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OLD-NEW DIRECTIONS OF THOUGHT

THE jacket of Lyle Stuart's (1963) edition of *The Cry for Justice,* an anthology of social protest literature compiled by Upton Sinclair, is illustrated with the photograph of a sculptured figure—a man with arms upraised, his face drawn by intensity of feeling. The flap explains:

> The photograph on the cover is of a sculpture by Vojin Bakic. It is of a man being hanged.
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> Stjepan Filipovic was a Yugoslavian metal worker who joined Tito's Partisans from the very beginning of their uprising against the Nazi occupation.
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> He was captured by the Nazis and sentenced to die. His execution was ordered for May 27, 1942, at Valjevo, Serbia. It was held in the square to intimidate the population.
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> When the Nazis put the rope around his neck, Filipovic flung his hands out defiantly and cursed the Germans as murderers. He shouted to the people to resist and implored them never to stop resisting.
>
> At the moment of his hanging, a photograph was taken from which a statue was later made.

Once seen, the figure of Filipovic is not easy to forget. Nor should what he stands for be forgotten. While there are other, equally important aspects of the human situation, a certain hush of reflection belongs by right to the heroic meaning of this statue, which deserves a continuous presence in the mind. And even though there is some risk of obsession by the cruelties and crimes with which the contributors to this anthology are concerned, it is a risk which ought to be taken. A man who, however humbly, would like to serve in some way as physician to his times must have some knowledge of its ills. He cannot leave their diagnosis to statisticians. He cannot be of much use to others unless he feels what afflicts them as an open wound in himself. He must feel the pain, yet not let it become a distorting obsession, for only with balance as a human being can a man see into underlying causes. Tolstoy, for example, went behind the external effects of social injustice and their superficial remedy when he wrote:

> It is very easy to take a child away from a prostitute, or from a beggar. It is very easy, when one has money, to have him washed, cleaned and dressed in good clothes, fed up, and even taught various sciences; but for us who do not earn our own bread, it is not only difficult to teach him to earn his bread, it is impossible, because by our example, and even by those material improvements of his life which cost us nothing, we teach the opposite.

A selection from Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo" is concerned with another level of wrong:

> Let not young souls be smothered out before
> They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their pride.
> It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull
> Its poor are oxlike, limp and leaden-eyed.
> Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly,
> Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap,
> Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve,
> Not that they die, but that they die like sheep.

Great rebels who are also great men maintain an undistorted view of common human good, even though, at moments of action, they may seem partisan. William Blake's poetry and art have an undying vigor because of the symmetry of his "fourfold vision," which shines through his identifications with human suffering and his condemnations of injustice. He knew that men emotionally polarized by crisis, driven to excess by unimaginable wrong, would only construct new confinements for themselves, but he *understood* their struggle and shared in their dream. Today Frantz Fanon is accounted as apostle of revolutionary violence, yet anyone who repeats this judgment without entering into the profundity of Fanon's analysis of the struggle of black men to achieve political freedom will do little or nothing to reduce the sum-total of violence in the world. *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove, 1966) is the

work of a distinguished humanist *in extremis* and the wonder is that, considering the agonies for which he speaks, a universality of vision nonetheless supplies the true strength of what he says. That the violence will infect the new societies it helps to bring to birth goes without saying, but where is the white man of non-violent persuasion who has been able to convey this lesson to the self-satisfied land of his birth? One of the rigors of earning a certificate for teaching non-violence to others is the acceptance of the conditions and suffering of those others. Carl Oglesby put this well in a contribution to *Liberation* (July-August) last summer:

> The black people and the Vietnamese are on the spot. Their fight is for survival, and I don't see how anyone who does not live out with them, in their historical mode, that encompassing emergency, can do much more than accept their wisdom in the matter. . . . My practical, central task, in any case, is to explain and defend them, to deprive white America of that insufferable moral self-assurance by means of which it licenses its genocides. . . .
>
> Which is not to say that we have no right to condemn. We do. Our profession, in fact, is that of the accuser. But we must always understand that history itself, our time and place, is not the proper target of our accusations. . . . All one can do about history is try to understand it and then enter it in pursuit of one's chosen objectives. In the current question, this means: understand and explain why what Dellinger calls the "counterviolence of the victim" occurs.
>
> Someone will say this is a trap. I will agree. I think I have nowhere tried to glamorize violence. . . . I do not hang posters of Che on my walls. . . .

What does understanding "history" involve? The image of a heroic defender of his people, about to be hanged by invaders, is one way of typifying history. Yet not all history is involved in revolutionary crisis. There are other images typifying other relationships of men with each other. Is there *any* form of universal symbolism that could comprehend all the relationships of man? Devotion to heroic struggle alone has the consequence of generating one barricades confrontation after another. In *The Native's Return* (1934) Louis Adamic tells of the songs and traditions of the Serbs, celebrating heroic triumphs and glorious defeats in war. The children, he suggests, are nourished on little else in their formative years, where all Balkanization begins. What, one wonders, do present-day angry revolutionists teach their children? What do we teach our own?

At the end of *Farewell to Revolution* (Norton, 1935), Everett Dean Martin asked just such a question:

> I wonder what men thought a century ago when they said that the school house was to be the foundation of our free institutions? Did they mean merely an education that would improve the individual's opportunities in a competitive struggle for money? Did they mean a patriotic propaganda which would make the population the half grown up victims of crowd appeal? Did they mean schooling which would lead to mere socialization without understanding or habits of reflection? Or did they mean to encourage reasonableness among the people and so see to it that there would be a sensitive and critical public opinion? Liberty is a cultural achievement; it cannot be preserved by a populace which is moved by passion and sentiment and has no knowledge of the principles upon which life in any free society must always be based. We have too long undervalued intelligence in this country, except that of the narrow expert. All history shows that a free people must be a thinking people, and must prize wisdom, as much as military people prize the glory of war. Yes, as much even as our democracy in the past has reverenced business success. Education preserves and enhances liberty, not only by acquainting people with facts, but most of all by putting the mind in immediate contact with the great free master minds of all ages. Then something happens, something of excellence and human understanding, something liberating, is caught up out of the ashes of the past, which crosses the dead centuries and lives to enrich and light the present. Revolutions have their passing hour and are gone. They come like dreams of horror, they pass and leave but exhaustion and sad awakening. But the stream of wisdom coursing through the centuries flows steadily on. Lost for a time it reappears richer and deeper than before. It has brought with it such freedom and civilization as man has yet known. It is the life of reason which will yet create the republic of the free.

These are brave words and we know that the truth is in them. What we seem not to have the heart for is the practice of these ideas in good times and bad, and regardless of what "other people" do. Revolutionary heroes, Mr. Martin is saying, belong to climactic moments; they do not belong to time. Or are we, because of our complacency or our fondness for barricades, ready to doom the future to perpetual guerrilla war? Is the poster the art-form of the age?

What culture heroes could we adopt in order to change our history from endless "revolutionary" episodes to a flow of harmonious and humanizing activities? We need heroes who are able to imagine what a right-side-up sort of life would be, even though the times are upside-down. Well, a case could be made for men like Gandhi and Tolstoy. There is ample evidence that Gandhi had clear ideas about the sort of society he believed would bring a natural symmetry to human life. He too sounded *extreme,* and it may be difficult to think of ourselves as a Gandhian sort of men, but we might consider that any actual solution or ordering of the problems of the modern world will be filled with extreme difficulties. The most promising of the signs of the present may be what the psychologists identify as marking a crisis in feelings of *identity*. They may mean simply that people are getting ready for a fundamental change in the way they think of themselves. It is by means of such changes that impossibilities become the order of the day, that "extreme" activities turn into middle-of-the-road solutions.

The vision contemplated by Tolstoy also presents difficulties, yet his fundamental ideas were never more alive, and his conceptions of progress and education have been filtering into the modern mind for several generations. What is usually left out of observations of this sort is the *brittle* character of old institutions, despite their portentous size and illusion of enduring power, on the one hand; and on the other, the enormous adaptability and tenacity of new forms of life, despite their apparent fragility and tenuous relation to "reality." Also to be considered is the paradoxical play of both optimism and pessimism in human expectations. One version of these contrasting outlooks was expressed by Sigfried Giedion in *Space, Time and Architecture:*

> . . . political revolutions subside, after a certain time, into a new social equilibrium, but the equilibrium that went out of human life with the coming of the Industrial Revolution has not been restored to this day [1962]. The destruction of man's inner quiet and security has remained the most conspicuous effect of the Industrial Revolution. The individual goes under before the march of production; he is devoured by it. . . .
>
> Some think that we stand at the beginning of a great tradition. Others, seeing disaster around them, think that we are at the utmost end of an age. The evaluation of the nineteenth century depends upon which of these is right.
>
> If our culture should be destroyed by brutal forces—or even if it should continue to be terrorized by them—then the nineteenth century will have to be judged as having misused men, materials, and human thought, as one of the most wretched of periods. If we prove capable of putting to their right use the potentialities which were handed down to us, then the nineteenth century, in spite of the human disorder it created and in spite of the consequences which are still developing out of it, will grow into new and heroic dimensions.

It is easy to discern Giedion's pessimistic tendency in this comparison, but the constructive side of such feelings is that they help people to *let go* of attitudes and hopes that stand in the way of basic change.

Today, the thoughtful men of the Western world are a chastened lot. The egotisms of the nineteenth century are about gone, and wondering appreciation of Oriental philosophies and psychologies grows commoner every year. The time may come when the figure of the Buddha, wrapped in contemplation, an unearthly Nirvanic smile lighting his countenance, will have as much meaning for a man in Europe or America as it has had for peoples of the East. Polemics and talk of "failure of nerve" can have little influence on great historical tendencies of the sort now in formation.

From our own intellectual history, there is this to be learned: We are always making strenuous metaphysical deductions on the basis of some supposedly "new" discovery, and so long as the enthusiasm for the discovery lasts the prevailing judgments concerning the nature of man shut out all previously held ideas. Then, when our attention is drawn elsewhere, the old ideas come back, mainly because there was some needed truth in them. Scientific certainties seem almost as ephemeral as fashions, these days, with a rather confused open-mindedness allowing the revival of very old conceptions as though they were novel "insights," when all that is new is a few changes in language.

Fundamental in the present, however, is the gradual relinquishment of the familiar scientific canon of "objective truth," and the emergence of the idea of the individual human being as both moral agent and judge of the question of what is true. This takes us back to the Socratic reform in philosophy, to the idea of the integrity and importance of individual thought—to, indeed, the idea of the soul as the man himself. This stance is arrived at, not only by religio-philosophic "teaching," but from a higher sort of pragmatism based on the practical exhaustion of alternatives in combination with the existential facts of life—the realities which gain a moral sort of objectivity when the distractions of failing theories diminish. We have become, so to speak, too sophisticated to explain ourselves away in terms of yesterday's externalizations of cause and meaning. All the reductive philosophies of the age have themselves been finally reduced—and we see that *we remain.*

So, it is a time, also, for reconsideration of the "spiritual" philosophies of the Western tradition, for wondering about the Platonic Theory of Forms, Plotinian mysticism and metaphysics, and the Leibnizian monads. There is, as we know, an inveterate tendency of the human mind to try to objectify what it is trying to understand, and since the objectivity of sense perception—the limitation of physical science—cannot serve us humanistically, as thinking men, we shall almost certainly avail ourselves of the second-degree objectivity of metaphysics. Actually, for some years now, there has been a slowly reviving interest in Leibnizian conceptions—involving a symbolic geometrizing of ourselves as centers of consciousness, graded by what we are aware of, by how universal are our perceptions and conceptions, and joined in the radical unity of a common essence. (See *Leibniz,* by John Theodore Merz, Lippincott, 1884.) This kind of thinking appeared first, in recent times, in W. Macneile Dixon's *The Human Situation* (Gifford Lectures, 1935-37). It occurs to writers endeavoring to give a philosophic account of the findings of modern biology, and to thinkers seeking a rational basis for understanding psychical phenomena of various sorts. There is moreover a noticeable withdrawal from theological tendencies in writers of this sort, which means that the spirit of science is being preserved, and its discipline expanded to include subjective areas of investigation.

These explorations should not be construed as an attempt on the part of scholarly men to invent a new religion for the "masses," which would be a vast presumption. What such work can contribute, however, is the foundations of a new high culture, independent of existing institutions, opening fresh channels for philosophic dialogue. This is thought freed of the heavy-handed skepticism and unengaged materialism that in the past have driven the popular hunger for transcendental ideas to resort to news-stand astrology and other forms of too-easy belief in matters left without discipline by scientific snobbery.

It is not to be supposed that such thinking has no potential for popular interest. Sartre is difficult, but he does not lack for readers, and the rigor of existential ideas of morality has proved no barrier to their influence on the coming generation. It is true enough that Sartre is no formal metaphysician—he has, instead, the old

suspicion of metaphysics; but he has been, for many, the revolutionary figure in philosophy who insists simply on finding first-hand meanings in life that are worthy of human beings. Through him and some others, the initiative in philosophy has been returned to *man*, and our time is still a time of the most rudimentary beginnings for thought that is authentically our own.

A Leibnizian metaphysics, it is true, contributes only a kind of geometry of the soul. It would have the same personal inaccessibility as any other set of abstract ideas. Intellectual diagrams are not very much like the three-dimensional life we experience; yet all that can be had from metaphysics, after all, is a certain correspondence in symmetries to the field of subjective awareness, giving clarifying dimensions to our reflections. Such thought cannot be adopted whole, as in sudden conversion, but it can contribute some order to the forms of self-discovery, and beauty to ideal conceptions.

REVIEW
ONLY THE ESKIMOS?

FRONTIERS for Jan. 29 quoted from Barry Commoner's remarks at a meeting of ecologists held in Warrenton, Virginia, in December of last year. Five of the papers presented at this gathering are now available in a 32-page supplement to *Natural History* for February, with Dr. Commoner's address as introduction. (The conference was on the Ecological Aspects of International Development, and was attended by more than seventy ecologists, economists, and social and political scientists.) Here, we shall attempt only some parallels between Dr. Commoner's broad conclusions and the general thinking of several other men, adequate summaries of the detailed reports in the supplement being virtually impossible. (We strongly recommend that copies of the supplement be obtained by interested readers and given as much circulation as possible. No better material could be found for use in courses devoted to the relation between modern technology and society, and high-school students, especially, would profit by such reading.) The point is that these research findings, taken as a whole, show beyond doubt that the time has come to do not only critical but *fundamental* thinking about the ends and means of Western civilization. Dr. Commoner begins:

> Technology is widely credited with many of the good things in modern life: rising agricultural productivity, new sources of power, automated industries, enormously accelerated travel, a vast increase in the volume and speed of communication spectacular improvements in medicine and surgery. Technology has magnified the wealth that is produced by human labor; it has lengthened our lives and sweetened the fruits of living. All this has encouraged a firm faith that technology is an undiluted good.
>
> There is now at least one strong reason to question this faith: the phenomenon which has just begun to capture the public attention that it merits—environmental pollution. It is beginning to be clear that this assault on the integrity of the environment is the price we pay for many of the benefits of modern technology. For the advantages of automotive transportation, we pay a price in dwindling wildlife and unstable ecological systems; for nuclear power, we risk the biological hazards of radiation; by increasing agricultural production with fertilizers, we worsen water pollution.
>
> The highly developed nations of the world are not only the immediate beneficiaries of the good that technology can do they are also the first victims of the environmental disease that technology breeds. We are both the inventors of the new technology, and its first victims.
>
> We are *unwitting* victims of environmental pollution, for most of the affronts to the environment were made, not out of greed, but ignorance. . . .

One might argue, in comment on this, that we need a more sophisticated technology to avoid such disasters. But when, it is important to ask, does a more sophisticated technology find itself compelled to resort to a metaphysic of *ends?* It is already obvious that further advances in technology can be expected to produce even more sophisticated problems, since this is how many of our present difficulties came into being. Dr. Commoner is careful to point out that in the case of smog, insecticides, detergents, radioactive fallout, chemical weapons and herbicides used in war, our technological thinking did not anticipate the far-reaching deleterious results. As he says:

> Clearly, we have compiled a record of serious failures in recent technological encounters with the environment. In each case the new technology was brought into use before the ultimate hazards were known. We have been quick to reap the benefits and slow to comprehend the costs.

It should be added that although Dr. Commoner says that the problems spring from ignorance rather than greed, there is plenty of evidence to show that the people who profit most from technological activity often do not *want* to anticipate unknown costs. One of the speakers at the ecology conference pointed out that political leaders respond only to immediate pressures, and in cases of national programs of development possible ecological consequences are brushed aside. As Lynton Caldwell (University of Indiana)

put it, the administrators wait for the bad effects to show, but by that time "the ecological damage has already occurred."

Just such problems were the subject of an article by a well-known psychiatrist, Dr. Jerome D. Frank, of Johns Hopkins, in *Etc.* for March, 1968. The psychology of "progress," he shows, bars concern for the future. After a long recital of facts, Dr. Frank summarizes:

> So everyone is motivated to minimize dangers, especially when taking them seriously might jeopardize gains. Perhaps this universal underestimation also partly reflects the proverbial American optimism. Even scientists, whose sole task should be to establish the facts, seem to be affected. One is constantly running across news items like: "New tests developed at Pennsylvania State University reveal that pesticide residue in plants is fifty per cent greater than present tests indicate." Or: "Radioactive caribou and reindeer may pose a health threat to nearly all residents of Alaska. Scientists previously had believed that only Eskimos living near the Arctic Circle were endangered."
>
> When profits, not merely truth, are at stake, optimism becomes literally blind. One example may suffice. Fluorides discharged into the air by phosphates plants in two Florida counties have damaged citrus crops over a radius of about fifty miles, cut production in some groves by as much as 57 per cent, and have resulted in a $20 million reduction in property values. In the face of these facts, a spokesman for the Florida Phosphates Council told the citrus growers: "Gentlemen, there's no problem of air pollution in this area that is affecting citrus groves. All you boys have to do is take better care of your groves and you will have no complaints about air pollution."

Thus the moral factor is of obvious importance in these considerations, and has application even in the pure sciences, where vested interest in theory may bring as much bias as expectation of dollar volume. After all, even T. H. Huxley practiced some nature-faking to persuade his nineteenth-century audience of the Darwinian theory of evolution. The scientist gains immunity to the temptations of special pleading only through his quality as a man—which is a moral consideration. (See Michael Polanyi's major work, *Personal Knowledge*, University of Chicago Press, 1958.)

Lynn White, Jr., an American historian, devoted an entire article to this contention in *Science* for March 10, 1967. Writing on "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," he set out the proposition that the indifferent, exploitative attitude toward nature on the part of Western man is a direct consequence of the Christian religion, which holds that the resources of the planet are simply "available" for whatever use man wishes to make of them. Prof. White develops this criticism at length, saying in one place: "By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects." He continues:

> Our daily habits of action, for example, are dominated by an implicit faith in perpetual progress which was unknown either to Greco-Roman antiquity or to the Orient. It is rooted in, and is indefensible apart from, Judeo-Christian teleology. . . . Both our present science and our present technology are so tinctured with Christian arrogance toward nature that no solution for our ecological crisis can be expected from them alone. Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be religious. We must rethink and refeel our nature and destiny.

Like the distinguished American naturalist, Aldo Leopold, and like the contemporary sociologist, Richard L. Means, Prof. White sees little hope except from a basic change in attitudes. Mr. Leopold insists that no real improvement in conservation practices will come without "an internal change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions," and Prof. Means blames the abuse of the natural world on "the refusal to connect the human spirit to nature"—reflecting "the traditional thought pattern of Western society wherein nature is conceived to be a separate substance—a material—mechanical, and in a metaphysical sense, irrelevant to man." While Prof. White recognizes the Zen Buddhist feeling for nature as representative of what is needed, he thinks that a revival of the pan-psychism of St. Francis has a

better chance of acceptance in the West. Francis "tried to substitute the idea of the equality of all creatures, including man, for the idea of man's limitless rule of creation."

Yet in a recent book by the late Thomas Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (New Directions, 1968), the author uses Buddhist psychology to throw light on lost meanings of Christianity. The following seems especially pertinent to the entire range of the problems defined by ecologists:

> The truth is that a certain kind of mentality cannot bear to have the worldly and the temporal called into question in any way whatever. . . . But if earthly and temporal values are treated in fact as absolutes, who can enjoy them? They become distorted and unreal and the person who sees them through this delusion is incapable of grasping the real value which they contain. The tragedy of a life centered on "things," on the grasping and manipulation of objects, is that such a life closes the ego upon itself as though it were an end in itself and throws it into a hopeless struggle with other perverse and hostile selves competing together for the possessions which will give them power and satisfaction. . . .
>
> Buddhism and Biblical Christianity agree in their view of man's present condition. Both are aware that man is somehow not in his right relation to the world and to things in it, or rather, to be more exact, they see that man bears in himself a mysterious tendency to *falsify* that relation, and to spend a great deal of energy in justifying the false view he takes of the world and his place in it. This falsification is what Buddhists call *Avidya. Avidya,* usually translated "ignorance," is the root of all evil and suffering because it places man in an equivocal, in fact, impossible, position. . . . The story of the Fall tells us in mythical language that "original sin" is not simply a stigma arbitrarily making good pleasures seem guilty, but a basic inauthenticity, a kind of predisposition to bad faith in our understanding of ourselves and the world. It implies a determined willfulness in trying to make things be other than they are in order that we may be able to make them subserve at any moment, to our individual desire for pleasure or for power. But since things do not obey our arbitrary impulsions, and since we cannot make the world correspond to and confirm the image of it dictated by our needs and illusions, our willfulness is inseparable from error and from suffering. Hence, Buddhism says, . . . every movement of desire tends to bear ultimate fruit in pain rather than lasting joy, in destruction rather than creation. (Let us note in passing that when technological skill seems in fact to give man almost absolute power in manipulating the world, this fact in no way reverses his original condition of brokenness and error but only makes it all the more obvious. We who live in the age of the H-bomb and the extermination camp have reason to reflect on this though such reflection is a bit unpopular.)

Well, there is almost too neat a fit between our beginning and Thomas Merton's ending, in the above. The next subject Merton discusses is Nirvana, and we may not be willing to go that far! But it seems entirely just to say that no one of the writers quoted here is very far away in spirit from the others. The "fit," in other words, is as much a "happening" as it is a reviewer's pleading or plan.

COMMENTARY
AN ANCIENT DILEMMA

THE current revival of behavioristic methods in the treatment of psychological disorders provides an excellent illustration of what is said in this week's lead article (page 7):

> We are always making strenuous metaphysical deductions on the basis of some supposedly "new" discovery, and so long as the enthusiasm for the discovery lasts the prevailing judgments concerning the nature of man shut out all previously held ideas. Then, when our attention is drawn elsewhere, the old ideas come back, mainly because there was some needed truth in them.

An article in the *Pacific Sun* for Feb. 14 describes the impressive successes of David Fisher, of the Institute of Behavioral Science, Sausalito, California, in using "reinforcement" techniques to help autistic (completely withdrawn and mute) children become normal, happy, and "able to cope with the society about them." The article tells how Dr. Fisher gained confidence in this approach by using it to bring to partial recovery the inmates of a "closed ward" of apparently hopelessly deranged women who had been institutionalized for ten years or more. He "acted out" normal behavior for them and rewarded them as they copied what he did. Within weeks, the women were earning the right to pass privileges for all-day and weekend "vacations" from the hospital.

The article contrasts these dramatic results with the often fruitless outcome of long courses of psychoanalytical treatment, and ends with a quotation from Dr. Albert Bandura, a leader in the renewed practice of Behavior Modification. In the *Scientific American* for March, 1967, Dr. Bandura wrote:

> The day may not be far off when psychological disorders can be treated not in mental hospitals or clinics but in comprehensive learning centers, where the clients will not be considered patients suffering from hidden psychic pathologies but as responsible people who will participate actively in developing their own potentialities.

It can hardly be questioned that these methods work wonders for people who have fallen far below the standards of behavior taken for granted in what we call "normal" society. Up to this point, one could say, "conditioning" with reinforcement techniques accomplishes what society itself ought to have done by simple example, but somehow failed to do.

But what about the psychological ills of those who need to reach beyond merely "social" guidance? Whose breakdown comes from failure to accept the responsibilities of transcendence? And what about the possibility that people whose attitudes are entirely shaped by conditioning techniques will be simply unable to *imagine* making decisions for which there are no handy examples in the surrounding environment? The Behaviorists seldom say anything about this. Are there then no unmodeled potentialities for man?

Up to a point, conformity and imitation can mean survival and salvation for a human being; beyond that point they may become stultification and moral suicide. The line between the two procedures has to be drawn in all educational endeavors which look beyond predictable function. In cases of gross pathology, drawing the line seems simple enough, but human life is not really made up of extreme cases; and psychological health always involves subtleties which blur the relation between order and freedom. Growth is the individual discovery and use of that relation. The only *human* goal of conformity, one could say, is intelligently selective non-conformity, and it is precisely here that conditioning theory breaks down. This is the basic dilemma created by all *formula* or simple cause-and-effect theories of education. The problem is resolved by admitting the dilemma, not by delighting in the all-or-nothing solution of choosing one side.

The issue itself is as old as man. A philosophical statement of the dilemma makes the content of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita.*

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
VISION VERSUS PROBLEM-SOLVING

A VALUABLE questioning of the familiar criticism of higher education appears in a book review in *Science* for Feb. 14. The writer, C. West Churchman, of the Space Sciences Laboratory, University of California (Berkeley), discusses a new book, *The Closed Corporation—American Universities in Crisis*, by James Ridgeway, finding its account of the defects, compromises, and confusions accurate enough, but, as he puts it, "largely irrelevant." The reviewer writes:

> I agree wholeheartedly that the make-up of the Regents of the University of California is very unhealthy for the university, and the method of appointment and tenure is extremely bad. But even supposing, as Ridgeway suggests, that the Regents were elected, with the help of the students, for reasonable terms, and even supposing the professors kept out of foolish entanglements with other institutions, and even supposing the administrators refused to serve on industrial boards of directors, what then? It seems to me nonsense to assume that making universities less shoddy in these respects will make them better institutions of learning.

This is a way of saying that description of symptoms is not the same as understanding what ought to be done. Mr. Churchman is pointing out that the entire "problem-solving" approach to the troubles on the campuses may itself be an illustration of what is wrong with education. Social criticism in the United States, with some few exceptions, takes the form of muckraking, which is doubtless better than no criticism at all, but the remedies applied as a result of this kind of attack on our institutions hardly survive the moral excitement which proposes them, and battles for specific reforms have to be fought over and over again. Not only do the problems flow off into other areas instead of being eliminated, but a general law of diminishing returns seems to afflict the problem-solving method itself. Mr. Churchman has an interesting comment on the muckraking approach:

> Indeed, the great success of journalistic indictments of the auto industry, the air travel industry, and now the educational industry is partly to be expected by the shallowness of the philosophical base of our culture. But in the case of the universities there must surely be some hope that a community of scholars and students can turn its attention to acquiring a deeper understanding of why such a community should exist.

How could such a "hope" be intelligently sustained? In any cycle of cultural decline, the *size* of a social institution usually determines how well or effectively it can be reshaped by deliberate efforts toward regeneration. New inspiration and cleansing reform are far more difficult to apply to large institutions, simply because of the inaccessible, interlocking complexity of the bad habits that need to be changed.

Meanwhile, human feelings of hopelessness concerning institutional changes may have an intuitive validity, yet lead to very different courses of action on the part of the people who experience them. Students and-young teachers who have essentially constructive attitudes may be led to withdraw from big institutions and to start small educational experiments. Others, usually in the majority, may turn these 'feelings into programmatic destructiveness and demands for "total revolution." It is easy, of course, to say that such people are "wrong," that they are "negative," that they wish only to "tear down," and destroy what opportunity remains for others to "get an education." To say this may be both true and irrelevant. These people have their authentic feelings, but they lack personal resources for the invention of constructive alternatives. Condemning them does not help.

No one knows, of course, what would happen if by some miracle there could be a sudden change in "attitude" on the part of large numbers of both students, faculty, and administrators. We do know, however, that such changes *never* come about from moral reproach, but only from the lifting power of vision. Meanwhile, it is

characteristic of the "inventory of failures" sort of criticism to end on an optimistic note, at the same time pointing to the absolute necessity for far-reaching reforms. Most readers, however, recognize this as only a conventional muckraker's "last chapter," and the common expectation is that nothing important will get done.

It should not be difficult to see that, morally, this kind of criticism is on the same psychological plane as the destructive protest, as the insistence upon "impossible" demands, and wrecking tactics generally. Both are inadequate responses to genuine feelings of hopelessness, the one expressing a conventional but actually hypocritical optimism, the other emerging as nihilistic pessimism, and both missing the point.

Mr. Churchman shows the superficiality of criticism which deals only with symptoms and their proposed correction:

> My own biased viewpoint on the "crisis" is that universities have lost their philosophical basis. I don't merely mean that philosophy is no longer being taught by philosophy departments, though this is no doubt true. I mean that none of the leaders, faculty, student, or administration, seems to say anything very significant about the meaning and purpose of higher education. Consider, for example, the "no nonsense, hard-line" policy of some politicians and some educators (Hayakawa is a recent example). These men tell us that there is a vast "silent majority" who merely wish to be educated. Educated for what? The point is well illustrated by Ridgeway's book. "The principle that should govern higher education," he says, "is surely simple enough: Since educational institutions are generally regarded as serving a public function, and financed to a large extent by the general citizenry, they ought to be responsible to the public." Which is true and trite if "responsible to the public" means "serving the true needs of those who deserve to be educated," or else false and insidious if the phrase means "performing in a manner which pleases the majority of the electorate."

Simply from this comment, it seems evident that the worth-while future of education will almost certainly develop in schools and institutions which are small enough and independent enough to be free of the manipulative pushes and pulls of politics; small enough, also, to be able to make use of the heritage of the past without being chained to the past; and small enough, finally, to embody vision without the dilutions and dissipations imposed by big organization.

There is a sense in which only an over-riding *esprit de corps* armed by clear perception can overcome the problems described by the critics of our educational and other social institutions. Something of what is required is suggested by a comment by Chuck Dederich, the founder of Synanon, on the difference between the "problem-solving" approach and the solution offered by a therapeutic community. After giving the specifics of a social welfare report on a Boston family, involving various diagnoses of the family's extreme ills, each of which would conventionally call for the services of a separate remedial agency, he said:

> Of course, all these separate activities can't help. They keep hacking away at it, of course, but it's like trying to sweep back the tide.
>
> Synanon's method will be completely different. It would not administrate such a situation. It would absorb it. It would take in such a family and introduce it to a completely new style of life, a life in which all those people would mingle with people who have succeeded on the outside, people who have education and achieved a measure of success, but who are now exactly the same as the people of that family; that is to say, paid-up members of the same club.

Well, the analogy may have shortcomings for the purposes of education, but the idea of sponging up problems, of *absorbing* them, of making them irrelevant, certainly applies. How does it work with Synanon? That is a long story (see *Synanon* by Guy Endore, Doubleday), but the success of Synanon has grown out of an idea powerful enough to attract a nucleus of people who themselves became the being-hood of a therapeutic environment. The health of Synanon is its healing capacity, and it began with a vision. This much of the achievement of Synanon, at least, can be applied as a principle to every sort of social reform and regeneration.

FRONTIERS

The Right to a Choice

THE infamies of power make a never-ending story and a point is reached in reciting them when it becomes obvious that an understanding of what lies behind this perpetual chronicle of injustice is just as important as efforts toward its day-to-day correction. What is wanted is some sort of "existential" recognition of the built-in imperfections of *all* uses of power, as the first step toward eliminating the factor of power in human relationships. Obviously, this elimination is going to be gradual. People don't drop the use of power until they become convinced that its exercise is both wrong and futile. And no one becomes convinced of this all at once. First we try to dehorn power, or use it more considerately. Probably this is inevitable, and also the only way in which the futility of even well-meaning manipulation is finally discovered. Meanwhile, there are the episodes of the misuse of power to report.

A "bang" beginning for any discussion of the wrongs to the American Indians has been continuously possible since the days of the Pilgrim Fathers—who, as someone has said, upon reaching the New World, first fell on their knees, and then fell on the aborigines. A current chapter of offenses is outlined by an article on "Indian Schools" in the Feb. 15 *New Republic*, by Daniel Henniger and Nancy Esposito. It begins:

> Senator Edward Kennedy has taken over the chairmanship of his late brother's Indian Education Sub-committee, which is soon to release a report recommending basic changes in the ways we educate Indian children. It's about time. The Bureau of Indian Affairs spent $86 million of its $241 million budget in 1968 on the education of 55,000 Indian children, and there's little to show for it.
>
> Nearly 60 per cent of these youngsters must attend BIA boarding schools, either because there's no public or federal day school near their home or because they are "social referrals." (BIA jargon for anything from a bilingual difficulty to serious emotional disorders and juvenile delinquency.) One per cent finish college. In Alaska there is only one federal high school, so two-thirds of the Alaskan Indians are sent to a boarding school in Oregon; 267 others go to school in Chilocco, Oklahoma. The Navajo nation comprises one-third of the BIA's responsibility, and 92 per cent of its children are in boarding schools. The schools have a 60 per cent dropout rate, compared to a national average of 23 per cent.

Why do the Indian children drop out? The rest of the article makes it plain that the school atmosphere is so dehumanizing that any escape seems an improvement: "Suicide among young Indians is over three times the national average and an even greater problem in the boarding schools." The schools are supposed to "Americanize" them, and this intention results in a program of deliberate alienation from everything friendly and good in their former home and tribal life on the reservations. So, while the children begin by equalling white children in school work, they commonly lose out between the sixth and eighth grades. They are promoted anyhow, and Indian children finish high school (those that do) with a "9.5 grade education." Behind all this is a government policy:

> Assimilation has been the aim of the Bureau of Indian Affairs since the early 1800's. But it no longer expresses that purpose in the embarrassing language of a World War II House subcommittee: "The final solution of the Indian problem [is] to work toward the liquidation of the Indian problem rather than toward merely perpetuating a federal Indian Service working with a steadily increasing Indian population." From the BIA's "Curriculum Needs of Navajo Pupils" we learn that the Navajo child "needs to begin to develop knowledge of how the dominant culture is pluralistic and how these people worked to become the culture which influences the American mainstream of life . . .", "needs to understand that every man is free to rise as high as he is able and willing . . ."; "needs assistance with accepting either the role of leader or follower . . ."; "needs to understand that a mastery of the English language is imperative to compete in the world today . . ."; "needs to understand that work is necessary to exist and succeed. . . ."

There is a glimmer of hope here and there in Indian education, and these writers take what

encouragement is possible from an experimental school in Arizona which gives the Indians "control of the immediate forces which shape their lives," with noticeably good results.

Each generation of whites is no doubt embarrassed by the egotisms of the language used by the previous generation concerning power relationships. Any reader can obtain basic schooling in such horrors by turning the pages of Felix S. Cohen's *Handbook of Federal Indian Law,* which illustrates the gradual transition in attitudes of American lawmakers, from open imperialism to bored paternalism to impatient do-goodism, and all the possible variations on these themes. Only recently has there been any serious attempt to see the Indians as they see themselves, and here, of course, there are complex difficulties, for often the Indians reflect the white man's stereotypes as the only self-definition some of them know. What is probably a useful book is reported on by Bruce Cox in *Trans-Action* for February—*The New Indians* by Sam Steiner (Harper & Row), concerned with the pan-nationalism of the million Indians of the United States and the half million (including the Metis) of Canada—a comparatively new development. Along with such books, one ought to read John Collier for an appreciation of the communal spirit in Indian life, which throws light on such statements as the recent one of a leader of the National Council of Indian Youth on the "War on Poverty":

> War has been declared on our condition. To many of us poverty is a way of life. We do not like to be miserable, but our poor conditions have preserved a way of life for a while. Is this just stepping up efforts to absorb us into the mainstream of American life?

Mr. Cox writes in summary of the new Indian spirit:

> Eliminating Indian poverty might require that they adopt what Karl Polanyi has called the North American "market mentality"—seeing labor, time, and land as commodities. And this would destroy much that is distinctively Indian. What Indian nationalists seek is a "Third Way"—they want to retain an Indian identity while participating in an industrial economy. . . .
>
> What do Indian nationalists want from white society, then? . . . an official of the National Congress of American Indians answers: "Let us look at your culture and see what we can use for our economic development. Let us arrange your science and education to the best interest of our people. Let us adopt those things that you offer that *we* consider of value."

A great many of the rest of us feel the same way in relation to science and education. The Western "melting pot" is no good for the Indians, and it's no good for us. But the Indians have much stronger reasons for claiming the right to a choice.