VOLUME XXXIX, NO. 15
APRIL 9, 1986

THE WRITERS

THERE are writers of many sorts; here we celebrate only one sort: the writers who, by some mysterious means, are able to add to the sum total of works of the human imagination—who increase the riches and potentialities of mankind. It is time that they were more appreciated and admired. We are thinking of such writers as Eschylus and Sophocles among the Greeks, of Pico della Mirandola in the Italian Renaissance, of Lessing and Goethe among the Germans; Shakespeare above all, who was English but belonged to the world; and in our own or recent times, the Spanish Ortega y Gasset and the French Albert Camus. And in America in the present, Wendell Berry. Whether they are poets, dramatists, or novelists, we shall call them essayists, who write out of conviction, wonder, and because they must, leaving us their affirmations and their questions. We have from them an inheritance properly called the life of the mind. Lest we forget the rising tide of women writers with impressive capacities, we add Willa Cather and Simone Weil and Hannah Arendt. The time may soon be here when we will no longer feel it important to distinguish between male and female writers—the skills of the mind have no sex, enriching as the differences in gender may have been.

What does the writer of distinction or genius achieve? He (or she) is able to make magnificent generalizations that ring with truth, that illuminate life; yet he does more than this. He illustrates these general ideas with examples we have never thought of, yet being given them they seem to us exactly right. General ideas are necessary because we cannot possibly know all about everything. A general idea gives the perception of order. We may intuit its validity but are helped to confirm the generalization by seeing how it is illustrated in some concrete form. The scientist is required to supply a large number of illustrations obtained by experiment (or protracted observation) which apparently have no other meaning. This is called proof. The essayist, however, appeals to our common sense, our feeling about the fitness of things, which adds to the strength of our intuitive recognition.

Another good thing about the essayist-writer is that he is not an obvious moralist. He believes in the essential decencies but has a way of talking about them that is never oppressive. Why is moralizing oppressive? Because it assumes things that should be left to ourselves—to each one. The moralizer supposes that he is better than other people and ought to instruct them. Perhaps some inner weakness makes him feel that way, but whatever the cause of his preaching, it becomes offensive. The truly moral man somehow knows that his will to do the "right thing" is a private resolve, not to be exploited as some sort of profession. It is moreover a human mystery, something of which one persuades himself or he is not persuaded. The good writers enlarge upon the mystery. There is this, for example, by that prince of essayists, W. Macneile Dixon, in the *The Human Situation:*

> Probably upon no subject ever discussed through the length and breadth of the globe has there been expended a fiercer hubbub of words than upon this—the foundations of morality. 'Why should I ask God to make me good when I want to be naughty?" asked the little girl. All the wise men of the world are put to silence by this childish query. A parliament of philosophers will not resolve it. When we set out in search of an answer we are, like the rebel angels in Milton's Pandemonium, in wand'ring mazes lost." "Pleasure is empty," say the Puritans; "it passes away." Ah, yes, but the ascetic as well as the reveller goes and who has the best of the bargain?
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> During an illness towards the close of his life Voltaire was visited by a priest, who summoned him to confession. "From whom do you come?" enquired the sick man. "From God," was the reply. When

> Voltaire desired to see his visitor's credentials, the priest could go no further and withdrew. Is the moralist in better case? Unhappily no; he is in worse. He cannot speak in the name of any church, any accredited body of opinion, but only in his own. How many moral systems are there? It will take you some time to count them.

Dixon will not preach, and he heaps scorn on those who do, yet if you read him for a half hour or so, you are uplifted. He is, in his English way, another Emerson, although not quite a Thoreau. Such writers have a life of the mind to which we are invited as readers. From reading them we discover hungers that will never finally be satisfied. Even a deeper sense of dignity may result. Here is a little more of Dixon, from the same book:

> And meaning, what is that? Have you ever pondered meanings? We talk of the import or meaning of this thing or that, the meaning of a poem, the meaning of a scientific concept, of a political event. Where are these to be found in nature? Only in us. They cannot be exhumed or distilled out of material movements. As well endeavor to extract the skylark's song out of granite rock, or honey from the salt seas. They are not resident in physical things, or to be expressed in the terminology of the laboratories. Meanings are the exclusive property of conscious selves and continuing selves. "Though the universe encompasses me," wrote Pascal, "by thought I encompass the universe." What are we to understand by this? Despite its stupendous immensity, the universe is not aware either of me or of itself. I, in my insignificance, am aware of myself and of the world.
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> Is it possible, this paradox, this preposterous, unbelievable thing? For it declares that you and I possess a supreme talent denied to the universe. We are awake as nothing else in creation is awake. The most enigmatical, indescribable, undeniable attribute of the self is its awareness. How can such an awakening ever at all or anywhere come about?
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> Can material things, oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, water, lead, stone, electrons or protons, or any combinations of such things become conscious of themselves? Can the stream rise above its source or the result outsoar its cause? Can carbon recognize itself as carbon, or say "Ah, here is hydrogen"? If not, beside them we are as gods, looking down from the Olympian battlements of consciousness upon the senseless nonentities which neither know nor care to know what they are or what they do.
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> Before you dismiss the self as irrelevant you will do well to ponder this, its aristocratic prerogative, which makes all else by comparison a negligible cipher.

Dixon is aware that being human constitutes a transcendent order of life. We are of the world, its children, and part of it, yet we are also apart from it through our ability to comprehend it, to do it either good or evil. This, for a man like Dixon, an exquisite writer, becomes riches indeed, which he gave to the world in books. In spirit, he seems like a member of the Cambridge Platonists of seventeenth-century England, and he belonged to a similar succession in England in this century, a group of thinkers which included John McTaggart, G. Lowes Dickinson, and some others, all very much worth reading.

Another writer who lives in the same universe of ideas, an essayist, philosopher, and journalist who has exercised a strong influence throughout the world of letters for at least 50 years, is Ortega, who has set many minds on fire. A passage in *Man and Crisis* (published in English by Norton in 1958) seems to take off from what Dixon said in the quotation above. It begins:

> If history, which is the science of human lives, were or could be exact, it would mean that men were flints, stones physio-chemical bodies, and nothing else. But then one would have neither history nor physics; for stones, more fortunate, if you like, than men, do not have to create science in order to be what they are, namely stones. On the other hand man is a most strange entity, who, in order to be what he is, needs first to find out what he is; needs, whether he will or no, to ask himself what are the things around him and what, there in the midst of them, is he. For it is this which really differentiates man from a stone, and not that man has understanding while the stone lacks it. We can imagine a very intelligent stone; but as the inner being of the stone is given it already made, once and for all, and it is required to make no decision on the subject, it has no need, in order to go on being a stone to pose and pose again the problem of self, asking "What must I do now?" or, which is the same thing, "What must I be?" Tossed into the air, without need to ask itself anything, and therefore

without having to exercise its understanding, the stone which we are imagining will fall toward the center of the earth. Its intelligence, even if existent, forms no part of its being, does not intervene in it, but would be an extrinsic and superfluous addition.

The essence of man, on the other hand, lies in the fact that he has no choice but to force himself to know, to build a science, good or bad, in order to resolve the problem of his own being and toward this end the problem of what are the things among which he must inexorably have that being. This—that he needs to know, that whether he likes it or not, he needs to work to the best of his intellectual means—is undoubtedly what constitutes the human condition. . .

Man, every man, must at every moment be deciding for the next moment what he is going to do, what he is going to be. This decision only he can make; it is not transferable, no one can substitute for me in the task of deciding for myself, in deciding on my life. When I put myself into another's hands, it is I who have decided and who go on deciding that he will direct me; thus I do not transfer the decision itself, but merely its mechanism. In place of deriving the norm of my conduct out of that mechanism which is my own intelligence, I take advantage of the mechanism of another's intelligence.

We are, in short, our own creators; we are responsible for ourselves and for all that we do.

How then shall we live? Our world is filled with "authorities" of various sorts, all or most of whom want us to behave according to the rules which they establish. We know without being told that the best minds are the freest, the best lives those lived by independent decision, whether or not "successful" according to conventional standards. How does one free his mind, and does he dare or can he afford to do so? Ortega discusses and illuminates this problem, although he can scarcely solve it. In his *Mission of the University* (published by Princeton University Press in 1944), in the chapter on "Culture and Science," he wrote:

There is no denying the fact that man invariably lives according to some definite ideas which constitute the very foundation of his way of life. These ideas which I have called "vital," meaning ideas by which an age conducts its life, are no more nor less than the repertory of our *active* convictions as to the nature of our world and our fellow creatures, convictions as to the hierarchy of the values of things—which are more to be esteemed, and which less.

It is not in our hands, whether to possess such a repertory or not. It is a matter of inescapable necessity, an ingredient essential to every human life, of whatever sort it may be. The reality we are wont to refer to as "human life," your life and the next fellow's, is something quite remote from biology, the science of organisms. Biology, like any other science, is no more than one occupation to which some men devote their life. The basic and truest meaning of the word *life* is not biological but biographical: that is the meaning it has always had in the language of the people. It means the totality of what we do and what we are—that formidable business, which every man must exercise on his own, of maintaining a place in the scheme of things and steering a course among the beings of the world.

Ortega now turns to the crucial distinction between science and culture.

In our age, the content of culture comes largely from science. But our discussion suffices to indicate that culture is not science. The content of culture, though it is being made in the field of science more than elsewhere, is not scientific fact but rather a vital faith, a conviction characteristic of our times. Five hundred years ago, faith was reposed in ecclesiastical councils, and the content of culture emanated in large part from them.

Culture . . . borrows from science what is vitally necessary for the interpretation of our existence. There are entire portions of science which are not culture, but pure scientific technique. And vice versa, culture requires that we possess a complete concept of the world and of man; it is not for culture to stop, with science, at the point where the methods of absolute theoretic rigor happen to end. Life cannot wait until the sciences may have explained the universe scientifically. We cannot put off living until we are ready. The most salient characteristic of life is its coerciveness: it is always urgent, "here and now," without any possible postponement. Life is fired at us point-blank. And culture, which is but its interpretation, cannot wait any more than can life itself.

This sharpens the distinction between culture and the sciences. Science is not something by which we live. If the physicist had to live by the ideas of his science, you may rest assured that he would not be so

> finicky as to wait for some other investigator to complete his research a century or so later. He would renounce the hope of a complete scientific solution, and fill in, with approximate or probable anticipations, what the rigorous corpus of physical doctrine lacks at present, and in part, always will lack.
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> The internal conduct of science is not a vital concern, that of culture is.

There are of course many avenues which lead to other considerations about the work of writers. We have chosen two almost contemporaries to quote because they provide valuable suggestions as to how to think about both ourselves and the world. There seems both invitation to reflection and an unpretentious wisdom in what they say. They are not out to convert anyone to anything but simply examine for us convictions they have arrived at, for what they are worth. There is an intellectual friendliness in their work. Once read, their ideas go on and on in our minds. In a way, these writers remind us of the *acharyas* of ancient India to whom even kings and emperors turned for help when confronted with problems they did not know how to solve. Our friend, K. S. Acharlu, wrote about them in *Gandhi Marg* of last June, in an article on the need to entirely separate education from the control and influence of the nation-state, and revive the old methods of teaching that prevailed many centuries ago in India. Acharlu wrote (as quoted in our "Children" article for last December 18):

> Indian tradition holds the teacher, the torch-bearer of knowledge in high esteem. He was called an Acharya, i.e., one who practiced what he preached and was a model of conduct. Acharya Vinoba has said that the Vedas employ the beautiful term "gatuvit" (pathfinder) to describe the teacher. In our ancient land the teacher, as the repository of knowledge, in moral, social, and philosophical matters was held in reverence. . . . It is teachers of this category who played a significant part in contributing to the fundamental unity of the country and in creating a social and religious revolution in society.

Modern writers of the sort we have quoted have a similar function. They are usually teachers, although not in "forest universities" as in old India, but they are free in mind, say what they think, and exercise a wide and potent influence on the culture. They are not honored in the same way as the acharyas, but that may eventually come about as their audience grows larger, as it must, if there is any real hope for the world.

We turn now to a present-day novelist, very much alive, if elderly, Robert Penn Warren, having recently reread his Civil War story, *Wilderness*, which first came out in 1961. This is a rare tale of great beauty, unlike the popular stories about the war between the states. Adam Rosenzweig was a clubfooted Jew who grew up in Bavaria. His father, devoted to political freedom, had taught him Greek and English, saying that these were "the tongues of liberty." But Leopold Rosenzweig fought in the revolution of 1848, which failed, and he was imprisoned for thirteen years. Ostracized as a radical, he coughed his life away on a cot in his brother's home, where his son now lived. The boy inherited nothing but his father's vision of freedom. The story unfolds with Adam's coming to America, hoping to fight for the Union in the Civil War. He had special boots made to hide his distorted foot. It was discovered on a fall on the ship which carried him to America and he was subjected to abuse and bitter mockery. He was to be sent back to Bavaria, but with the help of a sailor he found a way to get off the boat in New York, and after a number of unpleasant yet thrilling adventures, found his way to the home of a rich family friend. He had been saved from drowning by a black man. The story of how, working for a sutler, Adam finally found a way of fulfilling his dream, shows how a man, born with a limitation, could overcome everything that stood in his way. In quite unheroic ways, Adam became a hero. Every young person in America should know this story.

Robert Penn Warren was one of a group of twelve Southern writers who in 1930 united to bring about a book called *I'll Take My Stand* as a

restatement of the Jeffersonian agrarian ideal. One of the authors, John Crowe Ransom, said:

> A man can contemplate and explore, respect and love, an object as substantial as a farm or a native province. But he cannot contemplate nor explore, respect or love, a mere turnover, such as an assemblage of "natural resources, a pile of money, a volume of produce, a market, or a credit system. It is into precisely these intangibles that industrialism would translate the farmer's farm. It means the dehumanization of his life.

Such writers, who are now beginning to be understood and valued, are the carriers and renewers of such civilization as we still possess. They, too, are acharyas, preservers of the human qualities of human beings, the fine writers of our time. They are poets, storytellers, and practical philosophers who speak our language and keep it from degrading into nothing but the jargon of buying and selling. As another of the contributors to *I'll Take My Stand*, Lyle H. Lanier, put it:

> It is not the machine, however, but the theory of the use of the machine to which I object, and if this theory, which we may call industrialism, is a valid hypothesis of the course of Western civilization, all discussion of "progress" would do well to cease. The only intelligible meaning of progress implies social institutions for producing psychological effects just the reverse of those so outstanding in our Machine Age.

Some day we may have sense enough to put writers and teachers of this character wholly in charge of the education of coming generations.

REVIEW
BIOREGIONALISM

AN "idea whose time has come" makes the subject-matter of Kirkpatrick Sale's latest book, *Dwellers in the Land—The Bioregional Vision* (Sierra Club, 1985, $14.95). The author gathers evidence to show that the bioregion is gradually being recognized as the socio-ecological unit for the mankind of the future, showing various movements, both conscious and unconscious, in that direction. Bioregion—the term was devised a decade ago by Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann—means a region where the natural conditions of watershed, plant and animal life, climate, and "economic resources" are essentially similar. As Kirkpatrick Sale puts it:

> The kinds of soils and rocks under our feet; the sources of the waters we drink; the meaning of the different kinds of winds; the common insects, birds, mammals, plants, and trees; the particular cycles of the seasons; the times to plant and harvest and forage—these are the things that are necessary to know. The limits of its resources, the carrying capacities of its lands and waters; the places where it must not be stressed; the places where its bounties can best be developed the treasures it holds and the treasures it withholds—these are the things that must be understood. And the cultures of the people, of the populations native to the land and of those who have grown up with it, the human social and economic arrangements shaped by and adapted to the geomorphic ones, in both urban and rural settings—these are the things that must be appreciated.
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> That, in essence, is *bioregionalism.*

To be a bioregionalist is to be one who has begun to think differently about his life and its relationship to the environment. The natural surroundings, wherever he is, are no longer simply there as raw material to be used, but a community of life and intelligence with which he has interdependent relations and toward which he feels responsibilities. The bioregionalist has toward the earth and all its creatures something of the natural feel that a guest has toward his host or hostess. This feeling has both primitive and classical origins. The earth, the ancients believed, is a living reality—some called it a goddess, Gaea, one of the oldest of the divinities, the mother of all. But very nearly all the high ancient civilizations, like the modern ones, misused the land and in time were reduced to poverty. The loss of reverence for the land was never really regained, for in the West, after the Dark Ages, the Renaissance brought the awakening of the scientific spirit and the age of discovery began. Science and the manipulation of matter became the effective religion of the pioneers of Western civilization. The earth and its resources were simply there to be used, and as scientific genius gave instruction in its methods to technology, we began using them up. As we know, all the world is now feeling the pinch of shortages of what, so far, have been regarded as irreplaceable materials. But while Western technology became the master of production, it equally became the producer of waste and pollution. These latter are among the forces which are now awakening biologists, thoughtful farmers, essayists, the practitioners of a new branch of science, barely a century old, the ecologists, to thoughts about the welfare of the earth, for they see that the health and welfare of all human beings actually depends upon the health of the earth. This, you could say, is part of the scientific case for bioregionalism.

There is at the same time a social case, manifest these days in the unmanageability of the nation-state, in the increasingly articulate desire of ethnic and linguistic and regional groups to gain control of their lives, independent of the motives of imperial managers and commercial exploiters who never think about human welfare in any serious sense, but are intent on power and profits.

After an indictment of this sort, Kirkpatrick Sale asks:

> Is that too harsh? Take as an example Europe's treatment of the New World that opened up at the same time as the rise of science and the nation-states that nurtured it. Two continents, pristine jewels of unimagined glories, were perceived as nothing but empty spaces for unwanted populations, repositories of wanted ores, tracts of trees to fell and fields to

> plow, virgin territories with no other purpose but to be *worked.* Those who inhabited those spaces could be honorably and properly displaced, for they were only hunters and foragers who did nothing to "improve" the land and thus had no standing in the eyes of European law. Within a single century the Spanish denuded the New World of most of its gold, quite regardless of the human destruction they wrought; within a century and a half the lands available for crops desired in Europe were recklessly ravaged, with forced labor imported at the rate of 100,000 slaves a year; within another half-century the massive deforestation known as the Midwest Clearcut eliminated 100,000 acres of trees; within two generations the populations of prairie bison were reduced almost to extinction; and of course the sorry list could go on. And the example was multiplied around the world.

In the eighteenth century in England, the power age was born with the development of the steam engine by James Watt, and then the march of technology began in earnest. It was not long before the dread prophecy of Carlyle proved true—we all began to think like machines instead of living beings with respect for omnipresent life.

Modern man, isolated from natural processes, served by hundreds of machines and devices which turn nature into a mere abstraction, has had little or no idea of what our actions have done to the planet—has had no idea of *limit*, so that our cities have turned into ugly slums (except for a few show neighborhoods) with increasingly precarious support systems now in danger of breaking down. Meanwhile our prosperity has somehow been the cause of an inflation in land values and construction that makes it impossible for people with moderate incomes to own their own homes. Our topsoil is washing away, for reasons given by the ecologists, the water supply in the big cities is hardly fit to drink, while the surrounding air is filled with the fumes of pollution.

These are all factors which are driving people to think about another way of life. Mr. Sale lists the advantages of a bioregional life:

> 1. A self-sufficient bioregion would be more economically stable, more in control of investment, production, and sales, and hence more insulated from the cycles of boom-and-bust engendered by distant market forces or remote political crises. And its people, with a full close-up knowledge of both markets and resources, would be able to allocate their products and labor in the most efficient way, to build and develop what and where they want to at the safest pace, to control their money supply and currency value without extreme fluctuations—*and* to adjust all those procedures with comparative ease when necessary.
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> 2. A self-sufficient bioregion would not be in vassalage to far-off and uncontrollable national bureaucracies or transnational corporations, at the mercy of whims or "reeds of politicians and plutocrats. Not caught up in the vortex of worldwide trade, it would be free from the vulnerability that *always* accompanies dependence in some degree or other, as the Western world discovered with considerable pain when OPEC countries quadrupled the price of oil it depended on, as the non-Western world experiences daily.

These reasons for adopting a bioregional life go on, and tile interesting thing about the arguments presented is that virtually all of them are based upon actual practices in the past in community forms of life. There is really no novelty in them, whatever they may seem because they are both different from what we do and unfamiliar. Yet the American Indians simply by natural inclination and common sense ordered their lives according to bioregional territories. Today, Sale points out, there are dozens of good books and reading material on the subject. And wherever research is pursued, the conclusion is that bioregions are the only sensible remedy for the troubles of the United States and other large countries. Howard Washington Odum, a sociologist (with Harry Estill Moore) wrote a massive volume, *American Regionalism,* in 1938, in which he showed the natural divisions of our country into numerous regions, stressing the distinctive economic opportunities of various regions, saying in general:

> Regionalism . . . represents the philosophy and technique of self-help, self-development, and initiative in which each area unit is not only aided, but is committed to the fuller development of its own

> resources and capacities. It assumes that the key to the redistribution of wealth and the equalization of opportunity will be found in the capacity of each region to create wealth and, through new reaches of consumption of commodities, maintain the capacity and retain that wealth in well-balanced production and consumption.

Even a government document, published in 1935, pointed out that America could really be understood as "a nation of nations." This document, *Regional Factors in National Planning and Development,* said:

> Regional differentiation . . . may turn out to be the true expression of American life and culture . . . [reflecting] American ideals, needs, and viewpoints far more adequately than does State consciousness and loyalty. One might conclude, therefore, that it should not only be conserved but augmented and utilized as a major factor in national planning and development.

Lewis Mumford wrote in 1925:

> Regional planning asks not how wide an area can be brought under the aegis of the metropolis, but how the population and civic facilities can be distributed so as to promote and stimulate a vivid, creative life throughout a whole region—a region being any geographic area that possesses a certain unity of climate, soil, vegetation, industry and culture.

And our author points out:

> What makes the bioregional effort different—in the foreseeable future, anyway—is that it asks nothing of the Federal government and needs no national legislation, no governmental regulation, no Presidential dispensation. What commends it especially to its age is that it does not need any Federal presence to promote it, only a Federal obliviousness to permit it.

Sale provides an extensive bibliography. We especially recommend work by Peter Berg of the Planet Drum, San Francisco, California.

COMMENTARY
THE POWER OF CHANGE

EXCEPT for the figures on population and their effect on the schools as given in this week's "Children," the contents of this issue are concerned with the work of leaders who are able to set an example to others. Such individuals, as we know from history, are always few, and again, as we know from history, the issues, problems, and possibilities remain much the same, although the circumstances of their occurrence may be considerably altered. Pico's contention, in the fifteenth century, for example, was that human beings create their own natures—that, he said, is their calling, at which they may succeed or fail. This humanist doctrine has been endlessly repeated, ever since, and our common future may be said to depend on whether we are willing to rely on this principle and accept full responsibility for what we have made ourselves to be. No imaginary Satan can lead us to damnation, and only the potential god in every human can take us out of the wilderness, which is of itself of our construction.

This idea was again presented in our own century by Ortega.

> The essence of man, on the other hand, lies in the fact that he has no choice but to force himself to know, to build a science, good or bad, in order to resolve the problem of his own being and toward this end the problem of what are the things among which he must inexorably have that being. This—that he needs to know, that whether he likes it or not, he needs to work to the best of his intellectual means—is undoubtedly what constitutes the human condition.

Robert Penn Warren's story, *Wilderness*, offers a striking example of an individual who made the limitations imposed on him from birth into tools for the formation of his character. And the writers to whom the lead article is devoted were all people who shaped themselves, supplying evidence of human possibility that, as much as anything else, is the lesson they have to teach.

It is by such means, over the years, that wornout institutions fade away and fresh and useful institutions are born. But institutions, which seem to us so powerful, have only the strength and influence given them by the individuals who brought and continue them in being. The power to bring about change lies always in individuals, not in the organizations they create.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

POPULATION . . . HOME SCHOOLING

THE Fall 1985 issue of *Contemporary Education*, issued by the School of Education, Indiana State University in Terre Haute, is filled with figures, many of them interesting. An article by John C. Hill begins:

> On the wall in the lobby of the U.S. Department of Commerce building in Washington, D.C., there is a clock that records the population of the United States. On Jan. 1, 1985, this clock reported the population of the United States to be 237,236,000. Total population in the United States is increasing and is predicted to increase in the future. For example, from January 1, 1984 to January 1, 1985, the total U.S. population increased 2,126,000 or an average of 5,809 per day.

Yet the rate of increase is declining. In 1984, the birth to death ratio was 1.8 to 1. Thirty years ago it was 2 to 1. The Census Bureau expects that during the next few decades deaths may outnumber births and immigration may not be enough to cause population growth.

Such changes have an effect on the school populations. Apparently there are spurts in the birth rate, followed by declines.

> The peak birth years of the late 1950s and early 1960s resulted in peak elementary school enrollments during the late 1960s and in peak secondary school enrollments during the middle 1970s. Another wave of school enrollments is currently entering the elementary schools. However, this second wave of increasing school enrollments is significantly smaller than that of the 1960s. As the current wave of children moves up the age/grade ladder, enrollments in the middle school grades will increase by the end of this decade and enrollments in the high schools will increase during the middle of the next decade.

These figures are noticeably affected in the areas where immigration is strong—the coastal cities and regions. "School districts in the southern and western states, namely Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, have enrolled significant numbers of foreign-born children due to immigration."

> The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, reported the composition of the total 1980 elementary and secondary school pupil population to be 73.3 per cent white, 16.1 per cent black, 8 per cent Hispanic, 1.9 per cent Asian or Pacific Islander, and .8 per cent native Indian. Among the states, the white population ranged from a high of 99 per cent in Vermont to a low of 24.8 per cent in Hawaii. The black population ranged from a high of 51 per cent in Mississippi to a low of .2 per cent in South Dakota; the Hispanic population ranged from 46.5 per cent in New Mexico to .1 per cent in Alabama, Kentucky Maine, Mississippi, Tennessee, Vermont, and West Virginia, the Asian or Pacific Islander population ranged from 71.4 per cent in Hawaii to .2 per cent in Alabama; and the native American Indian population ranged from 20.6 per cent in Alaska to less than .05 per cent in Georgia, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and West Virginia.
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> The mobility of the population is another factor that significantly affects local school enrollments. The 1980 census data show that 36 per cent of all Americans reside in a state other than the state in which they were born. It is not uncommon for the average yearly turnover rate for pupils enrolled in a given school district to be from 20 to 25 per cent. . . .
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> Most states and the school districts within those states don't track students who leave; the task may be too formidable. So mobile is the U.S. population today that no one seems to be able to maintain statistics indicating how many children move in a given year. Unlike most of their parents, many of today's children won't grow to adulthood in the same town in which they were born.

These figures show that some of the problems experienced by the schools are not of their own making. In many areas, the fabric of the population is changing, and while this might be regarded by teachers as an opportunity to adapt to new needs, and is by some, many administrators are not in touch with the students in the way that teachers are, and fail to understand the crucial importance to the foreign-born young of bilingual education.

Another article in the Fall *Contemporary Education*, by Lawrence Riccio, is largely concerned with intelligence tests. Such tests are used to place students in ability groups, but their use has become increasingly controversial. This writer says:

> Some schools report using IQ tests exclusively. Advocates say the IQ score is the best representation of an individual's innate abilities and a good predictor of future academic success. Others say, however, that paper and pencil intelligence tests are crude screening devices, at best, and ineffective when dealing with people very much above or below average. Numerous doubts have been raised about whether IQ tests can measure aptitude.
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> When IQ tests are debated in the courtroom, the key issue generally changes from test validity to whether discrimination is involved. Comments by expert court witnesses yield the following considerations:
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> 1. Intelligence tests are not infallible, because they test only the narrow ranges of ability that lend themselves to standardized methods.
>
> 2. Most intelligence tests have been standardized for a normative population. Children from low socioeconomic homes predictably score lower than students from average and above average homes.
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> 3. Because standardized intelligence tests are not "culture free," they measure present rather than potential ability.
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> 4. A student's score on a particular test is affected by many variables including the physical environment of the testing room, the examiner's attitude, and the student's physical and emotional health and motivation.
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> 5. Excessive reliance on test scores can result in labeling children incorrectly (e.g., "incapable of learning"), and the labels can last for life.

We have received an interesting letter from a teacher in New York City who comments on the home schooling program. We reproduce it almost entire:

> As a teacher (public schools) for almost thirty years now, I have followed with great interest the arguments advanced in MANAS for the advantages of home instruction as opposed to institutional settings for the education of the young. I know very intimately both the advantages and disadvantages of home instruction, for the bulk of my teaching experience has been with homebound youngsters in New York City, mostly on the high school level—youngsters that are out of school for varied physical, mental, or emotional reasons.
>
> Three of my present five students are suffering from broken legs, and in the several months it takes for proper healing, I am assigned by the Board of Education to see these youngsters an hour or two a day and keep them going in all their academic subjects. I say "academic" subjects. The Big Four are now, and have been for many years, English, some form of math, science, and social studies.
>
> There is no question of the superiority of tutoring over conventional classroom techniques to impart "subject matter." We clear the kitchen table, set out the books and the assignments, and get down to work. What the child already knows we gloss over quickly, we zero in on his weaknesses, we tailor the approach and the expectations to the child before us. The best how-to book I can recommend to parents is not one of John Holt's, but a book by one of my former colleagues, retired for some time, Ernest Siegel, whose work is entitled *Teaching One Child*.
>
> The results of assiduous application to study by both the student and the tutor can be phenomenal—years of reading progress made in one year (at least as judged by standardized tests), and new interests engendered. Those of us in this field have plenty of success stories to relate.
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> Yet an annoying realization persists and gnaws away at me: the schools could easily duplicate the success we have at home, if only they wanted to. And the schools have advantages (economies of scale) impossible to achieve at home. Let us not be in too much of a hurry to abandon them.
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> I teach science at home with some difficulty, referring to various books that show how simple household objects can be turned to account to illustrate the various scientific principles. But it takes time, precious time, to gather and prepare these materials. Recently a student and I decided to make a Torricelli (mercury) barometer together. I made the base and stand at home—the boy has no shop in his apartment—but I had to get the mercury at the boy's high school of affiliation. As the science chairman led me to the appropriate supply closet, I glanced enviously around at the complex-lensed microscopes, the models, the charts that adorned the walls. What I

> wouldn't do to have available that three-arm balance scale that measures to micrograms! . . . So if I had my druthers, I would opt for youngsters having "rights of visitation" to the local public school, where they could be tutored in those subjects not amenable to home instruction: science shop; or where they could take advantage of the group dynamics of band, chorus, or dramatics society. . . .the alternative we are rapidly being faced with—the slow death of the public school—points up the pressing need to address this question.

Only experienced teachers are likely to think of these things.

FRONTIERS

The Trees of Arizona

LAST September 30, a forester and research writer, Ray Ring, gave a talk before a branch of the Society of American Foresters, in Flagstaff, Arizona. His subject was the extent of timber cutting in Arizona and other Western states from 1908 to 1982—a period of seventy-four years. After a year's research, he was able to point out that Arizona had cut down far more trees than any other Western state. In an article based on his talk, published in *High Country News* for last Nov. 11, he tells the long story of his research, considers why fully matured trees—Arizona is home to the world's largest continuous stand of ponderosa pine—are important apart from economic reasons, and then, rambling a bit, suggests how more trees might be saved. At first, in his work, he found the material he was looking for hard to find. Then he began reading in depth:

> I reviewed every annual report of the U.S. Forest Service, from 1905 on, and the earlier annual reports of the Department of Agriculture and the General Land Office, which had authority over Arizona's forests when Anglo settlement began in earnest in the mid-1800s. . . .
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> In 1880, theft of timber from public lands was so common that the federal land agent for Arizona, John Wasson, wrote about the difficulty in prosecuting the cases. In 1887, a federal report on Arizona's forests noted "destructive inroads" from railroads and settlements.
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> During this period, large tracts of prime forest land passed into private ownership, and were subjected to cutting that would be viewed as abusive today. The Atlantic and Pacific Railroad, now the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, was given probably the largest government handout ever in Arizona—nearly 8 million acres of public land, much of it in the lush pine belt. In a deal that land agent Wasson called fraudulent, 1 million acres of prime land was resold to the Aztec Land and Cattle Company for 50 cents an acre.

By 1900 Arizona was second in the nation for suspected timber trespass—cutting without permission on public lands. The trees were there, and those were days when a man could get rich simply by exercising an aggressive spirit. Then, years later, in 1966, a Forest Service researcher, John Spencer, showed that Arizona had the highest cutting rate in the Rocky Mountains, removing about 1.5 per cent of its saw-timber inventory every year—fifty per cent more than the average for the region. Using Spencer's comparative method, Ray Ring continued this study, finding that in 1977 "nearly 1.8 per cent of Arizona's sawtimber was harvested, with Oregon second with about 1 per cent."

The cutting cycle has become much shorter. It began at 250 years, then dropped to 200, and now it is down to 120 or even 90 in some locations. These cutting policies were established when there was no voice heard to defend the trees. Today there are very few virgin ponderosa pine areas left. Ring says he knows forest rangers who could locate some of them, but they have grown fond of the trees and don't talk about those places. Ring says:

> That sounds like a strange reference, doesn't it? "Foresters who love these areas." Admitting such emotion doesn't happen often in the profession. Perhaps it is because most foresters are men, and men traditionally have not felt free to express emotion. We go about our jobs, we do our duty, stoically. . . . We must go out and tame the forests, triumph over nature.
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> Many of you may have expected me to get up here and make a plea for preserving wild forests based on the importance for wildlife, or for recreation, or for the gene pool. But I want you to consider something else: the feel of a natural forest.
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> I think most of us react in the same way to a virgin stand of giant pines, and their attendant vegetation and wildlife and atmosphere. We feel inspired, or humbled, or calm. It is not the feeling we get from a managed stand. Sometimes I think we can sense the values of virgin stand more accurately—even the biological and scientific values—than any number of transect surveys and computer models can ever document. Our emotional reaction is an outgrowth of all that we see and smell and hear and feel about the richness of a virgin stand. . . .

> Yet I've collected a stack of the new national forest management plans and impact statements coming out around the West, a massive stack of thick tomes that would literally reach 15 feet in height, and I have yet to find even a passing reference to this most basic of human reactions. The awe, the instinctive love for a virgin stand.

Ray Ring has some strong criticisms of Forest Service reports which show bias, which make certainties out of doubtful matters because of the pressure from supervisors and "the forest products industry."

He is familiar with the argument, "Well, people need houses, don't they? They have to have the lumber from the trees." But he says:

> For the sake of argument, consider for a moment how the availability of low-cost wood products from the national forests affects the business of a man I know. This man builds houses out of mud, out of adobe down in Tucson. He uses very little wood. He has perfected a new technology that could be a revolution in adobe homebuilding. His houses are already competitive in price, and they will likely outlast the typical modern wood-frame house. But this businessman is having trouble getting the public interested on a wide scale.
>
> What would happen if the price of lumber from the forests were to rise, and the price of wood-framed houses went up accordingly? Do you think that is something this Tucson businessman fears? How many new jobs could he provide if people began buying his houses, instead of those made entirely out of wood products? Wouldn't the public demand merely shift to other materials?
>
> Our economy is elastic, adaptive and many-faceted. It will adapt. The so-called demand for wood houses and jobs in the wood industries is really a demand for the status quo by the timber industry, the homebuilders industry and the real estate industry. Together they form one of the most powerful alliances m the country.

If the foresters protect our forests, cherish our wilderness areas, fight for our landscapes, they might release into play "many other industries" which are kept from growing by letting the lobbies rule forest policy. Ray Ring is not only a forest-lover; he has common economic sense.