

HEALTH AND GROWTH

IN the opinion of some psychologists, Karen Horney's *Neurosis and Human Growth* (Norton, 1950) is the best of her books. The lay reader may simply regard it as a remarkably clear account of the human situation from the psychotherapeutic point of view. It is characterized by wholeness of outlook and moves from basic humanist assumptions through large areas of psychological confusion and moral struggle to basic humanist conclusions. One sees why Karen Horney is regarded as a shaping founder of modern humanist psychology. The book throws an explanatory light on the fact that people seeking personal help are more likely to turn to some form of psychology than to the traditional forms of religion. *Neurosis and Human Growth* can fairly be called a book on moral psychology. It is written without jargon, in sturdy confidence in the innate potentialities of human beings. It is moral in the sense that it enables the reader to interpret the insistent feeling of "ought" in his life with both freedom and common sense, and according to a self-devised content of meaning and purpose. For this reason the book can be thought of as a decisive stride toward the final transformation of psychoanalysis into a form of education.

Both the temper and the direction are revealed in the first paragraph of the first chapter:

Whatever the conditions under which a child grows up he will, if not mentally defective, learn to cope with others in one way or another and he will probably acquire some skills. But there are also forces in him which he cannot acquire or even develop by learning. You need not, and in fact cannot, teach an acorn to grow into an oak tree, but when given a chance, its intrinsic potentialities will develop. Similarly, the human individual, given a chance, tends to develop his particular human potentialities. He will develop then the unique alive forces of his real self: the clarity and depth of his own feelings, thoughts, wishes, interests; the ability to tap his own resources, the strength of his will power, the

special capacities or gifts he may have; the faculty to express himself, and to relate himself to others with his spontaneous feelings. All this will in time enable him to find his set of values and his aims in life. In short, he will grow, substantially undiverted, *toward self-realization*. And that is why I speak now and throughout this book of the *real self* as that central inner force common to all human beings and yet unique in each, which is the deep source of growth.

Nowhere is the "real self" subjected to formal definition. This omission is both natural and necessary. How could what is unique in each one have definition except in violation of everyone? How could what is not yet manifest, and becomes so only in wondrous effect, have its limits established? In some forms of Eastern thought, the hidden Self is a synonym of Deity, known only in godlike acts. In man, we speak of the godlike as the creative. This is in complete harmony with the Renaissance founder of modern Humanism, Pico della Mirandola, who declared Man to be that order of being which creates itself. Involved is a reality outrunning all pursuing speech, yet there is a kind of rhetoric in which logic or limit is turned against itself, ruled by the grammar of paradox and the art of intimation. One senses the presence of such unseizable meanings only by the atmosphere they create. (See, for example, A. H. Maslow's various accounts of the content of the peak experience; and what Plotinus says at the end of the Sixth Ennead also has application here.)

But Dr. Horney does not go into these matters. Her book is about the devices of evasion which get in the way of self-realization. There are, as we know, formidable obstacles, both inner and outer, to human fulfillment. Neurosis is the name given to the forms of self-deception men resort to in order to avoid direct confrontation with these obstacles. It is a method of coping doomed to failure, since it falsifies the nature of things, but the tendency to redesign the universe

according to weakness and sentiment is a part of human nature. Therapy, in Dr. Horney's view, is the art of helping the individual to prefer honesty and strength to weakness and self-deception. It is a difficult art, practiced by the attempt to "show" some facet of reality rather than to tell about it. Science, you could say, is the organization of truth about objects, but art seeks vital communication with subjects. The basis of therapeutic art is the assumption that hidden in every human being, somewhere, is the desire to know the truth, and the will, however suppressed or sidetracked, to grow. In her introductory chapter, Dr. Horney discusses the implications of this struggle to know, in relation to the meeting of obstacles:

Under inner stress . . . a person may become alienated from his real self. He will then shift the major part of his energies to the task of molding himself, by a rigid system of inner dictates, into a being of absolute perfection. For nothing short of godlike perfection can fulfill his idealized image of himself and satisfy his pride in the exalted attributes which (so he feels) he has, could have, or should have.

This trend in neurotic development (which is presented in detail in this book) engages our attention over and beyond the clinical or theoretical interest in pathological phenomena. For it involves a fundamental problem of morality—that of man's desire, drive, or religious obligation to obtain perfection. No serious student concerned with man's development will doubt the undesirability of pride or arrogance, or that of the drive for perfection when pride is the motivating force. But there is a wide divergence of opinion about the desirability or necessity of a disciplinary inner control system for the sake of insuring moral conduct.

After brief discussion of the far-reaching effect of this question, by reason of the various answers returned in the form of social systems, doctrines of law and order, ideologies, and moral codes, Dr. Horney identifies her own view:

. . . the problem of morality is again different when we believe that inherent in man are evolutionary constructive forces which urge him to realize his given potentialities. This belief does not mean that man is essentially good—which would

presuppose a given knowledge of what is good or bad. It means that man, by his very nature and by his own accord, strives toward self-realization, and that his set of values evolves from such striving. Apparently he cannot, for example, develop his full human potentialities unless he is truthful to himself; unless he is active and productive; unless he relates himself to others in the spirit of mutuality. Apparently he cannot grow if he indulges in a "dark idolatry of self" (Shelley) and consistently attributes all his own shortcomings to the deficiencies of others. He can grow, in the true sense, only if he assumes responsibility for himself.

Neither straitjackets nor whips can serve the fulfillments of such a being. He overcomes whatever is to be overcome by *outgrowing* it. Dr. Horney concludes this section:

The way toward this goal is an ever increasing awareness and understanding of ourselves. Self-knowledge, then, is not an aim in itself, but a means of liberating the forces of spontaneous growth.

In this sense, to work at ourselves becomes not only the prime moral obligation, but at the same time, in a very real sense, the prime moral *privilege*. To the extent that we take our growth seriously, it will be because of our own desire to do so. And as we lose the neurotic obsession with self, as we become free to grow ourselves, we also free ourselves to love and to feel concern for other people. We will then want to give them the opportunity for unhampered growth when they are young, and to help them in whatever way possible to find and realize themselves when they are blocked in their development. At any rate, whether for ourselves or others, the ideal is the liberation and cultivation of the forces which lead to self-realization.

The particular value of this book, apart from its philosophic affirmations, lies in detailed exposure of the many guises of neurotic pretense in response to the demands of a pseudo-self. The full vocabulary of religion and philosophy is sometimes drafted in the service of a spurious image of perfection. The very energies of normal growth are thus perverted to vain ends, while, almost invariably, some inner suspicion of self-betrayal or failure leads to energetic outward self-justification and fanatical assertions of righteousness. A man will try to prove to others

what he cannot prove to himself. Great literature supplies material for Dr. Horney's illustrations of these tendencies, and neurosis is gradually disclosed as the sickness of a fraudulent idea of the self. But not only conceptual distortion is involved. Emotional distortion comes from egotism—what was once called simply selfishness. The prescription is a philosophy of all-inclusive selfhood, the cure its application in brotherhood. The ill of neurosis does not survive forgetfulness of self in working for others. One might say that the real self is not a separate self, but that all real selves are joined in some ground of higher unity, practical awareness of which becomes the health of the individual self.

There are no entries in the index of this book under the word "social." Yet many volumes of social criticism could be developed from its insight into the tendencies and vulnerabilities of the neurotic personality. To what extent, for example, do the activities of certain social institutions fortify pseudo-self conceptions of human excellence or achievement? Examples are legion. There is the great Conqueror, the supreme Competitor, the rich, successful "Man of Distinction." All these pseudo-ideals generate darkly balancing opposites who eventually qualify as Evil Forces. For a time these reacting phenomena serve as convenient reinforcement. A nation's scapegoats, for example, make searching self-examination unnecessary. Dissatisfaction can be channeled against them and witch hunts followed by heresy trials can *prove* the innocence and virtue of those who pattern themselves predictably after the cultural pseudo-self. This pseudo-self has low-grade intellectual support from "thinkers" who often declare that the wide variety of commodities available for purchase in the United States is sufficient proof of the freedom and individuality of the American people. Who else has so many things to choose among and to enjoy? Thus commercial and political stereotypes come very close to being deliberately designed symbols of "idealized" neurotic selfhood.

Why, one wonders, do not psychologists make political capital out of such inferences, which are more or less obvious? The answer, no doubt, is that neurotic ills do not submit to the remedies available to political power. At the social or mass level, these problems are reflected in hardened institutional structures, becoming almost impossible to get at. The generalization of neurosis in social institutions is plain enough; it also seems inevitable, yet neurotic ills are accessible only in individuals. A political formula for remedy will create a rival cultural pseudo-self by neglecting the subtle psycho-dynamics involved in all authentic human growth.

But don't distorting social forms contribute to neurosis as confirming myths? One can only answer that they must, but the remedy is not implicit in the diagnosis. A change in power relationships commonly brings a new set of myths that will also have to be outgrown. For lasting social change, what is wanted is the flowering of growth in an increasing number of individuals, and every substitution of a power formula for natural growth brings need for further applications of power, until, finally, a new social neurosis has been given a fully developed, "mature" form. What are the social principles which could bring into existence an order hospitable to people who tell the truth to themselves, who are active and productive, who relate to one another in a spirit of mutuality, want no scapegoats for their troubles, and insist on assuming responsibility for themselves? Such an order can no doubt exist, but as a human evolution, realized in ingenious practice, not as an imposed ideological scheme.

Even an elementary knowledge of psychology points to the possibility that all research into how to use power to "fix up the world" is little more than a neurotic device for neglecting available opportunities to fix up ourselves. It is not that the world does not need fixing, but that this is not what people really want to do, or they would have done it long ago. It might be said that the society they have made, and which now seems to make

them, commits its worst offense, not in crimes of war, not in generating continuing ecological disaster, and not, finally, in its pitifully inadequate remedies for manifest social injustice, but in sanctioning and supporting a conception of the human self which is passive, resourceless, and by nature a creature and victim of the times. The people do not take the initiative for freeing actions that are open to them for the reason that they do not think of themselves as *capable* of finding solutions. Instead of making new lives for themselves, they make new claims on society.

Karen Horney's conception of the real self is a way of speaking of self-actualizing man. At the end of her book, she writes:

. . . the neurotic process . . . is a problem of the self. It is- a process of abandoning the real self for an idealized one; of trying to actualize this pseudo-self instead of our given human potentials; of a destructive warfare between the two selves; of allaying this warfare the best, or at any rate the only, way we can; and finally, through having our constructive forces mobilized by life or therapy, of finding our real selves. . . . If this neurotic self is mistaken for its healthy alive counterpart, the whole complex problem of the real self as seen by Kierkegaard or William James -cannot arise.

Finally we can look at the process from the perspective of moral or spiritual values. From this standpoint it has all the elements of a true human tragedy. However great man's possibilities for becoming destructive, the history of mankind also shows an alive and untiring striving toward greater knowledge about himself and the world around him, toward deeper religious experiences, toward developing greater spiritual powers and greater moral courage, toward greater achievements in all fields, and toward better ways of living. And his very best energies go into these strivings. By dint of his intellect and the power of his imagination, man can visualize things not yet existing. He reaches beyond what he is or can do at any given time. He has limitations, but his limits are not fast and final. Usually he lags behind what he wants to achieve within or outside himself. This in itself is not a tragic situation. But the inner psychic process which is the neurotic equivalent to healthy, human striving *is* tragic. Man under the pressure of inner distress reaches out for the ultimate and infinite which—

though his limits are not fixed—it is not given to him to reach; and in this very process he destroys himself, shifting his very best drive for self-realization to the actualization of his idealized image and thereby wasting the potentialities he actually possesses.

Here Dr. Horney seems to touch the very nerve of the tragic drama of human life. Man's longing for "the ultimate and infinite" cannot be regarded as neurotic, since there is no motive so persistent as this one. Spoken of sometimes as "divine unrest," it accepts no plateau of achievement as finality, but ceaselessly seeks for what has no existence in either time or space. How can there be explanation of this? Is it that in all men there is the welling presence of a reality born from beyond time and space, which has nonetheless the capacity to generate images of itself out of the stuff of time and space? That this, indeed, is the nature of the "creative" act? Perhaps Dr. Horney is saying that man's creativity, when pursued without self-knowledge, makes one Babylonian captivity after another—that nothing he creates in time is good enough to serve as a model for the future, which has its own unique needs and possibilities. The world of becoming is a world of incessant change, as Plato said, and in it there can be only approximations of ideals, never their final embodiment. It is not neurotic, for example, to want a good society, but it is self-defeating to demand a perfect society when it must be constituted of imperfect men. Ruthless dictatorships are forms of this demand, and the indifference to cruelty and coercion which they require is an unmistakable symptom of cultural neurosis.

The root of health for the individual, then, would lie in understanding the meaning of the longing which springs continually in his heart, and health for society would depend upon a concert of this understanding. Moral patience might be regarded as reconciliation to the fact that a man cannot "possess" in some finite form the reality which he ultimately *is*, since his essential being remains an exile in the world of limited conditions. The absolute subject cannot be known or realized

as a dimensioned object. This, then, is the truth the self-actualizing man recognizes, accepts, and makes the foundation of harmony in his life, while the neurotic finds it hateful since it denies his wished-for miracle of growth without pain and struggle. Hate of the real self is a defining symptom of neurosis, according to Dr. Horney.

It seems clear that the neurotic is prevented by his preoccupation with a pseudo-self from having natural feeling for others. He is united with others in his true self, but neurosis brings loss of contact with the true self. His moments of restoration are his moments of possible rebirth as a human being, a moral man.

Something similar might be said of certain established patterns of social behavior in the service of a pseudo cultural identity, such as those which take young men off to war.

One often hears, today, that nothing short of a religious revolution can change the destructive course of events. These are great words and the truth may be in them. But the psychological realities involved need the clarification provided in such works as Karen Horney's *Neurosis and Human Growth*. And there is need, also, for enriching ideas of the self and the heroic potentialities which lie as of the self and the heroic potentialities which lie latent in every man. These are dimensions of inspiration which a "religious revolution" will have to include, in order to accomplish its high ends.

REVIEW

THE GREAT RESTORATION

All literature might be regarded as the voicing of what Emerson called "the soul's enormous claim." If we give "to rationalize" a philosophic meaning, it suggests the endeavor to bring all forms of experience within the compass of human understanding. The long period of scholastic philosophy in the history of Western thought can be seen as a protracted effort to assimilate the crude and contradictory materials of the Christian revelation to an independent body of knowledge about man and the world. The most eminent of these thinkers displayed the riches of the human mind, whatever the subject of their discussions. And when, in the seventeenth century, the reach of awakening intellectuality came into open conflict with the authority of institutional religion, the irrepressible drive of rational inquiry sought safety by concentrating on investigation of the natural world, inaugurating the age of science.

The science of today is divided up into what we call "disciplines," each one devoted to a presumably limited area of experience of the external world. Yet there seems a sense in which each discipline is also concerned with some aspect of the nature and powers of man. One might even say that the world that is "scientifically" known is a human creation. The terms of the knowing are human terms. The circumstances known are *man's* circumstances, and a man's being is made up of himself and his circumstances. Science, then, is a species of autobiography.

Yet this suggestion, in order to make sense, requires considerable latitude for the idea of self. It has little application save through a beinghood which has a radius coextensive with the limits of the world. The limits of the self might be thought of as set by the limits of the perception of the self, and these limits are not fixed. At any rate, this way of thinking of the self provides a way out of the solipsist dilemma.

This is a general feeling and conception in relation to the identity of man which keeps cropping up in particularized forms of inquiry. Eddington, for example, wrote in 1920 concerning the scientific study of the physical world:

We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after the other, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo! it is our own.

More recently, a modern scholar, Dr. John A. Hutchison, director of the Blaisdell Institute, reviewing the content of the great religions of the past, observed that their essential subject-matter is the nature and destiny of man. The "gods," you could say, are only projections, tools of illustration and explanation. Theology, too, is the footprint of man. Dr. Hutchison says (in the Blaisdell Institute *Bulletin* for June, 1968):

. . .the interpretation I am offering you does not turn religion upside down, but just the opposite, turns it right-side up. If time permitted, I would like to argue that in the modern West, roughly since the enlightenment, there has been a massive misconception of religion as a hypothesis concerning a remote being called God whose dwelling place is just beyond the reach of our furthest telescope. Theists accept this hypothesis and atheists and skeptics reject it; but significantly they agree, and I would say mistakenly, on the primary meaning or reference for religion. I would call this the fallacy of the Head Spirit (I am tempted to say the Head Spook) Out There.

Ancient symbolic cosmologies begin as a sort of autobiography, in the sense that awakening to being has a parallel process in man, making comprehension possible. First there is the shoreless infinite of abstract thought, "Brahm, sole meditating in the night." Desire or the will to be is the origin of all. Men can understand this. All creative action in themselves begins in this way. This symbolic cosmology enables human beings to think of themselves as part of and even creators of the world, by a correspondence of capacity within themselves. The link uniting man and the gods is self-consciousness. The Hopi cosmology, as

given by Frank Waters in the *Book of the Hopi*, begins:

The first world was Tokpela (endless space).

But first, they say, there was only the Creator, Taiowa. All else was endless space. There was no beginning and no end, no time, no shape, no life. Just an immeasurable void that had its beginning and end, time, shape, and life in the mind of Talowa the Creator.

Then he, the infinite, conceived the finite.

The interpretation of literature as autobiography has a variety of illustrations. The idea that life is shaped by man's quest for self-knowledge is an ancient theme, but it soon becomes a threadbare abstraction if left without the flesh and blood of human and circumstantial relationships. Not fact but confrontation is the raw material of self-knowledge. The mythic memories of the human race are the treasury for study of this reality. In his just published book, *Mythopoesis* (Wayne State University Press, 1970, \$13.95), Harry Slochower shows that myths bring assurance "that we are not strangers and alone in the world." In his preface to this work, which considers deliberate literary use of great myths, Dr. Slochower writes:

The modern revival of the myth began in the nineteenth century, that is, at the very time when technology threatened to wipe out ancient folkways. In our own day, the theme has again fired the imagination of artists from Picasso to the surrealists, and of writers from Proust, Joyce and Thomas Mann to Kafka, Sartre, Cocteau and Faulkner. It penetrates our cultural areas, from anthropology, philosophy and religion to criticism and psychology in the works of Malinowski, Cassirer and Tillich, of Spengler and Toynbee, of I. A. Richards and T. S. Eliot, of Freud, Jung and Reich. The revival of the myth in our time is an attempt to satisfy the human need for relatedness to fellow travelers on our common journey.

The myth addresses itself to the problem of identity, asking "who am I?" And it proceeds to examine three questions that are organically related: "Where do I come from?" "Where am I bound?", and "What must I do now to get there?" In mythic

language, the problems deal with Creation, with Destiny and with the Quest.

Mythopoesis includes studies of the Book of Job, the story of Prometheus, of Oedipus, Dante's Divine Comedy, Don Quixote, Hamlet, Faust, Moby Dick, and has notes on recent writers such as Twain, Whitman, Kafka, Sartre and Camus. There is considerable use of Freud's ideas, but this does not type the author.

What may be signified by the story of Job? Dr. Slochower raises many interesting questions, but the most fruitful one is his wondering why Job was selected for such extreme testing. The answer seems to be, because Job was ready to break out of the conventional morality of his time. Because he was strong enough to stand or fall with his own human intelligence. He insisted, in short, on the right to remake himself. He might be wrong, or have done wrong, but he had to know for himself before he could put things right, and only he could put them right. Blind submission was not for Job:

Job is redeemed precisely because he has refused to accept an irrational authority, because he has insisted on maintaining his own ways without losing faith in a substantive principle. Job persists in making his own choice and, to this extent, is his own instrument for salvation.

Dr. Slochower explores the psychological implications of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. Prometheus is a titan—one of those who, according to Hesiod, are given to overreaching themselves. The titans, therefore, are types of creative man. Fire is the instrument of the liberation Prometheus brings to mankind, yet fire is dual in role. Pliny calls it a "measureless and implacable portion of nature" and wonders whether it should be regarded as "destroyer or preserver." By bringing men fire, Prometheus looses disorder or evil in the world, yet he also brings freedom. This is his crime against Zeus, whose rule will be disturbed by undocile men. Prometheus says he knew what he was doing. But did he, really? the Chorus asks. "A more subtle aspect of overreaching consists in the fact

that Prometheus never asks himself whether mankind is ready to use fire for its own good." But through Prometheus fire becomes the fire of self-consciousness:

Aeschylus transposes the gift of fire into the psychic power of consciousness that removes the old fear of dark authorities. Before he gave mankind "understanding and a portion of reason," Prometheus tells the Leader of the Chorus, the people were in a womb-like state: "like children . . . seeing they saw not, and hearing they understood not, but like as shapes in a dream they wrought all the days of their life in confusion." . . .

Fire was practical knowledge as well as reflective thought, enabling men to practice arts and sciences, raising them "from the animal towards the human stage." Prometheus taught them letters and the arts, and made them able to remember the past. His act freed them from "the disease of tyranny."

In Aeschylus' poetic version, Prometheus is punished not merely because he gave fire to man. . . . What Prometheus bequeathed is the fire of revolt, the spirit of defiance, that is, man's freedom from fear. Once set free, this power can never be lost, and with it ultimate victory over tyrannical authority is certain. . . . Job's implicit insistence on self-determination is made explicit by Prometheus. . . .

Emerson called Prometheus the Jesus of Greek mythology, in that he freely chose to sacrifice himself because of his love for man.

This book has many other riches, but our space is almost gone. What is made plain is that the gods become valuable to us only as we recognize their humanity and find their powers represented in ourselves.

COMMENTARY

ORTEGA ON HUMAN POSSIBILITY

METAPHYSICS is not understanding, but it is an indispensable tool of understanding. An impressive illustration of the use of metaphysics as a tool is provided by Ortega y Gasset in the first chapter of his work on sociology, *Man and People* (Norton Library paperback). Ortega starts out by saying that man is differentiated from animals by having a nature of his own—behaviorally recognized in his need to determine his own life by means of reflection and choice. Animals simply react to their environment. The animal "cannot be within itself." But man is under the necessity to realize himself. This is his Promethean mission and his Herculean task, which he cannot fulfill without striving to "know" himself. The project is pursued under conditions of paradox: he must be in the world to work at it, yet gain some independence of the world to succeed. This, Ortega finds, makes the dialectic of human life:

. . . these two things, man's power of withdrawing himself from the world and his power of taking his stand within himself are not gifts conferred upon man. I must emphasize this for those of you who are concerned with philosophy: they are not gifts conferred upon man. *Nothing that is substantive has been conferred upon man.* He has to do everything for himself.

Whatever is "conferred" upon him, as the enlightenment of tradition, he will one day have to free himself from, not because it is false, but because it was "conferred."

All that the skills of "doing," in contrast with the labor of knowing, can accomplish for man is to provide him a little time, some temporary security. Ortega writes:

Hence, if man enjoys this privilege of temporarily freeing himself from things and the power to enter into himself and there rest, it is because by his effort, his toil, and his ideas he has succeeded in reacting upon things, in transforming them, and creating around himself a margin of security. . . . This specifically human creation is

technology. Thanks to it, and in proportion to its progress, man can take his stand within himself. But, vice versa, man is a technician, he is able also to modify his environment in the direction of his convenience, because, seizing every moment of rest that things allowed him, he has used it to retire into himself and form ideas about this world, about these things and his relation to them, to form a plan of attack against his circumstances, in short, to create an inner world for himself. From this inner world he emerges and returns to the outer. But he returns as protagonist, he returns with a *self* which he did not possess before, with his plan of campaign—not to let himself be dominated by things, but to govern them himself . . . Man humanizes the world injects it, impregnates it with his own ideal substance, and it is possible to imagine that one day or another, in the far depths of time, this terrible outer world will become so saturated with man that our descendants will be able to travel through it as today we mentally travel through our own inner selves, it is possible to imagine that the world, without ceasing to be the world, will one day be changed into something like a materialized soul, and, as in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, the winds will blow at the bidding of Ariel, the elf of Ideas.

This is a vision of human fulfillment. It is an account of the process which in our time has gone almost lethally awry. The acts of self-reference upon which all *human* growth depends have been made to seem unnecessary by the fascinations and splendors of technique. The pseudo-self "ideals" of the present are all careless constructs by impatient technicians who are interested only in exhibiting their latest designs. While they may have learned their arts and skills from Prometheus, they have too long sought comfortable employment on the side of Zeus.

Suggestive parallels could be drawn between Ortega's "metaphysics" and Karen Horney's study of the relation between neurosis and human growth.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
 BASIC AND NECESSARY

WHAT may become a classic of criticism of present-day schools is reviewed by Harold Taylor on a single page of the *New York Times Book Review* for Feb. 8. The book is *Radical School Reform* (Simon & Schuster) edited by Ronald and Beatrice Gross, with twenty-three contributors, including many whose names will be familiar to MANAS readers. These teachers, Mr. Taylor finds, are right on every count. They are right in their radical criticism of the existing system, right in what they propose ought to be done, right in saying that it *can* be done—because, under great difficulties and against great odds, they have been doing it themselves. Mr. Taylor concludes:

The special value of the present book lies in the rich supply of honest and accurate reporting about radical experiments which have been tried by imaginative teachers who have created situations of freedom and autonomy for the young. There are excerpts from the work of Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Kenneth Clark, Sylvia Ashton Warner, A. S. Neill, Preston Wilcox and others who set the conceptual framework of experiment in everything from community-centered schools to new kinds of reading programs.

But the main thrust of the collection is in the personal accounts of children and what they have done, how they learned to want to learn, to read, to write, talk and handle themselves, written by teachers like George Dennison of the First Street School, Farnum Gray of the Pennsylvania Advancement School, Herbert Kohl in Harlem, Anne Long in Vancouver.

Most of them have been working in run-down buildings nobody wants, in ways few care to recognize. This book will help show anyone who reads it that we don't have to wait, and cannot wait, for property and children to be condemned before we make the basic and necessary changes until now made only by radicals.

Not exactly in the same class with the work done by these teachers, but related, is the refreshing and interesting story told by Sunny

Decker of her teaching experience in an all-Negro high school with an enrollment of four thousand, in Philadelphia. She sought this school out because of the reputation of the black principal. Her book, *An Empty Spoon* (Harper & Row), tells how she learned to cope. She had many experiences like the following:

I've probably had serious grading problems with half my kids. And though I try to look like one-who-knows, I always wind up feeling stupid about the whole system.

Harriet Martin walked in after a five-week tour of duty somewhere and asked if she were passing for the year. After five weeks and no excuse. I was very obnoxious about it all, and I rather resented having been ignored. So I took the easy way out and talked teacher to her. Things like, "Your job is school, and you've walked out on it." And "Am I supposed to give grades, or are you supposed to earn them?" When I finally shut up, she told me her four-year-old son had been hit by a car and she'd been at the hospital for weeks. Now he was home, but the cast was on his whole body, and he'd had to be fed and carried like an infant: Note: If you start with a question instead of a lecture, you save yourself a lot of embarrassment. So there I was, talking to someone's mother about what her job was. The teacher. With a big problem like grades.

Teaching an English class, Mrs. Decker found that essays required too much skill, but Japanese haiku was a great success. By different children:

Love leaves a black spot
 Which take time to erase
 Hate is easier

Believe and exist
 I always believe
 I died believing

In everyone's life
 There's lots of togetherness
 What happened to mine?

* * *

The March 15 *Parents' Bulletin* of the School in Rose Valley (Moynan, Pennsylvania) quietly illustrates what happens when community spirit pervades the activities of a school. It recalls a rule we have quoted before: "a joint enterprise

depends for its success, more than other systems, upon there being a nucleus of people whose friendship and identity of practice, has been tested by time." Community spirit is not something that can be injected. It is not an "ingredient." It is a synergistic bonus, the usufruct of years of cooperation; like "love," it ought not to be talked about much, since it bestows its blessings only as unpremeditated art.

One of the things teachers of the School in Rose Valley do is visit other schools. Two schools are described in some detail in this issue. Following is part of Jane Cosinuke's report on a Maryland public school:

Imagine, if you can, walking into a public elementary school in full swing with the morning program and feeling a genuine hushed overtone of silence. A quick glance around gave us the answer—honest-to-goodness carpeting on all the floors (not a mud clot in sight), acoustical tile on the ceiling (no resounding plaster or open rafters with insulation showing), and no children thundering down the hall in pursuit of equipment or changing classrooms. Instead, at the Lake Normandy School in Potomac, Maryland, we saw avenues leading from a center core library to open suites of blue, bronze, and green rooms set up with innumerable "learning centers," thoughtfully laid out to permit choice, with rich variety of materials to cover reading, writing, math, and social studies. Each suite was elaborately equipped with record players, tape recorders, ear phones, various visual aids (all in working order), and books, books, books.

Children were working in groups of two or three at the tables in front of each learning center or more casually on the carpeted floor. Teachers were moving about the room conferring with one child at a time, asking questions, giving help, sometimes prodding. There was no instructor standing up front trying to keep order and make everyone listen to her. Children were using the library reference books and dictionaries for their learning center activities.

There is no recess time, but the children are allowed to choose gym periods, which meant, as I watched in the all-purpose room, a game of ball tag and a long line of girls leap-frogging over each other on a long, narrow mat. They have no gym teacher.

The children work a full day with time out for lunch served to each whenever he feels hungry, between 11:30 and 12:30. The school compensates the children for not having recess time with Wednesday afternoons off. (One teacher commented that the children seem to "focus" and work harder on Wednesday morning than any other day.)

The *Bulletin* also has this account of a committee meeting of teachers and parents:

Everyone agreed when it was over that the Education Committee's Meeting on Feb. 19 was a good meeting, but it did seem to have a life of its own, quite resistant to any human effort to stick to the subjects. Ralph Flood presented the results of his and Christine Van Ness's study of the feasibility of reintroducing French at Rose Valley. He described the favored Chilton method, discussed the advantages of early exposure to a language, but then went on to say that the teachers' experience some years ago when French *was* taught was negative, and that as he viewed the current operation of the school, the day seemed already to be too fragmented by special subjects to add another. He added parenthetically that this last observation had led the Education Committee to an interest in other ways to organize school time, and that they were very interested in the Integrated Day approach. That did it! The Integrated Day will have to be dealt with. It is becoming an obsession. Most of the questions the rest of the evening were seeking information about it and since no one had actually prepared himself to talk about it, a rambling, disorganized, but interesting discussion ensued.

FRONTIERS Toward a Natural Life

TOLSTOY FARM, a commune with about forty residents in the state of Washington, is the subject of an article which takes a page of the *National Observer* for March 23. The writer, Jack Swanson, keeps the exact location a secret because merely curious visitors are not wanted. The community occupies two parcels of land in a narrow canyon, one of them purchased with money earned by the members, the other a gift to a young man named Huw Williams, the principal founder, by his parents who have a wheat farm forty miles away. Mr. Swanson writes a friendly report, describing: the feelings and longings which cause so many young people to seek refuge on the land.

Long cold winters are a part of life in that region of Washington, and home construction must be warm and comfortable. Started six years ago, this community is one of the older ones in the new wave of community-founding around the country. Speaking of the raw 1968-69 winter, the coldest in eighty years (the temperature reached forty below), Swanson says:

Tolstoy Farm survived, as it has the other winters of the past six years. In fact, Tolstoyites plan to be in their sheltered valley long after communities in the rest of the nation are torn apart by race wars, pollution, and atomic blasts. Tolstoy Farm and more than 200 other "intentional" communities across the nation are part of a movement that hopes to find new answers to the problems of urban life. An intentional community, as a Tolstoyite defines it, is "one that's built b1 design and not by chance." They are small and autonomous. Some of these experiments in group living are simply seasonal hippie communes, such as those in California's Big Sur or the New Mexico desert. Others, such as Quaker-directed Woolman Hill near Deerfield, Mass., are religiously oriented. Still others, such as Liberty House near Jackson, Miss., are cooperatives that buy raw materials, help with production problems, then market the finished products. In general, they comprise individuals who want to live a certain way, out of the mainstream of society.

A small group of young men and women in their twenties brought Tolstoy Farm into being. Government is by consensus and, it should be added, the lessons of experience. Total "permissiveness," it seems, has been gradually replaced by the consensus of common sense. On the subject of sexual relations and marriage, one resident told the reporter: "Monogamy seems to create the least amount of tensions and provides more stability for raising children." The coming of babies, in fact, shaped the order and stability of the group. The residents built a small school house out of concrete blocks with good heating facilities and provision for future construction of a library. Drugs were a problem for a while, but a crisis brought by arrests and a trial led finally to a solution in which "those who strongly opposed drugs began pointing out to users what effect their action could have on the community. The problem seemed to go away by itself." Following are some other patterns of development:

In the beginning, Tolstoyites, all refugees from a competitive system, wanted to build a community that was entirely independent. They hoped, for example, even to produce their own electricity by damming up the small stream that flows through their valley. But it never quite worked out. Each member found certain things from the outside world necessary. Many things were timesavers, but each exacted a price in terms of dependence on the outside world and its economy.

To meet their money needs, residents take a variety of approaches. Huw and several other men work for Huw's father during the harvest season. In the winter, Huw makes leather boots, moccasins, and saddles and sells them by mail. Tom and Andy moved to the city for the winter to work. Pat and Ricco worked in the city last winter.

Others went on welfare. There are some strong differences of opinion—such as whether or not to take "grants" for the school as a community project. Huw has principled objection to this. Thus there are problems. The residents are finding out their weaknesses, but also some strengths. Mr. Swanson says at the end of his article:

None of Tolstoy's residents, except for Huw, knew anything about gardening or raising animals before moving to the canyon. All were from urban, middle-class backgrounds. Finding that it's possible to plant seeds in the ground and raise better food than is found in cans and plastic bags at the local supermarket has been a "mind-blowing" experience for many. And the work is something that a man and a woman can do together. The husband is no longer gone ten hours a day while his wife is left home talking to the infants and the walls.

They've found also that it takes surprisingly little time to raise food, cut wood, build a house, and feed animals. Without television and movies, some at the farm have even more difficulty than outsiders in using their leisure time.

Some have difficulty organizing their lives when they don't have a boss, the government, or a teacher telling them what to do. Those who can't govern themselves escape to alcohol drugs, or the outside world again.

"The hippie movement is dead," says one resident, "but the basic discontent with modern society that fostered it is still very much alive. I see many young people choosing a life at an intentional community as an alternative to formal college training. They will come here, for instance, build their own home if they are men, or move in with a man if they are women, take part in the community and school, travel a bit, and, through all this, become aware of their own unique nature. Then they may settle down for life or move back into the outer world." . . .

"It is no good to assume that this is just youthful rebellion which will be outgrown soon, for this generation will never be satisfied with what society has to offer," Huw says.

Is Tolstoy Farm a Utopia where everyone lives together in peace and harmony? Hardly. Like any family or community or nation there are disagreements. Sometimes they are violent. But as they live together, Tolstoyites seem to have developed a loyalty and fondness for each other that goes above the bickering.

The insight and the driving search behind this movement among the young take diverse forms, finding expression at other levels. In his (Spring) *American Scholar* essay, for example, Joseph Wood Krutch notes that Charles Lindbergh said

recently that if he had to choose between airplanes and birds, he would choose birds. In a *Life* (last July 4) article, Mr. Lindbergh spoke of the various deteriorations in present-day civilization, saying:

That is why I have turned my attention from technological progress to life, from the civilized to the wild. In wilderness there is a lens to the past, to the present and to the future, offered to us for looking—a direction, a successful selection, an awareness of values that confronts us with the need for the means of our salvation. Let us never forget that wildness has developed life, including the human species. By comparison, our own accomplishments are trivial.

Mr. Krutch finds that Lindbergh means by "wildness" what Thoreau meant, calling it "a modern version of ancient pantheism." It is a view of Nature which does not submit to romantic interpretations, which calls for respect, even reverence, and the "deepest kind of love." "Something," Mr. Krutch says, "has been working itself out and to some of us, however difficult it may be to understand, nature has 'tended' toward something less simple than the so-called survival of the fittest—which after all means no more than the survival of those who survive."

For centuries, now, men have tried to abstract from Nature clear instructions on what to do next. But they have done it as technicians and conquerors. When Mr. Krutch speaks of translating "love of nature" as "trust in wildness," he must mean that what we have now to learn from nature requires a loving and trusting relationship. Prudential considerations are not good enough. Loving is having community with nature, in some sense being nature. The young point out that this is the age of *intentional* community, and Mr. Krutch observes that nature tends "to make survival depend more and more upon conscious intelligence."