

REFLECTIONS ON WAR

THE major appeal, these days, by people hoping to put an end to war, is to fear of extinction. This is logical enough; no one wants to die before his time; and the next war, if it comes, is likely to bring death and destruction to countless millions. There will be no "lucky" ones, if another major war comes, since many of the essential life-support systems will be destroyed. Yet fear as the basis for action, it must be said, is seldom able to accomplish more than peripheral changes in human behavior. If only fear can put an end to war, then there will be those who argue that the more fear the better; but common sense should suggest that, far from leading to peace, the climax of spreading fear is hysteria. Yet anxious people continue to argue that only fear will get through to a majority of people and bring actual results.

Are they right? Is it true that the hope of the world for peace is based on horror stories? A musing comment on war by Harold Goddard (in *The Meaning of Shakespeare*) may have bearing on this question. He says:

War is not the supreme tragedy of men and nations. The supreme tragedy of men and nations is that the moment war ceases they give themselves over to the pursuit of pleasure and power: either to idleness, amusement, diversion, dissipation, or sport; or to money, business, intrigues, politics, domination in some one of its diverse aspects—either, that is, to "peace" in that soft sense which indirectly makes more war inevitable, or to the hard selfishness that is nothing but war in its slumbering form. A third way that is neither pleasure nor power is humanity's supreme desideratum. What that third way is is no secret. How to get humanity to take it is the problem. The way itself is that of the imagination: of love of life for its own sake, of human friendship or the good family on a social scale, of play in its adult estate.

How shall this "third way" become the way of mankind? That is the theme that runs through all of Goddard's two volumes on Shakespeare. *Hamlet*, for him, is a study of conflicting motives.

It was Shakespeare's intent, Goddard believes, to show the folly and uselessness of revenge. But instead of preaching at his audience, he gives full evidence of the pressures on the Prince to do his traditional "duty" and execute his father's murderer. But whom does he cast for fulfillment of this hereditary obligation? Not a man submissive to the expectations of his times, but a sensitive youth and would-be philosopher who recoils from the deed. Yet finally he obeys his father's ghost, almost as one obsessed. He did what the conventional man of his time would have done. What was their code?

Mutually assured destruction—kill and be killed was the formula, very like our foreign policy's credo.

Seeking Shakespeare's intentions as dramatist and poet, Goddard says:

But if we are all repositories of racial revenge, we are also repositories of the rarer tendencies that over the centuries have resisted revenge. Against the contagion of a theater audience these ethereal forces have practically no chance, for in the crowd we are bound to take the play as drama rather than as poetry. But in solitude and silence these forces are sure to lead a certain number of sensitive readers to shudder at the thought of Hamlet shedding blood. Let them express their revulsion, however, and instantly there will be someone to remind them that, whatever may be true now, "in those days" blood revenge was an accepted part of the moral code. As if Shakespeare were a historian and not a poet!

"Those days" never existed. They never existed poetically, I mean. No doubt the code of the vendetta has prevailed for many ages in many lands and revenge has been a favorite theme of the poets from Homer down. History itself, as William James remarked, has been a bath of blood. Yet there is a sense in which the dictum "Thou shalt not kill" has remained just as absolute in the kingdom of the imagination as in the Mosaic law. Moralize bloodshed by custom, legalize it by the state, camouflage it by romance, and still to the finer side of

human nature it is just bloodshed; and always where poetry has become purest and risen highest there has been some parting of Hector and Andromache, some lament of the Trojan women, to show that those very deeds of vengeance and martial glory that the poet himself is ostensibly glorifying have somehow failed to utter the last word. . . .

Here is an account of the qualities in humans which can be depended upon, if they become widespread, to put an end to war. All else is emotional button-pushing and a transient passion for "survival." Some actual human *evolution* is in order, if we are no longer to submit to the darker side of human tradition. This evolution Goddard sees as having already occurred in a few, gaining exquisite expression in the work of a handful of poets. There are futurists and futurists. Blake, and after him Goddard are futurists of the constructive imagination; and can there ever, we may ask, be a world that will give scope to high human possibility without the service of this king faculty of human beings.

The great poets, at any rate, were of this conviction. Goddard elaborates:

If Shakespeare was bent in this play on presenting the morality of a primitive time, why did he make the mistake of centering it around a man who in endowment is as far ahead of either the Elizabethan age or our own as the code of blood revenge is behind both? . . . *Hamlet*, the conclusion is, is a failure because the materials Shakespeare inherited were too tough and intractable. Too tough and intractable for what? That they were too tough and intractable for a credible historical picture may be readily granted. But what of it? And since when has poetry to defer to history? Two world wars in three decades ought to have taught us that our history has not gone deep enough. But poetry has. The greatest poetry has always depicted the world as a little citadel of nobility threatened by an immense barbarism, a flickering candle surrounded by infinite night. The "historical" impossibility of *Hamlet* is its poetical truth, and the paradox of its central figure is the universal psychology of man. . . . Only on the assumption that Hamlet ought not to have killed the King can the play be fitted into what then becomes the unbroken progression of Shakespeare's spiritual development. The only other way out of the difficulty for those who do not themselves believe in blood

revenge is to hold that Shakespeare in *Hamlet* is an archeologist or anthropologist interested in the customs of primitive society rather than a poet concerned with the eternal problems of man.

But why did Shakespeare leave us in doubt about Hamlet? Because, says Goddard, Shakespeare knew something of human nature. Preachments which attempt to settle moral questions bar the way to independent growth. Humans have different ways of gaining maturity and wisdom. The artist will not try to short-circuit the means to understanding of his audience, concealing what wisdom he affords behind the follies and mixed qualities of his characters.

The spectator or reader of that work takes delight in their delusions. But meanwhile from a higher level the poet may be deluding him. Living would lose all its challenge if everything were made so plain that anybody could understand it all the first time. And so would reading. You plunge into a poem as you plunge into battle—at your peril. "That which can be made explicit to the idiot," said Blake, "is not worth my care." . . .

Shakespeare, I am convinced, wanted us at first to believe that Hamlet ought to kill the King in order that we might undergo his agony with him. But he did not want us, I am equally convinced, to persist in that belief. We must view Hamlet first under the aspect of time so that later we may view him under the aspect of eternity. We must be him before we can understand him.

No dramatist can do more for us than this.

At the end of his essay on *Othello*, Goddard summarizes what he understands Shakespeare to be teaching:

The secret of social and political strife, of conflict between nations, is only that of individual and domestic strife writ large. War and peace, says *Othello*, confirming *Hamlet* and carrying the thought from its negative to its positive phase, are states of the soul. War in the military sense is the outer manifestation of war in the psychological sense pre-existing in the inner worlds of its fomenters and participants. That is not saying that outer conditions have nothing to do with the production of war. But it is only as those conditions first produce a military state of the soul that they secondly produce war in its more generally accepted sense.

Are we, then, to contemplate more education in the plays of Shakespeare as a means to peace? Should we go to the poets for inspiration? We could do worse. The poets were once the educators of the entire human race, and their language was faithful to nature, as Emerson has said. Poets write in octaves of meanings; they are the true creators, the makers, of language. But this would indeed be an extraordinary reform, and it would have to begin with a reversal of the trend recently described by Neil Postman as "The Las Vegasizing of America." The key to this process is the electronic plug, the hypnosis of television. Postman writes: "To say it as plainly as I can, American culture is being transformed into one long and uninterrupted show business act." We have put television in the place of reading, the visual image in the place of thinking. The visual media, he suggests, are "cognitively regressive," since they reduce "the range and power of our capacity to abstract and conceptualize." As Rudolph Arnheim has said, "When communication can be achieved by pointing the finger . . . the mouth grows silent, the writing hand stops, and the mind shrinks."

Under what circumstances, then, can there be a revival of real thinking? There are of course those who remain able to think under *any* circumstances, but these are by no means typical of the population at large. Not only the psychological but the physical environment, too, plays a part. We turn to Gandhi for what may seem a very different approach. Gandhi labored all his life for a civilization of self-reliant villages. His idea was that each village would use the resources at hand. He called this "The Gospel of Swadeshi."

Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion, that is, the use of my immediate religious surrounding. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics I should make use of the indigenous institutions and

serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbors and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such Swadeshi, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium. (*The India of My Dreams.*)

In another collection of statements by Gandhi, *Industrialize and Perish!*, he declared that a non-violent civilization can be built only on self-contained villages. He spoke prophetically in 1927:

A time is coming when those who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants, vainly thinking that they add to the real substance, real knowledge of the world, will retrace their steps and say: "What have we done?" Civilizations have come and gone, and in spite of all our vaunted progress I am tempted to ask again and again, "To what purpose?" Wallace, a contemporary of Darwin, said the same thing. Fifty years of brilliant inventions and discoveries, he has said, has not added one inch to the moral height of mankind. So said a dreamer and visionary, if you will—Tolstoy.

It is necessary, while reading a man like Gandhi, to remember that his understanding of "progress" is different from the prevailing idea in the West. Why do we read him at all? Because we wonder what such a man believes concerning the way to peace. Here, we might notice, he is not exhorting or moralizing but describing the circumstances of a society which does not produce the military state of mind. He says:

There are two schools of thought current in the world. One wants to divide the world into cities and the other into villages. The village civilization and the city civilization are totally different things. One depended on machinery and industrialization, the other rested on handicraft. We have given preference to the latter.

After all, this industrialization and large-scale production was only of comparatively recent growth. We do not know how far it has contributed to our development and happiness, but we know that it has brought in its wake recent world wars. . . . It is the city man who is responsible for war all over the world, never the villager.

Gandhi argued this case from what were then current conditions (which have not significantly changed):

When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end. Take a concrete instance. England today is the cloth shop of the world. It, therefore, needs to hold a world in bondage to secure its market. But under the change that I have envisaged, she would limit her production to the actual needs of her 45 million of population. When that need is satisfied, the production would necessarily stop. It won't be continued for the sake of bringing in more gold irrespective of the needs of the people and at the risk of their impoverishment. There would be no unnatural accumulation of hoards in the pockets of the few, and want in the midst of plenty in regard to the rest, as is happening today, for instance, in America. America . . . has reached the acme of mass production, and yet she has not been able to abolish unemployment or want. There are still thousands, perhaps millions of people in America who live in misery, in spite of the phenomenal riches of the few. The whole of the American nation is not benefitted by this mass production.

Gandhi would not abandon "mass production," but by this he meant "production by the masses." "If," he asked, "you multiply individual production to millions of times, would it not give you mass production on a tremendous scale?"

But I quite understand that your "mass production" is a technical term for production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery. I have said to myself that that is wrong. My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions. Under my system, again, it is labour which is the current coin, not metal.

Democracy, for Gandhi, meant rural democracy:

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world.

It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbors or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of natural forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labor. . . .

The villagers should develop such a high degree of skill that articles prepared by them should command a ready market outside. When our villages are fully developed there will be no dearth in them of men with a high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village poets, village artists, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short, there will be nothing in life worth having which will not be had in the villages. Today the villages are dung heaps. Tomorrow they will be like tiny gardens of Eden where dwell highly intelligent folk whom no one can deceive or exploit. . . . It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraph . . . and the like . . .

Such a society—the India and the world of Gandhi's dreams—would have no wars and no reason for going to war. Is it possible, can it be done? All Gandhi's writings belong to the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. His most explicit brief exposition of his ideas is in a small book published in 1909—*Hind Swaraj* (Indian Home Rule), recording a philosophy that never thereafter changed. Practically all present-day Gandhians point to this book as the best one to read for understanding what Gandhi worked for, given in his own words. (Available Gandhian literature may be obtained at modest cost from Greenleaf Books, Weare, New Hampshire 03218,)

The reader of *Hind Swaraj* will discover that three quarters of a century ago (he wrote in 1908) Gandhi proposed a program of action which today, in one or another form, is being actively worked for in various parts of the world. There are excellent journals filled with the thinking of people who share in the ideas he declared, either because he inspired them or they arrived at some of those ideals by the exercise of searching

common sense. How, someone may ask, can the Gandhian conception of a society made up of villages be applied in a highly developed technological society?

There are answers to this question given by magazines such as *Rain* (2270 NW Irving, Portland, Ore. 92710), *Resurgence* (Ford House, Hartland, Bideford, Devon U. K.); the publications of the Planet Drum Foundation, P.O. Box 31251, San Francisco, Calif. 94131, of the School of Living Press, P.O. Box 3233, York, Pa. 17402; *The Ecologist*, Worthydale Manor Farm, Camelford, Cornwall PL32 9TT, UK.; *Permaculture*, 37 Goldsmith Street, Maryborough 3465 Australia; *Tilth*, Arlington, Washington 98223; *The Land Report* issued by the Land Institute, Salina, Kans. 67401; and in particular, *The Village as Solar Ecology*, edited by John and Nancy Todd, published by the New Alchemy Institute, 237 Hatchville Road, East Falmouth, Mass. 02536.

These magazines and publications represent a broad movement of gathering strength. Their goal is sending down roots for a society which respects the earth, its fruits, and all its inhabitants. Peace, as they see it, will be a natural consequence of the realization of their dream and goals. What they are working toward is consistent with peaceful attitudes and acts. The dominant civilization of the day, for a variety of reasons, many of them obvious, is not. Many of the editors and contributors to these journals would readily adopt the Gandhian definition: "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms."

REVIEW

SELF-VALIDATING EXPERIENCE

THIS week we consider a book now thirteen years old, one of the volumes that should be given comparative immortality by frequent reading. It is *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences* by Abraham H. Maslow, originally a Kappa Delta Pi lecture series (1964), and published by Viking in 1970, the year of the author's death, in June. A month before, in May, he wrote the Preface, in which he set the tone of the book, showing that religion, as it gains popularity, achieves rigidity and decay of meaning; and that the same is true of science. How, he asks, can we keep forever fresh, young, and freshly true our religion and our sciences? How can we learn always to turn away from the slogans on which such institutions subsist long after their life has found more receptive embodiments? And if we cannot change the institutions, how can we acquire the wit to stay out of them, or to work with them charily, without getting too deeply involved?

He begins by recalling that a patriotic women's organization accused the Supreme Court of being "Anti-religious" by banning prayer in the public schools. Maslow went on:

I disagreed with the women's organization. But then something happened that set me to thinking for many months. It dawned on me that I, too, was in favor of spiritual values and that, indeed, my researches and theoretical investigations had gone far toward demonstrating their reality. I had reacted in an automatic way against the whole statement by the organization, thereby implicitly accepting its erroneous definition and concept of spiritual values. In a word, I had allowed these intellectual primitives to capture a good word and to put *their* peculiar meaning to it, just as they had taken the fine word "patriotic" and contaminated and destroyed it. I had let them redefine these words and had then accepted their definitions. And now I want to take them back. I want to demonstrate that spiritual values have a naturalistic meaning, that they are not the exclusive possession of organized churches, that they do not need supernatural concepts to validate them, that they are well within the jurisdiction of a suitably enlarged

science, and that, therefore, they are the general responsibility of *all* mankind. If all this is so, then we shall have to re-evaluate the possible place of spiritual and moral values in education. For if these values are not exclusively identified with the churches, then teaching values in the schools need not breach the wall between church and state.

Simply from this opening passage, one sees that there is *real content* in the book. Maslow's work has been epoch-making in psychology, and in some measure in philosophy, too, simply because he refuses to go around, to evade, such touchy subjects. He wants to put a crowbar under conventional opinion and take away the accepted authority of the institutions that most other writers refer to with respect as a matter of course. This is the role of an innovating David in conflict with the Goliath of public habit—a losing game, many people will say. Such prospects did not deter Maslow in the least. He saw what needed to be done and set out to do it.

How could he make friends that way? Well, he did. His work soon overflowed the confinement of university press editions, graduating into the category of trade books for the general reader. There are more people "out there," able and willing to think as Maslow thinks—both seriously and fearlessly, that is—than we suppose.

This is how he sets the issue.

The Supreme Court decisions on prayer in the public schools were seen (mistakenly, as we shall see) by many Americans as a rejection of spiritual values in education. Much of the turmoil was in defense of these higher values and eternal verities rather than of the prayers as such. That is to say, very many people in our society apparently see organized religion as *the* locus, *the* source, *the* custodian and guardian and teacher of the spiritual life. Its methods, its style of teaching, its content are widely and officially accepted as *the* path, by many as the *only* path, to the life of righteousness, of purity and virtue, of justice and goodness, etc.

As a matter of fact, this identity is so profoundly built into the English language that it is almost impossible to speak of the "spiritual life" (a distasteful phrase to a scientist, and especially to a psychologist)

without using the vocabulary of traditional religion. There just isn't any other satisfactory language as yet. A trip to the thesaurus will demonstrate this very quickly. This makes an almost insoluble problem for the writer who is intent on demonstrating that the common base of all religions is human, natural, empirical, and that so-called spiritual values are also naturally derivable. But I have available only a theistic language for this "scientific" job.

Well, there will be those who say that what Maslow declares is "pretty good" but that he doesn't go far enough in the "right" ("my") direction, and that may be true. In his statement of "the common base of all religions" he leaves out the "metaphysical," which seems a plain intellectual error, but one should remember that Maslow is speaking culturally as well as personally. He is a teacher, a member of a profession. He would like to shape the way his profession and the schools approach these questions, and this is of necessity a gradual process. Cultural development does not proceed by jumps, but by increments of slow realization. What Maslow really accomplished was to take down the bars of materialistic negation, opening up to scientists as well as the rest of us the responsibility of *thinking* about religious truth. His books show how far he was able to go in this direction. No doubt there is a legitimate metaphysic to frame the meaning of a peak experience, but he was satisfied to acquaint us as well as he could with its actual ranges, its typical accompaniments of felt meaning, and then to consider the implications of this magnificent pole of human consciousness. What is the "peak experience"? History and biography are full of reports. It is that sense of being one with all life, of the eternal fitness of things, of the fitness of oneself in the world, and of the world for the self. One looks on the world of time and circumstance from an eyrie beyond time and place, an immortal vision, so to speak. This experience has degrees, it has both universality and individuality. It is private (very private) yet understood by others who have had the same experience. It is dissolving of evil, yet holds it in recognition.

Thus the peak learner surely and certainly that life can be worthwhile, that it can be beautiful and valuable. There are ends in life, i.e., experiences which are so precious in themselves as to prove that not everything is a means to some end other than itself.

Another kind of self-validating insight is the experience of being a real identity, a real self, of feeling what it is like to feel really oneself, what in fact one is—not a phony, a fake, a striver, an impersonator. Here again, the experiencing itself is the revelation of truth.

My feeling is that if it were never to happen again, the power of the experience could permanently affect the attitude toward life. A single glimpse of heaven is enough to confirm its existence even if it is never experienced again. It is my strong suspicion that even one such experience might be able to prevent suicide, for instance, and perhaps many varieties of slow self-destruction, e.g., alcoholism, drug addiction, addiction to violence, etc. I would guess also, on theoretical grounds, that peak-experiences might well abort "existential meaninglessness," states of valuelessness, etc., at least occasionally.

As one reads along, it becomes obvious that what Maslow is doing as a psychologist is to return authority for one's self-conception to the individual. He is the determined enemy of passivity, of "let the leader of the cult do the worrying." We are more than the creatures of the mechanistic processes the scientists work with. We are not the offspring of either behavioristic or Freudian theory. We are *ourselves* with evidence of our selves as starting-points, as creators needing to create, and capable of creation. How do we know this? As Maslow says, there is in our minds and hearts the seed of a self-validating process. How does he know this? Well, peak experience happens to people. He found this out and then began collecting reports. He was a scientist. He looked at a sort of evidence in human life known well to literature and the poets. Since it was a part of human experience, he took it seriously. Why not? Why should the scientist have the right to exclude anything that really happens from his researches? If, he said, we need to remake science in order to include the sublime

as well as the pathological, then that is what we must do. And he made a great beginning.

Still, people will ask how we can be sure about such matters. The reply might be, What do you think is normative for having certainty—the human, not the "objective" sort of certainty? There are, it is true, various certainties that we try to live by, some of them delusive; but others are not delusive at all.

. . . the point is that the experience itself is a kind of knowledge gained (or attitude changed) which is self-validating. Other such experiences, coming for the first time, are true simply because experienced, e.g., greater integration of the organism, . . . the widening and enriching of consciousness through new perceptual experiences, many of which leave a lasting effect, is a little like improving the perceiver himself.

Maslow is skilled in assembling the "ifs, and "and buts," in weighing them justly and disposing of many of them. He worked on the others for as long as he lived. He provided the roots for another vocabulary in thinking about human beings, ourselves. He built on the foundation of health, healthy minds as well as bodies. His books are portals to this kind of thinking, and to conclusions tentative as well as firm among those he reached. This is the beginning of a humanizing science of man.

COMMENTARY **THE RIGHT THING**

THERE is a great deal of good sense in the world. This issue illustrates its variety. There is Shakespeare's more than good—sublime—sense repeated in the lead article, and Harold Goddard's sense in discerning Shakespeare's. Then there is Gandhi's sense, now beginning to gather more and more agreement as his predictions come true. Maslow's perceptive sense comes through in what amounts to dialogue with himself—he writes an account of his own reflections, showing his use of reason. Becky O'Malley (in "Children") uses her sense of proportion to expose how ridiculous institutional practice can become, and applies her Irish humor with surgical effect. Then comes the urbanity of Montaigne. Finally, there is the incisive prose of an African "environmental economist" and the insight of a Gandhian writer on the possibilities of India.

This good sense is the real wealth of the world, since without it no material wealth is used to common advantage or will last.

But this sense is not adopted by human beings in aggregates of nations. Somehow, human intelligence is at a discount for the users of power. Power seems to make people unable to recognize good sense. Yet, curiously, those who see the importance of using good sense often spend their lives in the pursuit of power. How else, they ask, can we *apply* the plain good sense we have acquired?

There is great irony in this situation. What is wrong with the idea that if you want to do good, change things for the better, you will need the right instruments for action and the power to use them? What is wrong with the idea that, unless you get the tools and the power, the good will languish away in idealistic dreams?

These are old, old questions, yet their relevance is undiminished. We are far from answering them today. The difficulty is that there is a great difference between the laws governing

what we know how to do—move things around, fix things up—and altering human intentions and ways of thinking.

No one, it seems, is able to think and *know* for anyone else. Those of really good sense will not attempt it. But people are so *slow* in seeing what they ought to do! They are indeed. What if some other sort of lag is an even greater disaster—the lag in learning that no human being can be *made* to do the right thing, that there is no right thing except in self-chosen, voluntary acts?

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves THE SLY CONNIVERS

IN the *Progressive* for January, 1983—too close for comfort to Orwell's 1984—Becky O'Malley ("a lawyer and a free-lance writer in Berkeley, " Calif.) tells about her youngest daughter, whom she took out of a Berkeley public school "after she'd had seven teachers in her first three years in the 'system'." She also tells about the school—named "Malcolm X":

Almost all of the first week of school was devoted to making sure that both students and parents had a firm grip on the rules. Our daughter brought home a five-page, single-spaced Riot Act one day. Suppressing my urge to take a red pencil to the spelling and punctuation errors on every page, I signed my name on the lines provided so that my child could prove to her teachers that her parents had read and understood the rules.

In fact, I cheated. I didn't read the rules before I signed them. I figured it would be better to retain my upbeat attitude as long as possible for Eliza's sake, and I don't much like rules. I've brought my kids up to have good sense and to make their own decisions about appropriate behavior as much as possible. . . . Nevertheless, if the school in its infinite wisdom is into rules, I thought, I wouldn't worry about it. Maybe they need them to keep the kids from authoritarian homes in line.

Well, look at it from the school's point of view. The place is so big it has to have "administrators" who don't teach, but just run a tight ship so the teachers are, so to say, *able* to teach. That all this has become ridiculous, anti-educational, even anti-human, doesn't bother the administrators, who have *their* job to do, to *make* things *work*, after the fashion of administrators, who, indeed, are not reformers. They do the best they can, with occasional complaint. Not all public schools are the same of course, but they are enough the same because nearly all of them have the same problem.

The rest of Becky O'Malley's essay is on what came from the Science Department—ideal material for case study of how not to go about science education, or *any* education. But, of course, the

Department is faced with a condition, not a theory. Berkeley is a fine city full of "liberated" people, but far from a utopia. As you can see:

But unfortunately, the science department provided two copies of its rules, one to return to school and one to keep on the refrigerator door for reference, and recently I inadvertently read one copy. Its title, in keeping with the educational establishment's weakness for wordy euphemism, is, "A Model for Student Behavior in Science Class." But rules are rules, even if they're disguised in such regrettable language as "the following student behaviors are identified as minor offenses."

After the list of minor offenses, the writer notes that "the above behaviors are minor offenses that require the student to return after school and work for one class period. With repeated occurrences (sic), minor offenses can become major." It sounds like the Baltimore Catechism's minute distinctions between venial and mortal sins that I memorized in my Catholic girlhood.

But the model calls attention to one sin that even the Church Fathers didn't think of: Code section II, number 2, forbids "sitting quietly doing no work." That's a detention offense at junior high these days.

Too bad, Albert Einstein Jr., if you claim to be thinking about some silly theory or other. If you can't prove, by pushing that pencil and filling in those blanks, that you're working, it's detention for you, lad. What's this, little Marie Curie, you're wondering about what happens to those extra atoms? Do you want to stay after school today? Science these days is big business—no time to waste on unproductive day dreams. Hey there Ikey Newton, stop goldbricking under that apple tree and get to work.

How soon, I wonder, will my daughter be called on the carpet for "sitting quietly and doing no work"? If there's anything in heredity, she's in trouble. I think it was E. B. White who said, "Never ask a writer what he's doing staring at the wall. That's when the work gets done." . . .

You can bet the schools today won't produce daydreamers like us. Not in Berkeley, anyway.

And, on the average, no place else. The Berkeley school administrators had better thank their stars that Becky O'Malley is not another Carrie Nation armed with a super-hatchet to raze to street level the city's public schools. (See the chapter on Carrie in *Fanaticism*, reviewed last week; there was just no stopping her, a quality deserving respect.)

Instead, happily, there is the admirable and persuasive method of John Holt, who says, cutting the Gordian knot in a sentence: "Teach your children at home." If you can't, think about doing it anyway. It would be good for them, and might also, eventually, improve the schools, making them smaller and giving good teachers at least a chance to do what they know how to do.

We turn now to a book put together by Ronald Gross, *Invitation to Lifelong Learning* (Follett, 1982, \$18.95), in which appear several old friends—Plato, for one, who opens the book with the allegory of the Cave from the *Republic*. Next comes Pico's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, which is handy to refer to, and then Robert McClintock's advocacy and defense of study as a replacement for "teaching." McClintock, who works in Teacher's College in New York, provides this passage on Montaigne:

Like a number of the ancients, especially the stoical Seneca, Montaigne cautioned against reliance on teachers in the course of education. Passive knowing was less important than the work of finding out, and authoritative instruction simply put the youthful mind to rest. Teaching and learning might impart knowledge, whereas study led to understanding whereby things known were made one's own and became a part of one's judgment, and "education, labor, and study aim only at forming that." Yes, Montaigne went to school, to the College de Guinne, the best in France, at a precocious six. "At thirteen . . . I had completed my course (as they call it), and in truth, without any benefit that I can now take into account." Like many students of today and yore, Montaigne shirked his assignments, instead reading avidly Virgil, Terence, Plautus, and other authors that struck his, not his teachers', fancy. When mature, Montaigne remembered the wisdom of one instructor, "who knew enough to connive cleverly at this escapade of mine. . . . Pretending to see nothing, he whetted my appetite, allowing me to devour these books only on the sly and holding me gently at my job on the regular studies." Whether in or out of school, education for Montaigne was a process of self-set study, not of learning the lessons others prescribed.

The trouble with big institutions is that they make no place for the connivers, who have then to do their real work on the sly. Of course, the world has always been hard on genuine teachers, who sometimes don't bother to be sufficiently

circumspect. We know what happens then. (There are lots of other interesting things in Gross's book, which has 287 pages, but these early contributions are the classics well to always have around.)

Someone will say, "Our children are not Montaignes," and they may be right. They *may* be right, for the world cannot get along without Montaignes, and to shut them out, which is not impossible, is to give up on the hope of one day reaching civilization. Only a little system, with a few connivers, gives them a foothold, which is obviously all they need. Too much system means either death or rebellion at an early age.

The Montaignes may be more numerous than we suppose. Years ago, in the Spring 1965 issue of *Contemporary Issues*, Dorothy T. Samuel wrote about some of that generation of students, the ones who "tasted deep of the fleshpots of conspicuous consumption and found them bitter and unsatisfying."

On every college campus will be found unfashionably clad students lolling in cheap rooms, reading inexpensive paperbacks or second-hand editions of great books. . . . They browse among the courses and disciplines. If a book speaks to their condition, they may skip a few weeks of required work to peruse everything the author wrote. When the grade card reflects what they did not learn rather than what they did learn, they couldn't care less. Top grades are meaningful only to employers; these students have not seen any jobs worth doing. . . . And so the exodus has begun. In ones and twos undramatically, thoughtful lads and lasses are dropping out of college, at least off and on, so they will have time to think. . . . They are, in short, philosophic in an age which seems to offer no forum for discussion of principles and values and verities. . . . They would be Emersons and Thoreaus in a day when journals and podiums seem open only to statisticians and reporters.

What is the use of talk about how to improve the big institutions, except by dividing them up into little ones, which might stop driving the Montaignes, the Emersons, and the Thoreaus away? The objective would be to provide places for real teachers where they don't have to work in surroundings almost entirely against the grain of what they believe in and do.

FRONTIERS Ills and a Remedy

IN a recent issue of *New Age* two writers, Peggy Taylor and Nancy DuVergne Smith, interviewed Chinweizu, a Nigerian environmental economist. Asked what is *really* wrong with the world economy, he replied that it is based on greed—a motive, however disguised, which leads to indifference to need. Motive shapes methods, and then technical development proceeds as though there were no other dynamic, as though greed had been scientifically established as the natural and sole drive behind economic activity. Chinweizu said:

Greed doesn't always function in a clearly visible manner: it's tied into a complicated way of seeing the world and what people are here for and what they are about. If the belief that more is better (which is a value in the greed system, the ideology of greed) or that the grass is always greener on the other side, you have built-in dissatisfaction—the pressures from which lead to destruction of the environment.

In the existing society, a powerful factor supporting greed is the desire for status.

You begin to get status and its various rewards. At that point wasteful modes of fulfilling basic needs become entrenched within a culture. The more conspicuous waste you can command, or the more access you have to the resources for conspicuous waste, the more status you have, the more power, prestige, and all that heady stuff you acquire.

Tracing the practical effects of this attitude in the methods of economic production, distribution, and consumption, Chinweizu went on:

Those who wish to have control insist that they control production everywhere, and that desire on their part helps to dictate the way the economy is organized. You don't let a community grow all its own food. You sit there and find ways—literally dream up ways—to prevent them from doing so. You tempt, trick, or force a community that has been producing its own food into planting only coffee or corn or wheat or vegetables, and you glorify that as modern monoculture. Now everybody must come to you with all that corn or wheat or vegetables or coffee that they cannot eat, and you can then give the corn

people, say, the little amount of wheat or coffee that they must have (this is what is known as the modern cash crop economy). But meanwhile you've taken away the people's self-sufficiency and made them all dependent on you. They dare not offend you or fool with you, since you can starve them to death or into obedience.

The food processors, interested in mass markets, shelflife, and elaborately packaged sales appeal, try, he says, "to prevent you from getting everything you need except through them."

In the process, you end up consuming more energy and resources, because it takes more to produce that refined product. If through processing you double the quantity of energy and resources it takes to feed each person, you reduce by half the number of persons the earth can support.

How much it takes to support a human life is culturally determined. Given the finite capacity of the earth to supply resources and energy, how many people the earth can support depends significantly on the way our cultures choose to supply our basic needs. Finding the appropriate culture and with it the appropriate economy is the key.

Is there any hope? How can all these habits and assumptions be changed? Chinweizu believes that ecological values, taught by nature and by thoughtful humans, will begin to accomplish the change.

The environmental crisis is probably the best thing that could have happened. It forces people to face up to the fact they cannot go on as they have. And if inquiries are directed in the right channels, it could lead to improvements, or at least to an avoidance of the catastrophe that appears to be coming. . . .

Our inherited values seemed all right when different communities lived in various little ecological niches. . . . But now we've got this system where you can't stay unaware of what others are doing, because we've reached the point where we are able to influence what happens in every other locality. We've exhausted our ecological buffer zones or frontiers. We have to think of the biosphere as one system. Values that are not ecologically valid are going to really do us in, no matter how sanctified they are by antiquity. . . . we're talking about industrial systems that have far more disruptive impact on the global environment than having too many cattle or too many

sheep. Reassessing our inherited values is one area where the process has to begin. . . . The fact is, we have less than fifty years to undo the mistakes of five thousand. Of course, it's going to be a struggle, but awareness is certainly the first step: without it, we'll get nowhere. So the fact that a growing number of people in the world are at least beginning to look at how they behave, to look at their personal behavior, and to say "Well, should I give this up? Should I give that up?"—that's a beginning. And, as they say, a journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step.

. . . we have come to a transition point where a whole different kind of logic is at work. . . . The conditions of survival have suddenly changed, and so we have to change our fundamental analysis. It's difficult, but people will just keep trying to understand.

This analysis, even if somewhat simplified, has the virtue of being both cogent and brief. Spreading the word is the task of all those who see the point. Another side of the question is discussed by Devendra Kumar in the last October *Science for Villages*, in which he tells about the work of the Center of Science for Villages in Sangrahalaya, Wardha 442001, India. He begins by pointing out that India is third in the world in number of trained scientific personnel, and tenth in industrial infrastructure, yet close to half the population of the country lives below the subsistence level. "Technology," he says, "has been geared to industrial production but not to social justice."

India is probably the only country where the world can discover and evolve the desired direction, as it has both the technological capabilities and space for manoeuvrability. While the Western countries lack the latter, the other developing countries lack the former. Hence, for bridging the gulfs between the rural and the urban as well as that between the affluent and the third world, the very technology which helped create it must be utilized to remedy it. This desired appropriate technology has in recent times been highlighted by E. F. Schumacher's efforts but is intrinsic in the approach Gandhi took of Science.

Kumar urges the development of channels to take what researchers have found out into the rural areas for practical application. "Even

today," he says, "our labs have many techniques which can help the poor, but there is no conduit to take these from their portals to the doors of the mud huts." This is a service that voluntary agencies can perform, enabling the people in the villages to have employment which reduces their idle time. He concludes: "With a proper impetus, India can show the world a model of the new order where decentralized, low energy, low capital modes of scientific production are made possible."