VOLUME XXV, NO. 24
JUNE 14, 1972

LOST RESONANCES

A STATEMENT which has some resonances in it is one that can be learned from, yet critical interpretation can always make such statements seem inaccurate or untrue. Why, then, is it important to make them. Because their provocative character sets the reader on a course of independent thinking, and he may eventually make some discoveries of his own.

At this point we might go on to a consideration of the difference between poetry and prose; or, perhaps, between the creative practice of science, and technology. There are these two uses we make of the mind, and they are made by every human being, but more consciously and skillfully by some than by others. The writer whose work is filled with resonating ideas, if he knows what he is doing—if, that is, he has a grasp of the rules for embodying in limited form conceptions which have elements of the incommensurable in them—is a practitioner of art. He is in some sense an artist even though his purpose may be considerably more than an æsthetic one. It is surely more than accident that great scriptures take the form of austere verse, that the sonorous line becomes a means of stirring the imagination through sympathetic rates of vibration set going in the hearer or reader.

Statements without resonance have only a single, practical purpose, and when they are understood there is a sense in which they no longer exist: they have been *consumed* in some practical act. But a statement with resonance appeals to another part of the mind—the part that has octaves of meaning in it, and in which no question is ever finally answered, no problem really "settled," although there may be a subtle sort of growth. Paul Valéry gives an apparently trivial but instructive illustration of the distinction between these two forms of communication in *The Art of Poetry* (Bollingen, 1938):

> It may be observed that in all communication between men, certainty comes only from practical acts and from the verification which practical acts give us. *I ask you for a light, You give me a light:* you have understood me.
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> But in asking for a light, you were able to speak those few unimportant words with a certain intonation, a certain tone of voice, a certain inflection, a certain languor or briskness perceptible to me. I have understood your words, since without even thinking I handed you what you asked for—a light. But the matter does not end there. The strange thing: the sound and as it were the features of your little sentence come back to me, echo within me, as though they were pleased to be there; I, too, like to hear myself repeat this little phrase, which has almost lost its meaning, which has stopped being of use, and which can yet go on living, though with quite another life. It has acquired a value; and has acquired it *at the expense of its finite significance.* It has created the need to be heard again. . . . Here we are on the very threshold of the poetic state. This tiny experience will help us to the discovery of more than one truth.
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> It has shown us that language can produce effects of two quite different kinds. One of them tends to bring about the complete negation of language itself. I speak to you, and if you have understood my words, those very words are abolished. . . . In other terms, in practical or abstract uses of language, the form—that is the physical, the concrete part, the very act of speech—does not last, it does not outlive understanding; it dissolves in the light, it has acted, it has done its work; it has brought about understanding; it has lived.
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> But on the other hand, the moment this concrete form takes on, by an effect of its own, such importance that it asserts itself and makes itself, as it were, respected; and not only remarked and respected, but desired and therefore repeated—then something new happens: we are insensibly transformed and ready to live, breathe, and think in accordance with a rule and under laws which are no longer of the practical order—that is, nothing that may occur in this state will be resolved, finished, or abolished by a specific act. We are entering the poetic universe.

But what Valéry calls the poetic universe may have other names. It is quite conceivably the universe of distinctively human values, and might also be termed the universe of *meaning.*

The editorial in MANAS for May 17 provided an illustration of what Valéry speaks of here. Some sixty or perhaps seventy years ago, a Kansas official asked an old Creek Indian how old he was. The Indian did not really know but what he said in reply was so beautiful, so revealing of the meanings in the life of the Indians, that his questioner took it down in shorthand. He recognized that it was really a poem. So, as Valéry says, the statement that was simply to have satisfied a bureaucratic requirement "asserted itself" and made itself "respected," gaining independent life as a poem.

Are there deliberately multi-dimensional expressions? That is, do statements ostensibly concerned with practical affairs intentionally have overtones of transcendent meaning? This idea is very distant from present-day habits of thought, yet it is certainly the case that in pre-industrial cultures, many of the daily functions necessary to life, which we now term "work," were regarded as ceremonies symbolizing the larger processes of nature, or divine activity. The business of living was not something apart from the ritual of devotion, and the fulfillment of duty had a dignity which reached far beyond the material satisfactions that might result, or even the sense of a "job well done."

This whole question of the relation between the ideal and the practical has been much neglected, and is only now gaining re-examination, in the sense that more and more thoughtful persons, noticing the constrictions of human life which accompany total devotion to the practical, are beginning to wonder if it is not fatal to human beings to separate the two. They see that activities based solely on utility and personal satisfactions generate patterns of behavior which eventually come into conflict with everything that men have traditionally held to be good and true.

The important thing, however, is an understanding of the *relation* between the ideal and the practical, not a matter of choosing one or the other. One thinks, for example, of Richard Byrd's rather remarkable book about his adventures in exploring Little America near the South Pole. What will Byrd be remembered for? The scientific contributions of the trip—which had to do with increasing our practical knowledge of what makes the weather—or the extraordinary reflections which came to him while isolated for months in a tiny hut, when his radio failed him and his stove went bad, and the endless blizzard outside made his small cell the coldest, darkest place in the world? Why should this extreme situation, described in his book, *Alone* (1938), have enclosed him with the majestic rhythms of the universe, so noticeably that he could no longer feel cut off or alone? The sense of meaning that came to Byrd apparently belonged to him, but he had to go on a practical mission to Little America to find it.

Shall we say that the scientist-explorer, Byrd, also wrote a little "poetry"? Or shall we ask if that was a time when a human being found himself vibrating in tune with the sacred chord of life? He thought so.

Pierre Duhem, the theoretical physicist, in an article on "The Value of Physical Theory," has suggested that the world of forces and matter which the physicist studies ought to be recognized as the reflection of another world of ideal reality. He maintained that sense perception might not bring access to that world, but that to suppose therefore that no such world exists would amount to the reduction of science to high-level technology. He proposed that while physical theory might describe, it could not really "explain." He denied that knowledge of ultimate reality can be an object of physical theory, suggesting, instead, a parallelism:

> Physical theory never gives us the explanation of experimental laws; it never reveals realities hiding under sensible appearances; but the more complete it becomes, the more we apprehend that the logical

> order in which theory orders experimental laws is the reflection of an ontological order, the more we suspect that the relations it establishes among the data of perception correspond to the real relations among things, and the more we feel that theory tends to be a natural classification.
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> . . . The physicist is compelled to recognize that it would be unreasonable to work for the progress of physical theory if this theory were not the increasingly better defined and more precise reflection of a metaphysics; the belief in an order transcending physics is the sole justification of physical theory. (From an article which quotes Duhem's paper at some length, in *Science*, April 23, 1954.)

It seems reasonable to recall here that Paul Friedlander thought that Plato's Dialogues, in a different way, correspond to the world of eternal forms, even though embodied in the language of the world of appearances; and that, "for the eye which has learned to see," they pointed toward eternal being and what lies beyond. (*Plato: An Introduction.*)

It seems well to acknowledge, here, that while an idea gains richly from having resonances in other octaves of glinting meanings, affording seeds for brooding reflection, in breaking touch with the practical world it may lose the beautiful exactitude of finite dimensions. One might say that, for a long time, the modern world has been fascinated by the wonderful achievements which become possible through a concentration on the finite aspects of human experience. This is what Valéry means by abstract or practical thought, for the abstractions of science are working rules for the control and use of material forces, hence practical indeed. Only recently has there been any doubt of the validity of this preoccupation, which has become very largely the surrogate religion of the Western world. The resulting neglect of ideal conceptions, of resonating ideas, has made them seem fanciful, indistinct, and above all unreal, even though the world of thought has never been without those who declare otherwise. Ortega, for example, wrote in a book first published in English in 1941 (*History as a System*)*:*

> The past century, resorting to all but force, tried to restrict the human mind within the limits set to exactness. Its violent effort to turn its back on last problems is called agnosticism. But such endeavor seems neither fair nor sensible. That science is incapable of solving in its own way those fundamental questions is no sufficient reason for slighting them, as did the fox with the high-hung grapes, or for calling them myths and urging us to drop them altogether.
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> How can we turn a deaf ear to the last dramatic questions? Where does the world come from, and whither is it going? Which is the supreme power of the cosmos, what the essential meaning of human life? We cannot breathe confined to a realm of secondary and intermediate themes. We need a comprehensive perspective, foreground and background, not maimed scenery, a horizon stripped of the lure of infinite distances. Without the aid of the cardinal points we are liable to lose our bearings. The assurance that we have found no means of answering last questions is no valid excuse for callousness towards them. The more deeply should we feel, down to the roots of our being, their pressure and their sting. Whose hunger has ever been stilled with the knowledge that he could not eat? Insoluble though they may be, these problems will never cease to loom on the vault of night, stirring us with their starry twinkle—the stars, according to Heine, are night's restless golden thoughts. North and South help to orient us despite their being not precisely cities to which one can buy a railroad ticket.
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> We are given no escape from last questions. In one fashion or another they are in us, whether we like it or not. Scientific truth is exact, but it is incomplete and penultimate and of necessity embedded in another ultimate, though inexact, truth which I see no objection in calling a myth. . . .

Certain questions arise, questions inevitable in the face of this ardent, not to say joyous, invitation to inexactitude or ambiguity. If Ortega's account of what has happened to modern thought is accurate, and more and more people are agreeing with him, these days, then we shall need to know *why* what we think of as "progressive" and "scientific"—as, indeed, the very genius of the modern age—has, in its negative aspects, amounted to deliberate flight from the "last questions." Why have so many extremely intelligent men been content to explore the finite

world and make their measurements, accumulate their knowledge, elaborate their powers, sophisticate their instrumentation for control, as though those other matters of which Ortega speaks—which, he says, ignorant or wise, we actually live by, whether we know it or not—did not even exist?

Surely these men were not fools! The answer may be that while they were not fools, they were nonetheless men, and subject to the narrowing perception that feelings of great discovery sometimes produce. Moreover, it should be remembered that science was the child of an age of rebellion against a tyrannical authority that had shaped the mind of Europe by dogmatic fiat for a period of at least a thousand years. We are not yet ready to stop reading books which tell the history of the struggle between early scientific inquiry and the established authority of the Roman Church. It is too soon to forget the murder and suppression of the more philosophical scientists—the burning of Bruno at the stake and the silencing of Galileo—nor should we ignore the impossibility of measuring the unceasing intimidation of countless other men. The situation was more or less as Bertrand Russell wrote in 1925: "As a rule, the materialistic dogma has not been set up by men who loved dogma, but by men who felt that nothing less definite would enable them to fight the dogmas they disliked."

Yet polemics and adversary encounters are not the means to impartial truth. Science was born in a matrix of bitter and dangerous controversy with watchful churchmen who felt their authority gradually slipping away, and while these guardians of popular belief could not win the contest with so dramatically successful an opponent, they did manage to infect the scientists with their own all-or-nothing temper. So, from being entirely a "spiritual" domain, ruled by heavenly (and infernal) power, the world was transformed into a complex organization of matter under the reign of blind forces that became "rational" only through manipulative mastery by scientifically trained human beings.

But how could the reality of the transcendental world be lost or forgotten in so brief a space of time? Perhaps we should say that it was not actually lost, but attenuated, made bloodless in Western speculative philosophy. That reality comes alive, now and then, in isolated thinkers, among the mystics who speak in universal accents, in unpopular reformers, and sometimes in movements of thought which last for a while, such as the one represented by the New England Transcendentalists. But the *age* was surely forgetful of the philosophic past. One further explanation of this might lie in the peculiarly blighting inversion of spiritual conceptions by the Christian church generally. Consider for example the idea of periodic visitants to the world, the avataric appearance on earth of spiritual beings who represent a more perfect embodiment of the intelligence of higher worlds or realms, than has been attained by humanity as we know it. Many of the great religions have teachings of this sort. It is a Hermetic doctrine as well as a Hindu and Buddhist conception, and the Jewish idea of Messiahs is essentially the same. There is a natural logic in this teaching, once we become able to think of evolution in other than biological terms alone. Unfortunately, the early Christians, struggling against rival pagan sects, resolved to claim that only *their* Teacher was the Incarnation of the divine spirit, which made the philosophic doctrine of incarnation no natural principle but instead a miraculous intervention. This rendered their religion wholly dependent upon the historicity of Jesus, and generated Christian antagonism toward every other form of belief. And in its creedal forms, Christianity insisted more and more on the helplessness of man, stressing in contrast the unique power and Godhood of the carnalized Christ—a tragic materialization or concretization of an originally philosophical idea. Salvation, in the popular forms of Western religion, then became an almost mechanistic achievement—you declared your

belief in certain formulas, admitted your dependence, submitted your mind to rule by theological authority, conformed your behavior, at least in appearance, to the codified morality that was in harmony with the church's interests and requirements—and getting to heaven would be no great problem. In other words, the things of the mind and the spirit had already been turned into pseudo-realities with finite dimensions, so that the materialism of science was really no great novelty at all—only more candid, more basically honest, one could say, in the character of its claims.

These, then, may be some of the reasons why the modern turning to religious ideas is so chaotic and confused, so opportunistic and undisciplined. The West has no background of pure religious thought—no continuous cultural community that has generated a field for philosophical thinking such as, for example, existed during the days of the Platonic Academy or the later Neoplatonic School. There are wonderful isolated interludes in history, such as the Florentine Revival of Learning, and the Cambridge Platonists of seventeenth-century England, and a few rare individuals, but save for those few who seek to revive the temper and the inspiration of ancient thought, if not its formal character, we are now without such wellsprings of inspiration.

Yet this may be a condition not completely alien to the sort of beginning we now need to make. The individual who prefers the resonances of philosophy to finite exactitudes must already have developed some reliance on his own powers of mind. The issue of "authority" is not one that interests him greatly. He knows that for the kind of knowledge or certainty he wants, he will need first of all confidence in himself. And to gain this confidence means submission to certain disciplines of thought requiring much more than a narrow intellectuality. Involved, it may be, is some intuitive grasp of the balance between the practical and the ideal.

REVIEW
A MASLOW DISTILLATION

HOW do rare men, independent men, men with vision and determination, behave when they are born into societies which are heavily institutionalized and laden with sickly and destructive tendencies? What do they do about instituting changes in the world around them? How do they make up their minds? determine priorities? get down to business? Books with answers to these questions would be a never-ending delight to the reviewer, and we now have one of them.

Abraham H. Maslow: A Memorial Volume (Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., Monterey, Calif., $12.50), was put together by the International Study Project, Inc., with the assistance of Bertha G. Maslow, Dr. Maslow's widow. No one who has been helped and inspired by Abe Maslow will want to remain without a copy of this book, which is a rare achievement in recording the essential thought of an extraordinary man. (The International Study Project, Inc., is the new name of the W. P. Laughlin Charitable Foundation, the organization which freed Dr. Maslow to work as his heart desired during the last two years of his life, and which has now assumed responsibility for coordinating publication of his later and hitherto unpublished writings.)

The book has four parts. The first is made up of reminiscences and appreciations by several who were close friends of Dr. Maslow. This section confirms the idea that a great deal of a man is revealed by the quality of his friends, for the level of understanding in these contributions seems very high. So, early in the book, the memory of Abraham Maslow is relieved of the dead weight of conventional stereotypes of human achievement. The stature of the human being is not visible just now and then, through the cracks of the dominant institutions, but comes out in three dimensions, fully endowed and warmly alive.

As one who knew him well, Frank Manuel, the historian, tells of Maslow's capacity to uplift his friends and associates with a utopian—or eupsychian—vision which was grounded in a sage-like grasp of the promise he found in human potentiality. Prof. Manuel comments:

> Utopians like Abe Maslow have been possessed by a vision of the potential grandeur and vitality of man. We could not live without these men of fantasy—any more than an individual creature can long survive without his daily portion of sleeping and dreaming. When utopia dies, the society is spent.
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> But Maslow was also a man of science whose curiosity ranged further than almost any investigator's I have known. From his early boyhood he was forever poking his nose into every aspect of human behavior. He was open to every hypothesis, however outlandish it might appear to the established school. All were welcome. All—that is—except one powerful band of contemporaries whom he fought throughout his life: those committed to the false idol of the neutrality and indifference of positivistic science, those glorifying their mechanical and mathematical tools as if they were gods. I remember how disturbed Abe was when the American Psychological Association elected him president and he attended the first board meeting with the potentates of that academic Leviathan. What had he done, he kept asking morosely, what had become of him, when it was possible to choose him. He must have taken a wrong turn—betrayed his ideal in some respect—if they could select him. I sat consoling him one afternoon, assuring him that they were only trying to seize the instruments of utopia, that the power elite always operated in that fashion, and that he would be untouched by them. And so he was.

The second part of the book is given over to the taped report of Dr. Maslow's last major public seminar, held at the Graduate School of Management at the University of California in Los Angeles, a little over two months before his death on June 8, 1970. On this occasion he talked for almost three hours, extemporaneously, and the tape of what he said is a valuable record of his mature thinking as well as of some of his dreams. Part III presents unpublished notes, most of which are intensely interesting, and the book ends with a bibliography of Maslow's writings.

Two things stand out after reading this book, and this means that two things stand out about Maslow, since in a brief way the book has the compass of his life. They are, first, the built-in independence of the man; and, second, his faith in

human beings. Both these feelings were for him deeply principled realities. He *had* to make all his own decisions; he *couldn't* accept any important idea on authority: to do so would have violated his essential being. Yet he could learn from anyone; there was never a man more open to experience and the distillations of experience he was able to recognize in the fruits of other minds. And the other thing—his faith in others—was also an extension, a projection, a wider realization, of his faith in himself, since he rejected the idea of absolute separation among individual human beings. Neither of these ideas remained intuitions only; experiment and investigation were for the purpose of verifying them. His large-hearted conception of the capacities of human beings was behind the wide influence he exerted on others, for people felt his confidence in them and began to think about themselves in more respecting ways. He wrote in a notebook in 1944:

> Man *can* solve his problems by his own strength. He never has, so far, because he has never yet developed to his full strength. As to the forces of "goodness" within him, neither have these developed fully enough to be seen as the hope of the world—except in rare moments of exaltation. He doesn't have to fly to a God. He can look within himself for all sorts of potentialities, strength, and goodness.

This is a constant theme in his reflections—there can be no shifting of responsibility to others. In a note to himself while planning his presidential address before the APA, he said:

> Use Pope John story: "Sometimes half-asleep I think of some reform or improvement and say to myself 'I must tell the Pope about that.' And then I start up suddenly as I realize 'But *I* am the Pope'." *We* have the responsibility for understanding all these things, proving them, studying them, researching them, and getting firmer and firmer knowledge about them.

It becomes obvious that Maslow's optimism, while firm, was also cautious, and grounded in knowledge of human nature. He had learned from psychoanalysis "that it takes years for us, the best of us, to confront those unpleasant and repressed truths about ourselves that make us sick and therefore make us blind and deaf, and uneducable, and bad sadists, and violent counterrevolutionaries." Psychologists can understand violent reactions and vengeful emotions, yet they are wrong, they are mistakes, and these attitudes must change—there is no alternative:

> This is part of the humanistic ethos, that all human beings—any human being—can become a man. He can change. And if he finds it hard to do, certainly his children can change. There are no evil nations. There are no intrinsically evil cultures. There are not even intrinsically evil individuals. There are only individuals who have been made so and who therefore can be unmade.

Some of these notes are windows into the flow of consciousness of a man who never stopped thinking about the meaning of human longing, human striving, and the obstacles to human realization. He worked on how to remove the obstacles, which he knew were real.

An entry in 1967:

> From this experiencing oneself as a cause and as a creator, then there flows naturally the feeling of responsibility, of being master of one's own fate, of being the automobile driver rather than the passenger. With this in turn of course comes the hopefulness about controlling your own fate, about being able to do something in life.
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> The way to recover the meaning of life and the worthwhileness of life is to recover the power to experience, to have impulse voices from within and to be able to hear these impulse voices from within—and make the point: This can be done.

In the March, 1970, seminar at UCLA, Maslow spoke of the vast cultural reversal which, as he read history and current events, is now beginning. He spoke of the thrust of Western thought having been for hundreds of years directed at the denigration of the quality of human beings. This running down of man, of finding him incompetent, ignoble and weak, he maintained, must now be opposed, and the means are provided in the insights of humanistic psychology. He regarded this task as a veritable mission, and he saw the reality of "metamotivations" as having a tremendous role in the shaping of human life. He wanted the metamotivations to assume their full and proper role in the determination of behavior. What are "metamotivations"? They are "the search for truth and excellence and perfection and beauty

and justice and ultimate order and ultimate simplicity and harmony and specieshood and brotherhood and the like." He would range this understanding of human potentiality against the habits of the past, now so much in evidence and so influential:

> As I meet a very fine man, all the resources that are available to me for understanding that fine man debunk him so that he's seeking either for power or for selfish purposes of some sort or other. . . . We have been thrust into a position of despair. If you'd spend as much time thinking about that and trying to figure it out and trying to understand it and trying to feel as I have during the last few years, I think you would come up finally with the kind of anger which I have toward the carriers of the culture of despair in our society, let alone other societies. Now I'm not talking about skepticism, which I think is quite reasonable and acceptable at this point. But I'm talking about people who are convinced and who will proceed on the assumption that we're all a bunch of bastards, essentially, and that if we behave nicely that this is a fake and there is something behind it and there is something in it for us some place and that this is all hypocrisy and phoniness.

This outlook, he said, is what the youth, the students, are at last rejecting, and he told of a student who, after reading *Toward a Psychology of Being,* said that this was the first book he had read in four years of college which had "something good to say for people."

He went on to speak of the humanistic conception of man which brought into view "a new epistemology, a new metaphysics, a new ethic, a new axiology, a new definition of what the word *fact* means, a new definition of truth, which carries along with it by implication, then, a whole new methodology." He called for a science which has "normative zeal," proposing that "to do good, to help mankind, and to better the world—is quite compatible with scientific objectivity and, indeed, makes conceivable a better science, a more powerful science." He would broaden the meaning of objectivity to include not only spectator knowledge but experiential knowledge as well. Spectator knowledge is laissez-faire knowledge, uninvolved knowledge, while experiential knowledge is knowledge "by participation." It includes knowledge gained through love, and this sort of understanding may be generalized under the term Taoistic knowledge.

Here Dr. Maslow speaks of the need for "helpers," in the broad meaning of the term, and remarks:

> We have no good word in English for *helper;* it carries too many surplus connotations with it. I've used the Eastern conception of the Bodhisattva and transformed it a little bit for our purposes. Do you know what the word means?
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> There are two Buddhistic legends. In one the Buddha sat under a tree and had a great revelation; he saw the truth. It's very Socratic. He saw .the truth, the truth was revealed to him, and then he ascended to heaven, so to speak, to Nirvana. In another version, the Bodhisattvic Version, the Buddha sat under the tree, had a great illumination, saw the truth, ascended to the gates of heaven, and there, out of compassion for mankind, could not bear to selfishly enter heaven and came back to earth to help—on the assumption that nobody could go to heaven unless we all go to heaven.

This portion of the book continues with a discussion of how difficult it is to be of actual help to others, and how the individual who wants to help usually needs to do a lot of work on himself to make himself *able* to be of use in this way. He says, finally,

> But this is a paradox, because one of the paths to becoming a better person is via helping other people. You can't become a better person by being selfish, by being within your own skin. So this paradox has to be resolved; it's kind of like the hen and the egg thing, of simultaneously, if you want to be a better helper, improving yourself and being helpful the best way you can—but doing it in the spirit of humility and of modesty rather than in the spirit of taking control.

As anyone can see, the revolution in psychology has strong foundations.

COMMENTARY
THE NATURE OF MAN

MASLOW'S idea (see Review) that from feeling oneself to be a cause and a creator, there naturally flow feelings of responsibility, may be a defining characteristic of human beings. What we call the "dignity" of man certainly depends upon it. These two qualities—capacity and responsibility—are what make men memorable to other men, and in history.

It is one thing to speak of benefiting others, but something quite different to be able to *do* it. To help other people requires knowledge, and knowledge of this sort is so rare that there is a tendency to explain it as "supernatural"—more than is possible for mere human beings. No doubt most of the "gods" of tradition are apotheosized men, when they are not personifications of natural forces. A great debt is owed to the Buddha for establishing the idea that a *man* has the potentialities of godlike behavior, for it was central to his teaching that every human being could also become a Buddha.

Such language may be embarrassing to us, today, but self-reliant confidence in ourselves needs restoration, whatever language we use. Maslow remarked simply: "As to the forces of 'goodness' within him [man], neither have these developed fully enough to be seen as the hope of the world—except in rare moments of exaltation." He believed that by exercising his metamotivations more deliberately, a man could develop greater self-reliance. "He can look within himself for all sorts of potentialities, strength, and goodness."

Some of the early Christians, later called heretics, believed something like this, since they regarded the *Christos* as an unborn principle within themselves, which could come into being in persons who sought wisdom and devoted themselves to the good of others. Pagan doctrines of regeneration were very similar. The root idea does not change: it is that human beings have the capacity to transform themselves, if they devote themselves to the common good while struggling against their weaknesses. But it isn't easy, and it takes a long time.

These are very old ideas which get covered up and forgotten from time to time. In some periods, it is hard to find a book that has "something good to say for people." But it may be that these ideas are always reborn, by reason of those "voices from within," and because they are the primary or defining truths about human beings.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
APPROACHES TO LEARNING

THE School in Rose Valley (Moylan, Penna.), to which we often refer, has an Education Committee, probably made up of both parents and teachers, which wrestles with the larger questions that come up for people who think seriously about the responsibility of influencing the young. The April issue of the *Parents' Bulletin* of this school has a report by Marilyn Ashbrook on the Education Committee's deliberations concerning two approaches to education. Since the goal of education can be thought of as independence, these two approaches were named by the Committee as Independence I and Independence II. Following are some of the conclusions reached by the members of the Committee:

> Independence I [is] a state arrived at through a process called behavior modification. . . . At first glance, it doesn't look very independent: when a child performs correctly, he gets a reward (behaviorists call it positive reinforcement). If he performs in any other way, or does nothing, his behavior is ignored. Since only desired behavior brings any response, this is the action he tends to repeat. Eventually the child trains himself to perform in the way that has brought reinforcement. As one set of responses is consolidated, the reward is transferred to new behavior. In this way, behavior patterns are shaped painlessly, with no conflict between adult and child. Reinforcers can be tangible, such as "M & M's" [candies] or toys, tokens which can be exchanged for concrete rewards or special privileges, such as free time.
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> How is this independence? It is, because the child is not being coerced. Since he is choosing his own course of action, he feels he is taking the initiative for his actions. He acquires a new dignity as punishment ceases and his more redeeming activities are recognized.

There is no doubt about the fact that this sort of thing "works," and the behaviorists claim that it has been working "ever since man began communicating." It is also pointed out that poor behavior patterns may develop in this way, since when people reward bad actions with "attention," they are reinforced, because people like to be shown attention. "The behaviorist claims his method has always been used, but not perceived, just as the world was round before anyone knew it." The Committee report continues:

> Programmed learning and computer-aided instruction are built on this model. The material is introduced in such a way that the child usually gets the right answer. Success is positive reinforcement, and makes the child want to continue. While no one would want a child to learn only this way, it is a good method for teaching some things; some of it will probably be necessary if individualized learning is going to reach its potential.
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> Though reminiscent of the laboratory-rat-food-pellet milieu, behavior modification manuals paint a rosy picture. Examination copies provoked a range of protests from the committee, however. Since we like to think that people learn for the sake of becoming competent, that they act in worthwhile ways because they want to be noble creatures, the idea that all behavior depends upon what reinforcement went before is hard on our concepts of aspiration and free will, comerstones of the idea of the nobility in man. If people's functioning is improved by leaving less to chance, their sense of individuality—and indeed, the range of variation in personality—is not And manipulation demeans. The child may feel he is taking the initiative for his actions, but it is really pseudo-freedom. Independence, version I, could really be submitting to a new kind of authoritarianism. Not only that, tangible rewards smack of materialism. The values implicit in its method are questionable.

The behaviorist is likely to counter these criticisms with the claim that the values here said to be violated by behavior modification methods are really illusory—created by particular reinforcers in naïve people who refuse to admit that all education and training amount to the manipulation of human beings. One wonders if it is possible to converse with a behaviorist with anything better than a simple hedonistic model of man as the basis. Behaviorism often sounds like simplified, eighteenth-century, Enlightenment psychology dressed up in new terms. Please man

by satisfying his desires, and you have a way to solve all problems!

The assumption of behavior modification theories seems to be that the one who does the modifying knows what people really ought to do, how they should behave. So he finds ways of making it attractive. But there are, after all, a lot of issues and problems in life beyond the grasp of even the behavior modifiers, and it is sometimes a bit frightening to realize that the popularizers of the behaviorist approach to *social* problems all appear to be sure that Society "knows" what the behavior patterns of the people ought to be, so that all that is needed for good social management is conditioning them to fulfill those patterns. One wonders what sort of intelligent deviation from "authority" could be normally expected of children brought up by behaviorist educators!

The Committee report now turns to the other approach:

> Independence II, instead of merely giving the illusion of autonomy, places responsibility for learning directly on the child. His drive for competence makes him want to learn, and competence is his reward. The teacher's role is making learning possible—providing information on what is knowable on what one does to acquire this knowledge.
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> This position coincides more closely with Rose Valley's aims. The Education Committee wanted specific ways to implement the philosophy and found them in Gattegno's *What We Owe Children: The Subordination of Teaching to Learning* and Rogers' *Freedom To Learn.*
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> Gattegno objects to traditional schooling because it relies on memory, one of our weaker faculties. The learning process has more Important components: extracting information transforming data, generalizing, discriminating between important and subordinate ideas. He analyzes these processes in terms of child development (example: algebra is transformation of data, but so is learning to use the right pronoun at age two). Since the processes come naturally, he advises making it possible for children to educate themselves by using them.

Gattegno distinguishes between "know-how" subjects and "awareness" subjects. Know-how subjects are skills like reading and math, while awareness areas need to be known about, as, for example, what it was like to live in England in the thirteenth century, and how men learn to live together. There are questions like what "progress" is, and what is meant by saying our present culture is "manmade." The report continues:

> Several guidelines emerge for the "teacher" (a misnomer when the child is educating himself). The child's will is the mainspring of all and must be nurtured. His sense of truth has a similar magnitude, and should not be violated. In this vein, his time should be used economically, exchanging it for experience of compensating value.
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> "Teacher" is a term that Carl Rogers abandons. He would have the classroom run by a "facilitator." All learning would be self-initiated, and the usual teaching functions—lecturing making assignments, grading—would be eliminated. The facilitator would have definite responsibilities, however. Not only would he serve as a useful store of ideas and knowledge when needed, he would also set a tone for the exercise that would help students grow more self-reliant.
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> There are conditions to meet before this growth occurs. Prizing the learner so that what he is and does seems important, gives him enough faith in himself to take risks. Caring which is not possessive, so the adult's ego is not tangled with the child's, gives the student emotional support. The facilitator must really trust the child to develop, and give him complete, not conditional responsibility. And there must be full empathy for the child, understanding his feelings, thoughts, and actions.

The move toward Independence II is now going on at Rose Valley—or it has long been practiced there. It calls for "teachers" who feel in themselves the value of what they are doing, and need not try to "pose" as facilitators, since this doesn't work. Does the Independence II approach impose more responsibility on the child than he may be equal to? According to the report, "a child learns some of the most important things he'll ever know in this fashion, long before he starts school." Moreover, "a student who is spoon-fed is over-protected; he never does gain the strengths he needs."

FRONTIERS

Indian Bandits Surrender

IN May, 1960, Vinoba Bhave, Gandhian leader and founder of the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements to restore land to the landless peasants of India, went to the outlaws of the Chambal Valley to preach non-violence and the doctrine of brotherly cooperation. Moved by his appeal, twenty bandits and kidnappers surrendered, giving up their arms and accepting arrest, trial and imprisonment. These law-breakers, who had been operating in the broken terrain of the Chambal region for years, are known in India as *dacoits.* They were difficult to catch in this country, pocked by ravines from twenty to three hundred feet in depth, where rebels and victims of social injustice have been surviving in a hand-to-mouth existence as outlaws even since the time of the Mogul emperors, hundreds of years ago.

Vinoba did not go to the Chambal Valley uninvited. While working in Kashmir for the Bhoodan cause, he received a letter from Tehsildar Singh, a convicted dacoit who was waiting in his cell to be hanged. The bandit wrote that he had things to say to Vinoba before he died, and asked him to come or send a representative. A representative came and his report caused Vinoba to make the visit which brought the submission of the other dacoits.

Now, twelve years later, this drama has been repeated by more than a hundred dacoits. Last September, the leader of a large gang, Madho Singh, decided that he, too, had had enough of a bandit's life. He made contact with Vinoba, who suggested that he talk to Jayaprakash Narayan. Narayan said that if the authorities would promise fair treatment for the submitting dacoits, he would do all he could. Madho Singh said that he and all his gang would surrender, and serve their sentences, asking only that there be no death penalty against them. Receiving assurance of humane and sympathetic treatment for the dacoits, Jayaprakash Narayan suggested to them that they contact others and consider surrendering *en masse.* Jayaprakash Narayan then revived the Chambal Valley Peace Mission to help these men contemplating self-reform to prepare for a very different way of life. At this time the Government released Tebsildar Singh (his sentence had been commuted from hanging to imprisonment) and he and another former dacoit who had surrendered to Vinoba twelve years ago offered their services to the mission. Meanwhile, in evidence of their serious intent, the bandits released twelve kidnapped persons being held for ransom.

So, on April 14, in the village of Jaura, in Madbya Pradesh, a hundred dacoits laid down their arms—very effective arms, incidentally, such as American D21 automatics and sten guns—and were taken in charge by the police. These men were no petty offenders. According to an article in *Peace News* (May 5): "In Madhya Pradesh alone, during the past fifteen years, the law enforcement agency set up to deal with the problem has recorded 2,100 cases of dacoity (robbery and pillage), 2,000 kidnappings, and 1,300 murders." The *Peace News* writer, who had talked to the dacoits before they surrendered, said that some two hundred dacoits might surrender by the end of June, the deadline set by Jayaprakash Narayan.

It is well known that the dacoits are often protected by the villagers in the area, since they may be compared with Robin Hood in their policy of robbing the rich and helping the poor. Prabhash Joshi, a writer in the March *People's Action* (a Gandhian monthly), gives something of the history of the rebels of the Chambal Valley—a region which stretches over portions of three Indian states—Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. The uneven countryside, cut by countless ravines made by flood waters from the Vindhya mountains, is ideal for guerilla operations and no police or military authority has ever been able to wipe out the robber bands. Since the heritage of dacoity goes back to Indian resistance to Muslim rulers, the dacoits think of themselves

as rebels. Speaking of local attitudes toward them, Joshi says:

> Thus the valley has an enviable record of rebellion against alien authority. Its people have always resisted the law and order imposed by foreign machinery. Nowhere in the world have the people such respect and fascination for rebels and nowhere do the dacoits get such moral and physical support from the populace. Dacoits are heroes here who take up arms to undo the injustices and bring in a semblance of fair distribution of wealth.

So the law enforcement agencies of India have found the dacoity of the Chambal Valley very difficult to control. Madho Singh, the thirty-five-year-old gang leader who surrendered on April 14, told Joshi that he had been a dacoit out of desperation, and that after he had served his time he would ally himself with the Gandhi Peace Foundation and work for the day when no one would be called a dacoit.

The background of history given in *People's Action* makes the Los Angeles *Times* (April 20) account of the "surrender" easier to understand:

> P. C. Sethi, chief minister (governor) of the state, was on hand to hear Madho Singh address the crowd, asking forgiveness for the bandits and a chance to lead a new life.
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> The prodigal sons were received at a simple ceremony. A bandit climbs up onto a stage and places his gun and ammunition before the image of Gandhi. He then touches the feet of Mrs. Narayan and shuffles to Narayan himself, who gives the bandit a hug.
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> The bandit then touches Sethi's feet and finally a priest hands the outlaw a copy of the Hindu holy book, the Gita.

The *Times* correspondent remarks that the spectacle of seeing another dacoit leader, Mohar Singh, who had once threatened to kill Sethi, embracing the local superintendent of police was like watching "Robin Hood embracing the sheriff of Nottingham."

The writer for *People's Action* concludes by saying that dacoity can be permanently ended only by recognizing the socio-economic aspects of the problem, taking steps toward such land improvement as is possible and introducing cottage and small-scale industries into the Chambal region to provide legitimate employment.