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INSTRUCTING THE HEART

WE'VE all met them—the complacent innocents who are happy to explain why they don't read books. "I know it all in here," they say, patting their chests—or maybe the solar plexus—with a gesture of nurturing caress rather than boasting. They just know from inside what is right and what is wrong, and true or false. Books are for people who don't know the real way to find out about things. The old Romans had a word for it. *Ignorabimus* meant "We shall be ignorant," and for us it means escape from framing what we believe with materials necessary to critical understanding. Since our hearts tell us what we need to know, we have no hunger for instruction.

What could be more comfortable than an uninstructed heart? Yet there is unmistakable truth in the idea. One of the greatest philosophers of all time, Lao tse, seemed of this persuasion. He spoke of the "uncarved block"—the nature of humans before they acquired the veneer of civilization. As Holmes Welch says (in *The Parting of the Way*), commenting on the *Tao Te Ching:*

> In Lao Tzu's opinion, his nature—[man's] original nature—is free from hostility and aggressiveness. But society mars this nature—and here Lao Tzu would seem to align himself with the extremists in progressive education. From the first parental whack to the last deathbed prayer, man is kneaded and pummelled, either by those who want to make him "good" or those who want to use or destroy him. He becomes a reservoir of aggression on which society can draw to produce its goods competitively, fight its wars fiercely, and raise children more aggressive than himself.

Welch found in Herman Melville's *Typee* an account of the Marquesans that confirmed the Chinese philosopher's views. Melville wrote:

> With the young men there seemed almost always some matter of diversion or business on hand that afforded a constant variety of enjoyment. But whether fishing, or carving canoes, or polishing their ornaments, never was there exhibited the least sign of strife or contention among them. . . . In short, there were no legal provisions whatever for the well-being and conservation of society, the enlightened end of civilized legislation. And yet everything went on in the valley with a harmony and smoothness unparalleled, I will venture to assert in the most select, refined, and pious associations of mortals in Christendom. . . . I do not conceive that they could support a debating society for a single night: there would be nothing to dispute about. . . . But the continual happiness which so far as I was able to judge appeared to prevail in the valley, sprung principally from that all-pervading sensation which Rousseau has told us he at one time experienced, the mere buoyant sense of a healthful physical existence.

Trigant Burrow, the extraordinary psychiatrist who died in 1950, was convinced of the need of human beings to recover the natural qualities of their early days on earth. He believed that the use of symbols and words had created an artificial psychic environment, pervading our lives with a language based on self-interest. This theory is set forth at length in his posthumously published *Preconscious Foundations of Human Experience* (Basic Books, 1964), in which he quotes the following from Ernst Cassirer's *An Essay on Man:*

> No longer can man confront reality immediately; he cannot see it, as it were, face to face. Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man's symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with the things themselves man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols of religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium. His situation is the same in the theoretical as in the practical sphere. Even here man does not live in a world of hard facts, or according to his immediate needs and desires. He lives rather in the midst of imaginary emotions, in hopes and fears, in illusions and disillusions, in his fantasies and dreams.

Discussing language and consciousness of self, Burrow says:

> It would seem, then, that, with the increase of symbol usage, something very radical biologically took place among us as a species. Our feeling-medium of contact with the environment and one another was transferred to a segment of the organism—the symbolic segment, or forebrain. Shunted into this new medium of relational contact, our motivation, our common principle of operation as a species, underwent a coincident shift. What had been the organism's whole feeling was transformed into the *symbol* of feeling, or affect. It became partative, mentalized feeling—sentimentality.
>
> I repeat that the sign, symbol, or word has been and will continue to be a great asset in man's communication with man. But, where man's feeling, where his own motivation, where his very identity is transformed into symbol and metaphor, the story becomes quite a different one, for feeling and motivation are not to be so transmuted. Though peripherally such a transformation has taken place, the circumstance entails an organic contradiction in man's feeling and motivation. It has brought about an inadvertent but nevertheless biologically unwarranted overemphasis on both the word and the head that produces the word. And, in this misuse of the word, something has been left out of account that is vital to man's communication with man—a basic element without which man's word lacks the authority necessary to balanced communication.

We have one more submission in behalf of the man who doesn't and won't read books, this one from Plato, who in the *Phaedrus,* has Socrates tell a tale:

> The story is that in the region of Naucratis in Egypt there dwelt one of the old gods of the country, the god to whom the bird called Ibis is sacred, his own name being Theuth. He it was that invented number and calculation, geometry and astronomy, not to speak of draughts and dice, and above all writing. Now the king of the whole country at that time was Thamus, who dwelt in the great city of Upper Egypt which the Greeks call Egyptian Thebes, while Thamus they call Ammon. To him came Theuth, and revealed his arts saying that they ought to be passed on to the Egyptians in general. Thamus asked what was the use of them all, and when Theuth explained, he condemned what he thought the bad points and praised what he thought the good. On each art, we are told, Thamus had plenty of views both for and against; it would take too long to give them in detail. But when it came to writing Theuth said, "Here, O king is a branch of learning that will make the people of Egypt wiser and improve their memories; my discovery provides a recipe for memory and wisdom." But the king answered and said, "O man full of arts, to one it is given to create the things of art, and to another to judge what measure of harm and of profit they have for those that shall employ them. And so it is that you, by reason of your tender regard for the writing which is your offspring, have declared the very opposite of its true effect. If men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder. And it is no true wisdom that you offer your disciples, but only its semblance, for by telling them of many things without teaching them you will make them seem to know much, while for the most part they know nothing, and as men filled, not with wisdom, but with the conceit of wisdom, they will be a burden to their fellows.

Yet all these sages, from Lao tse and Plato to Melville and Burrow, wrote books! The time had come, it must have seemed to them, when books *had* to be written, even though they might expose mankind to all the delusions listed by Ammon, and invite the conceits common among people who are technically literate but impoverished in the life of the mind. It was Burrow's contention that we live in a picture gallery full of spurious representations of the world and other humans, made by reference to the projections of our self-interest. This may be an entirely unconscious procedure, especially for those who think of themselves as "objective scientists," but it is nonetheless projection, the more convincing if we suppose ourselves to be clear-seeing observers. The time is no doubt coming—it may already be here—when the best books will be those which expose the illusions of other books, but on what, then, can we rely? It very well may be that this passage through disillusionment will bring us out on "the other side," where we shall have instructed hearts and be able, at last, to sit at the table of oral interchange with Lao tse and

Socrates, and perhaps Montaigne and one or two others—holding, in short, conversation with ourselves. The Kabalists called this Ain Soph talking with Ain Soph, and Maslow thought of it as listening to inner voices. Such people will no doubt read books now and then, but only to stay acquainted with the current idiom, not for the wisdom of the heart.

But meanwhile we have more and more books written in correction of other books. One that came out five years ago, a history book, is Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (Harper & Row, 1980), now available as a Colophon paperback (600 pages, $8.50). We will quote enough here from what Zinn says in his first chapter to make his position as a historian clear. He says:

> "History is the memory of states," wrote Henry Kissinger in his first book, *A World Restored,* in which he proposed to tell the history of nineteenth-century Europe from the viewpoint of the leaders of Austria and England, ignoring the millions who suffered from those statesmen's policies. From his standpoint, the "peace" that Europe had before the French Revolution was "restored" by the diplomacy of a few national leaders. But for factory workers in England, farmers in France, colored people in Asia and Africa, women and children everywhere except in the upper classes, it was a world of conquest, violence, hunger, exploitation—a world not restored but disintegrated.
>
> My viewpoint, in telling the history of the United States, is different: that we must not accept the memory of states as our own. Nations are not communities and never have been. The history of any country, presented as the history of a family, conceals fierce conflicts of interest (sometimes exploding, most often repressed) between conquerors and conquered, masters and slaves, capitalists and workers, dominators and dominated in race and sex. And in such a world of conflict, a world of victims and executioners. It is the job of thinking people, as Albert Camus suggested, not to be on the side of the executioners.
>
> Thus, in that inevitable taking of sides which comes from selection and emphasis in history, I prefer to try to tell the story of the discovery of America from the viewpoint of the Arawaks, of the Constitution from the standpoint of the slaves, of Andrew Jackson as seen by the Cherokees, of the Civil War as seen by the New York Irish, of the Mexican war as seen by the deserting soldiers of Scott's army, of the rise of industrialism as seen by the young women in the Lowell textile mills, of the Spanish-American war as seen by the Cubans, the conquest of the Philippines as seen by black soldiers on Luzon, the Gilded Age as seen by southern farmers, the First World War as seen by socialists, the Second World War as seen by pacifists, the New Deal as seen by blacks in Harlem, the postwar American empire as seen by peons in Latin America. And so on, to the limited extent that any one person, however he or she strains, can "see" history from the standpoint of others.
>
> My point is not to grieve for the victims and denounce the executioners. Those tears, that anger, cast into the past, deplete our moral energy for the present. And the lines are not always clear. In the long run, the oppressor is also a victim. In the short run (and so far, human history has consisted only of short runs), the victims, themselves desperate and tainted with the culture that oppresses them, turn on other victims.
>
> Still, understanding the complexities, this book will be skeptical of governments and their attempts, through politics and culture, to ensnare ordinary people in a giant web of nationhood pretending to be a common interest. I will try not to overlook the cruelties that victims inflict on one another as they are jammed together in the boxcars of the system. I don't want to romanticize them. But I do remember (in rough paraphrase) a statement I once read: "The cry of the poor is not always just, but if you don't listen to it, you will never know what justice is."

We can think of no better argument for reading a book—in this case, Zinn's book.

Who are the writers who repeat, or interpret without distortion, the cry of the inarticulate poor? First of all there was Gandhi, although it should be recognized that he regarded the rich as among the poor, as people who were depriving themselves of a wealth that comes only to those who have put material acquisition out of their lives. Before him came Edward Bellamy. Then there was Henry George. In our own time there is Staughton Lynd, Howard Zinn, and doubtless others we haven't heard about. Wendell Berry,

who writes, like Gandhi, for all mankind, uses the small farmer, unquestionably poor but not much given to crying, as the laboratory case, and Berry manifestly understands what justice is. The ecologists give voice to an oppressed nature, obviously poorly these days, and needing advocates. And so on. The writers exist, and hope for the planet exists with them. But they have to be read.

The day may come when we'll need no more books, no more newspapers and magazines, but not yet, and not soon. How could that time be? Well, India was once a land that needed no history books. Asked about this, an old Indian—probably only an *ancient Indian*—would reply, "We don't need history books because we have the *Bhagavad-Gita,* which is the story of all mankind. The *Gita* tells what we must all go through, and deals with the stages of our awakening and the crises of transition from one stage to the next. That is history enough for us." But most Indians seem to have forgotten the *Gita* and so will have to write some history until they recover their true past, and this can hardly be soon. There is so much to unlearn of what they have taken from Western civilization. And Unlearning is far more difficult than learning. It is recovery from what Plato called "double ignorance."

The ways of unlearning are various but they may be typified in their extremes. Most dramatic is the shock which comes from having followed a course which ends in disaster. Then we have opportunity to see the truth, but often the sight finds us unready to understand, unwilling to accept the verdict in events. Then a man may decide, when failure is upon him, not that he has made mistakes but that the universe has conspired against him—that the world is filled with evil-doers and evil-intenders who lie in wait to disrupt his undertakings. He gathers his strength to counter their efforts as best he can, surrounding himself with guards and spies and elaborating theories which are sometimes printed in books to warn others of the dangers lying all about. For more than a thousand years Satan was held accountable for the miseries of mankind. Then, when his potency in deception had lessened because men had found more faith in machines than in heavenly authority, his tempters were recast as Kremlin imps of darkness, intent upon perverting democracy, infecting the rose garden of free enterprise with the seeds of subversion. It was exactly as Robert M. Hutchins warned: If we keep on seeing the work of Communists wherever an oppressed people begins to stir and struggle for freedom, sooner or later Communists will appear. We made a place for them.

Yet always, in these transitions, there is a Saving Remnant of individuals who have become wise enough not simply to rename their illusions.

The best way to pursue unlearning is to enjoy small increments of perception, holding off on judgment until the reality of the matter has unmistakably revealed itself. Books which redress balances are invaluable in progress of this sort.

But meanwhile, the redressing of balances too easily produces its own confusion. Some writers are looking back for their "fundamentals," others only forward. Their rhythms do not jibe. Peter Viereck put it well in *The Unadjusted Man* (1956):

> The currency of the actual word "nonconformist" has become so debased since Emerson's golden use of it that one is no longer surprised to read, in an AP dispatch of Oct. 3, 1955, this characterization of some typical movie star: "a nonconformist in the Marlon Brando tradition." Perhaps this abuse of the word "tradition" is as painful to serious traditionalists as this abuse of "nonconformist" is to Emerson's ghost. . . . The battleline reversed itself when the weapons (intellectual, artistic, political) of anti-philistine liberation were no longer denounced but adopted by the philistine enemy himself. They became, in subtly changed form, *his* weapons, now turned against the creative camp of their origin. . . . Philistia being so protean, it goes without saying that the current return to orthodoxy, values, religion, tradition (best-selling novelists, uplift lecturers, peace-of-mind sermons) is 90% toadies and opportunists, forever finding

> pretexts to "reassure," a word usually meaning to sell out, lose nerve, grovel, adjust. . . .
>
> The meaningful moral choice is not between conforming and nonconforming but between conforming to the ephemeral, stereotyped values of the moment and conforming to the ancient, lasting values shared by all creative cultures. . . .
>
> The traumatic uprooting of archetypes was the most important consequence of the world-wide industrial revolution. This moral wound, this cultural shock was even more important than the economic consequences of the industrial revolution. Liberty depends on a substratum of fixed archetypes, as opposed to the arbitrary shuffling about of laws and institutions. . . . The contrast between institutions grown organically and those shuffled out of arbitrary rationalist liberalism was summed up by a British librarian on being asked for the French constitution: "Sorry, sir, but we don't keep periodicals."

The proper work of a review is to help readers to find their way through the wilderness of too many books, magazines, and newspapers. The reason for reading the Times along with the Eternities is to keep track of how far away we still are from the archetypes of meaning—known only in Eternity—and to locate the paths that may close somewhat the gap.

REVIEW
GERMAN RENASCENCE

WHO are the Greens, and what do they stand for? According to Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak, the Greens are a new political party in West Germany who have "declared themselves an antiparty party, the political voice of the various citizens' movements."

> The Greens proposed an integrated approach to the current ecological, economic, and political crises, which they stressed are interrelated and global in nature. They spoke of the "spiritual impoverishment" of industrialized societies. They asked questions that neither of the major parties nor the government could answer and they amplified with playful humor the ironies that resulted. Next to the starched white shirts in the assemblies, the Greens looked unconventional, as their innovative proposals cut through the traditional boundaries of left and right.

This is taken from the Preface to Capra's and Spretnak's book, *Green Politics* (Dutton, $11.95) which came out last year. The Preface begins with a paragraph dramatizing the entry of the Greens on the stage of German political history:

> A ritual procession of twenty-seven people—including a nurse, a shop steward, a former general, a mason, several teachers, a veterinarian, a retired computer programmer, three engineers and a scientist, a bookseller, an architect, a journalist, a professor of agriculture, and a lawyer—walked through the streets of West Germany's capital on 22 March 1983 with a huge rubber globe and a branch of a tree that was dying from pollution in the Black Forest. They were accompanied by representatives from various citizens' movements and from other countries. They entered the lower chamber of their national assembly, the Bundestag, and took seats as the first new party to be elected in more than thirty years. The new parliamentarians insisted on being seated in between the conservative party (Christian Democrats), who sat on the right side of the chamber, and the liberal-left party (Social Democrats). They called themselves simply *die Grünen,* the Greens.

The fundamental rallying cry of the Greens is their opposition to nuclear war and nuclear armament on German soil. Except for this ground of unity, they have many differences among themselves by reason of a curious mix of conservatives and radicals, and they discuss these differences openly, not pretending to agree. Many women are among their leaders. As the authors of *Green Politics* say: "It is an ecological, holistic, and feminist movement that transcends the old political framework of left versus right."

It is committed to nonviolence at all levels. It encourages a rich cultural life that respects the pluralism within a society, and it honors the inner growth that leads to wisdom and compassion. . . . We were often told that three of the basic principles of Green politics—ecology, grass roots democracy, and nonviolence—were inspired in large part by citizens' movements in America, especially the civil rights and environmental movements. Many Greens have been influenced by the ecological wisdom of Native Americans, and they cite the examples of Thoreau and Martin Luther King in their nonviolent resistance to military escalation. The core symbol of the Greens itself, the sunflower, is not native to Germany but to North America. The Greens certainly drew on other antecedents as well, but their impressive achievement was grown from partially American seeds. The German Greens have preceded their American counterparts in transforming holistic theory into political practice, and we can learn a great deal from their successes and errors.

What sort of books helped to form the background of the Greens' common convictions? The writers list the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth,* a book by a conservative politician, Herbert Gruhl, who became a Greens founder, *A Planet Is Plundered,* Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful*, and books by Ivan Illich. Rudolph Steiner's system of organic gardening has been influential. Communists and former communists joined the Greens in small numbers being somewhat disillusioned by the events of current history. This caused some difficulty because of their dogmatic belief in Marxism. It is said that "many of them joined the Green Party, then left,

then rejoined, and that some almost had psychological breakdowns because Green political philosophy required them to change their deeply held convictions about the relationship of the individual to the state." Yet those who came in after 1979 were "most of them sincerely seeking a new politics and have since become 'transformed,' . . ." Capra and Spretnak conclude their chapter on the origins of the Greens:

> As we traveled the Green network around West Germany we became fascinated with the endless diversity of the citizens involved. "What is the glue that holds the Green party together?" we asked again and again. The most disarming reply came from Helmut Lippelt, a historian and Green state legislator in Lower Saxony: "Success!" He then became more serious and reflected, as the others had, on the primary unifying focus: "We are fighting for survival." Green politics have appealed to so many West Germans because theirs is a densely populated, heavily industrialized nation where the limits to growth are visible at every turn, where the madness of nuclear deterrence has made them prime candidates for thermonuclear holocaust, and where the level of affluence allows "big picture" reflection. They are fighting to save the natural world and humankind, not through force but by awakening the consciousness that a new orientation for society is imperative. When accused by old-paradigm politicians of being dreamers, the Greens respond: "Who is realistic about the future and who is naive?"

While we were reading this book two things seemed important to notice: first, that while the authors are indeed looking for hope and encouragement, they don't hide weaknesses or conflict; it is in short an honest book; and second, that it seems more an instruction in how the large population of an advanced, technological nation is slowly changing its mind and its basic attitudes toward life, than an account of political development, the outcome of which may be problematic. While leaders and spokesmen are of course most noticeable, the "rank and file" all participate in various ways and are determined to keep the movement decentralized so far as authority and leadership are concerned. Reading about this seems more important than the question of whether or not a lasting political body is being developed. These people are all teaching each other, and most of them are willing to learn. There seems a historical fitness in this. They are people whose parents suffered under the Nazi heel, and they have by no means forgotten the past, and have special reason to undertake historical change.

Most impressive is the critical self-consciousness of Green leaders who are also spokesmen. Rudolph Bahro told the writers:

> The Green party has developed with the pretense that it is the political arm of a movement and a new culture. But that culture hardly exists; it is in the embryonic state. There is a stream of humanistic psychology running through the society now, but this, too, is merely part of the emerging culture. The Greens in West Germany are more closely related to the new culture than are political forces in any other country, but it is to the party s disadvantage that its own development is more advanced than the countercultural network. For example, there is only a very small communitarian movement. We now must also do the sort of more fundamental work that should have preceded the party.

Petra Kelly, a young Bavarian woman who was educated in the United States, warned:

> The Green party is now at a very critical point. On one hand, it has achieved everything it hoped for in the last few years. On the other hand, it could lose it all very quickly within the next two years by literally trying to find ways to make a little influence here, a better life there, and losing sight of larger goals. As for our work in the Bundestag, if we would just successfully address four basic points—ecology, nuclear power and weapons, health, and the exploitation of women—the entire existence of the party would be justified. Getting people to reject the idea of deterrence must be a major goal for us. If the Greens end up becoming merely ecological Social Democrats, then the experiment is finished—it will have been a waste.

There is this passage by Bahro in a German leftist publication:

> I am interested in the forces for cultural revolution that lie, in no small way, in Christ, Buddha, and Lao Tzu. Forces that have made history. We need the gnostic tradition—as one aspect, not to fill the whole of life. I have long been

> drawn to such thinkers as Joachim di Fiore, Meister Eckhart, Spinoza and Pascal on account of the affinity of their mysticism to real freedom, which remains incomplete as long as it does not also include freedom of the spirit. I recently read that someone discovered a mystical experience of the young Marx, which would then be analogous to Luther's experience in the tower. I can well see this as possible.

Another Green spoke of the feeling of strength which develops in those who do peace work. Asked why this should happen, he said:

> By the doing of peace actions. By being side-by-side with others in the same situation—men, women, friends and not friends, strangers—who sit or stand or walk by your side, all moving together with the same life-protecting values and convictions. This creates a force, a peaceful power that is a spiritual power.

The politicalized leftists in the Green movement, Petra Kelly said, do not understand that "nonviolent action is an extremely subversive force." They think it's only a tactic, that it's like "begging from the state."

> To them everything is to be used. But there are some things you should never misuse—or even use. They are simply integral. Non-violence cannot be compromised.

Not all the Greens talk in this way, or even understand such language. But they choose for leaders the people who do. Whether or not it lasts, this is an extraordinary political phenomenon in the twentieth century.

COMMENTARY
THE LONG UPHILL ROAD

THE good things of this world are unadvertised. This is probably because people who have some good things and want to spread them around, if they resort to conventional sales promotion, see that the things sooner or later go bad. The "necessities" of the distribution system alter the quality of what is distributed. This is discouraging to people who think that all that the good needs to be more widely popular is the application of modern know-how. It does not occur to them that the know-how used in this way—or any way—is what pulls humans out of shape and distorts their judgment (what little they have left after years of being pulled and pushed). People say, we need a mailing list of at least a million and have to raise the money to pay for six mailings a year—either that, or nothing will happen. Little by little, they copy the techniques of the sales managers and direct mail-experts, until finally they lose what touch with truth they started out with. They still feel virtuous, but have acquired the habits of acquisitive enterprise. Eager to win battles, they have lost the war.

On the other hand, if you don't get through to people with what you have to offer, you'll be like Thoreau, who during his life accumulated numerous copies of the books he had written, but didn't sell; or like van Gogh, who sold only one painting during the fiercely productive years of his life. So, if you want to get distribution in a mass society you have to become part of the system. Years ago, the printer of MANAS, having starry-eyed tendencies, read about the motives of the Renaissance printers and decided to try to publish at least one or two very good books a year, to be able to say that he was part of the Renaissance tradition. So he put into print exquisite translations of certain classics and got a publishers' representative friend in the area to take them around to the bookstores. They sold hardly at all, and the friend explained: "Booksellers are harrassed by detail. They don't buy from a one-book-a-year publisher. They want a supplier who will give them twenty books a year, and get one invoice for the lot. Even if your book is as good as the Sermon on the Mount, if you have only one a year it won't get into the stores." He was right. The "channels" of distribution are controlled by the system and the system doesn't know the difference between the Sermon on the Mount and a lurid tale of violence with salacious trimmings.

Yet the truth seems to find ways of slowly getting around. The wise man does what he legitimately can, and . . . waits. Are the people who want to save the world from self-destruction able to apply this idea?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
NEWS FROM EGYPT AND HAWAII

GROWING WITHOUT SCHOOLING, the international organ of the home schooling movement, issued by John Holt and Donna Richoux (from 729 Boyleston St., Boston, Mass. 02116—six times a year, subscription $15.00), has many unsuspected facets. While its 28 pages (typewriter sheet size) are usually filled with reports from parents on adventures in teaching their children at home, and encounters with the law, there are also accounts of educational wonders in far-off places. For example, a reader recently turned in an article (in *Aramco World,* September, 1982) on the children who come to a weaving school in Harraniya, Egypt, started about forty years ago by a Cairo architect, Ramses Wassif, his wife, Sophie, and her father, Habin Gorgi. They had heard the saying of Oskar Kokoschka, the German Expressionist painter, that all children are born geniuses, but lose their capacity because of how they are taught. For the child, he said, "It begins with the parents and goes on with the teachers and if they don't get him, the other children will."

Gorgi agreed, believing that ancient Egypt's skill in art "still survived in today's children," and Wassif decided to test this faith by providing the young with opportunity to create in early childhood. They obtained a small piece of land beside a canal outside the village, with a domed and whitewashed structure, and invited eighteen children, the eldest 10, the youngest 8, to come and play. Each one had a small loom and received a supply of locally grown wool. The story goes on:

> At first, the only images to appear on the looms were irregular lines of color—a line of red, a line of yellow or perhaps black. One girl made two "legs" and said it was a bird. Another made four and said it was a cow. They could not, at first, make forms. Then, suddenly, the miracle happened: the children began to create—actually to create—what must be called works of art. Madame Sophie Wassif says that "one child made a complete tree with a bird alongside . . . the bird as big as the tree. This was the beginning."
>
> Because Wassif regarded adult criticism as a paralyzing intrusion on the child's imagination, no criticism was allowed. In the closely guarded environment of the studio, each child was free to work at whatever came into his or her mind—and they were thus able to develop confidence in their work, and to depend solely on their own imaginations. . . .
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> In a little more than a year, a profusion of images began to emerge from the children's looms: geese and ducks seen every morning on the near-by irrigation canal, Ahmad's water buffalo coming to drink, and Sharira's chickens. But there were also fantasies: pink sheep, purple horses, and birds that fly without opening their wings—all woven with an imaginative power and vision that only children possess.
>
> From the beginning, Wassif forbade the children to make preliminary drawings. The child had to visualize his picture and keep it in mind until the weaving was finished. As each tapestry progressed, the completed portion was rolled up so that the child was compelled to retain the purity of his conception until it was finished. Then, when the tapestry was completed and unrolled, the children exclaimed: "How did this happen?" "Did I do this?" A sense of triumph began to possess the children. . . .
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> A section of the garden surrounding the studio was used to grow dye plants . . . and over wood fires and steaming pots set up in the garden, the children were introduced to the magic of dyeing their own wools, according to the colors they needed for their next tapestry.

The children who years ago were the first to take part in this experiment "no longer think and weave the way they did then."

> They have matured into sophisticated artists, capable of subtle color and fine shading. . . . There have been a number of important exhibitions of Harraniya tapestries in Cairo Paris, Zurich, Rome, London, and Stockholm. . . . Many now grace the walls of galleries and collectors around the world.

While Ramses Wassif died in 1974, his wife Sophie carries on the work. She said:

> Only yesterday one of the new boys was sitting on the grass. He had all his colors spread out in front of him and he called out: "What will be my next

piece?" I said: "Oh, what beautiful colors you have there laid on the grass. Put these colors onto the loom." And so he began.

American parents may sigh, "Our children wouldn't react that way. They would have to concentrate and they don't like that." Well, perhaps Kokoschka was right. The young can be spoiled for acts of creation. An experiment that might be revealing would be to give first-year college students looms and tell them to go to work. Those that did would at least find out something about themselves.

Another story on the resourcefulness and creative capacities of children is borrowed from the well known medical researcher, Lewis Thomas, who wrote *The Lives of a Cell.* Thomas is intrigued by words and word origins and in this story (which appeared in the *New York Times*) he describes the capacity of children to develop language:

What I hadn't known until recently is that children not only learn language"—any old language you like—they can make language, any new language they like.

Sometime between 1880 and 19l0, Hawaiian Creole appeared as the common language of the sugar plantation workers in Hawaii—a genuine, complex speech with its own syntactical sentence structure and tight grammatical rules, containing words borrowed from the other tongues spoken by the first settlers: English, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Hawaiian.

Professor Bickerton has analyzed this new Creole and discovered that it closely resembles, in the details of its grammar, other Creole tongues in other colonial settings elsewhere in the world. It is fundamentally different from all the languages spoken in the homes of the different ethnic groups. It is a new language. When it appeared, it could not be understood or spoken by the adult generation who arrived in 1880, nor could the American overseers comprehend it.

Bickerton's great discovery is that this brand-new language never heard or spoken before, must have been made by the first generation of children—syntax, grammatical rules, sentence structure, metaphors and all. There it is: children make language. Not only are children biologically equipped to learn speech, if necessary they can manufacture it out of their collective heads, and in perfection at that.

It puts childhood in a new light, I think. . . .

We are fortunate in having a scientist like Lewis Thomas among us, writing his imaginative prose. Of men of this quality, we seem to get only about one per generation. Before Thomas there was Loren Eiseley who, whenever he raised his eyes above the anthropological bone pile—which was quite often—saw with a ranging and uninhibited imagination. Dr. Thomas now does the same for us.

John Holt, as many readers know, is not only a teacher. He also plays the cello, which he learned in mid-life, later telling how much fun it was in *Never Too Late,* a book which came out a few years ago. There's no stopping a man like that. Now he is taking up both violin and piano in the few moments he can spare from speaking, writing, and answering letters. *Growing Without Schooling* offers for sale books good for children, selected by Holt, and also low-cost musical instruments, including quarter size violins for children. In No. 39 he says:

Since *GWS* #37 [four months back], when I first wrote about the violins we are selling, I have learned, for one thing, that they are *not* made in Italy but in China. It takes a lot offhand work to make a violin (or viola, or cello), even the most inexpensive ones, and if the workers are paid Western-style wages, the instruments will be too expensive for most home schoolers to afford. One of our readers seems distressed by the idea of buying a violin made in China. As I see it, if our public servant, the President, can go to China (and enjoy himself there) we the citizens have every right to buy Chinese violins.

The other thing I have learned is that these very inexpensive instruments have an astonishingly good sound.

Well, we're not going to take up the violin or even the cello (which comes first in Holt's scheme), here at the MANAS office, but we don't ever want to be without John Holt's paper.

FRONTIERS

Some Good Machines

DURING recent years, with only casual notice in the press, the use of renewable energy sources has been rapidly increasing. While, around the world, about 18 per cent of all energy made available comes from renewable resources, the latter are now mainly hydropower and wood fuel. But fast growing sources are windpower and photovoltaic solar cells. Windpower is especially on the march in California, where the two major electric utility companies both gain substantial amounts of energy from wind farms located in areas known for high wind velocity. During 1983, Pacific Gas & Electric drew three million kilowatt hours of electricity from windmills near San Francisco (at Altamont Pass), and Southern California Edison takes power from wind machines near Banning. In consideration of the strength and promise of this development, writers in *State of the World—1984* have said:

> The economic verdict on wind farms is in. If well-designed machines are placed at windy sites, electricity can already be generated for as little as 10¢ per kilowatt-hour. In parts of California, the U.S. Midwest, northern Europe, and many developing countries where wind speeds average at least 12 miles per hour and where oil-generated electricity is common, wind farms are close to being economically viable now. . . . By the nineties wind farms are likely to have an economic advantage over coal and nuclear power plants in many parts of the world.

A pleasantly inviting source of information for householders who want to reduce their energy costs and their dependence on big public utilities is a catalog issued by the Real Goods Trading Company (308 East Perkins, Ukiah, Calif. 95482), *Alternative Energy Source Book* 1984 ($4.95). This publication lists and illustrates a wide range of energy-producing equipment which can be purchased from the Company, including wind generators, photovoltaic modules, hydroelectric systems, stand-by power systems, batteries, inverters, solar hot water heaters, cooling systems, pumps, and related devices.

Simple explanations are given, as for example:

> A photovoltaic device or silicon solar cell converts light into DC (direct current) electricity. It does not use heat from the sun as does thermal solar hot water. In fact the higher the ambient temperature, the less efficient a solar electric cell becomes. The most common commercially available solar cell is a small wafer or ribbon of semiconductor material, usually silicon. One side of the semiconductor material is positive (+) and the other side is negative (-). There is no additional material between the two sides—the key to generating electricity. When light strikes the positive side of the solar cell, the negative electrons are activated too and produce a tiny unit of electrical current.
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> When a group of solar cells are connected or the semiconductor ribbon material is applied to a predetermined surface area, a solar module is created. Quantitative electrical output is determined by the number of modules connected together. More than one module connected together is called a solar array. . . . Usually a battery storage system is necessary to act as a buffer between the solar array and your home on nights and sunless days. Although a solar array will generate some electricity on cloudy days (sometimes up to 60% of the rated output on a bright cloudy day) and even under a full moon, it varies greatly on both a daily and a seasonal basis. A battery system smooths out some of the variation.

Actually, the Real Goods catalog provides a fascinating short course in electrical engineering technology applicable to low voltage equipment and to the various energy sources one may find in a local environment. Individual systems are most effective when tailored to match such sources. The catalog is designed to help beginners and is filled with practical suggestions and valuable "do's" and "don'ts" that keep people from making mistakes.

We might note that appliances and equipment which obtain power from small systems usually run on DC (direct current), mainly because DC is required for storage of electrical energy in batteries. In fact, DC-operated motors and equipment are more efficient (usually) than those requiring AC—which may, as DC becomes more common, renew the manufacture of DC devices

for home and family farm use. The catalog has a map giving the mean solar radiation over a year in all the regions of the United States.

The only other catalog originating in California which has similar appeal is the one gotten out by Smith & Hawken, with text by Paul Hawken (author of *The Next Econ*omy), located at 25 Corte Madera, Mill Valley, Calif. 94941, offering a splendid collection of garden tools, most of them made in England by a firm that has forged them for more than two centuries. The tools are costly, but last a lifetime and more. With catalogs like these you feel in good company, since nobody is really trying to "sell" you anything. (Smith & Hawken's, much smaller, is free.)

After studying the catalogs we came across (from another source) a copy of an article Henry George wrote for the October 1868 *Overland Monthly,* "What the Railroads Will Bring Us." George's thinking about how to solve the problem of poverty with a land tax is still a frontier idea, but what he said about the transcontinental railroads has since been proved correct. Like other pioneers, his warnings were as important as his vision. In 1868, the railroads were being completed. He wrote:

> The locomotive is a great centralizer. It kills little towns and builds up great cities, and in the same way kills little businesses and builds up great ones. We have had comparatively but few rich men; no very rich ones, in the meaning "very rich" has in these times. But the process is going on. The great city that is to be will have its Astors, Vanderbilts, Stewarts and Spragues, and he who looks a few years ahead may even now read their names as he passes along Montgomery, California or Front streets. . . .
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> Let us not imagine ourselves in a fool's paradise, where the golden apples will drop into our mouths; let us not think that after the stormy seas and head gales of all the ages, our ship has at last struck the trade winds of time. The future of our State, of our nation, of our race, looks fair and bright perhaps the future looked so to the philosophers who once sat in the porches of Athens—to the unremembered men who raised the cities whose ruins lie south of us. Our modern civilization strikes broad and deep and looks high. So did the tower which men built almost to heaven.

Gandhi, born a year after George's article appeared, said in 1909, in *Hind Swaraj,* that the railroads of India enabled the British to have a hold on his country. He declared, however poetically: "Good travels at a snail's pace—it can, therefore, have little to do with the railways. Those who want to do good are not selfish, they are not in a hurry, they know that to impregnate people with good requires a long time." Gandhi was not against "progress," but he wanted it to be selective. He thought the sewing machine had a heavenly inspiration. He believed in machines and tools that free people, that do not enslave them. (Copies of *Hind Swaraj* [Indian Home Rule], 110 pages, may be obtained from Greenleaf Books, Weare, New Hampshire 03281, at $2.25. Add something for shipping.)