

A FLOWERING OF CIVILIZATION

IT is the burden of René Grousset's historical study, *In the Footsteps of the Buddha* (see last week's Review), that a vast renaissance of thought and culture spread throughout the East as a result of the Buddhist revival which took place a little more than a thousand years after the Buddha lived. Grousset describes the shaping forces of this cultural awakening in India and China, showing how the aspiration stirred by the Buddha's doctrines touched countless hearts, moving kings and ministers as well as men of learning to embody in their lives the principles that had been taught centuries earlier and recorded by attentive disciples. It is hardly open to debate that the scriptures of India, of which the Buddhist texts are a climactic expression, are the subtlest and most profound philosophical writings known to the world. Practically all the schools of modern thought were anticipated by this ancient flowering of intellectual and religio-philosophical genius, although only in recent years has there been some appreciation of the fact among Western scholars.

There were many centers of learning in India in the seventh century, but the greatest and most famous of these was unquestionably that known as Nalanda, which Grousset calls "a veritable monastic city consisting of some ten monasteries linked together by an enclosure of brick walls and comprising, apart from the monks' dwellings, a number of halls for meetings and for prayer." The biographer of Hiuan Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who came to India to obtain clear instruction on the teachings of the Master, makes this description of the great center of Mahayana Buddhism in southern Bihar:

There are ten thousand religious here at all times, both internal and external, and all follow the teaching of the Great Vehicle. Members of the eighteen schools are all assembled here and all manner of works are studied, from popular books, the Vedas and other accounts of that kind, to medicine,

the occult sciences and arithmetic. Within the monastery a hundred lectures were delivered each day and the disciples gave zealous attention to the teachings of their masters without ever a moment being wasted.

What must be remembered, however, is that Buddhism, unlike most other religions, gained no authority from claims of "revelation," but was rather an inquiry into the nature of being and knowledge, the demonstration of truth remaining the responsibility of the inquirer. A Bodhisattva or a Buddha is one who has found out the truth through self-discovery, and who then devotes himself to the instruction of others, so that they too may find the way to liberation. The possibility of this transcendent greatness is the balance in Buddhist thought for the pessimism and even nihilism that some see implicit in a system which declares the relativity and illusory character of all earthly knowledge. The resolution of this paradox is a challenge, not to "experts" in religion or science, but to each individual who seriously undertakes the way. Grousset has an interesting passage on an aspect of this paradox. After a long examination of Buddhist arguments to show the impermanence and unreality of the personal self, he says:

This doctrine of the unreality of the individual (*pudgala nairatmya*) was so dear to the hearts of Buddhists that it made them overlook what the Western mind would regard as a paradox. Indeed at the same time as they denied the soul they accepted as did every Indian the idea of moral responsibility, even, by virtue of the unquestioned dogma of transmigration, extending *ad infinitum* back into the past and forward into the future. Soul and self do not exist and yet the human being transmigrates from reincarnation to reincarnation taking with it into each fresh existence the accumulated merit or demerit acquired during its previous existences with all their potential for reward or expiation. And we must bear this belief continually in mind when studying the Buddhist "dogma" of the non-existence of the self, for

it is my opinion that it more than corrects and makes up on the practical side for the theoretical negations we have just been examining.

One could say that this vision of human possibility, with its promise of endless growth or development, which was inextricably linked with the doctrine of individual responsibility, was the fundamental inspiration and motive power of Buddhist civilization. It led to an intensification and heightening of intellectual, religious, and artistic life in the Far East. From Ellora and Ajanta in India, to the figures and reliefs of Borobudur in Java, and to Buddhist temples in Japan, the art of Mahayana faith left the testament of countless devoted artisans. Grousset is moved to eloquence by the frescoes of the Golden Temple of Horyuji at Nara, where he recognizes the same Bodhisattvas that are to be seen at Ajanta:

Superhumanly beautiful beneath the immense halo encircling their faces and the Hindu tiara of chiseled gold or the flower-flecked *mukata*, these heroes of holiness retain that inexpressible gracefulness which is their heritage from the soil of India. As with their brothers at Ajanta their Apollonian nobility of feature and mild, sedate expressions rob them of none of their Olympian power. They remain, like Sakyamuni, their common spiritual father, "Lions of Men." Possibly Japan has even stressed, along with the Aryan purity of their features, their voluptuous "Prince Charming" solemnity. What magnificent elegance there is in their Indian postures and in the richness of their necklaces and bracelets played against the dullness of the skin. What manly tenderness is expressed in these naked shoulders, busts and torsos, occasionally less lithe, perhaps, than those of Ajanta, but even more harmonious.

One notices above all how in the handsome bodies, at once haughty and tender, of these Olympians of idealism the pride of eternal youth is so imbued with intellectual seriousness, so permeated with an awareness of the vanity of all things and so matured with religious feeling and ardent mysticism as occasionally to give the impression of being almost weary of life. The generous line of the eyebrow forming, as at Ajanta, a contemplative arch across the forehead appears to give soaring wing to all the problems of metaphysics. And again recalling

Ajanta, what inner mystery is concealed beneath these slightly lowered eyebrows which yet give passage to the eyes unfathomable gaze? What is the word which has just died on those lips that know the vanity of everything and maintain a silence of expectation and tender compassion?

Grousset is here engaged in showing what he *means* by civilization and high culture—how the arts of an age reflect the reveries of philosophers, and how the invitations to search of a great teacher can be borne across continents and seas, traverse mountain chains, and find hospitality in every city, town, and village. The thought of the sage becomes the echo of the market place and the counsel of kings. The bridges of transcendental logic are translated into the architecture of temples, while the devotion of the disciple is rendered by the sculptor and the painter into the mien of inner peace. Nalanda, the great "university" where ten thousand aspirants gathered as with a single mind, may be thought of as an archetypal center for all this wonderful translation of religious philosophy into the habits and ways of men.

We have great universities today, but no one of them exercises a comparable influence. They, too, instruct in the relativity of all knowledge, and have many departments of learning where may be found scholars who can overwhelm with their erudition. But there is not, in their eclectic curriculum, any central conception such as the ancient Buddhists taught—the law of individual responsibility. Our universities teach about the world, not about man and the ennobling of his life. They may teach about "men," but only as some sort of statistical species to be observed and minutely described. There is no core doctrine of a "way" to be found and a life to be lived that is taught or even investigated in modern universities. So there is no true building of civilizations in these places.

How do great cultures and civilizations come into being? The Buddha provided a simple answer to this question, in the first two verses of the best

known of the Buddhist scriptures, the *Dhammapada*:

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain pursues him, as the wheel of the wagon follows the hoof of the ox that draws it.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness pursues him like his own shadow that never leaves him.

This, for the student, is only the beginning of his course of study. How is it that we are only what we have thought?

That, indeed, stripped of all artifacts, all additions and temporal acquirements, a man may be seen or understood to be, primally and originally, nothing but thought itself? A lifetime may be spent in pondering this question, which is the puzzle of sages. Yet it is also the foundation of all else that a man may know, for what could be more important than the law of his own becoming?

The world of today has put aside questions of human becoming, having for many years concentrated on learning the means of getting what is wanted. We are experts in the production of things, while the production of men has been made a subordinate process. Is there any reason to hope that this emphasis may be reversed?

There is an expression used in India, *Sanatana Dharma*, meaning the Eternal Religion, of which all other religions are held to be imperfect or temporal expressions. If there is such an Eternal Religion, we may think that it is mainly concerned with the true becoming of man, since one who is fully a man would need nothing else added to him. If this view is correct, then not only those known as Buddhists in the past, but the wise of every race and time have been in their way expounders of the Eternal Religion. Such men might be recognized not by what they call themselves, but by what they say. It is in no way

surprising, for example, to find that large sections of what Emerson wrote could be made into commentary and expansions of the twin verses of the *Dhammapada*. In this case, the proposition to be enlarged upon is: *All that we are is the result of what we have thought*. In an essay on "War," Emerson wrote:

It is really a thought that built this portentous war establishment, and a thought shall also melt it away. Every nation and every man instantly surround themselves with a material apparatus which exactly corresponds to their moral state, or state of thought. Observe how every truth and every error, each a *thought* of some man's mind, clothes itself with societies, houses, cities, language, ceremonies, newspapers. Observe the ideas of the present day—orthodoxy, scepticism, missions, popular education, temperance, anti-masonry, anti-slavery; see how each of these abstractions has embodied itself in an imposing apparatus in the community; and how timber, bricks, lime and stone have flown into convenient shape, obedient to the master idea reigning in the minds of many persons. . . .

We surround ourselves always, according to our freedom and ability, with true images of ourselves in things, whether it be ships or books or cannon or churches. The standing army the arsenal, the camp and the gibbet do not appertain to man. They only serve as an index to show where man is now; what a bad, ungoverned temper he has; what an ugly neighbor he is; how his affections halt, how low his hope lies. He who loves the bristle of bayonets only sees in their glitter what beforehand he feels in his heart. It is avarice and hatred, it is that" quivering lip, that cold, hating eye which built magazines. and powder houses.

It follows of course that the least change in man will change his circumstances; the least enlargement of his ideas the least mitigation of his feelings in respect to other men; if, for example, he could be inspired with a tender kindness to the souls of men, and should come to feel that every man was another self with whom he might come to join, as left hand works with right, every degree of the ascendancy of this feeling would cause the most striking changes of external things: the tents would be struck; the men-of-war would rot ashore, the arms rust; the cannon would become streetposts; the pikes, a fisher's harpoon; the marching regiment would be a caravan of emigrants, peaceful pioneers at the fountains of the Wabash and the Missouri. And so it must and will

be: bayonet and sword must first retreat a little from their ostentatious prominence; then quite hide themselves, as the sheriff's halter does now, inviting the attendance only of relations and friends; and then, lastly, will be transferred to the museums of the curious, as poisoning and torturing tools are at this day.

In this essay, Emerson represents a focus of human thought in which the role of the individual thinker is paramount, even though he speaks of the effect of the thought of many men upon the institutions of an epoch—how they are made and can be unmade by men as their creators. "It is a lesson," he says, "which all history teaches wise men, to put trust in ideas, and not in circumstances." Where did Emerson get this focus? Unfortunately, he is very nearly the last of the great exemplars of the *power* of human thought. We have records of the books he read and may perhaps decide that, as scholars have shown, he knew the philosophers of the East and accomplished in himself a fortunate blend of Indian transcendentalism with Platonic inspiration. But Emerson cannot—no more than any other genuine thinker—be explained away in terms of "influences." His language he had from others, but the fire of his thinking was generated within himself, and it is this strength of mind that gave the ancient East its faith in the teachings of the Bodhisattvas and sages who bore internal evidence of the revolutionary doctrines of which they spoke.

It is true that a benign supernaturalism garnishes the lore of the many lives of the Buddha, given in self-sacrifice. Similar tales were told of his followers, and when we speak of Buddhist civilization, we should have in mind a culture of simple people living in villages as well as the learned men of the monasteries and the philosophers who maintained the teachings of the Law as a living tradition. Grousset repeats one tale known to the people which establishes the close comradeship between men and their animal brothers:

The legend, as Hinan Tsang relates it, is a quite delightful one. Once upon a time, in a monastery in Rajagriha, the good monk who was charged with the stewardship of the monastery, having been unable to secure the necessary provisions, was in a state of great perplexity. As a flock of wild geese flew overhead he cried out with a laugh: "Today the monks' allowance is completely non-existent. Noble creatures, this is a circumstance of which you must take note!" Hardly had these words left his lips than the leader of the flock came tumbling out of the clouds as if his wings had been cut and fell at the monk's feet. All the other monks came running at once: the bird was a Bodhisattva who had given his life for them. A tower was erected to contain the body and furnished with an inscription to tell the story.

It was indeed a "story," for no Buddhist philosopher could believe that a sage would inhabit the body of a bird, yet the symbolism of the legend was entirely consistent with the spirit of Buddhism, which taught that a man's highest calling was to devote himself to the welfare of others, even to death if need be. And in these lands, where the doctrine of many births was known and believed by all, death was not feared as it is in the West.

The wonderful qualities of the sages found similar embellishment. Grousset repeats the account of how Ananda came to be the one who established the original canon at the first Buddhist council at Rajagriha:

Immediately following the death of the Blessed One, so the tradition goes, his disciples had gathered there to establish the texts which were to form the collection known as the Three Baskets. The council opened with a scene in which the whole essence of early Buddhism is reflected. Kasyapa, who presided, refused a seat on the council to Ananda, who was the Buddha's cousin and had been his favorite disciple but had been guilty of grave distraction. "Your faults, Ananda, are by no means effaced. Sully not the purity of this august assembly with your presence!" Ananda withdrew covered in confusion. "During the night he strove with all the strength of his spirit to break the ties that bound him to the world and attain arhatship. Then he came back and knocked at the door. 'Are your ties all broken?' Kasyapa asked him. 'They are all broken,' Ananda replied. 'If that is so,' resumed Kasyapa, 'there is no need to open the door

for you. Enter where you will . . . ' Ananda then entered through a crack in the door greeted the monk and kissed his feet. Kasyapa took him by the hand and said, 'I wanted to see you efface all your faults and obtain the fruit of the Bodhi. That I must now tell you, is why I sent you away from the assembly. Do not resent this.' 'If my heart bore any resentment,' replied Ananda, 'how could I say that I have broken all my ties?' He bowed again to Kasyapa, expressing his gratitude, and took his seat on the council. Then, at the invitation of Kasyapa himself, he mounted the dais and recited the discourses of the Buddha. The entire assembly received them from his lips and wrote them down on palm leaves."

This "folk" literature of Buddhism is as important as the philosophical treatises and the great works of art to be found wherever Buddhist doctrines took root, for they illustrate the texture of human attitudes which pervaded the daily lives of the people and, in the cases of unusual men such as the Chinese traveler, Hiuan Tsang, led them to give their lives to searching for the pure doctrines and to teaching others what they had learned. The Buddha, they all knew, was an ideal *man*; he was not a god; his condition, however elevated, was within the reach of all, and the use made of his legendary life and achievements was as a spur and a model of human striving. It was this ideal and the intellectual and moral disciplines of its pursuit which created "a vast current of humanism" that has even today by no means exhausted its energies.

Curiously, there is in principle no "supernaturalism" in the teachings of the Buddha. Perhaps, instead of speaking of Buddhism, we should think of the impact of his influence more in terms of *Sanatana Dharma*, or the Eternal Religion, for the conceptions of human excellence and possibility which the Buddha taught have never really died in the world, but have had renewed expression from time to time, as seems clear enough in the case of Emerson. Buddha spoke of the law of "liberation," but Emerson, in his time, which is closer to our own in idiom and habit of thought, gave expression to what might be called the Law of Civilization. It is thought of this kind of which the modern world has great

need. The scores of universities of the day have much knowledge of the world, but they do not teach of human responsibility and human possibility, save in a remote and derived sense, and after the lessons of many disasters and failures. What is wanted is positive conceptions, and these can flower only in a matrix of thought hospitable to primary thinking about man as a real being of mind—a being of cause who invariably generates the kind of world he imagines to exist, and then suffers or enjoys, according to the quality of his creation.

REVIEW

A ZADDIK FOR ALL

IT is common practice when reading a book for review to make notes as you go along, picking out central ideas or themes, marking lucid passages for quotation, compiling, in effect, your own index. Then, when it comes to writing about it, a lot of the spadework is done. The practice is good for composing reviews, and it is also good for remembering the high points of the book for other purposes.

But sometimes even a careful reading will leave a book unmarked. This can have one of two explanations. Either there was nothing in the book that seemed worth special notice, or it was so engrossing and all of a piece that marking would be very little help to a reviewer. *Martin Buber—an Intimate Portrait* (Viking, \$7.95), by Aubrey Hodes, is in the second category. The book is an unbroken flow concerned with the excellences of a rare human being, and it resists being broken up by any sort of analysis. This is also true of Buber's writing. We have done our share of musing on the quality of Buber's thought. Some writing can be considered apart from the man who wrote it, but not Buber's. This is not to suggest that he is intensely personal, but that what is great in Buber is the stamp of a man's character. He practiced meticulous moral responsibility in a period of habitual irresponsibility the world around. His convictions are capable of expression in terms of the utmost simplicity, yet the life of our time is filled with paradox and contradictions, so that the preservation of simple truths demands subtlety, profundity, and considerable courage. Buber proved quite equal to this.

Mr. Hodes has contributed a study of Buber which in our estimation is not likely to be displaced. He wrote this book by right of natural discipleship, as one who, twelve years before Buber died, sought him out, asking for a kind of help that Buber was both able and glad to give. Hodes had a relative who suffered from a serious

mental disorder, and he wanted to be of use to her but could find no way to get through the barriers between them. Hodes' access to Buber's friendship was his own desire to help another human being. The author recalls that day:

I had a responsibility, he said. Love was responsibility for the loved person by the one who loved. Only by accepting this responsibility could I affirm my real self, my authentic personality. The situation called upon me to make a concrete commitment, to realize my responsibility in action—to see her as a single unique distressed individual, not just as one of a depersonalized throng of mental patients.

But, he said, only I could decide whether to make that commitment. I should listen to the voice of the situation and question myself. Then I would know how to act.

At that time I had not read *I and Thou*, and I had not penetrated deeply enough into Buber's thought to know that he was applying his views on dialogue to my predicament. He offered no easy solution, no gift-wrapped grace. His words were immediate, intimate, demanding. He challenged and drew to the surface my latent desire to serve, to give to others. But he showed me that my love for humanity was too diffuse, and that it had to be focused in a way which would spring from my own particular form of giving. He spoke to my condition, as the Quakers say, and from that day on I was his.

When they first met, Hodes was twenty-five, Buber seventy-five. For twelve years more their friendship continued, with Hodes entering into Buber's interests and life, as the book shows. There is also the story of Buber's childhood and youth, as Buber related it.

Buber's writing does not submit to formal analysis. A merely intellectual account of his work would concern only the shell. While he wrote with logical structure, the wise humanity of his work is no product of construction, but pervades the whole. This quality is not a conclusion but a condition of all that is said. While every reader will have his favorite passages among Buber's works, one that we think of as especially revealing is in an essay in which he uses Max Stirner to elucidate Kierkegaard. It is

perhaps characteristic of Buber that he does not merely condemn Stirner's relentless egoism, but shows Stirner's value as an iconoclast who attacked forms and pretenses, never touching the inner truth, of which he was ignorant. This is really the best sort of criticism.

Buber, naturally enough, is spoken of as a Jewish thinker, and no doubt he is that. But he really belongs to everybody. Whatever his sources, his ideas are characteristically an expression of humanist conviction which leaves behind differences of sect and tradition. Hodes has a good passage on Buber's views of "group" opinion:

Buber's ethic of responsibility implies a response to every life situation. This response should spring from the depths of our personality and be spontaneous, unprogrammed, and entered into fully. He rejects any mechanical, preconceived code of behavior. He was completely against any dogma or system imposed upon the individual. Indeed, he spoke of "intoxication of ritual" and "the madness of dogma." He appreciated the "objective compactness" of dogma, but saw in it the once-for-all which resists the unforeseeable moment of the situation. And because a dogma states as absolute truth a conclusion in advance of any given situation, it stifles the individual response which has in it the power of creating a dialogue with life.

He was conscious that one of the ways men avoid facing a situation unprepared is to erect around themselves a fence of dogma or "certainty." Then, when a situation arises, a man does not have to decide anything but merely retreats behind the fence around him and follows the rules imposed upon him. He does not ask "What do I think?" He asks, "What does the committee think? What did the party say?" (or the rabbi, the priest, the newspaper columnist, the television pundit). They answer for him and he accepts their answer unquestioningly and evades the need to make a decision. . . .

Some men . . . remain trapped all their lives by the values, ideas, doctrines they accepted in their youth, never daring to move from this safe anchor. Others, however, break loose and seek the inner meaning of life by exploring their individual experiences. This process, which Buber calls "realization," strives to attain greater awareness and understanding. It is subjective, creative, intensely

personal. The liberated man discovers his direction. He lives in the moment in time through which he is passing. His life has meaning. And, paradoxically, his withdrawal into an individual searching for truth places him in a relation to the community more harmonious than that of the man who passively accepts the norm from force of habit.

Hodes gives many examples of how Buber applied his own ideas in relationships with others. One of these comes in the form of a letter from Anthony Wedgewood Benn, a former Minister of Technology in the British Government. Benn wrote to Hodes:

The thing I remember most about Buber was the very quiet way in which he received us and his habit of giving his entire attention to the person to whom he was speaking. I remember you telling me that he made a practice of not offering his guests any refreshment, as it destroyed the nature of the dialogue that would otherwise take place.

I also remember that one woman from New York made a suggestion to him about some educational work that might be undertaken in a kibbutz. "Are you prepared to do this work yourself?" he asked her. She said she was not thinking of doing it herself but thought that it might be a good idea if it was done. In the kindest possible way, he explained that he did not think that ideas were worth pursuing unless the people who advocated them were prepared to put them into practice themselves. Though I'm sure he didn't intend it as a rebuke, it was a very testing comment and it made one feel that he was interested more in people than in ideas and wanted to know how far people were prepared to sacrifice themselves in order to make real the ideas which, otherwise, it would be so easy to throw off in conversation in the expectation that others would take them up.

Simple honesty in human relations was the foundation of Buber's conception of responsibility. "The origin of all conflict between me and my fellow-men is that I do not say what I mean, and that I do not do what I say." This sort of confusion, which is often unrecognized, has the effect, Buber says, of poisoning "again and again and in increasing measure, the situation between myself and the other man."

Buber's differences with Gandhi on the subject of nonviolence are often stressed, but their differences are far less important than what they had in common. Gandhi attracted Buber's attention during the 1920's, by his expressed determination to practice truth in politics. Writing of Gandhi's declaration on integrity in politics, Buber said in 1930: "I know of nothing in modern Western public life to put by its side, unless it were, for all the difference in the source, the words of the American Thoreau in his classic treatise on the duty of civil disobedience." Buber found the keynote of Gandhi's position in one of his early statements:

I seem to take part in politics, but this is only because politics today strangles us like the coils of a serpent out of which one cannot slip no matter what one tries. I desire, therefore, to wrestle with the serpent.

Hodes feels that in this statement by Gandhi, Buber saw his own dilemma reflected, and he notes that Buber wrote of Gandhi: "He cannot wrestle uninterruptedly with the serpent; he must at times get along with it because he is directed to work in the kingdom of the serpent that he set out to destroy." Hodes asks: Was not Buber, in writing about Gandhi, really telling us about himself?

There is one delight in this book that we have not mentioned—the retelling of several of the Hasidic tales which Buber often used to illuminate a point. There is a flavor in these stories that is encountered nowhere else. At the end of an early chapter Hodes pays a tribute to Buber that may serve as our conclusion:

It was one of the numerous ironies of Buber's life that he—the greatest interpreter of Hasidism to the Jewish people and the civilization of the West—was not considered a *hasid* by today's *zaddikim* [teachers] and their disciples. Buber did not attend prayers in synagogue and rejected the prescribed rituals. So he could not have been at home in any of the dozens of Hasidic *stiebels*, or courts of the rabbis, within a mile or two of his house in Jerusalem. But for me and many others he remains a *zaddik*, and one of the greatest.

COMMENTARY

THE UNSPECIFIABLE ART

A MEMORABLE passage in Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* deals with the indefinable character of what in this week's "Children" John Keel terms the "Crafts Traditions Approach." Even for the use of advanced technological devices, Polanyi maintains, this learning from those who are masters of the skills involved remains necessary. Polanyi says:

An art which cannot be specified in detail cannot be transmitted by prescription, since no prescription for it exists. It can be passed on only by example from master to apprentice. This restricts the range of diffusion to that of personal contacts, and we find accordingly that craftsmanship tends to survive in closely circumscribed local conditions. Indeed, the diffusion of crafts from one country to another can often be traced to the migration of groups of craftsmen, as that of the Huguenots driven from France by the repeal of the Edict of Nantes under Louis XIV. Again, while *the articulate contents of science* are successfully taught all over the world in hundreds of new universities, *the unspecifiable art of scientific research* has not yet penetrated to many of these. The regions of Europe in which the scientific method first originated 400 years ago are scientifically more fruitful today, in spite of their impoverishment, than several overseas areas where much more money is available for scientific research. Without the opportunity offered to young scientists to serve an apprenticeship in Europe, and without the migration of European scientists to the new countries, research centres overseas could hardly ever have made much headway.

It follows that an art which has fallen into disuse for the period of a generation is altogether lost. There are hundreds of examples of this to which the process of mechanization is continuously adding new ones. These losses are irretrievable. It is pathetic to watch the endless efforts—equipped with microscopy, chemistry, with mathematics and electronics—to reproduce a single violin of the kind the half-literate Stradivarius turned out as a matter of routine more than 200 years ago.

. . . By watching the master and emulating his efforts in the presence of his example, the apprentice unconsciously picks up the rules of the art, including those which are not explicitly known to the master

himself. These hidden rules can be assimilated only by a person who surrenders himself to that extent uncritically to the imitation of another. A society which wants to preserve a fund of personal knowledge must submit to tradition.

"Uncritically" may be a poor word here. It is not necessary to be a blind follower, but one ready to learn the essences of what the teacher knows, without worrying too much about the external forms of instruction or the "logic" involved.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

APPROACHES IN ART EDUCATION

[This article is a much condensed version of a paper on art education by John Keel, who teaches at San Francisco State.]

SINCE 1963 I've done a lot of my teaching, thinking, and "researching" about art education around the idea of six historical styles of art instruction: (1) the craft traditions approach; (2) the "academic" approach; (3) the "expression" approach; (4) the experimental approach; (5) modern "formalism"; (6) life-needs and social functions approach. In the following notes I have formulated these approaches as they might be stated by their exemplars.

Craft Traditions Approach: The method of craft traditions proposes that the best way to learn art is in an intimate and somewhat long apprenticeship to a "master." Learning through on-the-job experience has prevailed through most of human history—the guild system of the middle ages, for example. Much of learning in art is a matter of finding out the possibilities and limitations of tools and materials as worked out in the tradition and passed on by a master. The process is largely a matter of what Michael Polanyi calls "indwelling"—getting deeply involved in rather limited activity over a period of time, working in well-established ways, and only, when the time is right, breaking out of the pattern.

Ideally, the student should learn his art, that is, his craft, from the bottom up, doing all sorts of menial workshop tasks, learning how to prepare tools and materials for work and to use them correctly. Over a period of time the apprentice picks up, almost by osmosis, the attitudes and techniques and devices of the master . . . the mysteries of his craft. If bright and talented, the student finds opportunities for doing things in his own way, for inventing, for adapting, for extending. Eventually, he must leave the atelier.

He must learn how to be on his own, as a journeyman, perhaps, some day, as a master. . . .

The Academic Approach: There are important "fundamentals" to be learned before one can expect to be any kind of an artist. Let us find out what there is to be learned, and teach it, methodically and intelligently. Then artistic creativity can take care of itself.

Why waste all that time in the workshop? We can be quite systematic and explicit. (Note how the Academies of Art that arose out of the Renaissance raised the arts from trades to professions.) We can identify and systematize a great deal of what a young artist needs to know—the fundamental knowledge and discipline which an artist must have—by teaching him: (1) color theory, (2) optics and perspective, (3) compositional devices, (4) techniques, (5) "elements" and "principles" of art, (6) the lessons of art history, (7) the philosophical laws of beauty, (8) artistic anatomy, etc., etc. Once identified, such "basics" can be organized into appropriate courses with teachers who explain and demonstrate and maintain high standards. Such a "master" can show his authority in what he says and how he demonstrates the knowledge of principles; he can evaluate the work in terms of how well the student shows his knowledge. When the student has learned the basic knowledge, he can leave the school and work on his own. This is the time for real creativity to flower.

The Expression Approach: While students need to know the nature of tools and materials, and can pick up useful devices and techniques from the past, what is most important is that art is personal, creative self-expression, which *is* creativity. The big job of the art teacher is to learn how to facilitate the development of such creative expression in the student. This is a very individual thing. The problem, of course, is *how* to do it. There are no easy answers. It's largely a matter of motivating, encouraging, guiding the unique creative process in the individual personality. Such guidance is often very subtle

and often very indirect—a matter of getting in touch or in tune with the unique unfolding personality. An "I-Thou" relationship. Students also need to understand and appreciate the psychological dynamics of the creative process, learning how to accept its various aspects and to work in terms of what they know about it. The biographies of artists may be a guide. This method seems to have its origins in the ideas of the Romantic Revolution. It is also very much part of the Existential approach of our times.

The Inductive, Experimental Approach: I'm interested in developing "creativity," too, but we're living in a scientific age and can be a lot less vague, a lot more systematic. Perhaps we shouldn't distinguish too sharply between what we call "art" and what we call "science." What we call "art" may soon become a kind of empirical science of visual design and communication. Dorner, the art historian, spoke of "A Way Beyond 'Art'." Teaching method should stress induction, a method of inquiry and problem-solving, being systematic. With an appropriate experimental and inductive approach—as a habit and attitude well established, the process can be applied in almost any direction, to any endeavor. In the course of such work, I'm positive that some things will be produced that we can call "works of art."

Often this approach focuses on new media, new material, some new tool, so it is sometimes thought of as "the materials approach," which has become part of basic design teaching, as found in such books as D'Amico's *Art for the Family*, Moholy-Nagy's *Vision in Motion*, and Collier's *Form, Space and Vision*. Calling it "the materials approach" over-simplifies. Think of it as setting up a problem to look into, such as what can you do with this new material? With a line? What are the structural possibilities of sheets of paper? The method includes setting limits, analysis, brainstorming, and using a heuristic approach. Students should explore and share their

discoveries, and go on to other problems, experiments.

Modern "Formalism": I think of an artist as a "master" of *seeing form* and of *creating form*—and what I have to teach is my highly disciplined way of seeing and working, that is structuring works of art. Let's face it, this can only be learned in an intimate and exacting apprenticeship. I have much in common with the craft tradition, but I would emphasize the visual and aesthetic aspects over technical aspects and craftsmanship. Technique and craftsmanship are the means to visual form. Academic method tries to teach composition by applying rules. I try to get at the *essence*, which is largely a way of seeing. Without this essential *form sense*, such rules of composition and design are at best art history, and at worst nonsense. I recognize the extremely subtle and extremely individual side of the creative process, but real creativity only comes after an essential discipline has been established. It's hard to formulate or verbalize what I'm getting at. Albers, Kepes, Hans Hofman, have given us some hints as to proper language to use, but all words are just pointers in a non-verbal process.

Human Needs, Social Functions Approach: All these approaches may be productive in developing artists and designers, but *most* of the people I teach aren't going to become artists or designers. I teach for them.

Art skills and knowledges, principles of design, techniques, etc., can be used as a way of developing personalities, as a means of relating to one another, as a means of dealing with the environment. I direct my teaching to individual needs and social functions, social purposes. You might call my approach "applied art"—art applied to the general problems of life.

I ask: What does this person or this group need to develop in a human way? What does society need to know about art in order to improve? Everything I know about art, about anything, then becomes just a resource to what I

have to do. I suppose this is what Herbert Read meant by education-through-art. Sometimes, my work is largely a matter of art therapy; sometimes, it's a kind of social studies, trying to understand and improve the social environment by working on the visual environment.

A lot of my work is teaching skills that students might use in their home life, their jobs, their future locations. This means knowing about and dealing with all sorts of things that aren't "art." For a good resource book try Ziegfeld and Faulkner's *Art Today*, which came out of the Owatonna Project in the Thirties. But that's only the beginning. . . .

JOHN KEEL

San Francisco State College

FRONTIERS "Communes, U.S.A."

IN 1966, Dick Fairfield, a graduate student in Berkeley, Calif., began a magazine called *The Modern Utopian*, devoted to community living and other aspects of "radical social change." During the past four years he has been active in helping people to start communes, and a year or two ago, spurred by an invitation from Penguin to write a paperback on the communes which have been springing up in great numbers around the country, he began a tour of these places, having in mind his *Modern Utopian* readers as well as the Penguin book. The record of these visits is now available in the form of a preliminary publication, *Communes, U.S.A.*, published at \$4.00 (postpaid) by Alternatives Foundation, P.O. Drawer A, San Francisco, Calif. 94131. The book has 187 pages in 8½ x 11 format; it is lithographed, with typewriter composition, and extensively illustrated by photographs of the people and scenes of various communes.

From one point of view, this book should be a better source of information about the commune movement than more conventional and "orderly" accounts. The author belongs to the generation of the people who are in the communes and he shares naturally in their feelings and attitudes. There is a sense in which these young people are not about to learn a great deal from previous generations of communitarians or studies of their efforts; it is as though the mess the world is now in has had the effect of breaking the links which join the past with the future, so that the lessons of simple common sense must now be gained at first hand, all over again. In the circumstances, there is probably no remedy for this break, except in growth and readjustment processes over a long period of years. A reading of Fairfield's book should help make clear what is involved.

Speaking of the founders of communes which have come into being in recent years, he says:

These people were generally over 25 years old and had some college education. They had been turned on to the idea of communal living through their minds rather than by drugs. But the overwhelming impetus for setting up communes came from the psychedelic drug sub-culture or the hippie movement. Up until two years ago communes were being set up by those influenced or "called" by a book like *Walden Two* on the one hand, and by the psychedelic revolution on the other. Today, such a separation cannot be as easily made.

Short summaries are given to the nineteenth-century communities of the sort visited by Charles Nordhoff and described in *The Communist Societies of the United States*. Arthur Morgan's work is inadequately mentioned, some notice is given to Ralph Borsodi, and there is an appreciative account of Mildred Loomis' contributions, but the bulk of the book is made up of descriptions of recently established communes such as Morning Star, Sheep Ridge, Tolstoy Farm, and various others. As to types of communes, Fairfield finds the division into traditional religious, service, and "scientific" useful, although there are several other types and some which fit into no category.

The author seems especially drawn to the groups which have an "open land" policy, accepting all comers. This makes for serious problems, as the story of Morning Star Ranch makes clear—problems with people unready to live on the land in a self-reliant way, and problems with the county authorities. A talk with Bill Wheeler, the founder of Sheep Ridge Ranch, proved especially informing. This commune has an open land policy and Fairfield remarked:

Obviously there are good things about living really close to the land, but most of us are not really *geared* to that kind of thing.

Bill: I suppose this is one of the ways that open land has a built-in population control.

Dick: You either build a suitable place or you leave?

Bill: Yeah, it's not all a bed of roses. That's actually a fairly important thing, because when you see thousands and millions and millions of people in the city, and you say, why aren't they all up on the ranch,

free land and all. But it's hard. And, I don't know, it's kind of a mystical thing. The thing about it is we are the avant garde, we are the, if you will, the future. I was just reading—it's a ridiculous book but—Leon Uris' *Exodus*, the Israeli thing. Like, I'd never read too much about Zionism, and all the things they went through in Israel. But I see real parallels between what happened there and the young people who are moving from the cities and onto the land here. The parallels are a lot alike in a lot of different ways. For example, much of the early experiments of the Israelis were very disappointing and they needed support from the world Jews to keep them going. They couldn't support themselves. In this sense I feel that the welfare trip which goes on at the ranch is really just a subsidy from the government to help us get going. Because, like, agriculture things take years and years and years to get going. Home industries take a long time to get going—to support themselves. Most people *want* to support themselves. I don't think there's really anybody on welfare who doesn't want to support himself. But it's going to take time for us young people to find out where we're at, to know exactly what we want to do. The energies are there. There's *no* doubt in my mind about that. The imagination is there—*no* doubt about that. What I've seen of what can be done, it's *incredible*. But it's going to take time. The real insight which I had on this was the Bolinas thing—the Standard Oil disaster out in the Bay. I was out in Bolinas, and just to see thousands and thousands of young people out—most of them long hairs—doing a really beautiful thing cleaning up.

There is a great deal of this mood in Dick Fairfield's book, along with reports of considerable nonsense and preoccupation with what seem very small matters. It seems important to add that the communes are only the visible aspect of a vast change in taste and direction that is going on in the coming generation—a change so sudden in its impact and far-reaching in its implications that a new kind of literature is rapidly coming into being to articulate the longings it represents and to serve its needs. Much of this literature is sloppy and immature, and some of it is hardly worth noticing. A great deal of it is frothy with juvenile rhetoric that will never become coherent because it has only slogans and jargon for substance. Yet the core qualities of the change have extraordinary capacity for survival,

because of the high human longing and good that they represent. And there is sometimes a sharply clarifying sense, as in the book reviews on the last page of this book, by Judson Jerome. Here mass media treatments of the communes are intelligently dealt with, along with a perceptive appreciation of the value of the Koinonia Community at Americus, Georgia. People who are wondering about the texture of life in communes of the present would do well to read this participatory study put together by Dick Fairfield.