VOLUME XXXVII, NO. 26-35
JUNE 27, 1984

AS IT WERE

AS human beings, we live in the tension between opposites. We demand freedom, yet require order for our enterprises. We wonder, and feel awe at the object of our wondering, while perfecting crafts that reduce wonders to processes that are understood. Yet craft at its best increases our capacity for wonder. Our skills never reach finality, although they seem to have limitless possibilities. The greater our ability to understand, the more we see that paradox is the rule and stuff of human life. A tormented soul of the last century exclaimed: "How shall we be proud when we are so small? How dare we be humble when we are so great?" How indeed.

It is the nature of the mind to formulate these opposites as the defining characteristics of the human being, and then to muse about the fabric of life woven of them from day to day. We cannot live save in a continuum of harmony, yet in a world without disturbances there could be nothing for us to do. This is the inadequacy of perfection; perfection is the completion, therefore the negation, of the heroic act. Perfection puts an end to time, yet a life is always a sequence in time. We have a word to give temporary understanding to this paradox: Transcendence. The term may have the richest meaning in all the language of subjectivity. Obviously, the meaning can exist only when there is something to transcend. The universe of things makes the objectivity. Our being is both lost and found in a universe of things. We search unceasingly for a principle of order behind a field filled with paradox; we record our wonders, our theories, our suspicions and doubts, and make, perhaps, a little progress—progress in grasping the elusiveness of truth. What are the signs, the landmarks of this progress? They are the junctures in experience of the measurable with the immeasurable, the finite with the infinite. The Hegelian triad will serve here as well as any other identification: Thesis, antithesis, synthesis, over and over again. But this beautiful simplicity has in it illusions as well as truth. Conceptualist certainty goes to pieces on the hard rocks of experience.

We need to come down to earth, and a passage in Wendell Berry's *Standing by Words* is of use for this. In an essay on how distinguished poets have dealt with the human situation, Berry considers the part played by "faith," showing that it is indispensable. He says that "belief in the sufficiency of facts or in the beneficence of technological progress is just as much a 'faith' as belief in the existence or beneficence of God," and that neither of these faiths can be called empirical, although both have empirical results.

> Whether I believe that the Lord is my shepherd or that progress is my shepherd is a matter of practical consequence and makes a difference. The truth or value of such an "opinion" may not be provable, but it is not for that reason impotent or without effect. . . .
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> That is, it is possible for an idea accepted on faith to produce worldly results that are demonstrably bad or good. If some Christians make it an article of faith that it is good to kill heathens or Communists, they will sooner or later have corpses to show for it. If some Christians believe, as alleged, that God gave them the world to do with as they please, they will sooner or later have deserts and ruins in measurable proof. If some Christians really believe that pride, lust, envy, anger, covetousness, gluttony, and sloth are deadly sins, then they will make improvements in government that will sooner or later be tangible and quantifiable.
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> That it is thus possible for an article of faith to be right or wrong according' to worldly result suggests that we may be up against limits and necessities in our earthly experience as absolute as "the will of God" was ever taken to be and that "the will of God" as expressed in moral law may therefore have the same standing as the laws of gravity and thermodynamics. In Dryden's day, perhaps, it was

> still possible to think of "love one another" as a rule contingent upon faith. By our own day such evidence has accumulated as to suggest that it may be an absolute law: Love one another or die, individually and as a species.

In what sense is "law" used here? Berry will go on to explain, but we might note that a great many of the laws of nature are little more than hearsay for most people, yet they do not challenge them. The weight of scientific authority is great in our time. But where is the authority that will give moral law the same universal acceptance? That indeed is the question Berry raises. Is "love one another" an absolute law?

> If so, then the difference between that law and a physical law such as the law of gravity is only a difference in the proximity of cause to effect. If I step off the roof, I will fall *immediately*, if, in this age of nuclear weapons, toxic chemicals, rampant destruction of soil, etc., we do not love one another, we or our children will suffer for it *sometime.* It is a critical difference, for it explains why people who do not ever willingly step off a roof will fearlessly regard their neighbors as enemies or competitors or economic victims. The uncertainty of the term between offense and punishment under moral law licenses all our viciousness, foolishness, and pride. Though most of us know that it is moral law—which is finally apt to look suspiciously like natural law—that visits our sins upon our children (and other people's children), still, to the worst side of our nature, deferred justice is no justice; we will rape the land and oppress the poor, and leave starvation and bloody vengeance (we hope) to be "surprises" or "acts of God" to a later generation.
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> Because moral justice tends not to be direct or immediate obedience to moral law, whether or not we think it divine, becomes a matter of propriety: of asking who and where we think we are, and on whose behalf (if anyone's) we think we are acting. And it may be that these questions cannot be asked, much less answered, until the question of authority has been settled, there being, that is, no need to ask such questions if we think the only authority resides in ourselves or, as must follow, in each one of ourselves. If, on the other hand, we believe authority comes from outside or above ourselves, then those questions *must* be asked, and the answers will put us to some trouble.

If, then, we would test the reality of moral law, time must be set aside. There are those able to do this, individuals who understand that time alters nothing, although giving extended appearance and numerous accidental garbs. We call this talent, this heritage or gift, Promethean, meaning the ability to see the continuous nature of action, the consequences in their originating cause. It is epimethean to measure reality by looking backward, to be blind to the changes going on in the present, from moment to moment, and to suppose they are without effect. Morality, then, is nought but clear vision, seeing things as they are. But only the gods can do this, and Berry looks for a halfway house of intimations, where humans are able to see at least suggestions of reality—a place he calls propriety, a sense of how things ought to be. Propriety is insight into the fitness of things. A man who has it is suited to be a proprietor, a manager of affairs. Often it is a wordless guide, a response to symbolic indications, a reading of the signs set by circumstances or, after we have had our way for a time, the terms hidden by circumstances.

What led Prometheus to give offense to Zeus? It was the imperialism of the heart. Did Prometheus know the risks he would incur? Yes, he knew. Did he realize that humankind were not ready, as yet, for the powers he gave them? Yes, he knew.

He did not count the cost. Yet, as counters go, for things that can be counted, Prometheus is best. His faculty is one that we have well nigh lost, having adopted arrogant Zeus as our God. In an essay published with his translation of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Eric Havelock points to the modern defiance, not only of foresight, but of practical common sense. Speaking of the aftermath of the first world war, he said:

> The Treaty of Versailles may or may not have been a vindictive document. What is striking is the total ineptitude of its arrangements in relation to the goals they were supposed to achieve. To take two examples, the victors imagined that they could be

recompensed by the vanquished in money for damages inflicted, as if the nations were private persons who could reimburse each other's bank accounts. The simplest economic science could have warned them that the transfer, apart from fixed assets held in foreign countries, could be made only in exported goods, the competition of which they were unprepared to accept and the production of which in Germany would mean a level of industrial activity which they feared. Again, they imagined they could protect themselves in the future by denying the vanquished access to certain resources and raw materials hitherto available to him from outside his borders. This of course was irreconcilable with the aim of obtaining reparations, but aside from that, the protective intention was defeated by the means used, for they increased the incentive of the vanquished to manufacture substitutes within his own borders. The science necessary for this production was perfectly well known. A reverse policy, such as that applied to France, for example, in the Treaty of Vienna, which had concluded the Napoleonic wars, would have encouraged Germany to remain dependent on world supplies and thus on the good will of those who controlled them. The policy actually followed had the end-result of making her independent of that good will.

In each of these instances, the mental mechanisms on which the victors relied were limited to a short-range perspective, at the expense of the long range. . . .

The foreshortening of the practical perspective is of course an endemic error in human action. What makes it conspicuous in the present epoch is its application by skilled men in large public affairs involving national and international policy. Great Britain, having won a war by the skin of her teeth, having shaved the edge of defeat more closely than at any time in her history, within twenty years proved so inept in her public policy as to allow the same enemy to come within an ace of defeating her again. Every scientific lesson, of economic or military efficiency, learned in one desperate struggle, was laid aside until past the eleventh hour.

We add, for comparative purposes, another reading of the same period of history, this one taken from *The Pilgrimage of Western Man* by Stringfellow Barr:

In one respect especially were the two world wars alike: in their demonstration that violence, in general wars of unlimited commitment, has a propensity to produce totally unintended results, which are liable to destroy the aims and hopes of even the victorious belligerents. The powers did not go to war in 1914 to produce a Bolshevik revolution in Russia or a nationalist revolution in Turkey, to restore a Polish state or make an Irish Free State, to set up a Jewish national home in Palestine or new Arab kingdoms, or even to found a League of Nations. . . . Again, in 1939 the powers did not go to war to subject Eastern Europe to Communism, to precipitate a communist evolution in China or national independence in colonial territories, to create a new world schism between East and West. . . .

Foresight is a scientific faculty, yet in no way alien to moral law. We return to Eric Havelock's musings on the Promethean role.

We cannot confine policies and programs, even for our lives, within the framework of kinship and acquaintanceship. Yet these same policies are the road to weal or woe, and therefore the choices we make or the directives we obey, however impersonal, have moral force.

Perhaps the Gospel precept "Love your enemies" is an imaginative and violent way of presenting in equally paradoxical form, the Promethean lesson: our long-range view of the "interested parties" has to take in everyone if it is to be long range at all. Philanthropy is a social thing, geared not to those we know but to the alien and the stranger.

Why then should altruism be interpreted as a close relation of science? What right had the Greek mind to visualize the technologically inventive man as also the helper, the benefactor, the "lover"? The answer stems back to an analysis of that effort which extends mental processes at long range into the "forethought," without which science cannot long remain science. In the old Greek myth "Afterthought" was not only a fool; he became the agent of transmission of miseries to man. But "Forethought," on the contrary, is what it is because it represents the ability to visualize the end beyond the end beyond the end. It is always shaping and then reshaping the means to embrace an objective which becomes wider and wider.

What are we attempting here? We are looking for keys to the meaning of propriety in Berry's sense. Propriety takes the place of the misleading idea that in a world which brings an infinitude of factors to bear on our decisions, it is

possible to have a "sure thing." The human condition is not to have a sure thing. Propriety is a guide in the face of uncertainty. It is concerned with what is right, win or lose. The followers of Zeus fear losing above all else. Havelock continues:

> Short-range effort fastens on the thing nearest to one's nose; this thing becomes one's own utility of the immediate moment, something private to oneself. As the time range extends, so does the orbit of persons and interests. The mind enters into a calculation. What will this momentary utility mean to my further utility, the day after tomorrow? Then if necessary the first utility is remodeled to suit the second, but the second meanwhile is remodeled to suit a third, till the process is pushed to that point where "utility" takes on the meaning of a common denominator between "myself" and an expanding range of other men's interests. This common denominator automatically involves a harmonization of interests, because the task of predicting what "I" will need, at a further and further stage of foresight, can be carried out only by trying to imagine a hundred other relationships in which "I" will be involved and in predicting a thousand actions of others on which "my" needs in turn will depend. The perspective extends, if pushed far enough in time length, to the point where it takes in city and state and family of states, and the estate of the unborn.
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> The conclusion would seem to be that if man cares to prethink far enough, his forethought becomes increasingly moral and philanthropic in its direction. Man cannot prethink evil, but only good. . . .
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> The common sense of modern man is being compelled to recognize that the most important moral acts, those which control the issues of happiness and security, and have power by their effects to destroy or preserve, are acts transacted in groups, by group decision, by impersonal command and obedience. If modern man clings at the same time to the illusion that the precious healing balm of altruism is by definition confined to intimate relationships, he is forced to dismiss it as an emotional luxury, not adapted to the needs of policy. That religious prejudice, which separates the source of moral purpose from the intellect, cripples the range of moral purpose beyond remedy. The formula symbolized in the person of Prometheus restores hope of effective public action, by making moral purpose depend not on religious intuition, but on a certain directive training of the mind.

And yet, we know well enough that the struggle of the intellect in behalf of strengthening the sense of propriety begins with the admonition of religious intuition. Feelings of what is good and right come over us as a polarizing breeze. Promethean thinking, even the kind of "calculation" proposed by Eric Havelock, keeps us from setting those feelings aside. Calculation does have at least one moral virtue: it may be used to prevent our becoming lost in feeling; it gives altruism hierarchical structure; it reveals the how of being of use. It gives plot to the play, scenery to the drama, fitness to decision.

The instruction of both religion and science is that there is always hazard in human life. Those who promise to remove it are the world's greatest deceivers. Prometheus, of course, being a god, accepted hazard as his lot. His tenure as a shackled prisoner on Mount Caucasus was to be, he said, ten thousand years, and the threats of Zeus could not make him change his mind. Yet there have been children of Prometheus among men. There are those who cannot be made to remain silent, others who refuse to speak. A hard propriety, this. Yet were it not for humans such as these, no culture would exist where the right of a man to speak his mind is cherished and protected. We have a great and common debt to those of the heroic breed.

Why are heroes so few? The familiar arrangements for the production of humans afford no explanation of the wide variety of moral qualities within a single family. Yet in every age worthy of being called an age, a few heroes appear. Maslow calls them the gold medalists, the individuals we should study in order to learn what we—as humans—are capable of. And Walt Whitman hailed them (in "To Him Who Was Crucified"):

> That we all labor together, transmitting the same
> charge and succession;
> We few, equals, indifferent of lands, indifferent
> of times;
> We, enclosers of all continents, all castes—allowers
> of all theologies.

Compassionaters, perceivers, rapport of men,
We walk silent among disputes and assertions, but reject
not the disputers, nor anything that is asserted;
We hear the bawling and the din—we are reached at by
divisions, jealousies, recriminations on every side,
They close peremptorily upon us, to surround us,
my comrade,
Yet we walk upheld, free, the whole earth over, journeying
up and down, till we make our ineffaceable mark
upon time and the diverse eras,
Till we saturate time and eras, that the men and women
of races ages to come, may prove brethren and
lovers as we are.

Explanation? No one has suggested a better than the thoroughly liberated Christian bishop of the fifth century, Synesius, who said:

> For there is indeed in the terrestrial abode the sacred tribe of heroes, who pay attention to mankind, and who are able to give them assistance even in the smallest concerns.
>
> This heroic tribe is, as it were, a colony from the gods established here in order that this terrene abode may not be left destitute of a better nature.

REVIEW
LEAVEN FROM ABROAD

THE population of the United States has been increased by several waves of migration—freedom-loving Germans came after the failure of the Revolution of 1848, and a great many Irish after the potato famine. Today Los Angeles is as much a "melting-pot" as New York ever was, having become the home of millions of Mexicans, thousands of Koreans and Japanese, in addition to the inhabitants of a large Chinatown. It is easy enough to describe these migrations in terms of numbers, but this leaves their cultural influence untouched. A book which brings such omissions home is Anthony Heilbut's *Exiled in Paradise* (Viking, 1981), providing five hundred pages about "German refugee artists and intellectuals in America from the 1930's to the present." While many of the names in the book are familiar, the general reader is likely to know little or nothing of the ordeals which attended the leaving of their native land. This was for us a quiet, almost unnoticed exodus; for them, in some cases, an experience which shattered their lives. Yet they brought with them the riches of European culture.

As one German scholar, Werner Jaeger, put it (as quoted by a student), to learn what classical scholarship is like in a country where classical humanism does not exist, "one must come to America." Many of the European intellectuals who came here during the thirties and forties had this classical background and provided a quality in education that has been widely appreciated. They also turned up in Hollywood—especially those who had had something to do in the theater in Germany—and gave dramatic intensity to the movies, while becoming depressed at how little influence they could exert.

In his Preface Mr. Heilbut summarizes:

> Everything about the German-speaking refugees from Hitler who settled here between 1933 and 1941 was special, and much of it was anomalous. The group was largely though not exclusively, Jewish, but they had been assimilated at home to such a degree that they considered themselves exempt from the violence that had provoked earlier diasporas. The artists and radicals among them saw themselves as vanguardists, anticipating a future that would transcend the cultural and political limits of the present, while the more typical members of the bourgeoisie were quite content to perform the functional roles of doctor and lawyer, merchant and scholar, that were required by society as currently constituted, What linked vanguardist and bourgeois was a commitment to service. Perhaps never before had any people, much less one so prominently situated and so apparently irreplaceable, been so despoiled of its confidence. Hitler reveled in the paradoxes of this destruction; he rewarded the exponents of the word with book burning and punished those who had only a historical identity by attempting to boot them out of history.

He could not, of course, do this. Their vitality and intelligence prevented, but he was able to banish them from Germany.

> They came to America knowing more about this country than other émigré groups had. From sources as varied as children's books, silent films, and political propaganda they had acquired a sense of the United States as being, alternately, a visionary landscape and a technological nightmare, populated by cowboys and Indians, gangsters and beauty queens. Uncertain about the prospects for high art in so wild a territory, they also arrived with a genuine respect for American movies and jazz. Knowing so much already—no matter how partial or artificial the knowledge—they became in short order professional interpreters of the American temperament. Bertolt Brecht once observed that émigré filmmakers—although the demand was not limited to Hollywood—were expected to decipher the Americans' hidden needs and discover for them a means of fulfilling them. . . . Within a few years, while their English was still threadbare, the émigrés had achieved remarkable success. Yet, after the political shocks of their emigration, they could not trust any form of sanctuary. True, America seemed to require their services, but a few years earlier Germany had needed them too. . . . Their role was peculiar, in an odd way peripheral. A bit like the old court Jews, they exerted great authority in some areas, but in other places they remained vulnerable: their ultimate vision was composed of alarm and betrayal, in both Europe and America.

As the reader no doubt sees, Anthony Heilbut is a perceptive writer. The foregoing seems an especially accurate characterization of his subjects, yet there are times when he seems to forget that the émigrés, for all their talent and sophistication, are nonetheless imperfect humans, men and women who have suffered much, been torn from their natural surroundings and in the land which accepted, and sometimes welcomed them, exposed to new pressures of an unpleasant and novel sort. Yet even those who receive the author's occasional barbs usually obtain a just appraisal, as in the case of Hannah Arendt, who may be taken as an ideal representative of the émigrés at their best:

> Hannah Arendt insisted upon remaining her own person. If she lost the conservatives or the radicals along the way, well then, she had no fear of traveling by herself. . . . Meanwhile, a new audience of young radicals asked her to define her special influence. But she shared her generation's perception: "the idolization of genius" was a degradation of the human person, a concept that smacked of what Marxists called reification, turning people into commodities. Influence, she told a young German, was not important: that was a male question. And she told a scholarly conference devoted to her work that it would be impossible to impose her positions on other people, since "these are adults." She was a grown-up woman, and these problems did not concern her.
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> She closed the conference with a final, implicit plea that she not be turned into some intellectual guru. "I would like to say that everything I did and everything I wrote—all that is tentative." A questioner asked her to locate herself in the political spectrum. She replied, "So you ask me where I am. I am nowhere. I am really not in the mainstream of present or any other political thought. But not because I want to be so original—it so happens that I somehow don't fit."
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> The "somehow" appears with the suddenness of an explanatory insight; perhaps the prophet of public life was unsuited to its present form: she herself had always claimed that she thought and wrote merely to understand, not to act upon a public world. Yet this same public world had acted upon her, whether by forcing her into exile or later by freeing her to talk more openly with the years, and to a larger audience. "I somehow don't fit": these words spoke for a generation of émigrés who found themselves, like Arendt, no longer rooted in any academic discipline or national culture.

Yet there is a sense in which Hannah Arendt fitted remarkably well. Her students loved her. They loved her for both her acute intelligence and her warm generosity, her personal friendliness and her impersonal mind. Two writers, contributors to Joseph Epstein's *Masters—Portraits of Great Teachers*, say:

> Taking Cicero's saying, "I prefer before heaven to go astray with Plato rather than hold the true views of his opponents," she showed how, from a worldly point of view, a genuine sense of humanity might take precedence over even the love of truth. A cultivated mind, Arendt explained—developing Cicero's thought—eschews absolutes and extremes that endanger prudent judgment and the limited horizons men need in order to be at home in the world. In her discussion, she emphasized Cicero's essential sanity and common sense; at the same time, however, she also made us aware of the incompleteness of this view.

There were German intellectuals who "didn't escape," yet came to this country in the minds of those who did. One of these is Walter Benjamin, who died by his own hand in 1940 because he could not get out of France—a writer now increasingly known in America, largely because of Hannah Arendt's efforts. She edited a book of his essays, *Illuminations*, in which everything is good, but his discussion of the task of translation almost unique in excellence. One could say, too, that Simone Weil, while amply translated and published in this country, also came in the minds of other émigrés (she came in person briefly, with her family, but did not stay, returning to England where she soon died). In his *Nobel Lecture* (1981) Czeslaw Milosz, a Polish émigré, having said that he was profoundly indebted to Simone Weil, added at the end: "I feel we should publicly confess our attachment to certain names because in that way we define our position more forcefully than by pronouncing the names of those to whom we would like to address a violent no."

Something should be said of Heilbut's account of émigrés in Hollywood, of whom there were many, in general doing more for Hollywood than Hollywood did for them. The author says:

> Whether it was Billy Wilder's conception of the wise guy, Fritz Lang's of the vigilante, or Douglas Sierk's of the housewife, what the world audience assumed to be quintessentially American types were really the creations of émigrés far from home. The paradox of their American achievement was that, more often than not, it repudiated the larger, less parochial vision of their youth. . . . So many Americans—actors, writers, technicians—are involved in movie production that it is not always easy to extract from it a European sensibility. Yet every émigré director was the product of principles and procedures acquired in Europe. . . . The important fact of their careers was that Hitler had kicked them halfway across the world, from Unter den Linden to Hollywood Boulevard. Their move had been political, and the deepest message of their careers was likewise political. For these men, with their highly cultivated historical sense, knew that their work involved a brand new nexus of art and commerce, just as the aesthetic means at their disposal made possible brand-new forms of artistic production or political manipulation.

A not unworthy concluding note may be that it was Otto Preminger, émigré director, who broke the Hollywood blacklist in 1959 by hiring the black-listed writer, Dalton Trumbo, to write *Exodus.*

COMMENTARY
NEXT ISSUE—SEPTEMBER 5

THE quotations from Eric Havelock and Stringfellow Barr on page 2 make an occasion for mentioning once again Barbara Tuchman's most recent book, *The March of Folly*. What she shows, more than anything else, is the almost unchallengeable authority of big institutions. The leaders of great nations have practically no provocation or incentive to think because past decisions are so strongly entrenched m the complex layers of bureaucracy—in people who are not *supposed* to think, but only to carry out policy handed down to them—that the leaders themselves can hardly imagine attempting to depart from familiar patterns of action. The politician, moreover, lives in an atmosphere generated by certainty. Has ever anyone been elected to office on a platform of admitted uncertainty?

This compulsion is spelled out in detail in Mrs. Tuchman's account of how the United States became involved in Vietnam. The egotism and vanity of leaders are also important factors in determining policy, which usually means, in the case of their mistakes, doing what is wrong and won't work over and over again, with increasing intensity. Even when the evidence of repeated failure comes in—undeniable to anyone in his right mind—the leaders can't see it, won't hear it, because they have decided that they *must* be right. They do all they can to create the public opinion which will endorse their decisions, and if the public finally turns against them, they only feel "betrayed," not wrong.

Everyone, of course, makes mistakes, but when institutions get too large, individual intelligence, which can guard against mistakes, is rendered culturally impotent—*culturally*, because it remains individual: organizations, which are built on habit, cannot use individual intelligence and turn it into a collective or group attitude.

This is the doom of bigness; it did in the dinosaurs, also all the great empires of the past; and it will push on to ruin the empires of the present—already coming apart—unless people see their way to forming smaller, manageable, social units according to the bioregional division of the earth.

The next issue of MANAS will be dated September 5.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

GOOD NEWS FROM KENTUCKY—AND KANSAS

THERE are various complimentary things that might be said about the state of Kentucky. One of them is that Wendell Berry chooses to live there and write poetry about his neighbors. Another compliment is paid by a lady, a mother, who wrote to *Growing Without Schooling* No. 36 (John Holt's paper) to describe her experience after deciding to teach her children at home. She said:

> . . . I had been told that the process of becoming a home school might take some time and trouble so I immediately sent for your back issues (to glean all pertinent information) and called Mr. Pat West, Jr., the Superintendent of Non-Public Schools in Frankfort. Within a few days, I was shocked to receive all of the necessary information and an application form! . . . I immediately called the local health department and the district fire marshal's office to request that they inspect our designated school area. Although I had been told that the officials who would be certifying (or Lord forbid, not certifying) our school were very hard to please and downright rude, I was thoroughly impressed with the courteous, helpful and supportive response from both offices. . . . By the end of July, I had received a 100% rating from the health department and the approval *and commendation* for cooperation from the Fire Marshal!
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> By the second week in August, our school had become approved by the State Department of Education, and my only other obligation was to notify the County Superintendent of Schools of the children's names and addresses by October 1, which I did.
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> Our school was sent data bank forms (which are sent out to all Kentucky schools) inquiring about our curriculum, schedule, philosophy, materials, etc., which I had been told by another homeschool family to expect. They had told me that I only needed to write N/A across the forms and return them or even throw them away! As I read through the forms, however, I realized that it might be helpful to the State Board of Education if I took the time to reply and write down the philosophy behind our family's decision to learn at home. . . . As I counted the number of books in our home and listed all the wonderful things we have been learning together, I became more and more aware of how really fine our program is and how committed we all are to our home school. I felt very proud of my children as I reviewed the many accomplishments they have made already. For example, the 7-year-old has taught himself to read with confidence, the children save their own money to help support their new Mexican foster-brother, with whom they correspond and have decided to learn Spanish for, the children help teach art classes at a local nursing home and have "adopted" a wonderful gentleman to be their "grandfather"; we have taught ourselves the rudiments of Cuisinaire rods, and are learning Latin; the children are carefully raising gerbils and keeping records of the successive generations, eating habits, and all pertinent information that they can gather to go into a book they hope to publish . . . and on and on! . . .
>
> My proudest moment came when I received a phone call from Mr. West only a few days after I had returned the data forms. He was kind enough to call me personally to commend our family on the fine program we had developed and to offer encouragement, praise, and any help we might need in the future. . . .

Whatever the element of maternal pride and joy in this report, the friendliness and support of the Kentucky educational authorities stand undiminished.

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For introduction to the educational opportunities at the Land Institute at Salina, Kansas, we take the last paragraph of a statement by Wes Jackson, founder of the Institute, made at a recent conference on the culture of farming.

> What I am about to say in conclusion may appear that I am stretching things a bit. But it does seem that everything we do either increases the probability of a nuclear holocaust or decreases it. A land whose soils have been saved from erosion and salt, a land whose agriculture is not fossil-fuel dependent or in need of nuclear power, is a land which will not need to allocate so many of its financial resources toward insuring that the Persian Gulf stays open. And though I deeply oppose nuclear power, in this respect oil *is* more dangerous than a

> nuclear power plant and from a nuclear point of view. Part of the conflict between nations boils down to being a carbon war. The most important carbon is soil carbon. We lost a third of this carbon with the opening up of the continent, and until 1960, before fossil fuel burning greatly accelerated, half the carbon which was put into the atmosphere by the U.S. came from the soils and half from fossil fuel burning. On a global scale, agriculture has contributed more carbon to the atmosphere than the industrial world. The main pioneers at work for a peaceable world, therefore, are those working for a sustainable sunshine agriculture.

What is the Land Institute? It is a place in Kansas (Route 3, Salina, Kans. 67401) where Jackson, his staff, and students are learning sustainable agriculture from nature—from the ecological processes that have been going on for untold millennia. He says:

> For us at the Land Institute, this philosophy means that we feature perennials in polycultures as we work with ten students at a time for a 43-week period from mid-February to mid-December. We use the prairie as an analogy. About half our time is devoted to reading, thinking, and discussing the social, political, economic and religious implications of running agriculture and culture on sunlight. We have wind machines, solar collectors, a large garden and the like, but all our research is in the area of sustainable agriculture.

The ten students—who are really apprentices in research farming—each receive a stipend of $80 a week for the 43 weeks, plus "full tuition scholarships for the spring, summer, and fall sessions." They study in the morning and work on the place during the afternoon. They help maintain the plant and equipment, carry out experiments, and sometimes design experiments. Emphasis is on topics in plant ecology and genetics in relation to sustainable agriculture. Assignments "explore the ethics and values which can be the underpinning of a sustainable society and the social and political structures which will enable such a society to evolve." During the summer students go on field trips and attend seminars.

The Land Institute is a non-profit educational research organization established in 1976 along the Smoky Hill River southeast of Salina, Kahsas. It is devoted to search for sustainable alternatives in agriculture, energy, shelter, and waste management. The work began on 28 acres, and the Institute now owns an adjacent 160 acres. Students work in a building containing a classroom/library, office, kitchen, shop and saw shed, lab and solar greenhouse. Solar collectors provide space heat and hot water, and two wind machines generate electricity for the building. A large barn contains seed threshing and cleaning equipment, a seed storage room, and field equipment. The research program is directed toward answering four questions:

> (1) Can perennialism and high seed yield go together?
>
> (2) Can a perennial polyculture have an economic advantage over a perennial monoculture?
>
> (3) Can an herbaceous perennial seed-producing polyculture capture and fix sufficient quantities of nitrogren to support itself?
>
> (4) Can such an ecosystem avoid epidemics of insects and pathogens?

Applicants for agricultural internships at the Land Institute are invited to write, giving past academic and job experience, any involvement in agricultural, environmental, or energy issues, and major interests and goals. They are asked to tell why they want to study at the Land Institute instead of a university and to describe their reading that relates to sustainable agriculture. Applicants should be college graduates or upper level undergraduates. In addition:

> Good health and stamina are important. In selecting interns we shall give special consideration to those individuals who intend to complete the Ph.D. and later develop a teaching and research program in the area of sustainable agriculture.

FRONTIERS

A Pattern Found on Earth

IN an article in *Esquire* for last December, George Leonard, an effective contemporary journalist, remarks that a full-scale biography of Abraham Maslow remains to be written. The story of, the meaning of, Maslow's life is embedded in his work. His dimensions are hidden—or manifest—in the gradual realization of a vision that began to take shape in the 1930s while he was working at Columbia University as the research assistant of Edward Thorndike. He gave expression to that vision in 1970, two weeks before he died (in California, at sixty-two), in a note on a book he had just begun to write:

> If I had to condense this whole book into a single sentence, I think I could come close to the essence of it by saying that it spells out the consequences of the discovery that man has a higher nature and that this is part of his essence Or, more simply, human beings can be wonderful out of their own human and biological nature. We need not take refuge in supernatural gods to explain our saints and sages and heroes and statesmen, as if to explain our disbelief that mere unaided human beings could be that good or wise.

Yet he had already "spelled out" those consequences in papers and books published over the years. The stuff of his work is summarized by Leonard:

> Maslow confronts us with paradoxes. He started out as a behaviorist, a skilled experimenter, and then went on to demonstrate the crippling limitations of just that kind of psychology in the study of human affairs. He co-authored a textbook on abnormal psychology, a classic in its field, and then went on to investigate, not the pathological, but the exceptionally healthy person. Considering himself a Freudian, he went on to take Freudian psychology out of the basement of warring drives and inevitable frustration, up into spacious, previously unexplored storeys of the human personality, where entirely different, non-Freudian rules seemed to prevail.

In the future historians will say of Maslow that he is the man who turned psychology around, making it pro instead of anti human. His career, from beginning to end, made the frontier of this great transition or transformation.

Abraham H. Maslow was born in 1908 in a Jewish slum in Brooklyn. His father, an emigrant from Kiev, wanted him to be a lawyer, but legal studies bored him and he chose to study psychology at the University of Wisconsin. We may say now that Psychology needed a man like him, with his qualifications. In a Brooklyn high school—

> He became a member of the chess team and of the honor society. . . . He edited the Latin magazine and the physics magazine, for which, in 1923, at the age of fifteen, he wrote an article predicting atom-powered ships and submarines. In terms of sheer, raw intelligence, Maslow was a true prodigy Tested years later by Thorndike, he registered an IQ of 195, the second highest Thorndike ever encountered.

Two of his teachers a few years later—Ruth Benedict the anthropolgist and Max Wertheimer, founder of Gestalt psychology—set him on fire.

> Not only were they giants in their fields, but they were also, to put it simply, wonderful human beings. Nothing he had learned in psychology equipped him to understand them. How could they be what they so clearly were in a world of savage, repressed Freudian drives and Nazi horrors? Who was the real human-species type, Hitler or Benedict and Wertheimer?

We might say that anyone who takes such contrasts seriously and insists on understanding them constitutes a frontier in the progress of mankind. Leonard continues:

> The direction of his exploration was set by a flash of insight that came to him while he was musing over his notes on Ruth Benedict and Max Wertheimer, trying to puzzle out the pattern that made these two people so very different from the neurotic, driven people who are usually the subject of psychological study. As he wrote years later, "I realized in one wonderful moment that their two patterns could be generalized. I was talking about a kind of person, not about two noncomparable individuals. There was a wonderful excitement in that. I tried to see whether this pattern could be found elsewhere, and I did find it elsewhere, in one person after another."

At about that time, Leonard says, he watched a parade of "young American servicemen on their way to combat duty."

> And he was overcome by the evils of war, the needless suffering and death, the tragic waste of human potential. He began weeping openly. Against the backdrop of those times, the conventional, step-by-step psychology he had been doing was entirely inadequate. He knew he would have to change his life and career.

This, too, was the making of a frontier. Lots of people watch parades. For how many does the experience become a lever which changes a life? The Maslovian psychology may help us a bit in understanding why that experience had so extraordinary an effect on him, but does not tell us why he was that sort of human—one who responds with his heart and acts on his feeling. Yet it is possible to describe such individuals, which is what Maslow did, in detail which became the structure of psychological theory. Leonard puts it well:

> Like many historic breakthroughs, this one, in retrospect, seems obvious, so simple a child might have hit upon it: Up until that time, the field of psychology had by and large concentrated on mental illness, neglecting or entirely ignoring psychological *health.* Symptoms had been relentlessly pursued, abnormalities endlessly analyzed. But the normal personality continued to be viewed primarily as a vague, gray area of little interest or concern. And *positive* psychological health was terra incognita. . . .
>
> The concept of self-actualization crystallized during Maslow's moment of insight about Ruth Benedict and Max Wertheimer, but it evolved and developed through years of studying exceptionally healthy and successful individuals. Self-actualization is, in short, the tendency of every human being—once the basic deficiency needs are adequately fulfilled—to *make real* his or her full potential, to become everything he or she can be. . . . For Maslow, the self-actualizing person is not a normal person with something added, but a normal person with nothing taken away. . . .
>
> One of the most striking characteristics of these people is that they are strongly focused on problems *outside* of themselves. They generally have a mission in life; they delight in bringing about justice, stopping cruelty and exploitation, fighting lies and untruth.

What to read by Maslow? *Toward A Psychology of Being* would make a good beginning. Then try *Farther Reaches of Human Nature.* We have no further suggestions. All his other books are good.