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CALL THEM "ANCESTORS"

QUESTIONS about the meaning of life seldom get much attention from people occupied with practical objectives, such as converting wilderness into farm lands, starting a business, or developing a transport system. The builder instinct is strong in human beings and the romance of challenging and adventurous enterprise generates objectives sufficient to engage the energies of men throughout most of their lives. It was Hegel, as we recall, who declared that the owl of Minerva does not rise until the sun of empire has set, and this seems to be true of individuals as well as of civilizations. Yet there have always been exceptions, men who could not be distracted from philosophic questions, and the world would be a poor place indeed without them. We can hardly explain these extraordinary individuals by any familiar theory; the combined effects of heredity and environment will not account for their hungering minds, nor have we any way of telling why several of them are sometimes born at the same time to form illustrious groups which give new shape to culture and establish visions which lift the eyes of succeeding generations.

By reason of the kind of history that has been written, lately, little attention is now drawn to such individuals. Since there is no foundation in modern theories of knowledge for dealing with distinctively human excellences, the decisive role of exceptional men is very largely ignored, and people are led by the authorities of the day to believe that only the drive of acquisitive self-interest and the desire for power are significant in historical causation. One of the participants in the Alpbach Conversations, discussed in MANAS last week, suggested "that our present society is actively engaged in repressing the search for meaning." Another participant replied: "Personally I am quite ready to be persuaded that the present social intellectual system of the West actually does repress the search for meaning and tends to regard meaning as a dirty word." Agreeing, Arthur Koestler observed:

> You might say that logical positivism, which calls all questions meaningless which refer to God, and man, and the universe—which calls all these questions meaningless, you might think this is a philosopher's dispute and does not affect the public at large. In reality it affects the public enormously, the semi-literate public through the mass-media, through popularization, indirect indoctrination, and so on. . . .

How, one may naturally ask, does this process of discouraging the search for meaning work? An example is found in a recent issue of the Sunday supplement of one of the largest newspapers published in the United States. There were three main feature stories in it—covering a famous professional football player, a university professor who researches "dreams," and the private lives of Las Vegas show girls. The stories are engrossingly written, intended to show the charming eccentricity, the hearts of gold, the simple, "down-to-earth" qualities of their subjects. Actually, there's nothing really "wrong" with these articles. They are anecdotally entertaining and play up good character. The football player is a kind of folk hero—he is still a leading quarterback at the age of forty-four; the show girls enjoy a quiet homelife and do embroidery in their spare time; the psychologist believes in the quest for self-knowledge, even though he limits his theories or speculations to Freudian and post-Freudian sources. Conclusion: Ours is a pretty good world, after all, with fine, "normal" people in jobs where you might anticipate something quite different.

Well, should we expect much more of a newspaper? Perhaps not. As a matter of fact, the paper in which this supplement appeared has been considerably upgraded in quality by its editor during the past ten years or so. The point is rather that a great many of its readers have no other

source of either information or intellectual stimulation—except for television, if we can count that. There are in the United States no natural avenues for the influence of serious philosophic thinkers to reach the general public, and this influence is neither sought after nor missed. Not since the days of Chautauqua, of Emerson's lectures, of Alcott's Conversations, have there been simple institutional channels for the dissemination of great ideas concerned with meaning. *All* the mass media of today are primarily instruments for stimulating the sale of merchandise, and the vehicle of news or culture second, or even last. It is no exaggeration to say that the channels devoted to the circulation of ideas have been entirely replaced by channels devoted to the circulation of goods. This, in itself, amounts to a repression of the search for meaning.

An effect of this repression has been a loss of respect on the part of many people for the main avenues of communication which remain. It is not uncommon, today, to hear contempt expressed for people who "believe" what they read in the newspapers or learn from other mass media. What is communicated may be incredibly trivial or mostly false, but the weakness is not in people's trust, but in the misplacing of it. The most important cohesive force in any human society is the factor of trust, and if that trust is ever really destroyed, the society will collapse in irreparable ruin. The fact is that all people, everywhere, look for guidance to others in authority, or in positions which command respect. This is wholly natural and necessary. The web of human life depends upon countless such relationships, and that authority is graded and limited by no means puts an end to it. The agony of many of the young in the coming generation grows out of the need to fill the vacuum of believable authority in their lives. One has only to study the history of the 1960's to see how a few talented Pied Pipers were able to give irreversible momentum to half a dozen Children's Crusades. This was a premonitory symptom of what can happen when there is a serious loss of trust—when the "credibility gap" becomes a yawning abyss.

Involved here is what has been termed "legitimacy." Legitimate authority is based upon respect for knowledge and ability, and in some cases wisdom and justice. Illegitimate authority exists and obtains conformity with coercive power when those who have the role are unable to earn the respect which legitimacy requires. The more authority rests on force, the more difficult legitimacy becomes. Moreover, the higher the level of authority, the closer it needs to be to an embodiment of basic meaning, if that authority is to be recognized as legitimate. But in a civilization which has suppressed communication about meaning—in which most references to "meaning" are a cosmetic fraud applied to conceal the uglier aspects of getting things done efficiently, regardless of their real meaning, if any—the loss of legitimacy seems practically certain. In an article considering this loss in modern times, John Schaar invites his readers to—

> Consider, for example, Clark Kerr's incisive definition of the multiversity as "a mechanism held together by administrative rules and powered by money." He is talking about what used to be called the community of scholars.

This article by Mr. Schaar, "Reflections on Authority," appeared in No. 8 of the *New American Review.* Speaking of present-day government and authority, he says:

> . . . what is missing is humanly meaningful authority and leadership. For this the age shows a total incapacity. Establishment officials and hippies alike share the conviction that the only alternatives to the present system of coordination are repression or the riot of passion and anarchy. Both groups, the high and the low, are unable to escape the crushing opposites that the world presents to us and that Weber taught us to believe are the only possible choices. Both groups conceive of authority almost exclusively in terms of repression and denial and cannot imagine obedience based on mutual respect and affection. Confronted with the structures of bureaucratic and technological coordination, the young fear all authority and flee into the unreason of drugs, music,

astrology, and the *Book of Changes,* justifying the flight by the doctrine of "do your own thing"—something that has never appeared on a large scale among any populace outside Bedlam and the nursery, where it can be indulged because there is a keeper who holds ultimate power over the inmates. When those in high positions are confronted with challenges, their first response is to isolate themselves from the challengers by tightening the old rules and imposing tougher new rules. When the managers do attempt reforms in a "humanistic" direction, the result is nearly always a deformity: to humanize leadership—institute coffee hours, fabricate human interest stories to show that the powerful one is a human being after all, and bring in the makeup artists when he has to go on television; to humanize bureaucracy—institute T-groups and ombudsmen; to humanize the law—introduce the indeterminate sentence, special procedures and officials for juvenile offenders, and psychiatrists who will put a technical name on any state of mind for a fee. It is always an alliance between "democratic" ideology and expert manipulation, in a hopeless attempt to reconstruct something now almost forgotten—the idea and experience of genuine authority. In the earlier ages of man, leaders were made by art to appear as more than human: divine or semi-divine personages. Today the ones who stand at the command posts and switching points are made by art to appear as more than mechanical.

Mr. Schaar concludes by pointing out that every man is confronted by three essential problems or mysteries. How he meets them will determine what meaning he is able to find in his life. They can be put in the form of basic questions:

Who am I as an individual? Who am I as a member of this society? Who am I as a man, a member of humanity? Each of the three questions contains within itself a host of questions, and the way a man formulates and responds to them composes the center and structure of his values.

This is connected with the responsibilities of authority:

Humanly significant authorities are those who help men answer these questions in terms that men implicitly understand. The leader offers interpretations and recommendations which resonate in the minds and spirits of other men. When leaders and followers interact on levels of mutual, subjective comprehension and sharing of meaning, then we have humanly significant leadership. The relationship is one of identification and co-performance. The leader finds himself in the followers, and they find themselves in the leader. I am aware that to the rational and objective men of our day, this is mysticism. But it is those same rational men who cannot understand why the rational, objective, and expert administrators are losing authority, if not yet power, in all the modern states. The answer is mysteriously simple: to the degree that the administrative leader achieves the objectivity and expertise which are the badges of his competence, he loses the ability to enter a relationship of mutual understanding with those who rely on him for counsel and direction. . . .

Hence, one way to describe the crisis of legitimacy is to say that the basic features and tendencies of modernity have produced a situation in which the established processes and formal structures of control are at war with the conditions necessary for authority. In this battle, legitimacy is destroyed.

This entire article by John Schaar could be taken as an appendix devoted to review of how the repression of the search for meaning is carried out in our society. It is not, of course, a conscious activity, except in the sense that there is a deliberate effort on the part of those who control the economic life of the nation to restrict the communications of the age to the transmission of ideas which will in some way serve the purposes of an expanding economy. In short, the work of the popularizers of the doctrines of the reductionists has been done all too well. The very idea of the search for meaning has been forgotten; conscience speaks no longer, having been sealed off by the quite conscientious efforts of men devoted to efficient technique, who take for granted that the ends that will result will be completely desirable, for how could such wonderful methods and means produce anything but equally splendid results?

What then is to be done? This is another of those questions, set at the macro level, which have workable answers only at the micro level. It is hardly possible to "organize" a search for meaning. To attempt organization of this quest

would mean the establishment of some sort of religious orthodoxy, or perhaps a kind of para-scientific specialty. The search for meaning can be fostered only by recognizing the forms in which it occurs naturally, and giving them the respect that they have been denied for at least several generations.

The thing to be guarded against, most of all, is the temptation to make a technological approach to meaning. The discovery of meaning is always spontaneous and free, and the fact that the same great meanings are rediscovered again and again should be evidence enough that the answers to the great questions listed by John Schaar cannot be codified or put into a catechism. Part of the realization of meaning must be that its possibilities can never be exhausted, so that any formulation which pretends to finality can be known to be fraudulent. In a perceptive article in the *Saturday Review* for Oct. 16, Louis J. Halle muses on the poetic character of great prose, giving as an example Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Why do his words ring so in the memory? Are the measured phrases of the address no more than ornamentation? What is the nature of a content which demands and finds symmetry and rhythmic beat? Even Lincoln's letters had this quality, now and then, Prof. Halle finds.

A closing portion of this article seems to speak directly to the question of how the search for meaning is best pursued, what it stands for, for humankind, and, by implication, what we may do to make some small personal contribution:

> My premise is that all mankind in its present condition, its evolution uncompleted, is suspended between the aboriginal chaos, above which it has risen some way, and a higher order of which it still perceives only glimmers. Each one of us, at least with part of his being, aspires to the higher order and is drawn to it. Therefore, when we organize ourselves into societies, it is not only for the sake of greater physical security and economic advantage; it is also for the sake of realizing a nobler life than is possible for wild animals rooting in the woods. The Athenians of the fifth century B.C. did not give their devotion to Athens merely because it sheltered them behind a stone wall and allowed them to make a living. They did so as well—indeed they did so primarily—because it represented the order epitomized in the Parthenon, in the statues of Phidias, and in the religious dramas performed at the foot of the Acropolis. Certainly the patriotism that caused Americans to break with the England of George III was based on the vision of a higher life that seemed already on the way to realization in our new national society.
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> If this is so, then political leadership is failing in its role if it confines itself to the problems of physical security and the economy. Abraham Lincoln, even while exercising the leadership of one side in a civil war that was being fought with savage partisanship, rose above the partisanship to the vision of a national union, embracing both sides alike, that had to redeem a sordid past, the guilt of which both shared, and thereby to attain a state of grace. All this he made explicit, while the war was being fought, in the poem we know as his Second Inaugural Address. With little change, parts of it might be included among the Psalms.
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> In the present stage of our development, I say, we men are uneasily suspended between a sordid chaos and the sublime order of which we have intimations. It is the function of poets—as of painters, sculptors, and musicians—to catch these intimations and enshrine them for us in the forms of language and the graphic arts. This is also the function of political leadership at the highest level, a function that can be discharged only in what an early poet called "wingéd words."

All this may be thought vague. We are used to exact amounts and precise dimensions, and Mr. Halle speaks of "intimations." But the search for meaning can be rooted in nothing but intimations, since, if we were given more by the artist, he would not be an artist but a mechanic, and what he gave would not be the seed of a truth but some lifeless, finished artifact.

What is wrong with the present age? Everyone has an answer to this question, but a reply not often heard is that we have too much done for us. Too much of our life is a manufactured thing. The revolt of youth doubtless has many causes behind it, some more admirable than others, but among them is certainly

the revolt of frustrated Yankee ingenuity and resourcefulness which have lost their field of activity. The advanced industrial society is out of scale for everything except obedient, passive, movable parts.

We exaggerate, of course. The country is wide, the open spaces many. But the well-worn paths seem all to be leading toward some form of submission to a pre-existing pattern; and so the young revolt. The counter society is a fact, but it remains without final definition and had better stay that way until the renewed quest for meaning gains some maturity and has borne a little fruit. The present may be something of a waiting period, which might well be devoted to the search for Ancestors in the search for meaning. Not organizations, not claimants, not prophets, but *ancestors*—by which we mean those few exceptional men and women, across the centuries, in whom the hunger to know grew so great that it determined the quality and character of all that they did.

If attention is given to organizations, the demands of technique and the clever solutions of bureaucrats will soon replace the ardor of individual inquiry, as has happened in the past. Never have the excesses of organization been so apparent as they are today, although it must be admitted that the skills of modern industry have at the same time become the means by which the men and women of this age have access to every other age, through the works of the best and greatest thinkers of the past, including the past of all the world.

Perhaps we should say that there is nothing wrong with industry and technology that a balanced life for human beings could not easily remedy. It is the lack of a sense of transcendent meaning and purpose that pulls everything out of shape, that infuses material activities with a desperate, compensating fury in the hope of filling up the abyss of lives left empty by the failure of vision, the absence of aspiration.

There is then a double conspiracy of events in the present—a sickness of the common life which drives men to seek alternatives, and the means to find them in the unparalleled opportunity to find out what other men have thought and to learn from them—perhaps, some day, to improve upon what they said and did.

REVIEW

HAPPY MAN, UNWOUNDED EARTH

JOHN COLLIER was not a particularly orderly writer, but his books, unlike most others, are all of them worth reading more than once, some of them several times. No man of our time was as willing a learner from the American Indians as John Collier, nor as able to communicate so well what he learned. When the new books that keep coming out pall or seem sterile in content, Collier is a good man to go to for relief. So, this being a week without a volume that appeals, we go to Collier.

On the Gleaming Way (Sage paperback) embodies his musings about the Navajos, the Pueblos, their land and, as he says, "their meanings to the world." A passage on the Pueblos, written in 1946, illustrates Collier's approach and his sense of the relevance of the Indian way of life:

> They are communities based on agriculture. They have existed and evolved through a very long time. Agriculture is nothing less than a very fine art with them—the more impressively as one moves to arid Hopiland.
>
> As agricultural communities they deal with the land—its soil, water, vegetation and wild life—not in the spirit of exploitation but in the spirit of reciprocity. A better word than reciprocity is brotherhood—active, considerate, loving brotherhood. This means they are conservationists; and present years are demonstrating that their conservation-mindedness is ready to take and use all of the applicable modern technologies of conservation. By ancient tradition, and with imaginative intensity, and within the slow, unfailing rhythms which they have taken from nature and made into their own social and spiritual rhythms, they function as *applied ecologists.* They have functioned thus for fifteen centuries or longer in the prescientific way of intuition and accumulated experience. When as at Acoma Pueblo, since 1936, they add to their prescientific ecology the modern techniques and organizational techniques, they are not aware of incompatibility or conflict between the two orders. The white man assumes that such incompatibility exists and that it dooms the prescientific, mystic, religious, aesthetic, intuitional world view and sentiments and complexes. The Pueblo Indian silently repudiates that assumption. The livingness of the earth, the reality of the two-way flow between earth and man, the deeply religious character of that relationship, are the fundamental premise of Pueblo life. New technologies, including the mathematical and quantitative operations of science, *if they be ecologically relevant within the Pueblo environment,* are brought into the ancient ecological enterprise without collision or contradiction.

Another kind of resourcefulness and strength is found among the Navajos. These Indians, Collier suggests, were hardly a "tribe," living, during the nineteenth century, in single, isolated families or small groups, in the same general area as the Pueblos. After the Civil War, the Navajos suffered the destruction of all their crops, which included the cutting down of all their fruit trees (three thousand of these in Canyon de Chelly alone, Collier says), and the slaughter of all their livestock, by the United States Army. They were exiled to eastern New Mexico, and when they were permitted to return in 1868, they numbered hardly more than twelve thousand. (Navajos multiply very rapidly and are now said to have a population of 125,000.) Collier says that after they returned to their land in Arizona the government encouraged them "to multiply their livestock without any account of what amount of livestock load the range could support without being ruined." The Navajos had sheep, goats, a few cattle, and a great many semi-wild horses. It did not take very many years for this growing livestock population to over-graze the land to the point of disaster. Sheep eat not only grass but roots, and erosion began to sweep away the topsoil in flash floods. Collier says:

> By the year 1933, a human population multiplied nearly fourfold since 1868 was subsisting on a land base whose potential had dwindled by more than one-half since 1868. The safe carrying capacity of the tribe's whole land area had fallen to some six hundred thousand sheep units. (A cow or a horse represents four sheep units.) The sheep units on this land numbered one million three hundred thousand. That meant an erosion increasing at geometrical, not arithmetical speed; it meant near-impending doom.

Through Collier's efforts—he was then Commissioner of Indian Affairs—a soil and range expert surveyed the reservation and reported the full extent of the crisis. Collier decided not to attempt a coercive enforcement of stock reduction and limitation on the Indians, but to burden the recently formed Navajo Tribal Council with the responsibility for the land. It was then that the Indian leaders showed their quality:

> Then there commenced a political event rare if not unique in the history of popular government. The Council accepted and affirmed the conservation program, with its bitter requirement of a slashing stock reduction, because its intellect and conscience required it to. The Council's constituency did not accept the program, but resisted it with a bitterness sometimes sad, sometimes angry and wild. The Council stood firm, and the electorate threw it out of office. The successor Councilmen, confronting the implacable facts, reaffirmed and extended the conservation program, including the stock reductions. The electorate threw this successor out of office; and again the new council affirmed the program and extended it. Thus, onward for ten years.
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> Not often do legislators, in the absence of corporation or big-money or other pressure-group influence, deliver themselves for electoral slaughter by going counter to the impassioned, even inflamed will of the vast majority of their constituents. That is what the Navajo legislators did. They did it under no sort of duress and bribery of the Indian Service duress and bribery were not possible and were not attempted. They did it out of a political virtue of a very high order, and under no compulsion except that of an overwhelming reality which they acknowledged after they entered on responsibility. They were helpless to communicate their understanding to the mass of the Navajos; but upward along the line of greatest unpopularity, greatest resistance, the Navajo Council moved.

This story had a mixed ending, both good and bad. In the long run, the productivity of the herds increased through reclamation of the land; even with fewer animals, there was a greater yield of wool and meat. But the Tribal Council fell into disunion with the tribe, because of the insistence, by administration after administration, on the conservation program.

The richest section of this book is concerned with the culture and the courage of the Pueblo Indians, for whom, it is plain, Collier felt a deep affection. Perhaps it should be explained that for many years before he became Indian Commissioner—which happened almost by accident, since he had no political ambitions—Collier had been working for the Indians as executive secretary of the American Indian Defense Association. The post he held in the Government, from 1933 to 1945, was only an interval in a long career of service to the indigenous peoples of the Americas, giving him opportunity, under President Roosevelt, to try to revitalize the Indian Service and to shape a new governmental attitude toward the Indians. The Indians were his lifelong study and many of them became his friends. In this section he wrote:

> The Pueblos, I suggest, in their philosophy and practice of the man-nature relationship, and in their ecological practice which makes of the human society a cooperant part of the planetary and cosmological ecological creation, are the askers of a question and the propounders of an answer even more universal than were the question and answer of Rochdale [a reference to the Rochdale weavers, who started the cooperative movement]. The question and answer of the Pueblos ring like bells muffled in the heart of every human child, and ring like bells muffled by many veils and almost drowned in many noises, yet audible, in the forsworn deeps of the adults of our epoch which is rushing on to its terminus. They tell that happy man, unwounded earth, and long, endless future can be had by our race still.

There is much discussion of the intricate systems of symbols by which the Pueblo Indians live—the foundation of convictions many thousands of years old. Then Collier says:

> It is a somewhat incredible fashion among many anthropologists to remark that the whole of this unified multitude of Pueblo sacred drama is nothing more than an operation to make the corn grow, or to bring an emotion of security to the afraid and insecure. Account for Charttes Cathedral thus, for the *Bhagavad-Gita,* for Michelangelo, Plato, Aeschylus, for the Christ, and for Bach's music. None can say what that Reality in the Universe is, from whence the Pueblo's sacred dramas came and

> toward which they march, and let one say that all is Freudian projection and mere imitative magic, if he thinks that his hypothesis requires this bankruptcy of perception of him. The experiencer knows what an experience is, and he alone; and the Pueblo Indian experiencer of the sacred drama knows that he is raised into vastness, made free from personal trouble, flooded with impersonal joy and ardor and plunged into the ever-flowing tide of the tribal and world soul. And whatever the epistemological presumption be, it is a fact that the sacred drama, at the core of Pueblo life, is a personality-forming, an educative institution, possibly without rival in the world of today.

John Collier devoted his whole life to the undoing of wrongs. At one time he believed that the indigenous peoples of the Americas would not survive—that they had been too deeply wounded by the cultural imperialism of Western man, and made defenseless by the terrible mixture of its depredations and its temptations. Before he died, he changed his mind, joyously concluding that the Indians would survive—survive and once again grow strong—and he hoped that from those secrets of nature and life which they had preserved over so many thousands of years, the white men would eventually learn what was missing from their own lives, and bring to birth another kind of civilization in the West.

COMMENTARY
"THE BIGGEST SINGLE FACT

IN an editorial in the *Saturday Review* for Oct. 30, Norman Cousins observes:

> The Pentagon Papers revealed all too clearly that one of our reasons for being in Vietnam was that we wanted to keep our prestige high in Southeast Asia. But some kinds of prestige are apparently worth more than others. It seems we will go anywhere, spend limitless sums, and do virtually anything in order to convince people we are capable of making and keeping military commitments. But we fail to recognize that moral factors can be even more powerful and important than the military ones. The biggest single fact emerging from the Pentagon Papers is that so many people in high places in government were incapable of making moral judgments. In the end, our failure in Vietnam has not been military but moral. We never stopped to ask whether what we were doing was right.

This is now being said again and again. It is one of the central points made by John Schaar in his recent study of the loss of legitimacy by modern authority. "The Pentagon's own retrospective account of those years," said William Pfaff in the *New Yorker* for last July 3, "makes it clear that those officials did not really devote much thought to why there should be a war," and he added: "We really went into Vietnam for no more complicated or subtle reason than to prevail: to make those who resisted submit to us." In his article, *"The Game of Nations,"* in *Harper's* for November, Richard Barnet shows how the methods of the policy-makers and security-managers systematically rule out the moral factor in all decisions. In the Pentagon, State Department, White House, or CIA, he says, "toughness is the most highly prized virtue." He continues:

> Like the detective on television, they are always looking for "the facts." In the process they miss reality. They never get close enough or related enough to another society to do more than count things in it. If you relate to a country as a military target, you do not need to know anything about it except such details as are easily supplied by reconnaissance satellites, spy ships, secret agents, and the like. You need never know who the victims of your attack were. Your job is to count. Things that stay still long enough to be counted are either inanimate or dead. . . . The man who tries to understand or explain the point of view of the adversary can be accused of defending him.

The attitudes of these men have been drilled into them by generations of tutors—in the psychology and history departments of universities and in the competitive struggle of business. That they and many others are "incapable of making moral judgments" is a measure of the changes that are needed, not only in the uses of power, but also in the people who have been content to raise such men to power.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
REVERENCE FOR LIFE

AT this time of year, if one lives in the country in California, one is likely to see boys barely into their teens stalking through the brush carrying a pellet gun or sometimes a twenty-two rifle, "hunting" for whatever wildlife they can find to shoot. Various legal "seasons" control such activities, but the longing to bring *something* down seems the controlling factor with some of these boys. Crouching and peering, hoping to come upon a cottontail or a quail, they seem to be acting out all they have heard of their fathers' deer-hunting expeditions. Their faces are tense with excitement and determination.

Boys can be different, of course. Some of them need only to kill one little bird to be horrified at what they have done, and never want to touch a firearm again. Perhaps the death of a sparrow is worth it in such cases. One might think that a lifelong revulsion toward all killing had been cheaply bought. But the other boys who, year after year, go out into the hills with their rifles—what could you say to them about this kind of "play," even if given a chance?

Could something be done about it in school? Or would the school boards object, on the ground that the sport of hunting is pretty basic in American life, with important industries and jobs dependent on the sale of guns and other equipment to hunters?

In the *Ontario Naturalist* for March of this year, Russell J. Rutter discusses the fact that "there is no code of morals (or ethics) covering our behavior toward the so-called lower animals." He notes that if the members of one hunt club trespass on the territory of another hunt club, the act is regarded as "unethical," without much difference of opinion. But when it comes to the morality of shooting a deer, there is hardly any consensus at all. Mr. Rutter would like to see some thinking get done on this subject. Personally, he is convinced that it is wrong to kill a deer for sport. The really interesting part of his article is concerned with how he reached this conclusion. Here we have what might be educational raw material:

> Conceivably, the question might be asked, "How does one get that way?" and to that I have no clear-cut answer. I do feel more confidence in what I think now because the impressionable days of my early youth were spent in an atmosphere of wanton killing. If I had always been this way I would suspect my attitude of being a mere biological accident. But until I was well into middle age I adhered in practice to the idea that killing a member of my own race was one thing but killing one of the other animals was something else. That is our alleged philosophy at the present time, but it is transparently defective, a false front behind which we hide to avoid thinking. If it is wrong to kill a fellow human being in time of peace it is equally wrong in time of war. I do not remember having been influenced by contact with other people, but I am able to date the beginning of my own doubts about man's right to practice "casual slaughter" on any species of animal except his own.
>
> I was living on a bush farm at the time and we were plagued—or thought we were—by porcupines. It was not unusual for me to get up in the middle of the night, aroused by the barking of a dog, go out with a flashlight and a rifle, shoot a porcupine, and go back to bed. Then one day in broad daylight we were invaded by two half-grown porcupines travelling together. I killed one, but the other escaped. The next day it was back and, moved more by an impulse to experiment than by compassion, I maneuvered it into a deep washtub, put the tub in my car, drove five miles down a side-road and let the porcupine go. Perhaps it was the deliberate sparing of a life compared with the thoughtless taking of it that started me thinking. Something that wanted to live was still alive, I could give life as well as take it. In any event, from that day on I found myself frequently meditating on the subject, and I have been doing so ever since. It did not take me long to find out that my attitude up to that time would not stand up to thoughtful analysis, and to this day I like to dare my hunting friends to spend five minutes a day during the season thinking about the rightness or wrongness of what they are doing. I am always surprised at the number who admit that they have never really thought about it.

Perhaps this is a good illustration of random or incidental learning. Mr. Rutter didn't set out to be a "moral" man and to talk himself into better forms of behavior. He happened, of course, to be a *thinking* man, and the right and wrong of killing animals came to him naturally, as a result of his thinking. This was a stronger influence than the atmosphere of "wanton killing" which surrounded his youth. Actually, it is a lot easier to resist moralizing than it is to resist thinking. By moralizing people tell other people what they ought to do, while by thinking people figure out for themselves what they ought to do. Thinking may take longer than moralizing, but it is more permanent, and it works.

This is a brief argument for working to establish an atmosphere friendly to thinking, instead of adding to the shrill cries which tell other people what they ought or ought not to do.

Mr. Rutter found a pleasant illustration of his casual approach to finding out what is right in Loren Eiseley's book, *The Unexpected Universe:*

> Loren Eiseley tells of finding a man on an ocean beach searching among the tide-stranded starfish and tossing all the live ones back into the sea. Perhaps a futile gesture, since man cannot reverse the laws of life and death but as Eiseley points out, he can at least choose to vote for life rather than death.

It shouldn't be very difficult to add to the environment of the young stories and pictures and perhaps films in which people are careful about life, and protective of other forms of life. Would this mean ignoring the reality of the "evil" in the world? Not at all. But we have a way of showing evil actions as though they were not really evil. Jessamyn West contributed an article on "Violence" to *Redbook* for January, 1963, which ought to be regularly reprinted for the benefit of parents. She wrote:

> . . . today there exists a conspiracy of double talk—a conspiracy to dehumanize the victims and whitewash the process by which they are erased. Death on the screen is so easy a matter. The fast draw, the quick collapse. We are never permitted to see very much of the man who is going to die. We must learn not to care for *him*, to feel that *his* death matters; otherwise our enjoyment of his violent end will be weakened. We must never see him as a fellow who planted radishes made kites for his kids or patted a dog on the head. . . . There are many intelligent thoughtful people who believe that there is too much violence on our movie and television screens and that it is particularly bad for our children to see it. But what is really wrong is that the children do *not* see it. They see only the pleasure of landing the blow without ever imagining the pain of receiving it, without even imagining that the one who receives the blow is capable of suffering pain.
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> The TV screen wherein only bad men die, and then neatly and with dispatch, dulls and kills the imagination—and whatever destroys the imagination limits and ultimately destroys man.

The point of Miss West's article is not far removed from Mr. Rutter's experience with the porcupine—a creature which, he finally realized, wanted to live. Until that day, his killing had been shrouded by night. But in broad daylight he understood better what killing meant, and he gave it up.

Rutter brings his article to a close with some apt quotations:

> It pleases me that I arrived at my present position unassisted, but years later I discovered others, such as Joseph Wood Krutch and Albert Schweitzer, saying what I had been thinking. I found Krutch writing: "One can hardly have reverence for life without some vivid sense that life exists even in the lower animals, and it is this vivid sense that is lacking in the majority of sportsmen. In the case of the hunter it is often not so much that he wants to kill as that he has no sense that he is killing. The conviction that man is nothing but an animal is widely held today, and the wanton killing of an animal other than man out of no necessity is at least a small murder—not an innocent game."

This is followed by a rare passage from Schweitzer:

> "If we are preoccupied with the fate of all living beings we face conflicts more numerous and more disturbing than those of devotion toward human beings. It is incumbent upon each of us to judge whether we must harm or kill, and thus become, by necessity, guilty. We should seek forgiveness by never missing an occasion to rescue living creatures.

I am life wanting to live, surrounded by life wanting to live, and meditating upon life I feel the obligation to respect any will-to-live as equal to mine and as having a mysterious value.

"A fundamental idea of Good consists in preserving life, in wanting to raise it to its highest value, and evil consists in annihilating life. By having reverence for life, we enter into a spiritual relation with the world. It is not given to us to serve the creative will, infinite and unfathomable, by comprehending its nature and intentions. But we come into spiritual contact with it by the feeling of the mystery of life and by devoting ourselves to all the living beings whom we are able to serve. Only a universal ethic which obliges us to be occupied with all beings puts us in a complete relation with the universe and the will manifested in it."

FRONTIERS

"Unthinkable" or Obscene?

IT is not easy to write about chemical and biological warfare. Ordinary warfare is bad enough, but poisoning the air people breathe, the food they eat, or infecting their bodies with either lethal or incapacitating viruses—the subject itself seems obscene. Yet it must be faced, we suppose, that a large number of highly trained men are working on the development of "weapons" of this sort. Why do they do it? Why aren't they revolted simply by the thought of such activities?

If we are going to consider this subject at all, it should not be left so abstract. On Nov. 25, 1969, President Nixon announced, to the general relief of a great many Americans, that "The U.S. shall renounce the use of . . . all methods of biological warfare and will confine its biological research to defensive measures." A summary appearing in *Peace News* for Oct. 8 identified the weapons involved as follows:

> There are seven, graded in their effects, from incapacitating illness to death. Three are biologically induced poisons, which could presumably be slipped into food or water supplies: Botulinus Toxin, the most deadly known poison, Shellfish poison, which causes respiratory paralysis leading to death, Staphyloccus Toxin, form of poisoning. The other four weapons are living micro-organisms, of which the deadliest is Anthrax Bacillus, which is familiar to us in the UK, because of the experiments carried out in 1942, on the island of Gruinard, off the northwest coast of Scotland, and which we are told may be contaminated for 100 years. Other germs induce encephalitis,. rabbit fever and Q-fever, which cause temporary incapacity.

Chemical warfare employs such weapons as poison gas, nerve gas, and incendiaries, as well as numerous defoliants of the sort now used to denude the forests of Vietnam.

Why is it that, except for a handful of conscientious scientists, most of them in the ecology movement, the chief opposition to such weapons comes from a vague, emotional objection to all such horrors on the part of the common people?

The reason, it seems clear, is that persons trained in the sciences have been taught to think that the universe and the ranges of natural life are all products of blind physical laws, without intrinsic meaning or purpose; and that it is completely rational to think of them as nothing but means to human ends. The world has no ends, only *we* have ends, and the world is but an arsenal available to us for achieving dominance. The ordinary man's intuitive attitude of reverence for nature and life, his unwillingness to destroy those who are defenseless against the murderous devices of chemical and biological technology—these feelings have only the standing of sentimentality in the eyes of toughminded technicians whose lives and loyalties are wholly absorbed in perfecting the skills they have been hired to develop. They accept the objectives of the leaders who put them to work, seeing what they do as the combination of a rare opportunity to do "advanced research" and at the same time to fulfill their patriotic duty. After all, the policies of the nation are generated by the democratic process, which is a sufficient moral endorsement for them as well as for a great many others.

In short, the devastating effects on human decision and behavior of this background of scientific materialism give ample reason for providing every encouragement to the pioneer thinkers, many of them leading scientists, who are now attempting to establish a new, humanistic basis for the practice of science.

Meanwhile, what about chemical and biological warfare? If the President says we are not going to use such weapons, need we be so concerned?

Now comes the necessity to report on what seems another sort of obscenity. In the *Nation* for Oct. 11, two writers, Arthur Kanegis and Lindsay Richards, tell what is actually happening in this area of military preparations. They have researched the subject as part of an American

Friends Service Committee project involving study of weapons development. Their first three paragraphs outline the major facts:

> The United States Army is doubling its budget request for chemical and biological weapons procurement. The figure increases from $25.3 million in fiscal year 1971 to $50.8 million in fiscal year 1972. This astonishing fact quietly emerges from the more than 4,000 pages of hearings released by the Senate Armed Services Committee on the current military budget requests.
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> For almost two years now the public has been treated to periodic White House and Pentagon press releases that repeat the boast made by President Nixon in 1969: the United States is renouncing *first* use of lethal chemical weapons and *all* use of biological warfare agents. One of the latest of these releases was a July 13th army announcement that it was beginning a projected year-long destruction of stockpiled germ warfare agents.
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> These Administration announcements, coupled with the widely publicized and controversial dumping of obsolete nerve gas, have given the public the impression that the entire program of chemical and biological warfare (CBW) is being abandoned. Meanwhile, military contractors are being assured in private that CBW work will continue—even expand—and that the cutbacks involve only a tiny part of the overall program.

Support for these statements is marshalled in a fairly long recital of facts drawn from various sources. One of these sources is a bulletin issued to its defense-industry clients by a private consulting firm, Defense Marketing Survey, a subsidiary of McGraw-Hill, in which opportunities for new or future business are described. The reporting services of this firm are regarded as thoroughly reliable and may cost thousands of dollars a year. One such report said: "Though ostensibly on the way 'out' of the military weapons arsenal, CBR (chemical, biological, radiological warfare) is merely being conducted in a different environment and, wherever possible, with less public attention." A later report said that the military procurement "request for CBR has actually more than doubled." The authors of the *Nation* article remark that while various press releases have said that CBW facilities are being closed down, cut back, or converted, "a brief survey of the major sites shows that in fact activity is being disguised and expanded." They conclude:

> The capability for germ warfare remains. To be sure we have the President's assurance that it will not be used, but well after Mr. Nixon forswore biological offense, the training program at Fort McClellan gives its pupils a thorough understanding of techniques of offensive biological warfare. A1though described as instruction in defense, the course in fact offers little information about effective civilian protection. It even suggests that such defense may be impossible: "remember that with massive doses of an agent we can probably break any immunity—no matter how it was acquired."

It was J. B. Priestley who, in one of his later novels, remarked that it isn't the boys who grow long hair and beards and loaf around picking at guitars that we need to worry about, but the ones who wear butch cuts, get high marks, never give their parents any trouble, and major in bacteriological warfare when they get to graduate school.