VOLUME XIX, NO. 37
SEPTEMBER 14, 1966

THE METHOD OR THE PLAN?

A CERTAIN hardihood of mind is required of anyone who today undertakes to write a book contending for far-reaching changes in the social and economic order on the ground that these changes have their mandate in Natural Law. Such an author must have a sturdiness of conviction which remains undismayed by some two centuries of special pleading, during which conclusions from "Natural Law" have led in directions widely different from his own; and he must also be untouched by the tired cynicism which looks upon *any* theory of Natural Law as a curiously naïve revival of eighteenth-century confidence in Science and Reason.

Having said this, we must add that books which *do* attempt to establish fundamental relations between the meaning of human life and the laws of nature are the only books which can be said to exert a measurable influence on human affairs. When a man insists that there are things which are not, but *ought to be*, he has to argue from some basic rule of order. He has at least to hope to touch the springs of intuitive longing in his readers, and to show by reasoned argument that a given course of action will lead to general human good. He will of course have to deal with contradictions and meet and resolve dilemmas. He is attempting to disclose nothing less than "the truth," and this is a project which many men consider to be quite hopeless and who often make a fairly good living out of professional attack on all such brave endeavors. Yet every age of unbelief and criticism finally comes to an end. It seems unquestionably true that the negative state of mind cannot be tolerated by human beings beyond a certain term. There is an obvious importance, therefore, in the affirmative expressions which emerge toward the end of a cycle of disenchantment and destructive criticism. Even if not world-shaking in character, such expressions may contain inklings of the kind of renewed faith in man that is to come.

A book which is plainly of this character is F. McEachran's *Freedom—The Only End*, just issued by Johnson Publications Ltd., London ($3.00). The threads of Mr. McEachran's argument are several. He begins by declaring that discovery of and conformity to Natural Law are the basis of human evolution. Deeply rooted in the requirements for the growth of human beings is Freedom. This leads him to accept the judgment of the State made by anarchist philosophers and to adopt the economic doctrines of Henry George. He acknowledges the reality of what the Christians call "original sin," but as an empirically noted flaw or defect, without theological implications. As he says:

> I want, however, to make it clear that it is always an individual and personal defect, varying in its symptoms from organism to organism and affecting in social life only the immediate environment. An obvious example of this arises when two men quarrel with each other and come to blows, the sort of human breakdown that probably comes within the experience of most people. It constitutes a deplorable but not unnatural situation, and involves no great use of force to restore peace. It is in fact a sort of irreducible minimum of social evil.

Mr. McEachran maintains that control of the disorders arising from "human nature" is a comparatively easy task:

> Any society of any kind will take steps to protect itself against the effects of original sin very much as almost all schools in England have a prefect system for the general maintenance of order. But whether this conception of government is really even remotely connected with the state in the modern world is quite another matter. There is all the difference in the world between a state keeping order among people who stand in normal relationships to one another and one that is keeping order among people in abnormal relationships.

This last sentence is a key idea of Mr. McEachran's argument. As illustration, he cites the classic case of the enclosure of the commons:

> During the Tudor regime in England a considerable amount of land was enclosed by the governing powers and large numbers of peasants were thrown on the roads. Queen Elizabeth on ascending the throne, found to her surprise that there was in the country an enormous army of vagrants (about 80,000 in number) who had no visible means of sustenance. So large a figure demanded immediate action, and the outcome was the Elizabethan Poor Law, which remained in force down to the middle of the nineteenth century. It was, in this way, almost the first act of what is now known as socialism, insofar as the state stepped in charitably to help the poor and needy through the medium of taxation. But, notice, if the enclosures which had driven the peasants off the land had not occurred no such government help would have been required, even supposing (which is inconceivable) that government help is ever as good as self-help.
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> Naturally enough, enclosures of land provoke resistance from the peasantry, and the state invariably sends troops to quell the rebellion and so restore what it calls, by a pleasant euphemism, "order." Yet it was originally the state itself which, by an unnatural law, disturbed the relatively normal relationships of the people. And there is little doubt, when we consider the various peasant revolts and agrarian revolutions that have taken place in Europe since the disappearance of feudal land tenure, that the existence of a large police force as well as a regular army has something to do with this enclosure of land. This is a case rather different from that which we first considered, but it is a case of the highest significance. We have as the first situation a crude natural order (peasants on land), then disorder caused by an artificial redistribution of land into a few hands, finally an artificial order produced by an armed force of the state. . . . Original sin may lead one man to deceive another, but not much more. States will apply interference, with scientific accuracy, to thousands or even millions of men and will attempt to punish with scientific precision all attempts to evade it.

Now while a great many learned arguments, armed with much expertise, could no doubt be directed against Mr. McEachran, and not only in terms of the fragmentary statement of his thesis given here, but against his entire presentation, very little of all this criticism would be *really* pertinent. His central argument in behalf of freedom is certainly valid, and his espousal of *laisser faire* economics so plainly not a defense of ruthless acquisitiveness, but of freedom divorced from monopoly power, that the usual liberal contentions imputing self-interest cannot possibly apply. If you look for this writer's basic purpose, apart from the forms of his argument and the illustrations of what he regards as "natural law," you soon see that his fundamental interest is in the maintenance of growth-situations for human beings. He sees that this purpose is inevitably defeated by coercive power, and in modern times coercive power is characteristically embodied in the national state. The fact is that no one can demonstrate that his proposals are impracticable, given the conditions he sets out, although it can be argued that the establishment of those conditions would be opposed by many sorts of people—all those who have rationalized their feelings of security in terms of the *status quo.* And we may note that the more precarious the existing arrangements, the more anxiety there is to keep them unchanged. Mr. McEachran addresses himself to this problem as well as he can:

> We have still to deal with the objection that since things are as they are and monopoly is enthroned, it is absolutely essential for the state to give help during the dislocation. To this argument, which puts forward two separate points, "help" and "the state," not necessarily conjoined, there are several answers. The first is the obvious one that as the state incorporates the very power that is causing the dislocation, i.e., causing change to occur too rapidly, to accept help from it is in fact only a further means of accentuating the dislocation. I need not stress this point as the reader will easily see its sting. The second is that whatever the state gives—and it will never give much—is taken from the workers by way of taxation, thereby discouraging other forms of production as well as reducing the workers' standard of living. The history of taxation shows how the process continues until, after destroying the liberty of the subject, it culminates in tyranny, ruin and either revolution or slow decay. Thirdly, and most important, we should remember that society in the absence of the state could quite easily provide all the

> help required. The prerequisite of the state disappearing is the abolition of the monopoly on which it depends, and with it the harmful dislocation now existing. When dislocation becomes merely individual dislocation, it will cause no more hardship to society than the growth of a tree causes to the tree. The very fact that labor is always in demand in a free society would obviate any mass distress or unemployment, and all that would remain would be individual cases of hardship due solely to bad luck or original sin. Most of these people would probably have taken precautions themselves through benevolent societies or insurance, but if not, it would be the easiest thing in the world to deal with them on charitable lines. They would present no overwhelming problem of the kind we are faced with in Europe and Asia today.

Now the only serious quarrel one can have with this passage is that it requires the reader to perform so many sustained acts of the imagination, that his thought-processes are almost certain to falter while trying to follow the reasoning in Mr. McEachran's argument. Obviously, it would have application only in a warless world. Obviously, it would involve the re-education, somehow, of large segments of the population which have been unfitted for work by a complex cluster of causes. And obviously, again, the task of imagining the restoration of the conditions of individual freedom, in the author's terms, in the context of modern technology (present and coming cybernation, etc.) with its vast systems of control, and despite the apparent subordination of mere land "ownership" to the power of enormous corporate superstructures, is completely dizzying to the mind—at least, to the mind of this reviewer. We do not say this in criticism of Mr. McEachran or in doubt of his principles, but rather as a way of recognizing the extreme difficulties in any project for reform as far-reaching as the one he proposes.

The point that seems most useful to make, here, is that it is senseless to draw up a devastating attack on books such as *Freedom—The Only End.* (Since the field of discussion is so wide, and the factors involved so numerous, any clever writer could easily *seem* to destroy its claims.) Instead, the thing to do is to focus on the educational purposes of the writer. In many such large questions, simply to grasp what is at issue is to change the character of the problem that is being examined. And since the problem examined by Mr. McEachran can be solved only through a general enlightenment, the particulars of his argument are far less important than his first principles and general contentions.

What is sought, in short, is the kind of consensus that will permit and lead to the first voluntary steps toward change. This consensus is the first essential, since coercion is ruled out by the very setting of the problem. Monopoly and coercive power can play no part in a plan which has for its chief purpose the correction of the mistakes of monopoly and coercive power. How, then, is the solution to be gained? Obviously, only by those problem-changing increments of understanding through which there is a continual redefinition of the problem itself, as a result of which people grow out of the idea that there can be no progress except through *total* change.

In these terms, the "plan" and total "program," conceived as the means to producing the "ideal situation," no longer have the same crucial importance. This is a way of affirming a very old idea—that the means to reach any goal must themselves contain instances of the goal. The end, in this case, is freedom; or, as we have redefined it, the establishment of growth-situations. So the practical end of the project becomes the immediate creation of growth-situations, developed out of the very limits which stand in the way of reaching the larger goal. This is all that can be done, under any circumstances.

After all, verbal agreement as a result of argument is not what is sought. This may work in a conformity society, but is useless and worse than useless in a society that is supposed to be free. People who conform without understanding have an uncontrollable tendency to search wildly for an external limit, some battering certainty that will

confine human behavior. This happens whenever they are precociously set free.

It is the intuitive grasp of this fact that makes men of wide personal experience seek with such determination for "Natural Law" as a guide for their idea of the good society. Freedom has no reality as an abstraction; it has meaning only within limits. The man who talks about freedom, but says nothing about limits, is the worst sort of demagogue.

The man who is really devoted to human freedom, whatever his final vision, will be more concerned with the educational process than with the political process. He will avoid manipulative solutions as he would the germs of the worst sort of infectious disease. He will spend his efforts in helping people to practice the principles of freedom in any social framework, on the theory that the framework can never be improved except by the action of men who are themselves learning how to be free. And he will never make any big *predictions* about the forms that the larger social freedom will take, except in terms of general principles. For nothing is more unpredictable, less susceptible to being blueprinted, than the way in which human growth in understanding takes place.

A distinguished man who taught philosophy at Harvard, George Herbert Palmer, has said something fundamental on this point:

> We cannot tell whether those whom we are teaching have taken our best points or not. Those best points, what are they? We shall count them one thing, our pupils another. We gather what seems to us of consequence and pour it out on our classes. But if their minds are not fitted to receive it, . . . all we pour down is simply shed as if nothing had fallen; while again we say something so slight that we hardly notice it, but, happening to be just the nutritive element which that small life needs, it is caught up and turned into human fibre. We cannot tell. We work in the dark. . . .
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> On this point I received capital instruction from one of my pupils. In teaching a course on English Empiricism I undertook a line of exposition I knew was abstruse. Indeed, I doubted if many of the class could follow; but there on the front seat sat one whose bright eyes were ever upon me. It seemed worth while to teach my three or four best men, that man in particular. By the end of the term there were many grumblings. My class did not get much out of me that year. They graduated, and a couple of years later this young fellow appeared at my door to say that he could not pass through Cambridge without thanking me for his work on Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. Pleased to be assured that my questionable methods were justified, and unwilling to drop a subject so agreeable, I asked if he could tell precisely where the value of the course lay. "Certainly," he answered. "It all centered in a single remark of Locke's. Locke said we ought to have clear and distinct ideas. I don't think I got anything else out of the course."
>
> Well, I was inclined to think the fellow foolish, so to mistake a bit of commonplace for gospel truth. Why did he not listen to some of the profound things I was saying? But on reflection I saw that he was right and I was wrong. That trivial saying had come to him at a critical moment as a word of power; while the deep matters which interested me, and which I had been offering him so confidently day by day, being unsuited to him, had passed him by. He had not heard them.

This being the case in all educational situations, and even more hazardously in relation to political claims and the arguments for "systems," how ridiculous it is for anyone to claim that he has been "understood" and therefore gained a mandate to take "power"! The man who makes such a claim has not himself understood the elementary realities of "understanding."

A reformer who says to himself, "I will pretend that these people understand my program and what it entails, because, even if they don't I know what is good for them and what must be done, and everything will all come out right in the end"—this is a man who has yet to recognize that freedom and understanding are indivisible. He is also, often without knowing it, and with the best of intentions, a very arrogant man.

This is a way of saying that the method is more important than the plan.

REVIEW
THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

THE situation confronting the present-day student is well put by a paragraph in the Introduction to *The New Student Left*, edited by Mitchell Cohen and Dennis Hale (Beacon Press, 1966, $4.95?

> Rebellion, Albert Camus tells us, implies an affirmation as well as a negation. The student, in his university environment, searches for something to affirm. War is bad, he is told, but one is not to agitate for peace. Discrimination is bad, but one ought not to break Jim Crow laws. Poverty is inexcusable, but one is not to affirm the rights of the poor too stridently. The student senses, but does not really know, what is wrong. "Something" is wrong; "they " are messing things up terribly. The times seem to call for more, not less, passion; but the student is told to separate his values from his daily existence, to be "objective." The times seem to call for more, not less, inquiry, but he is told that the really important questions have all been asked and answered satisfactorily: "ideology" has come to an end because it is merely a way of asking questions, not of verifying answers. Long before the rebel confronts the power structure of the South, he has come into conflict—often serious—with the establishment of the university. It was inevitable that the movement should eventually turn, as at Berkeley, upon its most dangerous and most efficient enemy, the Multiversity.

This book is made up of essays by young men who reject the unthinking complacency which is able to ignore the increasingly anti-human aspects of the mass technological society. (The editors have been associated with the *Activist*, a student journal published at Oberlin College and a number of the papers included in the book first appeared in this campus magazine.) The obvious incapacity of the present socio-economic system to put an end to war makes it subject to questioning, and when the questions are not heard—when the agony caused by modern war threatens to increase by the incalculable coefficient of nuclear power—people who will not suppress their moral awareness are driven to take a position outside the conventional assumptions of the existing society. The same kind of alienation results from witnessing widespread indifference toward continued injustice to Negro Americans. And the plight of the Negro is but a special case of the poverty in the midst of plenty—a condition which seems wholly unnecessary and contradictory in a society which is at the height of its productive and manipulative power.

Almost alone among critics of the present-day "affluent" society, the students recognize that the problem of constructive change is twofold. There is the immediate, practical need of deprived people for a decent level of material life. But there is also the need for the rediscovery of authentic values. A passage from a paper by Todd Gitlin shows the difficulties of serving both levels of need:

> One of the diabolical successes of this organized society is that it perverts people's notions about themselves into fantasies that perpetuate an unjust system. This is universally so, I think, but particularly true about the poor, the unemployed, the Negroes. If you can get to the suburbs you'll be green, safe, happy. . . . Negroes are inferior. . . . What you really need is Dial Soap and tail fins. . . . If you get a Ph.D. you'll be needed and happy. . . . You are powerful because you can vote. . . . and so on down the line. As Baldwin puts it, after a lifetime of brutalization, "you become a nigger": You act out the image that the Respectables have of you. Cultural and commercial pressures generate artificial "needs" that, in the minds of the victims, displace more genuine human needs.
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> That this process operates seems undeniable, but more than one conclusion can be drawn. One is that *everything* people say they want is a product of the process, and is therefore suspect; it is the product of distorted values that are in turn products of a distorted culture. The underlying premise here is that men are blank slates upon which the environment writes its will; there are no such things as basic "human needs." The conclusion is appealing for its "modern" relativism, its veneer of tolerance, but it is a blind alley; for if no needs are basic then we cannot separate "true" needs from "false" needs and we might just as well conclude that all expressed needs are "true." . . . If we reject this approach, as I think we must, then we must decide for ourselves which expressed needs are genuine or "just" and which are artificial or wrong. . . . What I want to emphasize is

> that the remedy for improper "needs" must be an *educational* one. . . .

It is not, we see, *just* a fairer distribution of material advantages that is at issue. That would be a far easier form of political contention to embrace. You might say that here, for the first time, is a kind of radicalism which refuses to use the over-simplifications of mass appeal to self-interest, and openly declares that incommensurables are involved—qualities of life which, if ignored, will turn the achievements of revolt into the same superficial rewards that have perverted the conventional society at large.

A summary of the contents of this book is practically impossible, mainly for the reason that the writers are struggling with an inevitable conflict in their own thought—on the one hand, the insistence of their sense of justice upon action of some sort, and on the other a deep distrust of all the one-dimensional, formula solutions of the past. The reactions to this conflict are many, and are expressed with considerable variety. What the papers in this collection have in common is not a unity of expression, but a determined facing of a very difficult problem—the attempt to locate a course of genuine morality through the maze of the technological labyrinth. No generation of youth has ever been presented with so many forms of moral ambiguity by its elders.

Consider: These young people have been obliged to grow toward a dubious maturity in a society which claims that freedom is not to be seriously distinguished from acquisitiveness; where organized labor cares little about the usefulness of what it makes, but only how much the workers are paid for making it; and where religion is publicly honored mostly as an anti-communist symbol. These claims are all forms of partisanship. None of them can be directly related to the higher qualities of human beings. Yet they take the form of endlessly repeated slogans and declarations and permeate the entire fabric of our society, reaching into the schools by means of intimidated teachers and administrators, and winning eager assent wherever the vulnerabilities of anxiety and insecurity are encountered. And at the same time, throughout their personal experience, students also encounter the undeniably good intentions of unimaginative conformists. It is not easy to stand alone against all this uniformity of righteousness.

Just because education itself often succumbs to the siren voices of the acquisitive society, the revolt of the students finds psychological betrayal very close to home. In a paper entitled "Theodicy of 1984," Bruce Payne and two other contributors examine the faith of Clark Kerr, President of the University of California, as expressed in his book, *Industrialism and Industrial Man.* The patterns of evolving industrialism and its requirements are the inescapable future of all, according to Mr. Kerr. This is apparently the gospel according to twentieth-century social science. "In Kerr's opinion there is no turning back and there is no alternative to industrialism once a country has chosen to industrialize." The authors of this paper continue:

> We become suspicious of this interpretation of history when we discover that the end of industrialization is "pluralistic industrialism" for all countries. The nature of this "good industrial society" happens to be the *American* answer to the questions of industrialization and the basis of the decisions by the American industrial elite. Pluralistic industrialism turns out to be the result of American culture, ideology, and organization.
>
> In America the cause and legitimacy of industrialization can be ascribed only to "liberty." Time and again Kerr defines liberty as "the absence of constraint" and the right to "act as you please," which are our common notions of liberty. America in the Declaration of Independence happened to desire "happiness." Happiness, declares Kerr, is prosperity. Prosperity is the promised land for which we make sacrifices. From this seed industrialism begins and continues to be the essence of American history. From this viewpoint Americans did not contract for an equal opportunity to live and develop their potentials, but rather their agreement was based on a desire to gain "satisfactions" from "wealth." Upon this desire, rational or irrational, there has been built the industrial complex we know today. For Kerr

there is no use being concerned for what we have given up in exchange for this age of large, impersonal organizations and mass society. There is no escaping the logic of industrialization. . . .

This new society is to be a society of the "managers and the managed." "Everywhere there develops a complex web of rules binding the worker to the industrial process, to his job, to his community, to patterns of behavior." . .

Students will be particularly interested in the position of education in the new society. . . . As the "handmaiden of industrialism," education has itself become a leading industry. Kerr considers education to be a functional imperative to an order based on technology. . . . The principal functions of education are to train the bulk of the population to "receive instructions, follow instructions, keep records," and to train the managers, engineers, and civil servants to operate this system. Each participant has his carefully delineated role within the "great web of rules," the authority alloted out to each person is carefully subordinated to the principle of efficient production and control.

Kerr is well aware that intellectuals and students can be most disruptive to the carefully laid plans of the managerial bureaucracy. Since Kerr assumes the goals of society are already embodied in the things that be, students and intellectuals "are by nature irresponsible. . . . not fully answerable for consequences. They are as a result never fully trusted by anybody, including themselves." . . . . Kerr's history as President of the University of California suggests how he proposes to control this apparently natural tendency of some students to refuse to see education as merely another technical procedure designed to fit them into a specialized niche in the process of production. . . .

The New Student Left is filled with analysis of this sort. The first section is general, made up of discussions which exhibit the searching questions and independent decisions of this generation of students. The second section is concerned with radical action in behalf of problems of race and poverty in the United States. The final section is devoted to the meaning and purpose of the campus revolt.

COMMENTARY
MOODY QUESTIONS

WANDERING around in the 700 pages of *Classics in Education*, a new anthology edited by Wade Baskin (Philosophical Library, $12.00), from which the quotation from George Herbert Palmer (see page 7) is borrowed, we came across the following tidbit from Hrabanus Maurus (776-856), who is identified as an important moulder of medieval ideas about the education of the clergy:

> The seven liberal arts of the philosophers, which Christians should learn for their utility and advantage, we have, as I think, sufficiently discussed. We have yet this to add. When those, who are called philosophers, have in their expositions or in their writings, uttered perchance some truth, which agrees with our faith, we should not handle it timidly, but rather take it as from its unlawful possessors and apply it for our own use.

What is distinctive about Maurus is not his willingness to use other men's "truths" for sectarian purposes, but his total lack of embarrassment at the idea. Is this a corruption from a power grown so great that it has destroyed the basis of shame?

A passage from Bertrand Russell is in a very different mood:

> Hamlet is held up as an awful warning against thought without action, but no one holds up Othello as a warning against action without thought. Professors such as Bergson, from a kind of snobbery towards the practical man, decry philosophy, and say that life at its best should resemble a calvary charge. For my part, I think action is best when it emerges from a profound apprehension of the universe and human destiny, not from some wildly passionate impulse of romantic but disproportionate self-assertion. A habit of finding pleasure in thought rather than in action is a safeguard against unwisdom and an excessive love of power, a means of preserving serenity in misfortune and peace of mind among worries. A life confined to what is personal is likely, sooner or later, to become unbearably painful; it is only by windows into a larger and less fretful cosmos that the more tragic parts of life become bearable. . . .
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> Life, at all times full of pain, is more painful in our time than in the two centuries which preceded it. The attempt to escape from pain drives men to triviality, to self-deception, to the invention of vast collective myths. But these momentary alleviations do but increase the sources of suffering in the long run.

The formulation of the meaning of education becomes somewhat difficult if it be admitted that the most certain "truths" of an age may, in time, turn out to have been only such "myths." One wonders how a society in which authority rests upon power can possibly cope with this problem, or even recognize its existence.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE LIVING WORLD

[This contribution by Leonora C. Lane is condensed from an article which appeared in the *Journal of Human Relations* for the second quarter of 1966 (Vol. 14, No. 2). It is reprinted with the permission of the publisher, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio.]

KEEPING alive a sense of wonder in children implies and assumes a sense of wonder in the guiding adult, whether parent or teacher. A child learns many of his attitudes and behaviors from adults. Frequently attitudes are caught through a child's exposure to a given type of emotional or intellectual climate. His sense of wonder is generated in part by exposure to adults who have an inquiring mind and by encouragement given to a child who is inquisitive. I am interpreting a sense of wonder as the developing and maintaining of a sensitivity to things, events, ideas, and to the needs of people. Sensitivity is then an openness to experience, a readiness to receive impressions from the external world, an enjoyment in exploring, and a daring to step off the beaten path. Sensitivity . . . thrives in an atmosphere of patience and encouragement. Adults who would help a child keep alive a sense of wonder will encourage questioning. They will set examples of examining the stereotype, of refusing to accept statements based on insufficient evidence. A person who keeps alive his sense of wonder is open to the new, the unusual. He needs not the final answer! He is continuously on the quest. He is not unduly alarmed when change comes. Fortunate is the child who grows up in such an atmosphere.

Skies and seas and birds and trees! Houses, buildings, steeples, and spires! Through-ways, "clover leaves," ramps, and bridges! Rockets and missiles, or astronauts orbiting or walking in space! Trains, busses, planes, and 'copters! Farmer, ranger, plumber, driver! Mother, father, teacher, preacher! All are encompassed in the world around today's child. A question might well be asked and is being asked now by many people concerned with keeping alive a sense of wonder in children of all economic and social levels: How do we extend the intellectual horizons of children whose world consists of dilapidated rat-infested buildings, unkempt streets, dark, crime-ridden alleys, and no play spaces other than busy traffic-filled streets? Children must be taken out of these surroundings and given an opportunity to enjoy the wonder of nature, the wonder of ideas, and the wonder of wholesome interpersonal relationships. The unfinished job of our times is the task of helping all children feel comfortable with themselves and with others. . . .

I begin with trees. I remember a high school teacher who taught me how to identify trees. This he did in the public school of a very large city. "Look up at this tree," he would say. "Look at the branches. Are they opposite or alternate?" He would then show us, first by drawing, just what he meant by the terms opposite and alternate. And at that point he told us how to identify several large families of trees simply on the basis of branching and contour. We walked for several blocks to find trees with opposite branches. In a short while we were able to find the maples and horse chestnuts. Later in the term when our teacher took us by streetcar to the outskirts of the city and to the city parks, we were able to recognize most of the common trees around us.

I remember vividly some of the questions we were asked: How does the tree come out of the ground? Is it shaped like a vase, or is it like an umbrella? Does it go up, up, up, or does this particular tree spread out? Is the bark smooth or rough? Here he gave us two valuable clues in tree identification. I know now why our teacher emphasized the broad aspects of contour, branching, trunk, and bark. He wanted us to know trees in all seasons. Finally in the spring we found one tree which was to be our own. Then we had to paint or show by crayon just how the leaves developed. We could almost feel the thrust

of leaves emerging out of buds. He encouraged our parents to buy tree books. We borrowed tree books from the library. Today, many, many years later, I have an almost insatiable curiosity about trees. Except for being exposed to Latin and feeling the extreme satisfaction that came with knowing another language, no intellectual experience has given me the satisfaction of those first lessons in tree study. . . .

Some questions we might ask parents: Do you have any interest in making weather predictions? Have you seen the snow clouds floating through this valley? Are you noticing the deep reds, purples, and golds as they fade into the dusk? Have you looked in the almanac for the name of that "bright lantern" which has been hanging to the south and west in the evening sky? Have you tried to teach your child to make amateur predictions about the weather and to work toward more professional skills? Does your child have a thermometer and a barometer of his own? Has he made a weather vane? Have you taken him to the nearest weather station in your area?

Undoubtedly you have been asked "what can I do?" Is it too rainy to play outdoors or too cold? Why not try making a weather diary? How many sunny days, how many rainy days, or snowy days in a given month? When did the first snow fall? In many areas snowfall is an unusual happening. Your child might want to talk with older people in the community to learn weather history. Which city in the state seems always to have the lowest temperature, the highest? Has your child learned to read weather maps? Daily papers usually carry good descriptions of weather as it moves into a given area. Has he learned how to compute movement of storms? With the tremendously heavy emphasis on vital mathematics, your child should be ready for this venture. Why not give him some kind of incentive for increasing the accuracy of his weather predictions?

What kind of sounds does your child know? He may be able to teach you in this area! Sounds of planes, 'copters, cars, and tractors. . . . Has he learned to listen for the night sounds? Can he recognize the wise old owl—him of silent flight and powerful eyes, him of the sharp talons and strong beak? Has he counted the hoots of the hoot owl, and has he had the genuine thrill of imitating the hoot owl and observing small birds flying in consternation? Has he listened to the piercing, eery outcry of the screech owl? Or maybe in the dim, dim twilight he has seen this owl sitting motionless in a tree. Have you ever let your child stay up late on an October night to watch wild geese moving south on their way from Canada to the Carolinas? He will never forget the V-wedge moving across the moon. And if he knows how to listen carefully, he will hear the never-to-be-forgotten honk-honk of the goose.

> Have you got a brook in your little heart
> Where bashful flowers blow
> And blushing birds go down to drink
> And shadows tremble so?
>
> And nobody knows, so still it flows,
> That any brook is there;
> And yet your little daily draught of life
> Is daily drunken there.
>
> Then look out for the little brook in March,
> When the rivers overflow;
> And the snows come hurrying from the hills
> And the bridges often go.
>
> And later, in August it may be,
> When the meadows parching lie
> Beware, lest this little brook of life
> Some burning noon go dry.

Can the brook in the heart be nurtured by a sense of wonder? Is there a more delightful way to bring together words, rhythm, and melody in poetry and the astonishing workings of nature than Emily Dickinson's?

A child's world or a man's world, however, is more than wind and sand and sea; it is more than the fragile blossom that sways in the breeze; it is more than beast of the field or fowl of the air; it is more than that which passeth through the paths of the sea. Boris Pasternak in *Dr. Zhivago*, grappling with the wonder of man, asks, "Well,

what are you? What is it about you that you have always known as yourself? What are you conscious of in yourself: your kidneys, your liver, your blood vessels? No. However far back you go in your memory it is always some external manifestation of yourself where you come across your identity: in the work of your hands, in your family, in other people. And now listen carefully. You in others, that is what you are, this is what your consciousness has breathed, and lived on and enjoyed throughout your life, your soul, your immortality—your life in others." You may well ask, "How does one transmit such philosophy to a child?" Here, as in no other area of human living, is the deed so important a technique in social development. Models, not admonitions, help a child develop and keep alive his sense of wonder in human transactions. Mother and father, a social unit, mother and father, each a unique individual, but creating together a relationship which includes the children; then mother, father, and children generating and receiving human responses. Ever-widening is the scope of relationship, each attaining his identity through others.

How can we help a child remain an individual in society? How can we help him become sensitive to the wonder of man's abilities in general and his own powers in particular? Social psychologists insist that "only as the individual in society struggles to preserve his individuality in common cause with his fellows can he hope to remain an individual." Implication is clear for parents, teachers, and others concerned with the growth and development of a child. Let us keep "a brook" in his heart!

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FRONTIERS

The Humanist Renaissance

How should Humanism be defined? It is at once affirmation and inquiry about the nature of man. The only thing that can be said to be finally "settled" in the content of Humanism is that it does not allow any view which, under development, can be used to *stop* further learning by man about himself. This is an oblique way of declaring the human competence to solve human problems. The Humanist says that even if we are manifestly ignorant about a great many things concerning human life, this ignorance must never be made into an excuse for surrender of authority over our own lives. Nothing can justify believing and acting upon what we do not understand.

Thus there are both gnostic and agnostic elements in the Humanist stance. Humanism is founded on a high gnostic faith in the sense of its insistence upon human capacity—actual and potential—as the only resource of human beings. It is agnostic in that it refuses to embrace or espouse doctrines which threaten, either directly or by implication, its gnostic foundation.

Now this, it must be admitted, is a pretty "pure" or philosophical account of Humanism. That humanists differ among themselves about theories of progress for mankind is obvious from recent history. In one epoch it may seem to many humanists that religion is the major threat to human freedom, the source of both intellectual confinement and the sanctions of political oppression. Later on, in a period of weakening religious institutions, this view may change into skepticism toward the mechanistic assumptions of science as applied to man. Those who use the bludgeon of materialism to put down the anti-human claims of dogma sometimes—as was the case with Diderot—suffer a terrible shock of recognition when they realize that the very weapons they have been using in behalf of human freedom can themselves be turned against mankind.

It is at such moments of history when, by some rare and wonderful awakening, devoted men on the battlefields of justice begin to question themselves, that the kaleidoscope of perception turns enough to give humanist gnosticism and agnosticism new meanings. It is then that Humanism returns to its core and is once again defined in terms of its ends instead of a particular set of means that have been popular for a term of action. Or, you could say that Humanism has indeed become "pure" once again. This return to the source enables men to recognize the common humanist themes in many traditions of thought.

Writing about the Humanist Renaissance of the present in the *Humanist* for July/August, Erich Fromm performs this service for contemporary Humanists. He shows the threads of humanist principles reaching back some 2,500 years and identifies them in the work of many great reformers. He finds humanism in Buddhism, in the prophets of the Old Testament, in the teachings of Christ, in the Renaissance philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa, Pico della Mirandola, and Erasmus, and in the great figures of the Enlightenment such as Spinoza, Locke, and Lessing, and Goethe, Freud, and Marx. Dr. Fromm is particularly interested in showing the Humanist content of Marx's thought, probably because this seems so unlikely to many people. As he puts it:

> In the *Philosophical Manuscripts* he wrote: "A being does not regard himself as independent unless he is his own master and he is only his own master when he owes his existence to himself. A man who lives by the favor of another considers himself a dependent being." Man is independent only if he appropriates his manifold being in an all-inclusive way and thus is a whole man. Here, Marx is closely related to Goethe and the Renaissance philosophers. But what Marx emphasizes perhaps more than anyone else is independence, not owing one's existence to anyone else, or to use a term he often used, "self-activity." Here, "activity" does not mean doing something, being busy, but the process of inner productivity, a concept which is very similar to those of Aristotle and Spinoza. Marx expressed it in another line: "If you love without evoking love in return [if you are not capable by the manifestation of yourself as a loving person to make yourself a beloved person], then your love is impotent, a misfortune." A reader, not knowing this was Marx, might look for Buddhist or Renaissance sources. Unfortunately, Marx is almost as misrepresented in the Soviet Union

as he is in the United States, so this humanist side of Marx is not particularly known.

What enables Dr. Fromm to make this point about Marx, regardless of the *means* later identified with Marxism? It is the purity of the Humanist idea, which develops most naturally, one may say, in the context of psychological studies, a field where political and historical biases become subordinate to the realities of human nature. In this sense the scientific study of psychology is a virtual necessity to impartial philosophy, since from psychology we discover the indisputable *givens of* human life. This use of psychology may be regarded as a climactic achievement of our time. In this instance, it enables Dr. Fromm to make his "pure" definition of Humanism:

> Humanist philosophy can be characterized as follows: first, belief in the unity of the human race, that there is nothing human which is not found in every one of us, second, the emphasis on man's dignity; third, the emphasis on man's capacity to develop and perfect himself; and fourth, the emphasis on reason, objectivity, and peace.

In considering what all these generalities may mean, he points to the possibility of giving them specific content through the study of man. It has been done before with success, and it needs to be done again. Each age, you could say, must give the terms of the Humanist credo specific meanings consistent with its first principles. Dr. Fromm writes:

> . . . how do we establish the validity of certain human values, if their validity is not based upon God, revelation, or simple tradition? I believe it can be done by an examination of the conditions of the existence of man, by analysis of the intrinsic contradictions in human existence, and by an analysis of how they can be optimally solved. This job was accomplished quite effectively by Buddhism 2,500 years ago. One may or may not agree with Buddhist conclusions, and most of Buddhism is misunderstood today anyway, but certainly this was a completely non-mythological, rational attempt to understand human existence, to see its problems, and to find an answer. There may be better answers, but methodologically this was the first time that an objective, rational analysis was made.

The catholicity of Dr. Fromm's humanism is evident in the following paragraph:

> More specifically, I think the answers and the values of this type of humanism would lie in the following direction. There is a supreme value in the productive personality, self-activated in the sense of Spinoza, Goethe, or Marx. This is contrary to the *homo consumens*, the eternal suckling which is the average character structure in the industrial society today. Further, a person would develop his love and his reason. Another supreme value would be the capacity of man for transcendence, a word usually used in theological discussion. It is said that man has to go beyond himself in order to be fully human, and this "beyond himself" is then usually defined as God. But if one speaks in terms of human experience the concept of God is quite unnecessary, and the question becomes, can a man drop his ego? Can he leave the prison of his own separate existence? Can he make himself empty? Can he be open to the world? As the mystics have expressed it, can he be empty in order to be full? Can he be poor in order to be rich? Or, to use an expression which Marx often used, "What matters is that man is much, not that he has much or uses much." In its most radical form we would arrive at what might be called atheistic mysticism, as it is actually found in Zen Buddhism, as well as among a number of Western philosophers who have no connection with Zen Buddhism. One might describe it as a sense of oneness with the world which is not based upon belief in God in a conceptual sense but which nevertheless is not too different from certain Christian, Jewish, or Moslem mystics who have expressed the same experience in other concepts and other words.

What conclusion can we draw from this view of Humanism, simply on the basis of what Dr. Fromm has said? We can surely say one thing: that humanism so interpreted leads to finding its common concern for human welfare and human good in widely differing avenues of thought. Implicit, also, is the fact that serious antagonisms come only when means are adopted which require power and forcible control of some human beings by others. The study of man and of the ideas he has about himself points to these basic conclusions.