VOLUME XXXVI, NO. 23
JUNE 8, 1983

THE SAVING GRACE

THE love of truth is a primary inspiration in most nonphysical human activity, while the illusion of having it is behind the worst man-made disasters that overtake mankind. As an object, the truth represents *meaning,* and the idea of meaning determines everything else we think and do. Our sense of meaning is what we act upon, except for actions constrained by instinct, and these, we might say, result from the body's sense of meaning.

Is, then, the truth we seek many, or is it one? Whichever it is, one thing is plain: We *want* it to be one. An "instinct" of the mind looks for simple explanations. When we find them, we feel secure, expressing our satisfaction by claiming we have discovered "laws." If experience shows a law to have exceptions, we do not abandon it, but make the formulation of the law more comprehensive, to include the exceptions. We call this scientific progress. Conditions or events which we are unable to order and define in terms of law are attributed to chance, but these remain a challenge to scientific minds whose goal is to bring all that happens under the rule of law—as few laws as possible. The rise of science grew out of recognition that the simple explanation offered by religion was not orderly, could not be understood as having *meaning.* Atheists pointed out that the rule of God (enacted by his priests) was not just; philosophers declared that it was impossible for God to be just; and scientists found religion to be irrational, declaring the will of God to be the asylum of ignorance.

With the verdict of the eighteenth-century revolution that we had been lied to by both king and priest, the French cut off their king's head and abandoned the Christian calendar, while the Americans, as determined as the French but less vengeful, threw out the king's troops and made sure by law that no religious group could ever gain overt political authority. It is notable that, as Harry Elmer Barnes remarked in *History and Social Intelligence* (1926), "the majority of distinguished Americans in the generation of the Fathers were not even professing Christians." Their views are said to be like the opinions of the well known free-thinker of a century later, Robert G. Ingersoll.

Are we then free from the spurious simplicities of self-deception? Not yet. The pain of not knowing the answers to basic questions is too difficult for most of us to bear, and relying on some kind of "authority" is the only available remedy. The common condition is well described by Louis J. Halle in *The Ideological Imagination* (Quadrangle, 1972), a book concerned with the far-reaching consequences of ideological belief. He says:

> We have to recognize that, on virtually any point at all, the most knowledgeable of us may be wrong. Here, however, we confront a psychological impulse common to us all. We are unwilling to face the fact of the unknown because it fills us with fear or imposes on us the strain of perplexing uncertainty. Therefore, although an individual may recognize his own ignorance, he is comforted by the assumption that there are others who know what he does not, just as a small child is comforted by the assumption that there is nothing his parents do not know. Perhaps the individual, of himself, does not know why he is on earth and what the purpose of existence is, but he can go to a priest who can tell him. Although he, of himself, does not know the reason for a pain in his body, he has access to a doctor who does know about such things. The reason for the aurora borealis may be a mystery to him personally, but it does not disturb him as long as he has no doubt that there are men of science who understand it.
>
> It is as if all mankind were engaged in a conspiracy to cover up the fact of its ignorance. For the doctor does not let his patient see how little he actually does know, the priest does not turn a member of his flock away with the answer that he has no answer, the

> professor does not reject the authority that those who sit at his feet attribute to him, a prophet like Karl Marx does not announce that he may be wrong about the future, and the President of the United States does not tell the American people that he is at a loss to know how to deal with the problems that confront the nation. It is part of the tragedy of human kind that this pretense must be maintained over the whole wide scene of human concerns.

The pretense, it seems clear—which in time becomes stubborn belief—is a substitute for the certainty we are unable to acquire for ourselves. Living without certainty calls for a kind of nerve that is in short supply. Within our historical period, while there have doubtless been others, only Socrates has attained to distinctive fame for having it. Of him Prof. Halle says:

> The true and almost unique greatness of Socrates lay in his recognition of his own and all men's ignorance. It is a depressing thought that not only was his agnosticism punished by his death twenty-four centuries ago, but the basic fact of our ignorance, and our consequent dependence on mythology has continued to be covered up ever since.

The Ideological Imagination is a study of the various forms of that covering up. A beginning in this exposé was made by Herbert Spencer in 1884, with publication of *The Man versus the State*, in which he said:

> The great political superstition of the past was the divine right of kings. The great political superstition of the present is the divine right of parliaments. The oil of anointing seems unawares to have dripped from the head of the one on to the heads of the many, and given sacredness to them also and to their decrees.

Prof. Halle broadens the base of the analysis. He begins with a definition:

> The word "ideology" has a wide range of meanings that, like all words denoting abstractions, has changed over generations. I do not use it here in its widest sense, to denote any complex of ideas whatever. For one thing, I confine it to bodies of doctrine that present themselves as affording systems of belief so complete that whole populations may live by them alone, that are made known and interpreted by leaders ostensibly possessed of special genius or by organized elites not unlike priesthoods, that claim exclusive authority as representing something like revealed truth, and that consequently require the suppression of whatever does not conform. Perhaps I should put it that I am concerned here only with systems of belief that are implicitly totalitarian.
>
> It will be seen that "ideology," so defined, not only excludes liberal democracy but is its opposite. For liberal democracy is based on the assumption that none of us mortals have a privileged knowledge of truth, that equally honest and intelligent men will disagree in their identification of it. Therefore, instead of undertaking to abolish diversity it seeks to accommodate it, providing an open marketplace in which men of varying beliefs may compete in offering their intellectual wares to the public. Such a marketplace, in order to accommodate diversity, requires freedom of speech and mutual tolerance. . . . To be precise, I am concerned with the role of ideology in a world, inaugurated by the French Revolution, in which political sovereignty is attributed to the people rather than to individual rulers. If I define democracy as the attribution of sovereignty to the people, then there is a close historical association between the development of democracy and the development of ideology. Where the political activity of whole populations has to be taken into account, ideology provides the basis of a common mind, at the same time that it provides, as well, a means by which one or a few men can manipulate multitudes. It serves a purpose that would not have been relevant to the earlier societies in which sovereignty was vested in individual rulers while the populations ruled by them remained politically inert and obedient.

Later in his book Prof. Halle says:

> The foundations of every ideology are false, in the sense that every ideology bases itself on some vision of the world that does not correspond to existential reality. The original Marxism, as we have seen, was as completely defeated as the fascism of Mussolini and Hitler. Still, however, it continued to provide the regimes that called themselves Marxists with a legitimacy that the fascist regimes could not summon to their aid. This is one of the paradoxes of the modern world.
>
> It is not easy to define what gives a body of doctrine power over the minds of men in the mass. Especially for those who are unlearned and have intellectual pretensions, a vague immensity of conception, a high level of abstraction, and obscurity of language seem to be essential. The clarity, the

> specificity, and the unequivocal language found in the writings of a Hobbes or a de Tocqueville can never move the world like the abstractions and obscurities of a Hegel, which permit a range of application and interpretation so wide that they can never be proved wrong. Hobbes required no exegesis, but the writers who have swayed the people have required whole libraries of it. Without the mystery that a Delphic ambiguity imparts, the limited minds of us poor mortals, forever seeking magic, cannot be satisfied. The unreadability of Marxist literature in general has contributed to its sway.

Here we begin to get a glimmering of how ideology exerts its power. In ancient societies, myth was the source of all conceptions of meaning. As Robert Redfield has pointed out (in *The Primitive World and its Transformations*, 1953), the world of ancient peoples was a world of moral significance in which all were participants. Nature, he said, "is part of the same moral system in which man and the affairs between men also find themselves, man's actions with regard to nature are limited by notions of inherent, not expediential, rightness." But since science accomplished its great transformation of the human mind, "Man comes out from the unity of the universe within which he is oriented now as something separate from nature and comes to confront nature as something with physical qualities only, upon which he may work his will." But though he "comes out," he brings with him his mythic consciousness, which has been subordinated only superficially. And as he is increasingly separated from nature by technological processes and bureaucratic arrangements, his old habits of thinking reassert themselves. In his *Essay on Man*, Ernst Cassirer gave an account of this transition:

> Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man's symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with things themselves man is in a sense conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols or 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.

In modern times, however, mythic patterns are no longer derived from archaic religious tradition, interwoven with the world of nature, but come from political conventions devised by such men as Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Lenin. Their ambiguities give play to the imagination, but not in the same way as the ambiguities of myth, which dissolve in awesome mystery. Great truths may be embedded in myths, but great tyrannies are justified by the transfer of mythic emotion to ideological claims and programs. Plato apparently understood this well. Writing in the *Partisan Review* for September-October, 1954, V.E. Walter said:

> Plato, one of the greatest mythmakers, became the professed enemy of myth in the political realm. Plato's solution to the problem of justice should not be confused with his formulation of the question. The Republic itself was intensely conservative, but his dialectics were revolutionary. He demanded that the state be, first of all, *understood*, and developed a method to search systematically for the unifying principles. Then, he declared, a choice must be made between the ethical and the mythical conception of the state. The legal state, the state of justice, excludes mythological construction. . . . to construct moral and political life on tradition, Plato argued, meant building on shifting sands. In the *Phœdrus* he told us that the man who is impelled by tradition, proceeding from habit and routine, is blind.

Supposedly rational constructions, in short, should never invoke mythic inspiration, but this is what ideologies invariably do. Prof. Halle describes the deliberate exploitation of myth:

> It is surely no accident that the extreme of fascism was realized in the two countries most notable for their contributions to grand opera. Mussolini, assuming the part of "II Duce," had himself outfitted with special costumes. On the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia, before the packed square, he lifted his voice in crescendo to a pitch of passion barely controlled, reaching out his right arm above the audience as if the shaking fist held thunderbolts. At last, when his voice fell, when his two hands came to rest on his hips, the applause of

the audience, the stamping of feet, and the cries of "Bravo!" rose into the Roman skies. . . .

It follows that to understand the Nazi movement, in turn, one should go to *Der Ring der Nibelungen* in preference to the writings of any philosopher. German opera is greater in scale and weight than Italian, requiring a bigger stage. On the stage that the Nazis provided, the ocean of storm troopers extended to the horizon, while the tall, blood-red pennons with their swastikas, rank on rank, stood above it like the multitudinous sails of Viking fleets awaiting the order to move forward. Never had choruses so large been assembled on a stage so extensive. When they shouted their pagan cries in unison it was like the earth, itself, speaking. And then, just when the suspense threatened to become too great, the leader who had been invoked by the ritualistic repetition of his name from so many throats appeared at the center of the scene, the focal point of myriad arms raised like bayonets in salute. Out of the hush that followed spoke the voice of the Fuhrer, proclaiming the world-historical mission of a new master race.

Turning to the present, Prof. Halle says:

In the most developed countries today, participation in political debate and struggle is no longer confined to a minority. Newspapers formerly designed to appeal to the few now compete in appealing to the millions. Increasingly, debate on the political issues of the day is formulated in terms suitable for transmission by the newly developed media of mass communication.

One effect of mass participation in political debate is the increasing tendency for such debate to be carried on by demonstration in the streets, where the views of opposing partisans can be expressed only in such slogans as may be shouted in unison or printed on placards. This represents a falling off from the highest standard of public debate, as exemplified by the series of articles, collectively known as *The Federalist*, which appeared in the American press in 1787 and 1788. By excluding those processes of thoughtful deliberation for which the individual mind is best fitted, such means of carrying on political contests allow only bigotry. . . .

It is not clear to me that, when the common mind acquires a mass basis, there is as much to choose between one faction and another as one might wish. Bigotry is abhorrent in itself, whatever the cause with which it is associated. . . . The vast intellectual communities of modern times are, as we have seen, more vulnerable than others to ideological thinking, with its intolerance.

What then should we seek to preserve, throughout coming disorders? The author finds an answer given by a character in a Gissing novel:

> Take a man by himself, and there is generally some reason to be found in him, some disposition for good; mass him with his fellows in the social organism, and ten to one he becomes a blatant creature, without a thought of his own, ready for any evil to which contagion prompts him. It is because nations tend to stupidity and baseness that mankind moves so slowly; it is because individuals have a capacity for better things that it moves at all.

If, then, our love of truth is genuine, if we dare to admit our ignorance and to take our place in the Socratic ranks, the obligation is to think individually, rejecting the Aristotelian claim that the state exhausts human possibility. This is not to deny that human community amplifies human resources, but to seek fellowship where it can be found and fostered, undiminished and uncaricatured by political slogans. Louis Halle puts it well in his conclusion:

> A man, I say, is responsible for himself, for what he succeeds in making for himself during his span of life. This is so whether he lives in a society that is enjoying a golden age or in a society that has fallen into corruption and barbarism. . . . Socrates did not encompass the salvation of Athenian society, but in saving his own honor he saved the honor of mankind, providing the classic example of a life committed to free inquiry based on the knowledge of one s own ignorance . . . The saving grace afforded every individual, in whatever circumstances he finds himself, is that his honor as a man depends on himself alone.

This is the heart of philosophy for human beings, a truth that is forged over time, not "discovered," and therefore will never need revision with changing events. That it is also the heart of social order is another truth, although it may require the dissolution of "historical" thinking for it to be recognized. A reading of *The Ideological Imagination* would certainly assist.

REVIEW
THE PREVAILING ETHOS

SWEET REASON is the name of an annual journal issued by the Oregon Committee for the Humanities, the first issue of which appeared last year. The price is $7.95. The address of the Committee is 419 SW Washington Street, Portland, Oregon 97204. The contents, contributed mostly by academics, are "Oregon Essays," and the theme of the first issue is "The Ethic of Abundance in an Age of Austerity." The editor is Joan Pierson.

One contributor, Miles Shishido, who teaches religion and philosophy at Pacific University, contrasts the "ethical styles" of the Americans and the Japanese. Japanese customs and attitudes are traced to the influence of Buddhism and the earlier national Shinto religion. Austerity, simplicity, love of unpretentious beauty, the poverty that means independence of worldly things, and modesty are the qualities he finds prevailing in the Japanese way of life. In contrast, "Power and wealth not only characterize America's physical shape; they characterize her spirit. They constitute the American ethos." And then the writer says: "Poverty and beauty constitute the Japanese ethos."

Having read this far, you suspect how the discussion will come out and that the writer is right. Anyone with a fondness for Lafcadio Hearn, who had reason to dislike America and who came to love Japan, would agree. Mr. Shishido also says:

> Admittedly, the choice of power and plentitude for the American ethos and poverty and beauty for the Japanese is highly selective and may ignore much in both cultures which could have been singled out with equal justification. But I hope I have shown that the choice was not arbitrary.

He has, he has. He goes on:

> The Japanese attitude follows from the ethos of poverty and the ethos of beauty. Nature is a thing of beauty and therefore to be admired and appreciated. This the Japanese do in the spirit of worship and of recreation, as they travel long distances to see the fall colors in the mountains and sit, eat, and play in the parks where the cherry trees bloom in the spring. Nature is the source of human life and thus is to be revered and respected. One does not attack nature, but adjusts to it. Furthermore, nature is not an inexhaustible source. Thus, it must be tenderly nurtured and protected. This care of plants and land is seen in the way the Japanese terrace their fields, build retaining walls on hillsides, and restore damaged trees through surgery and braces. The American attitude is one of eternal optimism, derived from the ethos of power and abundance, and tends toward exploitation and waste. The bounty of nature is seen as boundless. What if specific sources of supply run out? New and different sources can be tapped.

What, then, are lessons Americans can learn from the Japanese? As preface to answering this question, Mr. Shishido (writing probably a year or two ago) describes the economic sector in Japan:

> It is a startling but not too widely publicized fact that Japanese auto workers are out-producing both their American and European counterparts by a wide margin. It is estimated that the average European auto worker produces about 15 cars a year, the American between 20 and 25, and the Japanese between 30 and 40. One can easily explain the superiority of the Japanese on the basis of modernized factories and equipment, but this would be too easy and misleading. It is true that in 1981, Japan had more robots in operation than did the other countries combined. But, compared to American factories, Japanese factories are small and lean and very unpretentious—one might even be tempted to say "cheap." The real secret of success in Japanese auto production as well as in other industries where Japan holds commanding leadership is the prevailing ethos: the spirit of the family in the corporation, the capacity of the workers to sublimate their own claims to ensure the good of the whole, and the empathy of workers in being able to see the inclusion of their interests in the interests of the whole. Of course, there are other factors involved: for example, the uniformly high level of worker education, extensive on-the-job training, quality control, and market research. But the main reasons must be that company is family, and worker and management are not in an adversary relationship, but a cooperative one. On both sides, rights and freedoms have been moderated for the sake of harmony and mutuality and company success.

So, from the Japanese we can learn "creative partnership" and eliminate strikes and lockouts. We can learn to make "minor adjustments in our priorities" and discovery that austerity "does not necessarily lead to an impoverished life." All good things to know.

The lessons are plain enough. Japanese virtue—unmistakably virtue—is enabling the people to make better, smaller cars in ever larger quantities. That's the payoff, as we Americans say. The Japanese learned how to make cars from us and then vastly improved the techniques, adding out of their tradition qualities we don't possess. They took instruction from us and now we have opportunity to take instruction from them.

But what instructions? How to make more and better cars at a lower price? The question arises after a look at the California freeways (and at photographs of Tokyo on smoggy days). We have a declining civilization dragged along in the widening wake of a cavalcade of cars. Whatever *our* virtues are, the Japanese have not been learning from *them*, but, instead, have been imitating our mistakes with extraordinary efficiency.

Yet there are Japanese who give the right advice, to us as well as for their own country. We have in mind the musings of Tanizaki Junichero, quoted by E.G. Seidensticker in an issue of the *Japan Quarterly* of years ago. Tanizaki, a distinguished Japanese author (practically unknown in America), said to himself and his readers of that time:

> There are those who hold that as long as a house keeps out the cold and as long as food keeps off starvation, it matters little what they look like. And indeed for even the sternest ascetic the fact remains that a snowy day is cold, and there is no denying the impulse to accept the services of a heater if it happens to be there in front of one, no matter how cruelly its inelegance may shatter the spell of the day. But it is on occasions like this that I always think how different everything would be if we in the Orient had developed our own physics and chemistry: would not the techniques and industries based on them have taken a different form, would not our myriads of everyday gadgets, our medicines, the products of our industrial art—would they not have suited our national temper better than they do? . . .
>
> The Westerners have been able to move forward in ordered steps, while we have met a superior civilization and have had to surrender to it, and we have had to leave a road we have followed for thousands of years. The missteps and inconveniences this has caused have, I think, been many. If we had been left alone we might not be much further now in a material way than we were five hundred years ago. Even now in the Indian and Chinese countryside [this was first published, according to Seidensticker, in 1934] life no doubt goes on much as it did when Buddha and Confucius were alive. But we would have gone in a direction that suited us. We would have gone ahead very slowly, and yet it is not impossible that we would one day have discovered our own substitute for the trolley, the radio, the airplane of today. They would have been no borrowed gadgets, they would have been the tools of our culture, suited to us.

The thing is not sweetly unreasonable—not for the Japanese. In the sixteenth century they learned how to make guns from some Portuguese traders, and like other things they make, they were very good guns (at the time). But then, after using them for fifty or so years, they decided that guns were "borrowed gadgets," not suited to their culture, so they gave them up and went back to using swords—the best swords in the world. Commenting on this dramatic change, Noel Perrin (in *Giving Up the Gun*, Godine, 1979) remarks:

> What the Japanese experience *does* prove is two things. First, that a no-growth economy is perfectly compatible with prosperous and civilized life. And second, that human beings are less the passive victims of their own knowledge and skills than most people in the West suppose.

Well, one hopes so. The Japanese stopped using guns after 1637 (the year of the Shimabara Rebellion) and didn't think of them seriously again until Admiral Perry arrived in 1854. They went on making their very good swords. (On the high quality of Japanese skills, see Soetsu Yanagi's *The Unknown Craftsman*, Harper & Row.)

We have neglected the rest of *Sweet Reason*, but can say that the other nine contributions will give the reader an understanding of why Oregon is a state where good things keep on happening. Richard Clinton writes about the transition from the colonial era to the time of decolonization, also the passage from cultural adolescence to maturity, wondering if we are equal to so great a change. Peter List asks, "Do the Starving Have Rights?" deciding that accidents of birth are not sufficient reason for letting anybody go hungry. He ends with adoption of the outlook of Frances Lappé and Joseph Collins in *Food First.* "We must," he says, look "carefully at the way multinational food corporations and the foreign policy of the rich nations operate in other countries and at the way the rich and powerful in those countries control food resources internationally." Allan Winkler, a historian, discusses the delusions and vulnerabilities of affluence and wonders if we can overcome them without experiencing poverty. He finds the answer in stewardship.

COMMENTARY
"THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE"

A FEW years ago, in *Masculine/Feminine,* which he edited with his wife, Betty, Theodore Roszak gave the last—if not the only—word concerning the argument about the sexes. The virtues, he declared, have no sex. As he put it:

> There, then, is the heart of the matter: *There are no masculine and feminine virtues.* There are only human virtues. Courage, daring, decisiveness, resourcefulness are good qualities in women as much so in men.

Now, in *Rain* for April/May, writing about women astronomers, Margaret Alic shows that the powers of intellect are also independent of sex. Queen Sophia of Denmark, both chemist and astronomer, built an observatory for Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) and worked there as his colleague.

> In 1702 Maria Kirch discovered a comet. It was not named for her and she never received recognition for the discovery. Thus her observations on the aurora borealis (1707) and her writings on the conjunction of the sun with Saturn and Venus (1709) and on the approaching conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 1712 (including the obligatory astrological predictions) became her most lasting contributions to astronomy. . . .
>
> Meanwhile, in Paris in the 1680s, Jeanne Dumée set out to prove that women "are not incapable of study, if they wish to make the effort, because between the brain of a women and that of a man there is no difference." At the age of seventeen, having sent her husband off to war, Dumee was free to devote herself to astronomy. Her treatise [on the mobility of the earth] demonstrated how the observations of Venus and the satellites of Jupiter proved the motion of the earth and the validity of the Copernican and Galilean theories. Her unpublished manuscript has survived in the National Library of Paris. . . .

These are only a few of the women who contributed to astronomical science. "Women," the *Rain* writer says, "helped to put the astronomy of the Scientific Revolution on a firm foundation."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
NON-PHYSICAL EVOLUTION

THE political argument about Evolution—and it is political, with nothing to do with either science or religion, as Stephen Jay Gould pointed out last year—will not be improved by intelligent discussion, since politics has little to do with intelligence; but some remarks by Jonas Salk in the March *Psychology Today* might for some readers raise the argument to a higher gear. Biological evolution is concerned with where man's body came from and how it was developed. But evolution is not only biological. A few years ago Theodore Roszak wrote *Unfinished Animal* to point to the importance of non-physical evolution in humans, and now Jonas Salk calls for recognition of "metabiological" evolution. He says (in the *Psychology Today* interview):

> Biological evolution depends upon genes. The metabiological equivalent of the biological gene is an idea generated in the human mind; it is the analogue of a newly generated gene in a cell. In biological evolution, the genes determine the nature, characteristics, and behavior of a cell, or, indeed, of the organism composed of cells. In metabiological evolution, ideas determine the nature, characteristics, and behavior of a metabiological cell—an individual—or the metabiological organism, the society.

One result of metabiological evolution is the craft of printing. There are many others:

> I would put the development of math, of physics, of the arts into this category, the development of radio, television, and other means of mass communication. I would also include the development of ideas, Darwin's concept of evolution, Newton's celestial mechanics, Einstein's attempts at developing a unified field theory to link together electricity, magnetism, et cetera. Metabiological evolution is anything that results in an increase in consciousness.

The Lamarckian doctrine of the inheritance of acquired characteristics is rejected by biologists, but Dr. Salk thinks it fits metabiological evolution: what we learn can be "transmitted to succeeding generations." Yet we also, he says, create obstacles to further development. We suffer from symbolic "cancers":

> Police forces and military forces can be overprotective, and the dangers when they go haywire can be very great. At the metabiological level, we seem to be suppressing the very creativity and ingenuity that we need for survival. The human mind has gone through a whole series of evolutionary stages, and at each stage it has found ways of dealing with the challenges posed by its environment. The time has arrived in which we have to realize that we are all parts of a single organism and develop some new kinds of responses and relationships.

These comments are on the themes of Jonas Salk's new book, *Anatomy of Reality* (Columbia University Press). He changes the subject of argument by changing the object of evolution. Other remarks:

> I'm saying that we should trust our intuition. I believe that the principles of universal evolution are revealed to us through our intuitions. And I think that if we combine our intuition and our reason, we can respond in an evolutionarily sound way to our problems as a species. . . .
>
> Most organisms react to stimuli without any thought of future consequences. But since the evolution of consciousness, man has been able to look to the future, to foresee our own deaths. Consciousness implies a prophetic sense; some have it more acutely than others. . . . Those already advantaged are resistant to change; it's the disadvantaged who desire change. We may have to develop a whole new mythology, a literature that depicts the future. [Dr. Salk's earlier books, *Man Unfolding* and *The Survival of the Wisest,* begin this undertaking.] We're going to have to rely on artists as well as scientists for the solutions we need, people who *want* to visualize the architecture of human relationships . . . to assure that we keep on evolving. Who knows? We may evolve into something better.

Present-day biblical scholars are now contributing to this hope. Is there any way, one wonders, to get their findings into the argument about religion versus science in the schools? For example, in the *Los Angeles Times* for Feb. 12, John Dart notes that in the ancient documents of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library it is said that "Eve did the correct thing in picking fruit from the tree of knowledge." Telling good from evil was surely a

way of "getting better," even though eating the fruit transformed us into moral intelligences, providing the equal option of getting worse.

Dart's story, however, is mainly about a new translation of the account of the creation of Eve, suggesting that she was meant to be a being with "power equal to Adam" rather than a mere helpmate. Dart gives the Hebrew words involved and the reason for raising Eve's status. But the real reason, a University of California (in Santa Barbara) scholar declared, lies in the fact that "such a change wouldn't have occurred to anyone until recently," and "did so now because of the women's liberation movement."

As has been said, the Deity (or is it Evolution?) moves in mysterious ways its wonders to perform.

Another politicalizing argument is reported by Harry Trimborn in the *Los Angeles Times* (Feb. 26). This story is about a change in the status of Martin Luther declared by authorities in East Germany. They consulted no manuscripts, since political action springs from other sources. Luther is now recognized (in East Berlin, where the dialectics of history make the official line) as no longer "a lackey of the rich and powerful." Instead, according to the East German head of state, he is "one of the most important humanists striving for a just world" and a forerunner of Karl Marx. Ceremonies to honor Luther will be held in East Germany on Nov. 10, 1983, the five hundredth anniversary of his birth.

The reconstruction of Luther's character seems "miraculous" enough to qualify as theological:

> The regime's praise of Luther is a dramatic turnabout from the earlier East German Communist view of him. It had long considered him one of the chief villains of German history. Until the early 1970s, Luther was branded a "servant of the princes" and a traitor for his opposition to the Peasants' War of 1524-26. . . . The Peasants' War has been hailed by the regime as an early communist-type revolution in which the people sought to break the shackles of their overlords.

But now, since the East German leaders have decided that their Communist State needs "historical roots," Luther stands vindicated. Joining him in this dubious distinction is Frederick the Great, Richard Wagner, and Otto von Bismarck. Meanwhile, according to the *Times* writer, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which has 6.85 million communicants (out of a population of 17 million in East Germany), is somewhat embarrassed. This church and this state don't get on well, and while the state would like it to *seem* that they get on, the Lutherans prefer to avoid the appearance of harmony. The *Times* writer says:

> Those relations, never cordial, have been strained in recent years as a result of the Evangelical Church's low-key support for East Germany's small, independent peace movement, which calls for arms reductions in the East as well as in the West.
>
> Also, the church is opposed to the military-type training of school-children and other manifestations of what it considers the militarization of East German society. It has sought, but with some reluctance, to act as an intermediary between the government and conscientious objectors to compulsory military duty.

Meanwhile, a report from Bonn (last year) describes a West German bill to extend the term of alternative service for conscientious objectors and eliminate the ordeal of oral examination of applicants for C.O. status, held to be unfair to those who are inarticulate. It was also argued that the interrogation of applicants is "an intrusion into an area of conscience that can never be ascertained by another." (*Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 30, 1982.)

To date, 400 thousand men (since World War II ended) have applied for exemption from military duty, with 300 thousand receiving it. Finally, "the current backlog of C.O. applicants is at a record high of almost 100,000." The right of conscientious objection is written into the Constitution of West Germany.

FRONTIERS

Violence/Non-Violence

VIOLENCE is a very human trait. Like rage, fury, anger, hate, joy and love, it arises from our deepest emotional roots. Like all forces coming from the core of our being, it is not to be forgotten, slighted, or denied. The shivers and chills it sends through us and the outpouring of energy it releases in us are real. It has a valid place in marshalling our energies in extreme contests of survival. But the costs it imposes upon us make it an unwise part of our nature to nurture, encourage, use indiscriminately, or give primary place in society as we have done.

Modern violence is sophisticated. It is often silent and rarely visible. Whether our escalatingly violent technologies of war or our subtly violent economic technologies, the direct effects are often separated from us in space or time, and its effect upon our lives is rarely visible. Yet both individually and as a society we are deeply affected by the violence we unleash.

We *are* aware of violence in our cities—the brawling, mugging, rape and murder violence of the powerless—but much less conscious of the far greater violence which has been institutionalized throughout our society. The obvious violence of the powerless striking out against the repressive forces they have no other means to contest is trivial compared to the violence pervasively used to "administer" the far reaches of our country's global economic empire, or our economic and military support of repressive dictatorships in other countries. We reacted with horror to the German genocide of Jews, but blot from our memories the equally genocidal murder of civilian populations we accomplished in subjugating the Native Americans, in the firebombing of Dresden, Berlin and Tokyo, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; our saturation bombing of Indochina, and our current support of equivalent, if less dramatic atrocities in Latin America, Asia and elsewhere. All that seems far from home.

Yet closer to home the same tendency toward violence almost universally underlies our actions. We blithely apply massive doses of herbicides and pesticides to our fields and forests, disregarding their violent disruption of ecological balancing forces, and unhealthy impacts on workers, nearby residents, and the ultimate consumers. We innocently buy inexpensive imported goods, blissfully unaware that we are supporting intolerable working, living, and social conditions forced upon their makers throughout our economic empire, and that we will ultimately have to compete against such violent production conditions.

The massive doses of poisons and antibiotics we employ in futile attempts to eliminate rodents and diseases are equally violent in their conception and impact. That they cause resistance to develop and breed more formidable diseases rarely enters our consciousness. We choose such methods instinctively because our immensely powerful technology has made them possible, and because it has lulled us into ignoring the real impacts of our actions.

We would scarcely call violent the anesthesized torture we and our pocketbooks undergo in a dentist's chair until we compare it to the alternative of simply eating less sugar. Few would consider our medical practices to be violent until we consider the impact on us of the more virulent diseases bred by our antibiotic chemical medicine, and our dependence on surgery and corrective actions rather than preventive health care. Would we consider our transportation system to be violent? Compare the death and mutilation caused each year by the automobile to the alternatives, say, of a European city providing mass transit and built to minimize the need for transport. What of our governmental violence toward Native Americans standing up for their legal treaty rights; or toward anti-war activists speaking out against a corrupt and immoral war

we instigated and waged? Or our economic policies encouraging capital-intensive processes that eliminate jobs and cause the economic disenfranchisement of growing numbers of Americans?

The concentrated power which characterizes our society is increasingly vulnerable and unstable, and gives rise to ever more violent means to protect or exploit that vulnerability. Increasingly, it molds our society at home into the same forms of violent action and suppression we have seen emerges from our actions abroad. We are being asked to work closer and closer to the starvation wages we have imposed abroad or lose our jobs and factories to those same competitors. Our police forces have changed from the "law-keeping" British Bobbies to the armored, brutal, identity-hidden riot police of today. Para-military authority is increasingly being granted to power companies to protect nuclear power installations. Diplomatic installations and corporate headquarters are being fortified. Surveillance of employees and shakedown of airline passengers are now routine. The frequency of assassination of political leaders is increasing, and the practice of living behind locked and guarded gates, with barred windows, chainlink fences and barbed wire is becoming more common. A single terrorist or computer malfunction can threaten the lives of millions.

This state of siege affects the very marrow of our lives. Anger, violence and frustration all cause us to tighten up inside—and draw us away from anything which might distract our energies, which might question or cause us to hesitate in our total commitment to a course of action. This cuts us off from the object of our violence from any respect, love, concern, understanding, empathy, or conscience that might lead to questioning our acts. It similarly, however, cuts us off from other people and experiences that can give meaning, value, joy and happiness to our lives.

In that isolation produced by violence, we cannot discriminate between courses of action that are ultimately destructive and those that are life-enhancing. It leads to estrangement—a truthful sense that we are no longer capable of being a trusted part of the great cosmic dance of our world. It leads to further isolation, frustration, and inner rage at finding no real value, love, respect, meaning or happiness in our lives or the world around us. It emerges finally as violence from our own hand.

Violence is destructive and destabilizing—it cannot form the basis of a durable society. It brings its own downfall eventually as its effects emerge and as the value of nonviolent attitudes, actions and technologies becomes more obvious. Even as the violence in our society escalates today it is losing its power. Seeking the roots of our violence, we are slowly learning that we must co-exist with others—and are developing peaceful ways of mutual accommodation instead of violent and futile warfare. Accommodating to conditions rather than overwhelming them demands more of us, but can be ultimately more successful and awaken new sensitivities, skills and understanding. The deeper understanding of the needs and relationships of others required for co-existence helps open us to acceptance, love, and veneration of life rather than separating us from those things with which we interact. It draws us closer to the rest of creation and into a richer, subtler, and more varied world.

Non-violent technologies are emerging to replace violent ones. Replacing bulldozers with crowbars to demolish buildings allows salvage of building materials as well as other economic savings. Selective logging, manual thinning and portable mills are beginning to make possible continually usable forests and more effective use of forest growth. High fertilizer and machinery costs are causing us to replace chemical monoculture farming with diversified crops, crop rotations, green manures and interplanting, while also replacing an industry of farming with a

culture of farmers. Replacing sugar and dentists with self-discipline creates a whole new generation of stronger more self-directed people as well as giving impetus to a cuisine with richer and more varied tastes than mere "sweetness." Simpler and more self-reliant living lessens our demands on others while it heightens our own abilities.

The change we are undergoing today in the material and resource base of our culture is threatening the vast disparities of power which lie beneath our society, its values and its actions. Pressure toward a new, more equitable and dispersed distribution of power is developing, and with it an awareness of the need to find peace with ourselves and our surroundings. In another age we could accept the violence in our society as an unavoidable privilege of the powerful. Today things have become too interconnected. Our world is being melded into a single and awesome organism, and its eddies of power have become too complexly interwoven with the needs and well-being of every individual to ignore their flow. We are beginning to find that more durable and less violent ways to relate to others hold far greater reward than the concentrated power and violence of our recent past.

Portland, Oregon

TOM BENDER