

A CERTAIN DOUBLENESS

THOREAU is likely to appear to us to have been a man of very great patience. Yet he might have rejected this idea, as he would any shallow compliment, since what seems to have been his patience was not for him a conscious virtue. After all, he did not feel pressed for time. He had things to find out, but he was in no hurry. Reading him brings the growing impression that he is someone from another century, or perhaps no century. Was there ever a man so free of the opinions of his time? He of course used the opinions of his time, sorting them out more by spontaneous attraction than with any great care. He simply isolated what was worth attending to from what was not. Yet he could also take a child's view of things, as in his wonder at the trains which thundered by not far from his house at Walden.

Thoreau was on a philosophical quest, yet not as something "special." He wanted the sort of understanding that is sought by men who are wholly indifferent to the fact that for a great many people "philosophy" is an undertaking separated from other pursuits. Philosophy, for him, included all the dimensions of being a man, a human being. He would use abstractions as momentary tools—like a flashlight to snap on, which illuminates, but also obscures, and then must be turned off for a return to "reality"—but the knowledge he gained was not dependent upon such tools, and might never again be expressed by him in their peculiar language.

He did not expect to get the last ontological word out of a book or a metaphysical proposition or syllogism. He did not think the "truth" some sort of production, but rather a state of being which might be deceptively mirrored in a multitude of ways, becoming the field of human experience by this means. He read much, no doubt of that; curiously, however, he warned against reading much as Plato warned against

writing. This is a matter for some attention: that the most consummate thinkers and careful readers and skillful writers say much the same thing about reading. They are not against reading, but against any deluding effect it may have, against the conceits it may produce.

After a chapter on the splendors of great reading, Thoreau begins the next one:

But while we are confined to books, though the most select and classic, and read only particular written languages, which are themselves but dialects and provincial, we are in danger of forgetting the language which all things and events speak without metaphor, which alone is copious and standard. Much is published, but little printed. The rays which stream through the shutter will be no longer remembered when the shutter is wholly removed. No method nor discipline can supersede the necessity of being forever on the alert. What is a course of history or philosophy, or poetry, no matter how well selected, or the best society, or the most admirable routine of life, compared with the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen? Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer? Read your fate, see what is before you, and walk on to futurity.

But *how*? Thoreau, at this point, does not say. He tells us that he busied himself hoeing beans. A Zen dissolution of discourse into a gardener's industry. And then a lapse into the timeless existence of an Indian tribe of whom it was said that "for yesterday, today, tomorrow they have only one word, and they express the variety of meaning by pointing backward for yesterday, forward for tomorrow, and overhead for the passing day." Thoreau is disinclined to think that the natural day he knows at Walden will "reprove his indolence." There is no hint of how the last ontological word is to be forged.

Stanley Cavell, in *The Senses of Walden*, is able to see in Thoreau's book an intention to go beyond Kant, who had locked away from us forever a knowledge of things in themselves,

because their nature is not revealed in the presentations of the senses. Yet there is a way of getting behind this barrier, although one must meet the conditions of access; and these conditions "are to be discovered experimentally; historically, Hegel had said." Cavell continues:

Walden is also, accordingly, a response to skepticism, and not just in matters of knowledge. Epistemologically, its motive is the recovery of the object, in the form in which Kant left that problem and the German Idealists and the Romantic poets picked it up, viz., a recovery of the thing-in-itself; in particular, of the relation between the subject of knowledge and its object. Morally, its motive is to answer, by transforming, the problem of the freedom of the will in the midst of a universe of natural laws, by which our conduct, like the rest of nature, is determined. *Walden*, in effect, provides a transcendental deduction for the concepts of the thing-in-itself and for determination—something Kant ought, so to speak, to have done.

What philosophers, men in thought, call the "determinism" of nature is in fact (i.e., really fits our concept of) fate. "By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, (men) are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt" (I, 5). It is an idea of something controlled beyond itself, toward a predetermined end or within predetermined confines. We did not get such an idea from nature, because what we find in nature is recurrence and "resolution" (XVI, 1); nature has no destiny beyond its presence; and it is completely autonomous, self-determined. So we must be projecting the idea into nature (it is an idea of reflection). Then the idea comes from our own sense of being controlled from outside.

The railroad is a symbol of external constraint for Thoreau. Today he would probably use the automobile, perhaps quoting Kenneth Schneider's *Autokind vs. Mankind* for evidence. Indeed, it is plain from *Walden* and from other of Thoreau's writings that he believed most of the constraints on the will of men to be self-imposed. Their "necessities" were not really necessary at all, but imagined out of false conceptions of both themselves and the world (and the Deity). They whipped themselves into doing what they did. As he says in a famous passage in the first chapter:

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.

Well, what *did* Thoreau find out in the woods? A question like that deserves another: Why do men go on reading him? And when they do, why does he make so many converts—to what, no one quite knows? One could of course answer that he learned not to do desperate things.

It seems worth pointing out that the cruelest things men have done to other men have usually been those they believed to be "necessary"—ordained by religion, by patriotism, or by the laws of state upon which men depend for survival and hope of a future. The sacrifices to Moloch, the fires of the Holy Inquisition, the long wars of religion, the pious persecutions pursued by reformers like Calvin and the Puritan divines; the Moscow Trials, the Death Camps of the Nazis, the Bomb and all its hideous offspring, and the genocidal slaughtering of the present—have not all these been *necessary*.; Then there are the things men do to accumulate money—or "security," which has a more wholesome ring. Thoreau writes of most of these things, although often obliquely.

Of the visitors he had at Walden, he said:

Girls and boys and young women generally seemed glad to be in the woods. They looked in the pond and at the flowers, and improved their time. Men of business, even farmers thought only of solitude and employment, and of the great distance I dwelt from something or other; and though they said they loved a ramble in the woods occasionally, it was obvious they did not. Restless, committed men, whose time was all taken up in getting a living or keeping it; ministers who spoke of God as if they enjoyed a monopoly of the subject, who could not bear all kinds of opinions; doctors, lawyers, uneasy housekeepers who pried into my cupboard and bed when I was out,—how came Mrs. _____ to know

that my sheets were not as clean as hers?—young men who had ceased to be young, and had concluded that it was safest to follow the beaten track of the professions,—all these generally said that it was not possible to do so much good in my position. Ay! there was the rub. The old and the infirm and the timid, of whatever age or sex, thought most of sickness, and sudden accident and death; to them life seemed full of danger,—what danger is there if you don't think of any?—and they thought that a prudent man would carefully select the safest position, where Dr. B. might be on hand at a moment's warning. To them the village was literally a *com-munity*, a league for mutual defence, and you would suppose that they would not go a-huckleberrying without a medicine chest. The amount of it is, if a man is alive, there is always *danger* that he may die, though the danger must be allowed to be less in proportion as he is dead-and-alive to begin with. A man sits as many risks as he runs. Finally, there were the self-styled reformers, the greatest bores of all, who thought that I was forever singing,—

This is the house that I built;
This is the man that lives in the house that I
built; but they did not know that the third line was,—
These are the folks that worry the man
That lives in the house that I built.

Thoreau is no great searcher-out of enemies and philistines; his identification of them is casual; and he speaks as well as he can to the other side of each one. Every man gets a chance to be reborn; spring comes each year, and in this birth-time of nature, "Through our own recovered innocence we discern the innocence of our neighbors." He issues his bulls, but they are directed at massive, collective misconceptions; he has no personal targets, pursues no vendettas. Besides, he is about another business, the business of finding out all he can. Such a man can afford no enemies or feuds. In the chapter on "Solitude" he tells about his method of "research":

By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved in Nature. I may be either the drift-wood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it. I *may* be affected by a theatrical exhibition; on the other hand, I *may not* be affected by an actual event which appears to concern me very

much more. I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and as sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it; and that is no more I than it is you. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life, is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. This doubleness may easily make us poor neighbors and friends, sometimes.

Here, made explicit, may be the heart of the matter. The heart of how Thoreau was able to find what he found at Walden. He might, one supposes, have found it anywhere, with such a witness to take notes. But in the woods the spectacle of life seemed richer to him; the meanings less tarnished by the passage of time and less obscured by a noisy contemporaneity. Meeting Thoreau must have been a formidable encounter, for those without the wit to prepare themselves:

Men frequently say to me, "I should think you would feel lonesome down there, and want to be nearer folks, rainy and snowy days and nights especially." I am tempted to reply to such,—This whole earth we inhabit is but a point in space. How far apart, think you, dwell the two most distant inhabitants of yonder star, the breadth of whose disk cannot be appreciated by our instruments? Why should I feel lonely? Is not our planet in the Milky Way?

And then he adds:

What sort of space is that which separates a man from his fellows and makes him solitary? I have found that no exertion of the legs can bring two minds much nearer to one another. What do you want most to dwell near to? Not to many men sure, the depot, the post-office, the bar-room the meeting-house, the school-house, the grocery, Beacon Hill, or the Five Points, where most men congregate, but to the perennial source of our life, whence in all our experience we have found that to issue, as the willow stands near to the water and sends out its roots in that direction. This will vary with different natures, but this is a place where a wise man will dig his cellar. . . .

Here we might raise the question, Has Thoreau found out anything about things-in-themselves? Has he been able to communicate his findings? Surely he has tried.

To know what Thoreau knew, one must, it seems likely, feel his longings, experience his dissatisfactions, and avoid the distractions which he avoided. The man who asked him if he were not lonely, probably explained, at some point, "Oh, you know what I mean—don't you want to be with people, don't you *like* people, and conversation, and making new friends?" And what "normal" man would not agree with at least the mood of this question? But Thoreau thought differently. Too much of meeting and of talking was a distraction from what he wanted to do with his life.

There was a great health in Thoreau—the health of the cosmos and of solar systems. He was mysterious in a perfectly natural way, and he was a man who knew delights.

I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude. We are for the most part more lonely when we go abroad among men than when we stay in our chambers. A man thinking or working is always alone, let him be where he will. Solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows. The really diligent student in one of the crowded hives of Cambridge College is as solitary as a dervish in the desert. The farmer can work alone in the field or the woods all day hoeing or chopping, and not feel lonesome, because he is employed; but when he comes home at night he cannot sit down in a room alone, at the mercy of his thoughts, but must be where he can "see the folks," and recreate, as he thinks, remunerate, himself for his day's solitude; and hence he wonders how the student can sit alone in the house all night and most of the day without ennui and "the blues", but he does not realize that the student, though in the house, is still at work in *his* field, and chopping in *his* woods, as the farmer in his, and in turn seeks the same recreation and society that the latter does, though it may be a more condensed form of it.

Society is commonly too cheap. We meet at very short intervals, not having had time to acquire any new values for each other.

Some consideration to the sort of man Thoreau was seems of importance, lest we suppose that an account of what he did will somehow give the key to his greatness. But it is what he did *in* his life, what he made of his experience, rather than the experience itself, that is the key. The world gained new definition for him, because he was willing to look at it with new eyes:

I learned this, at least, by my experiment; that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind and will pass an invisible boundary, new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws will be expanded and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them.

We live in an age when the "laws" of nature are indeed being "liberalized," mainly through the discovery that they, or our understanding of them, are chiefly our own readings of patterns that we have declared to be the most significant natural processes. As Werner Heisenberg has said: "In natural science the object of investigation is not nature as such, but nature exposed to man's mode of enquiry." Today, a great many people are recognizing this, and calling attention to what has been left out of our "scientific knowledge," and to the distortions in our ideas of the world and of ourselves which have resulted. It is now time to begin to correct these distortions, and Thoreau was among the first to point the way. In his book, *Excursions*, first published in 1863, a year after his death, the opening chapter is a review of a state report, issued in 1842, of *The Natural History of*

Massachusetts. Thoreau did an excellent summary of this work, covering both its virtues and defects, for he was himself a naturalist, but at the end he added:

These volumes deal much in measurements and minute descriptions, not interesting to the general reader, with only here and there a colored sentence to allure him, like those plants growing in dark forests, which bear only leaves without blossoms. But the ground was comparatively unbroken, and we will not complain of the pioneer, if he raises no flowers with his first crop. . . . It has been well said that "the attitude of inspection is prone." Wisdom does not inspect, but behold. We must look a long time before we can see. Slow are the beginnings of philosophy. He has something demoniacal in him who can discern a law or couple two facts. . . . The true man of science will know nature better by his finer organization, he will smell, taste, see, hear, feel, better than other men. His will be a deeper and finer experience. We do not learn by inference and deduction, and the application of mathematics to philosophy, but by direct intercourse and sympathy. It is with science as with ethics,—we cannot know truth by contrivance and method; the Baconian is as false as any other and with all the helps of machinery and the arts, the most scientific will still be the healthiest and friendliest man, and possess a more perfect Indian wisdom.

Here, with hardly a mention of them, was Thoreau's reproach to Locke and Bacon and Descartes, and all the splitters of man's nature and the desacralizers of the world. He went about his own learning unperturbed and undismayed, and in the leisure of a man who knew he would find out what belonged to him to know. More he did not ask, nor wanted. It may be long before we can estimate, much less understand, the allotment that became his by these means.

REVIEW

"CRISES OF THE REPUBLIC"

HANNAH ARENDT'S latest book, *Crises of the Republic* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), is made up of three long essays and an interview by a German journalist. The first essay, "Lying in Politics," is an evaluation of the significance of the *Pentagon Papers*. The second, "Civil Disobedience," is a clarifying discussion of what civil disobedience is, what it is not, and a wondering about how this form of action may eventually find a place among the legitimate instruments of democratic process in America. The third essay, "On Violence," deals mainly with the fallacies in theoretical justifications of violence by both past and contemporary writers.

Dr. Arendt's common sense is illustrated by a passage in the essay on Violence, in which she proposes "to examine its roots and nature." She says:

To speak about the nature and causes of violence in these terms must appear presumptuous at a moment when floods of foundation money are channeled into the various research projects of social scientists, when a deluge of books on the subject has already appeared, when eminent natural scientists, biologists, physiologists, ethologists, and zoologists—have joined in an all-out effort to solve the riddle of "aggressiveness" in human behavior, and even a brand-new science, called "polemology," has emerged. I have two excuses for trying nevertheless.

First, while I find much of the work of the zoologists fascinating, I fail to see how it can possibly apply to our problem. In order to know that people will fight for their homeland we hardly had to discover instincts of "group territorialism" in ants, fish, and apes; and in order to learn that overcrowding results in irritation and aggressiveness, we hardly needed to experiment with rats. One day spent in the slums of any big city should have sufficed. I am surprised and often delighted to see that some animals behave like men; I cannot see how this could either justify or condemn human behavior. I fail to understand why we are asked "to recognize that man behaves very much like a group territorial species," rather than the other way round—that certain animal species behave very much like men. (Following Adolf Portmann, these new insights into animal behavior do not close the gap between man and

animal; they only demonstrate that "much more of what we know of ourselves than we thought also occurs in animals.") Why should we, after having "eliminated" all anthropomorphisms from animal psychology (whether we actually succeeded is another matter), now try to discover "how 'theriomorph' man is"? Is it not obvious that anthropomorphism and theriomorphism in the behavioral sciences are but two sides of the same "error"? Moreover, if we define man as belonging to the animal kingdom, why should we ask him to take his standards of behavior from another animal species? . . .

Second, the research results of both the social and the natural sciences tend to make violent behavior even more of a "natural" reaction than we would have been prepared to grant without them.

The scientific view, Dr. Arendt says, is, generally speaking, that man is an animal with reason "added." The possession of reason makes the "aboriginal instincts" devoted to survival in the animal become "dangerous" in man, when directed by reason and divorced from the "natural" restraints of the animal kingdom.

Hence science is called upon to cure us of the side effects of reason by manipulating and controlling our instincts, usually by finding harmless outlets for them after their "life-promoting function" has disappeared. The standard of behavior is again derived from other species, in which the function of the life instincts has not been destroyed through the intervention of human reason. And the specific distinction between man and beast is now, strictly speaking, no longer reason (the *lumen naturale* of the human animal) but science the knowledge of these standards and the techniques applying them. According to this view, man acts irrationally and like a beast if he refuses to listen to the scientists or is ignorant of their latest findings.

Dr. Arendt's discussion of violence raises all the fundamental questions—such as the relation between power and violence. She shows that while power may use violence as an instrument, when violence is relied upon as a *source* of power it always fails and destroys even the power that uses it. The distinction between power and violence is well drawn in this essay, but since the term power seems fatally ambiguous, we wish that Dr. Arendt had substituted the word "authority" for the meaning of power, conceived as independent of violence, since she really means that power not dependent upon violence is nourished by respect, and when respect is lost only violence remains to enforce decision. The relation

between respect and authority is more easily grasped, since where respect involves trust, the idea of "power" need not enter into the relationship at all.

For background reading on the discussion of violence, an old book, Guglielmo Ferrero's *The Principles of Power*, would be especially valuable. Ferrero was a historian who devoted most of his life to a study of the problem of legitimacy in government, and his book is the fruit of this study. Then, John H. Schaar's essay, "Reflections on Authority," in No. 8 of the *New American Review* (published in January, 1970), examines the roots of legitimate authority in philosophical conceptions of government, showing that when the idea of order and responsibility is divorced from feelings of obligation which go beyond the social contract, there can no longer be any real dignity in authority, which has now only a pragmatic justification through "services" it claims to perform.

In the essay on "Civil Disobedience," Dr. Arendt discusses at some length the fictitious character of most of the contract theories of government, pointing out that the least fictitious of these doctrines is the American conception, in which the *society* which existed *before* the Constitution was drawn up—indeed, before the War for Independence was won—declared its intent to make a government that would be binding on all its members. The Declaration of Independence was an acknowledgement and a declaration of the identity of this society. Asking whether this historic act, or the spirit which it embodied, is enough to suggest consent by the governed, Dr. Arendt says:

We all live and survive by a kind of *tacit consent*, which, however, it would be difficult to call voluntary. How can will what is there anyhow? We might call it voluntary, though, when the child happens to be born into a community in which dissent is also a legal and *de-facto* possibility once he has grown into a man. Dissent implies consent, and is the hallmark of free government; one who knows that he may dissent knows also that he somehow consents when he does not dissent.

Consent as it is implied in the right to dissent—the spirit of American law and the quintessence of American government—spells out and articulates the tacit consent given in exchange for the community's tacit welcome of new arrivals, of the inner immigration through which it

constantly renews itself. Seen in this perspective, tacit consent is not a fiction; it is inherent in the human condition. However, the general tacit consent—the "tacit agreement, a sort of *consensus universalis*," as Tocqueville called it—must be carefully distinguished from consent to specific laws or specific policies, which it does not cover even if they are the result of majority decisions. It is often argued that the consent to the Constitution, the *consensus universalis*, implies consent to statutory laws as well, because in representative government the people have helped to make them. This consent, I think, is entirely fictitious; under the present circumstances at any rate, it has lost all plausibility. Representative government is itself in a crisis today, partly because it has lost, in the course of time, all institutions that permitted the citizens' actual participation and partly because it is now gravely affected by the disease from which the party system suffers: bureaucratization and the two parties' tendency to represent nobody except the party machines.

Later in this essay Dr. Arendt shows that the original consent—what she terms the horizontal version of the social contract—is a very simple agreement which lies at the foundation of all contracts: the agreement to keep what promises are made. The duty of the citizen as citizen is to make and keep his promises. Loss of legitimacy begins for American government when too many of the government's promises are broken, since all agreements to keep promises have two sides. There are many cases, today, of the failure of the authorities to keep to the original conditions. Speaking of these, Dr. Arendt names "the case of an 'illegal and immoral war,' the case of an increasingly impatient claim to power by the executive branch of government, the case of chronic deception, coupled with deliberate attacks on the freedoms guaranteed under the First Amendment, whose chief political function has been to make *chronic* deception impossible; and there has been, last but not least, the case of violations (in the case of war-oriented or other government-directed research) of the specific trust of the universities that gave them protection against political and social pressure."

We have said nothing of the essay, "Lying in Politics," since this received attention in MANAS for May 31 of last year.

COMMENTARY

AFTER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

WITH this issue, MANAS begins its twenty-sixth year of publishing. While there have been many changes in the world and in human attitudes during the quarter of a century since we began, we find no need to change the statement of our objectives, as outlined in the bold-face box below, and not much reason, either, to alter the emphasis of our first lead article which appeared in the issue of January 7, 1948. In that article we took Tom Paine and Socrates for our keynoters, saying:

The art of Socrates was to make men ask themselves what they believed in, and why. It followed that having examined their beliefs, men examined their actions, and so changed their lives. Socrates rehearsed no dogmas and composed no creeds. He left behind no ritual but the habit of asking questions. His central faith was in the power of the individual to educate his conscience and be at peace with it. His career was a quest for knowledge, and as no man can seek and find knowledge without conveying it to others, Socrates was among the greatest of educators.

Today, we need both the lucid consciousness of a Paine and the acute judgment of a Socrates. . . .

Let us, then, rediscover if we can the spirit of Socratic questioning, on every problem that confronts the human mind. And let us relate our findings with the common yearning for freedom that Paine loved so well. Only thus can we restore the dignity of man: The "dignity of man" must acquire a larger meaning than any political phrase can contain. The dignity of man is not something that is conferred, allowed or "recognized," but something disclosed by each human being for himself.

Along with Paine and Socrates, Gandhi has provided us with frequent themes for MANAS. Paine declared that "An army of principles will penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot." Victor Hugo said: "There is one thing that is stronger than all the armies in the world; and that is an idea whose time has come." Gandhi gave our century such an idea, and from day to day and month to month, it gathers strength. No word

that spreads the Gandhian conceptions is said in vain.

And now, in this issue, Thoreau. It takes a long, long while to become sated with Thoreau. A little of Thoreau always seems to call for more. He is a kind of natural universe in himself. He is a man who opens things up, and may now be seen to have been as prophetic in his way as Blake was in his.

MANAS has only one publication in addition to the magazine itself—a booklet made of four articles on Thoreau which appeared back in August and September of 1961. It is a beautiful booklet and we are proud it is. There are some left. They sell at 75 cents.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

HONEY AND WILD RASPBERRIES

I

WHEN we moved to Canada seven years ago we did not know how we would be making a living. The first two years we did not need to decide, because we were too busy, first selling our home in Vermont and later building (by ourselves) our new home in Canada. It had taken seventeen years of off-again, on-again building to finish the house in Vermont. We gave ourselves one year of constant work to build the new one.

At the end of the year, not altogether at our own instigation, we started taking children to live with us in the summer. We weren't really psychologically ready for the first two children, but they arrived and we had to cope, and the flow of children started our way.

During our period of transition we had turned many ideas over in our minds, questioning what we really wanted to do. We decided that we wanted to work with children, but because of its very exhausting nature we tossed out the idea of a school, even though we had enough land and a big enough barn for a school, and we had both taught school for six years at one time. The farm was in a small community and our own two remaining children attended the local school. At the time of our arrival this school was purely academic in structure. There was no art, no music, and no class in shop. The children who lived in this farm community had, through no choice of their own, a very narrow outlook on the world around them. Because of all of these factors we decided on a summer art workshop for children. In that way our own children would have seven weeks each year of a totally different environment.

The second summer that we took children we were more prepared, and we had eleven boys and girls. The two years following, we had seventeen children and during the last two years we have

taken twenty-two kids. However, ideally we feel that seventeen or eighteen children at one time is the best number for us to have.

People, including ourselves, for lack of a better word, call us a camp. We called our first summer get-together "Summer Art Workshop." Then somewhere along the way we changed to "Farm and Sea Experience." The current name fits better as the children spend six weeks on the farm and then have one week "vacation" on the seashore at the Bay of Fundy. We still have a lot of art, but the farm and community life seem more important.

To get to what I want to talk about I have had to give a little background of what we do and how we live. Every summer I am the cook and band-aid dispenser. So from the beginning I have been very involved with the eating habits of the campers. From the start I wanted to try to cook nourishing food. This stemmed from the selfish feeling that the better the food, the less illness and dissatisfaction we would have with the children, and the less work I'd have. Since I was always available in the kitchen I naturally fell into the job of nursing on a small scale.

My personality fitted into the cook role best. I liked to eat, and in general cooks are fairly individualistic, loner with their pots, and short-tempered when others are under foot, and they also aren't too happy about food complaints. It all fitted me fine. My main job was to handle the flash flood of kids wanting to eat, three times a day.

The fewer the campers, the more noticeable their eating habits were to the cook. Frankly, it took me time to learn not to be bothered by their idiosyncrasies in eating. Children are the first to know that the easiest way to reach a mother is to fiddle around with their food.

The first child I did battle with didn't like homemade, whole-wheat pancakes, cooked oatmeal, or scrambled eggs—he out and out wanted store-bought, packaged, instant cereal.

We did a three-week fencing match about breakfast and then one day my husband, Lowell, who by that time was annoyed at both of us, took the boy to the grocery store and told him to pick out *his* cereal. By this time the poor kid was pretty intimidated by me about *lousy* commercial cereals and he timidly picked what he felt was the lesser of evils, a box of shredded wheat. He returned to the farm in a state of quiet elation. The following summer I found a half-eaten box of shredded wheat where he had put it for safekeeping.

Then we had a little boy who put catsup on everything. He was a foster child attending a school for the deaf. The few times he was home it appeared that his mother would send him out with 50 cents and tell him to get something to eat at the nearest snack bar. That something was usually hot dogs or hamburgers. When he did have regular meals he automatically reached for his bottle and poured catsup all over everything.

Another little boy wouldn't use catsup or eat anything red. He didn't seem to know why. That was my first experience in having a child who didn't like homemade pizza or spaghetti. Since we are a small, personal group of children and adults each summer, *determined not to grow any larger*, we have at least one set of parents each year that try to push their problems off on us. This has brought me to the conclusion that while all problem children have eating peculiarities, all food fussers aren't necessarily problem children.

Our third summer we had a definite food-fusser. Actually, he was a beacon of warning about things to come, but at that time we did not recognize the significance of this problem.

We observed that this child was a very hyper-kid with a lot of allergies. He came with his own case of soy bean milk and a generous supply of antihistamines. We had more children that summer and I didn't notice right off that he was eating poorly. But by the end of a week he surfaced . . . into my view. One morning he took a plate of honey and no pancake.

We have a number of round tables we eat at during camp. At breakfast there are from one to five children eating at each table. If I don't notice a food-fusser because I'm too busy, I can rely on some one of the other kids to observe what is really going on. They are certainly going to yelp if one person takes all the syrup or honey. The boy with the allergies ate so poorly he was very jumpy and nervous. For that reason he wanted his flashlight on all night in his little house in the woods. The boy who was in the house with him couldn't sleep with the light in his eyes. The antihistamines the child was given by his doctor had benzedrine in them to counter the drowsy effect of the drug. All this only made him more jumpy. Both his parents were professionals and a maid was the only one home most of the time. She silenced any problem with another piece of candy or lollipops.

During the winter of our fourth year of camp I perfected a homemade (cold) cereal which would help solve my problems with the instant cereal kids. Everybody seemed to like it and here's the recipe.

VIRGINIA'S GRANOLA

Mix

4 cups of rolled oats (old-fashioned oats)
1 cup of wheat germ
1 cup of sesame seeds
1 cup of raisins
1 cup of chopped dates
1 teaspoon of cinnamon
1 teaspoon of nutmeg
5 crushed cardamon or coriander seeds

Melt together

½ cup of honey
½ cup of cooking oil
1 teaspoon of vanilla

Pour the melted mixture over the dry ingredients and mix well. Spread the mixture onto cookie sheets and bake until light brown (about 15-20 minutes) in an oven at 325 degrees. Remove from oven and let cool until the mixture is crispy, then store in glass jars for use.

The fifth summer we were hit right in the center by a very evident phenomenon. We had three sugar addicts in our midst! The poptart, sugar-coated cereal, soft-drink kids had arrived. This problem had been creeping up on us but it took these three extreme cases to make us recognize that it was something we would have to contend with continually. There had been jam-eaters every summer—you noticed that when you had to fill the jam jar too often. But you figured that in time the child would try other things. Every noon we put out peanut butter, cheese, honey, sometimes egg or tuna salad, and sardines. I tried putting out homemade jam and I suggested that if the kids would go out and pick raspberries, of which we always have plenty, I would make homemade jam. I keep making this suggestion but so far have never had any raspberries arrive at the kitchen door. I wanted to give up the jam altogether but the new campers each year might not see anything they liked or recognized as food, except synthetic jam.

New kids weren't usually used to honey. Most of them had never seen or tasted unprocessed, unheated, raw honey out of the hive. The raw honey was always on the table but only the older campers who had been at the farm previously would eat it. The raw honey always crystallized in the time between extraction from the comb and camp time. The raw honey doesn't flow and most of the new kids won't make the extra effort needed to spread it on pancakes and bread.

(To be concluded)

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FRONTIERS

Grounds for Redefining "Efficiency"

THE question of what a non-polluting, no-growth, non-Faustian culture is going to be like needs to be answered over and over again, in as many ways as possible, since practically all the reliable prophets—the ecologists, humanist economists, and socio-philosophical moralists—say that not only human survival but also a life worth living will be dependent upon developing or restoring a culture of this kind.

What, for example, is going to happen to agriculture? This is the nuts and bolts side of the problem, and it is not at all easy to deal with, for the reason that the required changes are so far-reaching and will affect the lives and habits of not only a great many people on the land, but also those in industry. The character and extent of these changes is from time to time indicated by articles in the monthly magazine, *Environment*, published by the Committee for Environmental Information, 438 North Skinker Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri 63130, at \$10.00 a year. The October issue, for example, has in it articles on the extraordinary dependence of modern industrial farming on gasoline-generated power, and the dangers of exclusive reliance on high-yield monoculture grains. (A study of the wasteful practices of modern architecture should also be mentioned, even though this discussion is not directly related to agriculture.) Careful reading of these articles shows the kind and extent of the re-education that will have to take effect before much real change can be expected.

A keynote is set for looking at this material by a comment in the letter column by René Dubos, who maintains that an earlier article in *Environment* had exaggerated the case against human modification of natural conditions. The statement he objects to is: "The more changes man makes in his environment, the more dependent he becomes upon the substitution of pesticides for natural controls." Dr. Dubos comments:

This statement is of course valid for [one] kind of environmental changes—especially monocultural farming. . . . But the statement is false when applied to made-made landscapes such as most of the rice

paddies of Asia, the "enclosures" of East Anglia, the "bocages" of Northwestern France. These agricultural landscapes are entirely man-made (some of them dating from the eighteenth century) and yet constitute highly diversified eco-systems. They have proved ecologically stable, economically profitable—as well as esthetically rewarding. The diversity of animal and especially bird life they harbor has contributed a great deal to "natural" pest control.

Well, what are the disadvantages of monocultures? Their virtues are well known. They produce more food and lend themselves to the efficiencies of large-scale, industrialized farming. In "The Green Revolution," H. Garrison Wilkes and Susan Wilkes examine the effects of vastly increased production of three principal cereal plants: hybrid corn, Durum wheat, and the "miracle" rice IR-8. Prof. Wilkes, a biologist, points out that since long domesticated varieties of food plants tend to become wholly dependent on man, and will die out unless deliberately preserved, exclusive reliance on high-yield varieties could easily lead to the extinction of hardier, low-yield varieties. Yet these low-yield varieties might be necessary to prevent the decimating famine which could result when the high-yield variety succumbs to disease or pests.

Only a few basic crops keep the human race from starvation: rice, wheat, corn, sorghum, barley, potatoes, sugar cane, casava, bananas, peanuts, beans, and soybeans. But even this small diversity needs qualification:

Over 60 per cent of the human caloric intake is attributed to the first five on the list. Of these five, rice leads, with half of the world's human population depending on it for 50 per cent of their daily energy needs. Said another way, rice alone accounts for 25 per cent of the human caloric intake worldwide.

The writers recall the potato famine in Ireland in the nineteenth century, when this food crop, brought to Ireland from the Andes country of South America, failed due to an unknown fungus infection. The Irish had developed a high-yield variety of potato, and had no plants with the capacity to resist the fungus. Two million people died of hunger in ten years, and two million more emigrated, leaving four million, many in abject poverty. Then there was the recent case of the wheat stem rust which attacked the high-yield

variety of wheat popular with American growers. And the leaf blight which attacked hybrid corn of the type that accounted for some 80 per cent of the entire U.S. crop in 1970. One fifth of that crop was destroyed by a fungus leaf blight; other varieties of corn were hardly affected. The writers comment:

The case of the wheat stem rust which took 65 per cent of the Durum wheat crop in 1953 and 75 per cent of it in 1954, and 25 per cent of the bread wheat in that same year, or the southern crop leaf blight of the 1970s, are only early warnings.

Furthermore, the highly bred strains of the Green Revolution which promised such large yields in 1967-70 are already showing signs of weakness, which can only be corrected by future incorporation of genes from the very varieties they were designed to replace.

Similar problems have overtaken the high-yield rice crops in the Philippines, while the traditional varieties remain almost immune. Apparently, plant breeders are going to have to add "genes" from the older varieties of grains to the new hybrid kinds, every year or two, to keep them from succumbing to these devastating attacks of plant disease. "Presently," say these writers, "we are actively promoting agricultural technology in third world nations without making an inventory of genetic material, or assessing the system our technology is replacing." Moreover, in encouraging farmers in underdeveloped areas to use high-yield varieties, "We are being very short-sighted by taking high-yield but genetically limited strains into the last undisturbed centers of diversity without assessing and preserving their genetic wealth to insure that we will always have a diversity of strains to meet changing and new conditions."

They might have added a note on the increased dependence of farmers everywhere on plant breeders with specialized knowledge, once the economies of these countries adapt themselves to technological levels of production, becoming vulnerable, at the same time, to threats which need constant alertness and attention.

"Farming with Petroleum," by Michael J. Perelman (of California State College at Chico), deals with the extraordinary requirements of

mechanized farming. Since 1940, the farm population of the United States has dropped from 31.9 million (23.2 per cent of the total) to 9.4 million (4.8 per cent) in 1970, with a corresponding reduction in the number of farms, which are of course much larger. The average farm has jumped from 167 acres to about 400 acres in the same period. Meanwhile, since 1950, the value of farm machinery has practically tripled—increasing from 12.1 billion dollars to 34.2 billion dollars.

The bigger the farm, the more need for pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Meanwhile, the cultivation of food-producing land by modern methods requires about 150 gallons of gasoline a year for each American fed, or five times the energy the person consumes in food. That isn't much, we might say, but the Chinese peasant, for each BTU of bodily energy he expends in growing rice (wet rice culture), produces more than 50 units in return. Prof. Perelman contrasts this with our record: "for each unit of fossil energy we expend we get about one-fifth return. On the basis of these two ratios, Chinese wet rice agriculture is far more efficient than our own system." Another item of interest in this article is the fact that the hybrid corn which gives so great a yield loses in protein content as it gains in yield. Agronomists call this the "inverse nitrogen law." The more nitrogen (protein) in a food, the less the yield as a crop. "What we need," this writer concludes, "is a complete redefinition of efficiency."