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THE SOURCES OF VISION

THE present cannot be called a time of vision, yet it is unmistakably a period characterized by vacuum-creating critical activities that may be regarded as among the prerequisites of a fresh vision. It is also a time when the sequence of events, as reported daily, seems uninterruptedly discouraging. Signs of "progress" are difficult to find, while both practical and moral dilemmas multiply, exciting a morbid zeal in description that has few counterparts in recent cultural history. Champions of "modernity" must now be recruited from those whose education consisted mainly in echoes from the past, and who are too dull or closed in mind to question them. Intellectual intelligence, except in protected areas of scholarly and scientific research, is engaged in anatomizing the phenomena of social disorder and institutional and cultural decay, often with a careless, showy brilliance. It is as though the occupational conditioning of generations of objective, relativist criticism had made incredible any form of positive inspiration.

Yet there are spontaneous, embryonic formations in behalf of far-reaching change. There are various desertions and migrations from modern sophistication. There is a new language of "autonomy" and "creativity" with hardly developed implications—a kind of verbal utopianism which is institutionally homeless and often transparently compromised in practice by stains of the corruption from which it would escape. These tendencies may be but forerunners of bolder acts of the imagination yet to come.

Perhaps the free visioning for which so many long will not be possible until there is more "letting go." But to let go without simultaneously "taking hold" amounts to a leap into the unknown. Some of the young, one might say, are busy trying to create islands of comparative security in trackless areas. Others are simply moving around, ignoring the maps and signposts of conventional behavior. New and at first invisible flexibilities are developing in established social forms. Men in the professions are beginning to reject past rigidities and to demand more freedom for their contribution to social continuity. So there are countless little "lettings go," insignificant no doubt when noticed separately, but perhaps indicative, all together, of some kind of mutation in human attitudes. The changes, in short, are now "molecular," not structural, and these, as William James believed, may have to come first.

Meanwhile, the best magazines seem largely engaged in super-sophisticated iconoclasm. In *Harper's* for April, Peter Schrag makes it clear that in the United States the Day of the Saxon, of the WASP (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant), is about over. Once the very image of the "American" type, the WASPS have become scapegoats of history. Yet they were, Mr. Schrag says, "the landlords of our culture, and their values, with rare exceptions, were those that defined it: hard work, perseverance, self-reliance, puritanism, the missionary spirit, and the abstract rule of law." He continues:

> They are, of course, still with us—in corporations and clubs, in foundations and universities, in government and the military, maintaining the interlocking directorates that make sociologists salivate and that give the Establishment its ugly name: the Power Structure, the Military-Industrial Complex; the rulers of America. But while they hold power, they hold it with less assurance and with less legitimacy than at any time in history. They are hanging on, men living off their cultural capital, but rarely able or willing to create more. One can almost define their domains by locating the people and institutions that are chronically on the defensive: university presidents and trustees; the large foundations; the corporations government; the military. They grew great as initiators and entrepreneurs. They invented the country, its culture and its values; they shaped the institutions and

> organizations. Then they drew the institutions around themselves, moved to the suburbs, and became org-men.

The "ethnic" identification of this type is handy but unfortunate, since there are probably a great many persons of Anglo-Saxon origin who, along with others, are doing their best to free American civilization from the dead hand of the past; yet Mr. Schrag is able to show that present-day literature, science, and culture are now an expression of the "melting pot," with people named Mailer, Roth, Ellison, Baldwin, Nader, Chavez, Chomsky, Ginsberg, Goodman, Bettelheim, Erikson, Cleaver, and Marcuse exercising the shaping influences. Mr. Schrag documents the passing of a frame of mind, an image of unity, coherence, and direction for America. He concludes: "One of the reasons that growing up in America is absurd and chaotic is that the current version of Americanization—what the school people call socializing children—has lost its appeal. We will now have to devise ways of recognizing and assessing the alternatives."

In the same issue of *Harper's*, John Fischer, conductor of "The Easy Chair," writes at length on the fallacies in expecting more technology to pull the country out of the messes technology has already made. Not only has the old self-image faded into inadequacy and unpopularity, but the claims of monumental achievement are under devastating attack. The models through which the future was once imagined and planned for are fast becoming either unacceptable or positively repellent. So it is no wonder that, even before the class magazines found out that sweeping iconoclasm was all that could win general consensus approval from intellectual readers, the young had begun dropping out of school, turning away from education in the hard sciences, and improvising new ways of life.

Is there, then, no promise of a vision to come? When a system of any sort breaks down—when it no longer works well at all—two courses are open. One is to pretend that the failure is only technical, and apply familiar methods for patching it up, continuing to do this until, finally, revolutionary or anarchic forces take over. The other course is to go back to roots and beginnings, and to make a new start with new assumptions. This seems to be the only way in which new knowledge, new science, new vision, can be born. First comes radical distrust. Since we already have that, what is the next step? It is adopting or making oneself hospitable to new assumptions. How is this done?

It happens that in the field of the history of science, there is a book which throws light on this question. While the history of science is not the history of man, it offers analogues which can be sharply delineated, and the quest for scientific truth has had universalizing motives behind it. Thomas S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago Press, 1962) is a study of how new discoveries, revolutionary in effect, have finally been able to claim attention. The new viewpoint, he shows, is resisted because it invariably opens up to questioning various old problems which were supposed to have been solved. Thus "Nature" must contribute some questioning of the old solutions, before conventional investigators are willing to face the disturbance and risk of adopting a new hypothesis. And "the new candidate must seem to resolve some outstanding and generally recognized problem that can be met in no other way."

Judging from the visionless condition of the present, we are obliged to say that thorough-going disenchantment and detailed elaboration of the causes of discouragement and failure are not sufficient as "general recognition." The hungering, while acute, is still backward-looking; the diagnoses are still conceived too much in terms of the old, "problem-solving," technical approach. The language which validates distrust cannot be used to focus attention on merely germinal and still highly subjective incubations of vision.

Yet we can hardly say this of people whose hopes are increasingly centered in work with new schools. Here, surely, is a narrowing of the focus of search for a new inspiration. And starting a school is a kind of social or community self-reference. It can be thought of as akin to Thoreau's trust in "wildness"—a turning to the natural givens in human beings, who are to be helped to maturity without indoctrination in any familiar prejudice. Almost prayerfully, the new schools speak of cherishing and fostering "freedom." Yet freedom gains meaning only in a context o£ striving. Its value is proved in a world filled with obstacles. It follows that education cannot help but take a direction, and it is here, no doubt, that the new schools find their difficulties, since all the old problems arise. And how, in a time when old models seem useless, are they to be met?

Martin Buber has written wisely on this situation. In the section, "Education," in *Between Man and Man* (Macmillan, 1968), he says:

> There is not and never has been a norm and fixed maxim of education. What is called so was always only the norm of a culture, of a society, a church, an epoch, to which education too, like all stirring and action of the spirit, was submissive, and which education translated into its language. In a formed age there is in truth no autonomy of education, but only in an age which is losing form. Only in it, in the disintegration of traditional bonds, in the spinning whirl of freedom does personal responsibility arise which in the end can no longer lean with its burden of decision on any church or society or culture, but is lonely in face of Present Being.
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> In an age which is losing form the highly praised "personalities," who know how to serve its fictitious forms and in their name to dominate the age, count in the truth of what is happening no more than those who lament the genuine forms of the past and are diligent to restore them. The ones who count are those persons who—though they may be of little renown—respond to and are responsible for the continuation of the living spirit, each in the active stillness of his sphere of work.
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> The question which is always being brought forward—"To where, to what, must we educate?"—misunderstands the situation. Only times which know a figure of general validity—the Christian, the gentleman, the citizen—know an answer to that question, not necessarily in words, but by pointing with the finger to the figure which rises clear in the air, out-topping all. The forming of this figure in all individuals, out of all materials, is the formation of "culture." But when all figures are shattered, when no figure is able any more to dominate and shape the present human material, what is there left to form?

Buber's answer is that of a distinguished philosopher in a great tradition, but here it seems better left unrepealed. His clarity is concerned with the unique opportunities and responsibilities of education—new education—in the present. For surely the verdict of the times, the consensus of intelligence, such as we possess in common, is that "all figures" are now shattered, and a time for new beginnings, a new inspiration, has come.

Yet the cry for something new has its ominous side. Has not the demand for the "new" been identified by our most searching critics as a leading symptom of the rootlessness of the age? It is here that the sharp tools of critical analysis are rendered useless by the unresisting reality of final paradox.

What men have thought of as "new" can usually be identified as something lifted from a dustbin of history and given a new name. This is not at all what we want. What we do want, no doubt, is to be able to teach hospitality to vision, to generate openness to values which endure through the vicissitudes and crises of history—and this, in a word, means *character,* since all things are added, eventually, to men who possess the high human qualities from which this word obtains its meaning. Here Buber is again valuable:

> If I have to teach algebra I can expect to succeed in giving my pupils an idea of quadratic equations with two unknown quantities. Even the slowest-witted child will understand it so well that he will amuse himself by solving equations at night when he cannot fall asleep. And even one with the most sluggish memory will not forget, in his old age, how to play with *x* and *y*. But if I am concerned with the education of character, everything becomes problematic. I try to explain to my pupils that envy is

> despicable, and at once I feel the secret resistance of those who are poorer than their comrades. I try to explain that it is wicked to bully the weak, and at once I see a suppressed smile on the lips of the strong. I try to explain that lying destroys life, and something frightful happens: the worst habitual liar of the class produces a brilliant essay on the destructive power of lying. I have made the fatal mistake of *giving instruction* in ethics, and what I said is accepted as current coin of knowledge; nothing of it is transformed into character-building substance.
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> But the difficulty lies still deeper. In all teaching of a subject I can announce my intention of teaching as openly as I please, and this does not interfere with the results. After all, pupils do want, for the most part, to learn something, even if not over-much, so that a tacit agreement becomes possible. But as soon as my pupils notice that I want to educate their characters I am resisted precisely by those who show most signs of genuine independent character: they will not let themselves be educated, or rather, they do not like the idea that somebody wants to educate them. And those, too, who are seriously labouring over the question of good and evil, rebel when one dictates to them, as though it were some long established truth, what is good and what is bad; and they rebel just because they have experienced over and over again how hard it is to find the right way. Does it follow that one should keep silent about one's intention of educating character, and act by ruse and subterfuge? No; I have just said that the difficulty lies deeper. It is not enough to see that education of character is not introduced into a lesson in class; neither may one conceal it in cleverly arranged intervals. Education cannot tolerate such politic action. Even if the pupil does not notice the hidden motive it will have its negative effect on the actions of the teacher himself by depriving him of the directness which is his strength. Only in his whole being, in all his spontaneity can the educator truly affect the whole being of his pupil. For educating characters you do not need a moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow beings. His aliveness streams out to them and affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them.

Well, if we are lacking in vision, there is here at least some awareness of the primary stuff of which visions are made. And whatever the vision that may be born to us, in its own time, it will include this recognition of the integrities of human growth. While Buber speaks with the light of discovery, what he says did not begin to be "true" in some recent time. It has always been true. Yet for those who are witness to the passing of an education based upon particular images of man, as figures and models of "progress," what is timeless may indeed seem "new."

A knowledge of these integrities gives confidence in man, and frees a person—a teacher, or anyone—from fearing to admit his ignorance about practically everything else. This is a strange sort of security, yet it is the foundation of every authentically human undertaking, and its natural idiom in communication creates the only literature with a civilizing effect. We know little of the plateaus of achievement that exist for a subjectivity schooled in determined recognition of how these integrities grow and take on structure, although dim memories of such processes may be recorded in ancient rites and ceremonies, and in the myths. What in man, we well may wonder, is invited to action by the reports of these heroic enterprises? And what must be known and taught before the invitation can be renewed?

REVIEW
THE PRACTICE OF COOPERATION

THE handful of industrial and commercial concerns which are organized according to some principle of common ownership and worker-participation in management exercise an influence out of all proportion to their economic role. Simply by survival, and in some instances by notable success, these semi-utopian ventures prove the viability of ethically based economic enterprises in the midst of a dog-eat-dog, competitive system. In general, such experiments are long on practice and short on theory, which may be behind their uniquely important virtue of being "going concerns." Yet they are not *without* theory. That is, they have an inspiration and they embody principles. And they were founded by men who believe that social development must be voluntary if it is to be humanly valuable.

The German economic theorist, Folkert Wilken, uses several of these concerns to illustrate principles of economic reform in his recent volume, *The Liberation of Work* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul). This book will be welcomed by those who regard the thinking of such men as John Ruskin, Gandhi, and E. F. Schumacher as containing the basic solution to the economic disorders of the modern world. This solution is of course "economic" only in appearance. The roots of the change required and called for lie in regenerating conceptions of the nature of man and in a humanistic diagnosis of the ills afflicting present social organization. This is made clear by Prof. Schumacher, who contributes the Preface to Prof. Wilken's book:

> The broad generalizations of the political debate—capitalism vs. socialism, planning vs. the free market; etc., etc.—are today worse than useless. We have to come to grips with the precise details of the social situation, with the precise rights and obligations of the persons and groups involved; with real "constitution-making" for various types of firms and other associations below the level of the state. What becomes of the idea of ownership, once ownership ceases to be wholly personal? Personal (or private) ownership is a *bundle* of rights and obligations, and when there is any change away from the personal (or private) level, every one of the specific rights and obligations making up the "bundle" must be separately studied and separately "placed" with persons, groups or other organizations capable of exercising such rights and obligations and interested in doing so. This requires painstaking work of a highly imaginative kind, based not only on solid practical knowledge but also on firm conviction of the ultimate value of the human person.

Ostensibly, Prof. Wilken's book is about new forms o£ economic association and how they help to solve conflict between labor and capital. But it is also about the errors made by over-simplifying moral emotions. Questions of right turn on conceptions of self. But conceptions of self are not fixed. They change in time, in reaction to circumstances, and vary from man to man and culture to culture. So all theories concerning human good, being at root an expression of the idea of self, have this variable component. Not only is this the case, but, under strong historical pressures, men may be led to adopt and to act upon ideas of self-benefit which are not really consistent with their inner feelings about themselves. A longing for full recognition as a man may find superficial replacement in a struggle to get more money, especially after long influence of distorting social doctrines in which money is valued above human considerations. But money is no substitute for human dignity, and the "always more" theory of progress can never satisfy the longings that spring from the non-material reality in human beings.

This point is made by Prof. Wilken after an account of the labor movement's campaign for ever higher wages, regardless of whether continual increases are in the common interest:

> The trouble behind the increasing demands continually being pressed by the workers, looked into more deeply, lies in a sense of injustice. This springs from the position they occupy in the system. But such demands for justice spring from the deepest recesses of the human soul, where is rooted the indestructible germ of *humanity.* The realization of social justice is valued higher than any economic disturbances arising

> from its attainment. Of a very different nature is the motive behind the opposition of the entrepreneurs and employers to increased pay and shorter hours. *Their* attitude is inspired by the interest they have in upholding the market-dominated system, and the rights of ownership which are rooted in this. They would like to justify this system which is to blame for the wage disputes, and to save it from the consequences of its basic principle, which arose when the principle of selfish satisfaction of the needs of the individual consumer was transformed into the guiding principle of the whole economic process. As this principle is in its very essence anti-social, the State has been alloted the task of correcting the economic and social harm caused by this antisocial principle, by taking on itself the function of the essential binding social element. Thus the State is charged with the social responsibility for the realization of social values in an economic system which can achieve the ideal of freedom only in an anti-social way, carrying competition even into those spheres which lie outside the exchange of commodities. To these spheres belongs the labor market, on which the rival instincts for gain of both parties explode in industrial strife. This strife is waged with economic weapons, and only in extreme circumstance does the violence of the underlying factors reveal itself.

The basis of this book, in short, lies in truisms of moral psychology. The mutilating assumptions of market place philosophy, indifferent to the profound meaning of work and its value to human beings, reducing economic interdependence to mere transactions, while vulgarizing the material background of all human life, has no way of coping with the resulting outbursts of moral emotion, which must now function in a world in which moral and human values have been displaced. Men are converted into determined adversaries, driven into self-protective and hostile combinations, and, eventually, come to be ruled by ideas of interest and distrust as though these partisan motives were laws of nature. Cooperation is diminished to mean little more than collaboration in combat in behalf of self-interest. The object of this cooperation is *power,* pursued in blind defiance of the fact that the object of industry, considered as a social function, is not power but productivity in order to meet need. The pursuit of power is beside the point, and it will solve no problems. It is wasteful of productive energy and makes existing problems of conflict greater by seeming to increase the stakes of combat.

Men do not really do good work for money. This is a false dogma of the market philosophy. They do good work because it is an expression of their lives. It is only when they have not the decencies of life that they begin to believe that they do and must work for money. Again and again in this book, it is shown that there is no one-to-one relationship, psychologically, between the amount or quality of the work done and the amount of money received. In economic relationships where there is mutual respect, just intent, and proved responsibility, the cash nexus simply does not exist as the decisive element. Another law provides the harmony and solidarity. That this sort of relationship can exist among human beings with different functions in a productive enterprise is shown over and over again by the examples given in Prof. Wilken's book.

Much of his discussion is given to differentiating the various mechanisms of cooperation and of the sharing of responsibility along with the returns of production. He distinguishes carefully between decisions which can be made on common moral principles, such as justice, and those which require specialized knowledge. Productive organizations which come to maturity through years of cooperation experience little difficulty in making this distinction, and there is no sense of loss in allowing particular decisions to be made by those with corresponding knowledge and responsibility. The discussion of the labor movement is clarifying in this connection:

> Today, the Trade Union is only in part an expression of the workers' solidarity. As an element of the labour-market, and representative of its militant tactics, the Union naturally has no interest in the formation of working communities which constitute a higher synthesis than the Trade Union,

> because they are formed by the cooperation of the workers with the entrepreneurs, not just the workers with each other. In place of these real social unions, the Trade Unions substitute demands for *participation in authority.* The militant nature of such participation is due to the situation of the labour-market. Its aim is to develop resistance against the entrepreneur's power, and his abuse of it. . . . They believe that industrial reform can only be brought about by *democracy,* and that democracy can only come about through *participation.*
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> Now, a new industrial order worthy of the name must be brought about by adequate social methods. Only through such methods can the economic system attain the form necessary today. The idea that economic reform can be achieved by the *political* principle of democracy is based on an inadmissible transference of the social methods which are suited to the *political* system, to the *economic* system. This social method consists of the establishment of the will of the people, by a majority vote. Democracy is a political, not an economic concept. The specifically economic problems in industry, touching on the division and nature of the product, the utilization of labour and capital, the distribution of raw materials, etc., cannot be solved by majority decisions or voting. They can only be dealt with by those who possess the *technical knowledge.* The workers are *not* specialists in this field. Only in questions which touch on one's instinctive awareness of justice, such as the question of power, and the division of the profits, does *everyone* have the necessary knowledge. For such things *can* be decided democratically.

It is quite apparent that questions of motive, factors of trust, agreement on general social objectives are the key considerations, and these go back to ultimate philosophic questions, to the idea of the self. In his closing chapters, Prof. Wilken considers the principles and practices of a number of cooperative enterprises, among them the G. L. Rexroth Iron Works, the John Lewis Partnership, the Scott Bader Company and Commonwealth, in England, and several German concerns. It becomes evident, from even these limited examples, that the principles explored and advocated in this book work out in practice. The fruits of trust become clear at every level, and men who grow into understanding of the value of cooperation in a field of practical activities enjoy a kind of life from which it would be folly to turn away. There is no waste or destruction in growth of this sort, nor is any "master plan" necessary. Vision, imagination, and persistent common sense are the constant ingredients of these valuable socio-economic experiments.

COMMENTARY
REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

IN justice to Folkert Wilken (see Review) and to the enterprises he describes, it should be noted that when he speaks of the importance of "technical knowledge" for making economic decisions in the conduct of a business, going on to say that the workers "are *not* specialists in this field," he means only that. The familiar and often warranted suspicion that such remarks are justification for keeping the workers in "their place" simply does not apply, since there is plenty of upward mobility for the workers in the firms he describes. Managerial ability, wherever it appears, is welcomed, not discouraged, since it is scarce enough at every level of industrial operations. The point, here, is that the patterns of an organization based on mutual trust and cooperation cannot be judged by a no-trust ethic.

After allowing a reasonable latitude for the common imperfections of human nature, one can see in these firms ample evidence of genuine concern for human beings and a regard for their potentialities. Such organizations are experiments in trust at the economic level, and the intentions of the men who take the major initial responsibility for starting them are not revealed by the stereotypes of revolutionary ideology. This would only repeat the mistake of letting a statistical, institutional analysis of the human condition serve as a measure of individual human beings. The fact is that a great many men working in institutional roles transcend the potentialities indicated by statistical analysis, and it is just such men who are capable of making social forms serve as instruments of release instead of confinement. The complex societies of the present would have collapsed long ago, but for the presence of these men. This is certainly the case with the sort of men who have shaped the economic forms discussed by Folkert Wilken. (The same might be said of the contributors to the volume given attention in this week's "Children.")

It is evident from Prof. Wilken's account of the rise of the trade union movement that the vast social inefficiencies caused by capital/labor conflicts can be traced to the betrayal of trust and the exploitive use of many human beings by a few others. The solution typically sought, involving a series of spiralling confrontations, has been in the acquisition of *power.* But power leads only to conflict, not to production, which is the aim of economic activity. The only intelligent solution lies, then, in the restoration of trust. If trust can be made to grow in a single enterprise, on an entirely voluntary basis, and even with a surrounding environment of adversary psychology and continual power confrontations, then something rather remarkable has been achieved.

That is what the firms Prof. Wilken describes have done. From his and other reports, the trust seems justified. One might expect this. Why should businessmen who could personally do very well operating by conventional standards bother to share ownership and opportunity with others who work with them, except for the best of reasons?

What they are doing is sometimes called "paternalistic." Maybe it is, in a way. Quite possibly, these men want both the enterprise and its strange ideals to survive, and have some knowledge of the conditions of survival. There is little likelihood, in any event, that what they do and how they do it will match up very well with ethical theories which have yet to prove themselves in practice. Yet even under the gradualism and qualified reforms introduced by these men, which cannot work without both practical testing and shared understanding, there is more mutual trust, more spontaneous human regard and probably more realized freedom than would be possible under an ideologically devised undertaking.

Finally, there is a sense in which a mere business ought not to be burdened with responsibility for modelling the totality of social and cultural reform. It's only an economic activity. Getting food and clothing and shelter are not the whole of life, and in a really good society they will have become the least part of it—the mechanics of physical accommodation to need. Not the least among the disorienting delusions of modern times may be the idea that economics is the master-science on which all other values depend, leading to the view that an economic system can make the difference between good and evil in human life.

It is no accident that the economists who offer the simplest and clearest explanations of the breakdowns of the technological society—men like E. F. Schumacher and Folkert Wilken—start out with the contention that an economics which fails to take its first principles from humanist philosophy is sterile in principle and abortive in effect.

Meanwhile, as W. R. Niblett suggests (see "Children"), the sickness of the universities is due to the withering of their original humanism into brittle structures which can no longer command respect, which have been too long submitted to use as mere instruments of technical, economic, and "system" purposes.

No "system" can restore the flow of genuine concern for man. But men in whom concern is born can bring changes in ingenious ways, subordinating and reshaping even stubborn systems to human purposes.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE IDEAL UNIVERSITY

PATIENT and temperate inquiry into the meaning and role of higher education in three English-speaking countries—England, the United States, and Canada—is provided in *Higher Education: Demand and Response* (London: Tavistock, 1969), edited by W. R. Niblett, head of the Department of Higher Education in the University of London. The book is the fruit of a meeting of some twenty-five representatives of universities in these countries. It is made up of candid self-criticism, for which the provocatives are well known. The word "response" in the title means response to those issues which the heightened self-consciousness of the times must inevitably disclose. In an introductory essay, Mr. Niblett lists some of the questions raised:

> How free are universities really? How free have they ever been except to obey the contemporary commands of their society? And if their society loses faith in or respect for them and the goods they produce can they for long go on having respect for of faith in themselves? Fine talk can continue about the free intellect, obedience to reason, following the truth wherever it may lead. But if it leads to bitter criticism of the very society which sustains and finances the whole higher education system, what then? Is the free intellect all that important? What do we mean by the term anyway? Is the contemporary concept of rationality at all adequate—sufficiently comprehensive or sufficiently in touch with the springs of feeling and action? But where are colleges and universities to get the necessary confidence to change? Where are they to get the confidence to criticize their society in an age when students, taxpayers, and governments are ail dubious about them save as instruments that can be used? They may well be entering a period of financial enfeeblement: robust in its challenge to priorities and to central purposes.
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> And yet, clearly, if even universities cannot at times stand over against their society to comment upon it, if they cannot be places which are powerfully normative and directive in some of their influence, to what other agency can we hopefully look in our time? If this is not part of their job whose job is it?

There are dozens of things to be said in criticism of higher education, and they all get said in this book, driving to the fore a basic question: What sort of normative considerations should be applied to places of higher learning, which are now very large everywhere, and in the United States are enormous?

Has higher learning itself a canon for setting its own ideals? To what needs should it be symmetrically responsive? The problem seems to call for settlement of great but still unsettled questions. We know the plausible answers, but one of the themes of this book, now and then expressed overtly, is that confident acceptance of plausible settlements is what has been doing us in.

Yet there can be no doubt about the fact that the institutions of higher learning ought to be changed. But into what, and by what means? Mortal danger lurks in every confident definition of the good in terms of shaping institutions. Yet there is a passage in Northrop Frye's contribution to this volume which may contain some clues to a *pro tem* answer:

> If we take a second look at our greatest Utopians, Plato and More, we notice that Socrates in the *Republic* is not concerned about setting up his ideal state anywhere: what he is concerned about is the analogy between his ideal state and the structure of the wise man's mind, with its reason, will, and desire corresponding to the philosopher-king, soldiers, and artisans of the political myth. The ideal state exists, so far as we know, only in such minds, which will obey its laws whatever society they are actually living in. Similarly, More calls his ideal state Utopia, meaning nowhere. Hythloday (the "babbler"), who has been to Nowhere, has returned a revolutionary communist, convinced that nothing can be done with Europe until it has been destroyed and a replica of the Utopia set up in its place. But More himself, to whom the story is being told, suggests using the knowledge of Utopia rather as a means of bringing about an improvement in European society from within. Plato and More realize that while the wise man's mind is rigidly disciplined, and while the mature state is ordered, we cannot take the analogy

> between the disciplined mind and the disciplined state too literally. For Plato certainly, and for More probably, the wise man's mind is a ruthless dictatorship of reason over appetite, achieved by control of the will. When we translate this into its social equivalents of a philosopher-king ruling workers by stormtroopers (not "guardians," as in Jowett, but "guards"), we get the most frightful tyranny. But the real Utopia is an individual goal, of which the disciplined society is an allegory. The reason for the allegory is that the Utopian ideal points beyond the individual to a condition in which, as in Kant's kingdom of ends, society and individual are no longer in conflict, but have become different aspects of the same human body.
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> Not only does contemporary radicalism include separatist movements, but it is itself intensely separatist in feeling, and hence the question of where one stops separating becomes central. One feels that the more extreme radicals of our time are simply individualists. The more strident the anarchist slogan (e.g.: "Let's have a revolution first and find out why later"), the more clearly the individualistic basis of its attitude appears, and the more obviously the Utopian attitude is a projection of it. In the Utopianism of Plato and More the traditional authoritarian structure of society was treated as an allegory of the dictatorship of reason in the wise man's mind. We do not now think of the wise man's mind as a dictatorship of reason: in fact we do not think about the wise man's mind at all. We think, rather, in Freudian terms, of a mind in which a principle of normality and balance is fighting for its life against a thundering herd of chaotic impulses, which cannot simply be suppressed but must be frequently indulged and humoured always allowed to have their way however silly or infantile it may be. In short, we think of the mind as a participating democracy: necessary to live with, yet cumbersome, exasperating, and not an ideal but a process. In such an analogy there is no place for the inner-directed person who resists society until death, like Socrates, or More himself: society is divided and the "individual," despite the etymology of the word, self-divided.

This seems as good a diagnosis as any of what is wrong with the modern university. It shelters no effort to find out about a "wise man's mind." The illusion destroyed by current events is the assumption that wisdom would just "happen" as a product of higher education, since that is what, traditionally, education is supposed to produce. The ideal university has existence only in that place where the "ideal state" is also found.

Because of what seemed the extreme pertinence of Northrop Frye's analysis, we have neglected the other contributions to this book, which are in general openly questioning and good. Taken together, they encourage the hope that some universities, at least, have in them the potentialities of self-regenerating institutions.

FRONTIERS

Beyond Technique

NOT the least of the "techniques" in which modern man excels—and with which, until very recently, he has been proud to identify himself—is the capacity to give cogent expression to alarm and to organize a factual supporting case which seems unanswerable.

We have two examples of such cases. One is briefly but effectively drawn by Barry Commoner, a cellular biologist turned ecologist by the blind or ignorant policies of the Atomic Energy Commission. In the *Saturday Review* for April 4, he writes so effectively on the destructive effects of technological misuse of the environment that "alarm" seems a pale description of his claim to attention. He says:

> The environmental crisis, together with all of the other evils that blight the nation—racial inequality, hunger, poverty, and war—cries out for a profound revision of our national priorities. No national problem can be solved until that is accomplished.
>
> Confronted by the depth of this multiple crisis, it is easy to respond with a spate of studies, reports, and projections for future action. But, however essential they may be, more than plans are needed. For the grinding oppression of environmental deterioration—the blighted streets and uncollected garbage, the rats and cockroaches, the decaying beaches and foul rivers, the choking polluted air—degrades the hope of our citizens for the future and their will to secure it. To unwind this spiral of despair, we must take immediate steps against the symptoms as well as the fundamental disorder.

Dr. Commoner has much to say concerning what can and ought to be done, right now, and it deserves active response. Here we should like to give further attention to cries of alarm. A more comprehensive case is made by Alexander Klein in the introductory chapter to a book he has edited—*Natural Enemies: Youth and the Clash of Generations* (Lippincott, 1970). The "youth revolt" provides Prof. Klein with occasion for a devastating and quite unexaggerated summary of what modern man is doing to man, along with his offenses against nature. Several pages are devoted to this case, of which we quote only some opening paragraphs:

> Lack of, or tragically inadequate, action on soul-destroying injustices and deadly problems which threaten us all is almost universally acknowledged to be a central factor in the extent and sharpness of America's "youth revolt" and "student unrest." Buckminster Fuller estimates that we have perhaps fifteen years left to "choose between Utopia and oblivion" for our species. George Wald declares that the "younger generation is no longer sure it has a future," mentioning nuclear holocaust and population explosion. But the future can be irretrievably damaged and even destroyed in many other ways including technological and ecological anarchy and mismanagement, and the industrious applications of the quantum leaps in genetics and surveillance to create a super-1984.
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> Meantime, the young see all our institutions (schools, hospitals, courts, Congress, etc.) deeply inadequate, our cities dying, our highest officials' public lying taken for granted. They see money earned by work taxed far more heavily than money acquired by manipulation; and pittance aid to the poor frowned on while lavish government subsidies and family inheritance for the rich are socially approved. They see an "affluent" society in which public services and the quality of life decline precipitously, and 50 per cent of white families' income—85 per cent of blacks'—is at a level you and I would consider abject poverty ($1500 to $6500 after taxes for a family of four).
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> Contrary to patronizing adult strictures, most of the young know full well that *all* societies are "hypocritical," with a considerable gap between values professed and values lived. But youth is "historical" enough to know that if all hell isn't raised, very little narrowing of the gap will occur. Convinced that we have the productive ability to fill all our people's material needs at a decent level—and still have ample luxuries for the "elite"—youth finds our not doing so inexcusable. They are further shocked when they discover that our society—relative to its capacities—is not even trying to solve its people's pressing problems, *really* trying, with a fraction of the commitment with which it tries to "win" wars. At most, nibbling, Band-Aid measures are taken. Indeed, housing "programs" decrease housing for the poor and lower middle-classes, while

> funding luxury dwellings. Income is as unfairly distributed as thirty years ago. More black children go to segregated schools than in 1954; black unemployment is hardly dented; and the average black college graduate is paid $1,000 a year less than the average white high-school dropout.
>
> Eighteen months after seeing starving American children on television the young read that most states still criminally keep food stamps from reaching the hungry. And the federal government won't let those hungry grow corn for their children on nearby unused land, because the well-to-do owners are being handsomely paid to keep it fallow!
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> So the crises of morality, credibility and confidence deepen, the likelihood of major strife, concentration camps and the police state increases. And all but a few of those from whom youth might have expected the best—their professors and liberals in general (myself included)—appear either oblivious or helpless.

Well, as we said, this is merely the beginning of Prof. Klein's indictment. Again, "alarm" seems an inadequate word.

Maybe the young, as he suggests, "know" all these things. Some of them certainly do. But if they don't know them, they "hunch" them, and have passed the balance point where the quantitative swings over into the qualitative, with feelings of total rejection now shaping their views. Prof. Klein has no particular admiration for some of the activities to which this rejection leads, but that is not the burden of his argument. He is concerned with healing the breach between the generations and proposes a Politics of Common Purpose to enlist the energies of persons of all ages to work for "humanistic, democratic transformation."

It is natural and necessary to speak of remedies, and to work for them. Yet an effective remedy, one would think, will have to be founded on a better understanding of the alarm itself. We are alarmed because a theory—rather a "habit"—of progress, or what was thought to be progress, simply does not work any more, and is rapidly going into reverse. We are *horrified* by this. We have not kept the faith, we tell ourselves. This seems true enough; yet there can be no doubt about the fact that most Americans thought they were keeping the faith. And when, today, aroused critics call "the people" to account, they speak as though there were out there some "responsible" human being who is a type of all the others—somebody who can be *talked to,* reproached, and by exhortation made to arouse himself, to do his duty, and fulfill the American Dream.

There is no such individual. Nor does there seem much awareness among the sounders of alarms concerning the actual processes by which human beings reassess their values, reorient their lives, and begin to *change.*

We should begin, then, by understanding what has happened to us, not merely in terms of terrible facts, but *in principle,* if for no other reason than to be sure that what we attempt to do about it, however laggingly or ineffectually, will not contribute to making it all happen again.

In his last book, *Man and People,* which was his "sociology," Ortega y Gasset wrote:

> No small part of the anguish that today is tormenting the souls of the West derives from the fact that during the past century—and perhaps for the first time in history—man reached the point of believing himself secure. Secure! . . . The progressivist idea consists in affirming not only that humanity—an abstract, irresponsible, nonexistent entity invented at the time—that humanity progresses, which is certain, but also that it progresses of necessity. This idea anesthetized the European and the American to that basic feeling of risk which is the substance of man. Because if humanity progresses, this means that we can abandon all watchfulness, stop worrying, throw off all responsibility, or, as we say in Spain, "snore away" and let humanity bear us inevitably to perfection and delight. Human history thus loses all the bone and sinew of drama and is reduced to a peaceful tourist trip, organized by some transcendent "Cook's." Traveling thus securely toward its fulfillment, the civilization in which we are embarked would be like the Phaeacian ship in Homer which sailed straight to port without a pilot. This security is what we are paying for today.

This is the real cause for alarm, and not the ugly facts which merely confirm the analysis. The facts are bad, the ills declaring them ominous, and if more such facts develop we may not survive to report them. But reporting them is in itself no remedy. The misconception of life, of which these ills are but the spawn, long ago proliferated into rationalizing justification of all the pseudo-autonomous mechanisms of the technological society—our ship "without a pilot." Recovery from this delusion is a task for individuals, and it cannot be undertaken as an "emergency action," inspired by sudden sounding of alarms. Yet Barry Commoner is right enough in saying that the symptoms must also be attacked, because already they threaten to debilitate the will. The root ill, however, lies in the lingering expectation that our "society" will somehow pull us through, because it is a *good* society. We need instruction from those able to show that the good in society is never more than the offprint and memory of the goodness of men, individual men, who lived yesterday or a long time ago. What was for them a vehicle for action has become for us a mirror of complacency and contradictions.: Armed with surgical steel, and the potions, even the spells, of scientific alchemy, these contradictions now maim and kill.