger for a long time. We are now, to ourselves, incomprehensibly powerful, capable of doing more damage than floods, storms, volcanoes, and earthquakes. And so it is more important than ever that we should have cultures capable of making us into humans—creatures capable of prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, and the other virtues. For our history reveals that, stripped of the restraints, disciplines, and ameliorations of culture, humans are not "natural," not "thinking animals" or "naked apes," but monsters—indiscriminate killers and destroyers.

There are various ways good writers find to get at the meaning and obligations of human life. Berry's way seems one of the best.

COMMENTARY
LEARNING ABOUT OURSELVES

IN this week's review, we quote from Wendell Berry, Gary Nabhan's account in *The Desert Smells Like Rain* of two cases, one in Arizona, the other in Old Mexico. This material happens to be in the next column and we suggest that it be read carefully for its revelation of the scholarly ignorance of the modern world. The old Mexican Papago knew from everyday observation what the park service men were ignorant of—that there can be natural relationships between some forms of wildlife and human communities which provide precisely the environment needed by the wildlife for survival. Wilderness, in short, does not require in all cases the exclusion of human beings. "When people live and work in a place, and plant their seeds and water their trees, the birds go live with them." Something should be added, of course—to the effect that the humans need to have a natural and not an exploitive relationship to the land.

For mankind, who are quite capable of ruthlessly *using* the resources of nature without regard for the effect on the balances of water and soil, without notice of how the nutritive qualities of the soil are preserved, having the right relationship to the land must now begin to be a fully conscious project. This is the meaning of the work of men such as Wes Jackson, of Aldo Leopold, and a handful of others who have grown up to what we call moral responsibility. What comes naturally to plants and animals—without, that is the need for moral decision—has now become obligatory as conscious moral decision on the part of human beings.

Saying this is a way of recognizing the nature of human beings. Berry puts it this way:

> And so it is more important than ever that we should have cultures capable of making us into humans—creatures capable of prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, and the other virtues. For our history reveals that, stripped of the restraints, disciplines, and ameliorations of cultures, humans are not "natural, not thinking animals or naked apes," but monsters—indiscriminate killers and destroyers.

This drives home the *natural* character of moral obligation for human beings. It tells us something vitally important about ourselves, and about, therefore, the very universe in which we live.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

A LONG LOOK AT SCHOOLS

IN the *Teachers College Record* for last fall, Harold Howe contributes a long article in reply to the question, "Can Schools Teach Values?" In answer he says in effect, only teachers can teach values, and more by intuitive feeling than by management. He makes what may be regarded as a rather shy attempt to free our minds from the supposition that institutions can do anything constructively important, since at best they are only the vehicles for such activity; they are themselves the effects of human action and should not be mistaken for causes. That kind of mistake is one of the weaknesses of such journals as the *Teachers College Record*, which are edited in the context of schools as institutions, as though there could not be education except in schools. This, one might say, is natural enough, since persons overtly active in education can only find jobs in schools, so that schools become the inevitable background for consideration of educational processes. One doubts, for example, that there has ever been a serious discussion of the ideas of John Holt in such a journal, since Holt, a teacher, in the middle of his life decided that for the sake of the children it would be best to do without schools. Thousands of parents have agreed with him and have undertaken to teach their own children, for the most part with remarkable success. Yet serious consideration of what Holt has to say would be virtual heresy in a modern educational journal, since he says that the best way to bring up children would be to take them out of school.

Mr. Howe, now a lecturer in education at Harvard University, has been a teacher, a principal, and a school superintendent, and was U.S. Commissioner of Education under President Johnson and vice president of the Ford Foundation for Education in the 1970s. Yet as a thoughtful, honest man he reaches conclusions which lie at the base of Holt's decision to break with the schools. After reviewing the situation of teachers in our secondary schools, with classes so large that the teacher finds it difficult to remember the names of the students, Howe says:

> I think that the structure of our secondary schools could not have been better arranged to defeat the kind of rapport between teachers and students that will allow mutual interest and mutual respect and understanding to develop. When those important intangibles have been established there is a chance for teachers to influence students as people not just as names that take tests on a subject.

How are values transmitted to children? Mr. Howe remarks that while he was working on this article his wife, who has done counselling work in schools attended by "problem youth," said to him:

> "Remember that you can't preach to kids. Either they won t listen, or if they do, they won't believe you." I am inclined to agree with her. In my opinion there is a limited return on the direct teachings of ethical principles. Moreover, it seems to me that the content of courses, regardless of the information or skill they may purvey, cannot do as much to build constructive attitudes as can the association of a teacher who is skillful in developing rapport with students. Unless there is some friendliness, warmth, and respect between teachers and learners, not even the most significant lessons will prove much, and it is quite possible to teach ethics, or for that matter the Bible, in a fashion that will result in unethical behavior. Providing information about the perils of drugs and alcohol or about how to drive safely will not necessarily produce the intended behavior. The high insurance rates charged drivers under twenty-five years of age, even after taking driving training at school, bear witness to this assertion.
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> Knowing what is good or bad probably makes some difference in behavior, but learning it in a way that includes some spark of personal interest and sense of common concern between student and teacher is likely to make more. This is what good teaching is all about, and it is an art rather than a science. Some children really do think, when they are tempted to decorate the walls of the school's washroom, "Mrs. Jones wouldn't want me to do that"—and then do not do it, not because they respect Mrs. Jones but because she respects them.

Why did Mr. Howe write this article? At the beginning he gives these reasons:

> Between 1960 and 1980 delinquency rates of youngsters ten to seventeen years of age increased by 130 per cent.
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> Between 1972 and 1979 the proportion of our country's youth using drugs more than doubled and the number of alcohol users increased by more than 50 per cent.
>
> The number of births among unwed teenage women has increased radically since 1960, as have accompanying problems of venereal disease.
>
> Violent deaths from motor accidents, homicide, and suicide increased steadily among teenagers from 1960 to 1980.
>
> The number of school dropouts decreased rapidly from 1960 into the early 1970s and then started to increase again.
>
> Unemployment has burgeoned among youth and particularly among minority youth, in spite of numerous initiatives to reverse this trend.

Various explanations have been offered for these trends, but the clearest one is formulated by Mr. Howe:

> Young people tend to emulate adults whom they encounter at home, in schools, in their communities, and through the media. It seems almost unnecessary to document the point that today's youth are overexposed to negative models purveyed mostly by adults. Dishonesty, drug abuse, indifference to the needs of others, blatantly discriminating behavior, irresponsibility about obligations, abuses of sexuality, and all the other foibles of adult society are paraded before youngsters every day of their lives. The contrast between what adults *do* and what they *tell* their children to do is immense.

Another factor of importance is the far-reaching change in the environment. A hundred years ago, "Boys understood what their fathers did and frequently found work alongside them; girls mainly learned homemaking skills from their mothers or learned about work through moving into low-paying jobs their mothers found near home." It is quite different now:

> One hundred years later, about go per cent of teenagers were in school. Seventy-five percent graduated. Many of them had no clear notion of what their fathers' work was like, and their mothers were rapidly moving into jobs like those of their fathers. They had little sense of being valued by the adult world, and they saw much less of the adults in their families than had their earlier counterparts. A recent study reports that typical teenagers spend five minutes a day with fathers, half of it watching television, and forty minutes with their mothers, most of it not very productive in terms of moral stimulation. A good case can also be made that we have put our youth into institutions called high schools that convey the message that the adult world does not value them but will some day if they work hard. Is it surprising that a good many young people become alienated or that they tend to develop their own youth culture, one that to many adults seems appalling?

Then, in the schools, there is what has been called the "hidden curriculum."

> The school, instead of being a place that genuinely seeks the development of free individuals, is turned by its internal mores and culture into an apparatus that emphasizes conformity In that process many of our ideals for schools and the children in them are compromised.
>
> Where is this hidden curriculum found? It may be in the materials children are asked to read as well as in the fact that they are not allowed to read other materials. I suspect that the main source is the authority structure of the school and in the nature of the subtle interaction there between the children and adults. As children develop into youth they see increasingly the contrasts between what adults say and what adults do.

One thing that Mr. Howe makes plain is that if parents want their children to be really educated, they will have to interest themselves in what needs to be done and increasingly take part in the process. This responsibility cannot be delegated except at the children's expense.

FRONTIERS

Creeping (?) Disaster

WHILE "recycling" is no longer a term that needs explanation, it is not a practice that excites great interest. However, we strongly recommend a reading of Worldwatch Paper No. 76, *Mining Urban Wastes: The Potential for Recycling*, by Cynthia Pollock, not only for its instructive comment, but mainly in order to consider the implicit criticism of how we live our lives. Would the right kind of a human society inevitably surround itself with mountains of waste—to the point where getting rid of the wastes becomes a major economic problem? We have that kind of a society now, and should we give serious thought to the idea of changing it in radical fashion? This would obviously involve many problems, the greatest of which would be how to overcome habits that have been built up over generations. But that, we think, is the real content of Cynthia Pollock's research. She says in one place:

> Historically, solid waste has been regarded more as a nuisance than as a real problem requiring a well-thought-out solution. Even recent broad-based efforts to promote recycling stem primarily from the rising costs of landfill disposal and the high financial and health risks posed by incinerators. Recycling is only beginning to succeed because the competition is pricing itself out of the market. The substantial energy, materials, and environmental benefits derived from recycling have been traditionally regarded as welcome side effects. But as evidence of our changing relationship with the earth and its natural systems accumulates, averting environmental stresses may soon become the major force pushing greatly expanded recycling programs.

This writer begins the paper by giving some idea of the dimensions of the problem of urban wastes:

> Residents of New York City collectively discard 24,000 tons of materials each day. The amalgam, considered trash by most of its contributors, contains valuable metals, reusable glass containers, recyclable paper and plastic, and food wastes high in soil nutrient value. It also contains ever greater amounts of hazardous wastes—mercury from batteries, PBCs from fluorescent lights, and toxic chemicals from household cleaning solvents, paints, and wood preservatives.
>
> Growing volumes of refuse and a scarcity of disposal sites plague cities everywhere. Municipal governments worldwide are struggling to find the best methods for managing their residents' wastes. Particularly in industrial countries, the premium now placed on open space and environmental quality is restricting the use of traditional landfills. Increasingly refuse is either hauled long distances to sanitary landfills (ones that are covered daily with dirt or other fill), burned in incinerators designed to recover energy, or separated to retrieve valuable materials for recycling.
>
> The waste disposal problem exists because most consumer goods are destined for a one-night stand. They are purchased, consumed, and discarded with little regard for their remaining value. The energy, materials, and environmental costs associated with this consumption pattern are staggering. David Morris of the Washington-based Institute for Local Self-Reliance puts it well: "A city the size of San Francisco disposes of more aluminum than is produced by a small bauxite mine, more copper than a medium copper mine and more paper than a good sized timber stand. San Francisco is a mine. The question is how to mine it most effectively and how to get the maximum value from the collected materials."

We are a nation of people who have been led into the pattern of living that produces all this waste by expert salesmen who understand the feeling that lies behind the impulse to buy. For example, Cynthia Pollock says:

> Nearly $1 of every $10 Americans spend for food and beverages pays for packaging. Preliminary figures released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture indicate that Americans spent more for food packaging in 1986 than the nation's farmers received in net income. The packaging bill for the year was expected to total $28 billion. . . . Residents of New York state have doubled their packaging consumption over the last 30 years and are expected to discard over 400 kilograms of packaging per person in 1996. In the United States, more than one-half of the paper and glass produced, and about one-third of the plastics, are incorporated in items with a lifespan of under one year.

It is completely impossible to summarize the contents of this pamphlet with a few neat

generalizations. The subject is far too complicated, and this, of course, is what makes Worldwatch Paper No. 76 worth reading.

Governmental policies vary greatly, from country to country, and in the U.S. from state to state. Yet it becomes evident that the necessity of recycling is gradually taking hold. For example,

> In the state of Oregon, a Recycling Opportunity Act went into effect on July 1, 1986. Its aim is to make recycling available to all citizens in the state. Residential curbside pickup of recyclables is required at least once per month in cities of 4000 or more; in smaller communities, recycling depots must be established at disposal sites. The law explicitly ranks solid waste management options in terms of priority The most desirable goal is to reduce the amount of waste generated, then to reuse the material for the purpose it was originally intended. Next comes recycling of the nonreusable material, followed by energy recovery from "waste that cannot be reused or recycled, so long as the energy recovery facility preserves the quality of air, water and land resources." The last step is to dispose of the remainder by landfilling or other approved method.

One value of this paper is that it shows the serious character of the mistakes which may occur in government policy.

> Subsidized loans for power plant construction and pollution control equipment compound the problem by masking the true costs of the large amounts of energy used to process materials. Analysts at the Washington-based Fund for Renewable Energy and the Environment estimate that the U.S. government provided $44 billion in subsidies to the energy industry in 1984, a sum equal to one-quarter of the federal budget deficit.

Cynthia Pollock concludes her paper by saying:

> Municipal governments collectively spend tens of billions of dollars annually disposing of their citizens' wastes. Billions more are spent to clean up the environmental damage caused by our consumption habits. In a capital-short world, faced with increasingly apparent natural limits, recycling provides immediate benefits and offers far greater potential. The countries that successfully make the transition to a recycling society will have the healthiest environments and the strongest economies.

And they will also have people who will begin to understand the importance of radical change in the way we live.