

HUMAN MEANINGS OF CRISIS

THERE are two reasons for feeling that this is a good time to be alive. The primary reason grows out of the conviction, variously expressed, that some kind of benevolent conspiracy of new ideas about life and the human community is shaping far-reaching changes for the almost immediate future. To speak in this vague way of processes and ferments soon to affect all human beings would be presumptuous, save for the fact that the anticipations are so strong, so numerous, and characteristic of so many different sorts of people, that generality can hardly be avoided.

The other reason, obviously related to the first, lies in the challenge of the "negative" situations which, taken together, make up a many-layered strait jacket of frustration for men with ideals and human hopes. There are countless practical reasons, no matter what good thing you want to do, for not being able to do it. If you want to contribute to the prospects of world peace, you not only have to convince the Russians and the Chinese of your country's good intentions, but you also have to persuade your country of the importance of a sympathetic understanding of the historical antecedents of Communism in Russia and China, and of the need to *have* good intentions in terms of commonly acceptable solutions for the conflicts of the Cold War. If you want to play a part in solving the socio-moral disorders of racial injustice, you have to develop both superhuman patience and superhuman toughness, and then, when you see the situation whole, be ready to take on the additional problem of what promise to be the last-ditch economic convulsions of an acquisitive society which for a hundred years or so has given itself the wrong reasons for doing good, bad, and indifferent things with extreme efficiency and "religious" determination. If you want to campaign for "natural living" and the restoration of serenity and

repose to daily existence, you find yourself confronted by not only the puzzling question of why so few people seem to care about what you argue for, but also by the fact, as you work on the problem, that you realize your own intuitive definitions of "the natural" don't mean very much to either yourself or anyone else. You may read *Walden*, take *Wilderness* magazine, revel in Donald Culross Peattie and Aldo Leopold's *Sands County Almanac*. You may subscribe to *Organic Gardening* and *Prevention*, oppose fluoridization of public water, read *Summerhill* and try to make a new start in bringing up your children, but great, thumping questions remain. There are so many ways to make yourself feel ignorant and discouraged. A personal formula might be easy enough to work out, but the larger problems of "society" keep on oozing their nasty effluvias into your private utopia, even a hypothetical one. You drive out through the San Fernando Valley and you see all those big electronics plants where they design or make black boxes and other gadgets to keep the missiles flying, and you remember in passing that, in labor disputes, the big thing is what the men get for making what they make—never whether it is worth making. You begin to use words like *malaise* and "alienation" and wonder how on earth the leaders of the country can talk about having a "Great Society."

You think about these things, and then along comes another book on Synanon, to give you grounds for hope. Why should this be? Why should the more or less successful struggles of a couple of hundred former heroin addicts to stay clean and live useful lives have meaning for the very different problems of a couple of hundred million people? Well, Synanon *does* have a success story, and the people at Synanon who are writing it with their lives were up against obstacles which, in personal terms, were as bad or worse

than those which confront people who have the unlikely notion of wanting to reconstruct the world. What you get out of serious study of Synanon—and serious study means finding some way to *identify* with what actually happens there—is some functional meanings for those vague conceptions most people have about "success" and "health" and "getting well" in a psycho-social sense.

What is at issue, here, is the question of whether or not it is possible to learn something basic about the general human situation by looking closely at a sample made up of individuals who backed themselves into what seemed a completely hopeless situation, and then decided to work their way out.

This is like asking whether there is any "real truth" in the myths of antiquity. It is like trying to decide whether there are basic, common denominators for human problems—whether, in fact, *wisdom* is possible, and if it is, how it might be expected to work in contemporary real-life dilemmas. It is a question of whether you might be able to extrapolate what you learn from a more or less isolated, limited, extreme situation and apply it to larger-scale human problems. There is a big difference, of course, between saying that you think this ought to work, and proving that it will.

The new book about Synanon—ideal for finding some first, tentative answers to such questions is *The Tunnel Back: Synanon* by Lewis Yablonsky (Macmillan, 1965, \$6.95). A quotation from the last chapter, concerned with the opinions about Synanon held by psychotherapists—people who are supposed to know what there is to know about psycho-emotional disorders such as heroin addiction—will get us into the problem quickly:

Even some professionals who are friends of Synanon and think they know better often tend to distort the picture. They perceive Synanon from their own limited viewpoint. The psychiatrists see a psychiatric process; the correctional people see a

"halfway house"; the psychologists, depending on their school, a therapeutic process. The "friendly" professionals tend to heap praise on the organization and then to conclude that Synanon has inadvertently stumbled on their magic professional secret. One very friendly, enthusiastic psychiatrist, after a two-week visit, concluded that Synanon had inadvertently developed an extension of Freudian psychoanalysis: "Many of your people are now ready for the ["true," "bona fide," "legal"] therapeutic experience of psychoanalysis," he gleefully announced and then went on to publish his "discovery."

What are the elements of this relationship? Well, we ought to be able to state some of them with clarity. First of all, on the one hand, you have a professional group of men, psychologists and psychiatrists, who, on the whole, are adding to the common understanding of their time—not much, perhaps, but more than other people, other specialists, are adding. The psychotherapists have quite naturally inherited from the founders of their movement a legitimate sense of importance, of doing significant things, which belongs by right to pioneers who dare to look at questions that other people are reluctant to look at. In short, these men *know* something, and they know that they know something.

What is the broad, cultural context for this kind of knowing? Basically, it is the syncretistic context of Western religion, science, and pragmatic philosophy. From Christianity most people have absorbed the idea that, one way or another, there is a One True Doctrine. And since Western religion is congregational—you pick the group which has the right religion and join it to get the benefits—you look around for the Right Group. Well, it turned out that scientists seemed to be the right group. They are the people who are finding things out. They don't know everything, of course, but they are looking and checking all the time. And when something is found out, they try to make sure of it.

Our culture is completely saturated with the assumption that scientists are members of the Right Group. This comes out loud and clear when, on Saturday nights, visitors are ushered on

tours around the Synanon building to see where and how the ax-addicts live. In every such contingent of "squares" there is always at least one person who will ask the Synanon resident conducting the tour whether the people in the house are *qualified* to "treat" each other for their character disorders and other troubles. "Of course" the questioner says knowingly, "you must have some *scientifically trained* person on the staff." Then, being told that, at Synanon, "There's nobody here but just us addicts," he solemnly shakes his head. The fact that the addicts are addicts no longer isn't evidence enough that the boys and girls at Synanon are learning how to heal themselves.

The older, more articulate members of Synanon, many of them with personal experience of both the worst and the best that conventional society deals out to drug addicts in its attempts to "cure" or punish them, have something to say on this point. Reid Kimball, a member of Synanon since the early days, puts it well:

I suppose a professional is someone who is trained and professes to do something. Right?

The professionals haven't cured any addicts and Synanon has. I guess we have as much right to be called professionals as they do. Right?

Now what exactly happens at Synanon? The question asks too much, but we can have a try at answering. First of all, an addict comes to the House and asks to be let in. A screening committee made up of ex-addicts—interviews him. They want to find out how serious he is. If they distrust his motives, they may ask him to come back at another time—*exactly* at another time. If he keeps his appointment, he may be admitted. If he is late, and makes some excuse, he gets another screening date, and is told to be *on time*. Once admitted, he is introduced verbally to what Synanon is all about. It is explained that the members of Synanon were all addicts once, and that he can become "normal," too. These indoctrination sessions are merciless toward the typical addict mentality and contemptuous of the

milieu in which it thrives. The Synanon workers who run these sessions ride on the *esprit de corps* generated by their own transformed lives. They know how Synanon works, and they know how an addict's mind works. And they know what changes the addict has to accomplish in himself. They try to get these things as clear as possible, right at the beginning.

Compassion, Nietzsche said somewhere, is the fellow feeling of the unsound. There is a lot of that at Synanon. Newcomers who arrive at Synanon high on drugs have to "kick" without medication, but they now have friends who sit up with them, hold their heads when they vomit, massage their twitching muscles, and are just there, friendly toward everything except the idea of a "fix." After withdrawal, the new member is put on one of the work crews that care for the house and its needs. He may wash dishes, mop floors, or clean toilets. Intellectual addicts sop out urinals and take orders from "clean" ex-addicts who only now are learning how to speak grammatical English.

A new member who can't bear this attack on his old idea of himself may leave any time, but there is a lot of pressure against it. And the fact that an addict *can* leave if he wants to—Synanon is the psychological opposite of jail or a state hospital—creates a puzzling situation for the novice. For the first time, maybe, in his life, he has to make his own decisions. He usually stays.

The heart of the Synanon program is the small-s synanon. These are held three times a week. Essentially they are ordeals in which the members attempt to teach one another self-respect and respect for the Synanon community. Two things have to happen for a person to become a durable member of Synanon House. He has to give up, crush, get rid of that part of his identity which depended upon heroin. He has to build for himself a constructive idea of self—one that works for himself and his relations with the other members of the "club." Small-s synanons are hothouse treatments with these objectives in mind.

Synanon has a lot of things going to help the process on—educational programs and seminars, jobs which provide status, and opportunities to spread the word about Synanon in speaking dates before schools, Rotary clubs, university students, people in jail, men in prison. There is no end to the possibilities of a useful future as a Synanon worker or graduate. But it takes *years*.

Lewis Yablonsky's book *The Tunnel Back*, is undoubtedly the best book on Synanon that has appeared. The author, an authority on juvenile delinquency, is one of the handful of professionals who came to Synanon to see what it was and how it worked, and stayed long enough to find out. He learned the work of the house from the inside, becoming a close associate and friend of Charles E. Dederich, Synanon's founder—the man whose veritable genius is inseparable from Synanon's success. There is enough direct quotation from Dederich in the book to give the reader a working understanding of what this means.

MANAS has printed so much on Synanon in the past that it seems out of place to repeat more of the facts here. Instead, we should like simply to say that there can be no substitute for reading Dr. Yablonsky's book, which turns the story of Synanon into a moving drama of the crucial life-processes of the twenty or thirty human beings whose past and present he examines in detail, and whose future now seems bright. This is a book which is so thorough in its understanding of nuance and detail, as well as in drawing the main outline, that its generalizations and conclusions seem to cry out for statement before, as a social scientist and social psychologist, Dr. Yablonsky is ready to state them. The book was written deep in the grain of life at Synanon and it has captured the agony, the struggle, the ambivalence, and finally the triumph, that go on there, day after day.

Well, what really "does the thing" at Synanon? Love and Truth, you could say. But then, after you've said it, you have to jeer a little. Love is such a big thing that usually it shouldn't be talked about at all. Nearly all the talk about Big

Things suffers from phyness, these days. Children barely get through kindergarten before they acquire some cynicism about the names and forms of love. Yet Love is real in the same way that a new seventeen-year-old addict at Synanon, given Emerson's essay on Self-Reliance to read, may find some real ideas percolating around in his sick little head. It is the touch of a hand held out to help, with nothing to give or get but the help, except maybe a gruff word or a wisecrack to drive sloppy sentiment out of the picture.

Love is the ancestor of more clichés than any other word in the language, and is equalled in the abuse it has suffered only by the word "God," yet you can't do without it. Love is the magic which makes the therapeutic process work, insofar as people, any time, any where, help one another to get well.

But this would be the grossest of oversimplifications without attention to the other essential ingredient—Truth. And what is truth? Truth is what has happened to a human being when, immediately after, he is able to look at himself and his situation without false hopes and without false fears. Truth is that universal pregnancy of mind and heart which enables men to be born of boys, friends of enemies, and it exists only where people are determined to find it and be satisfied with nothing else.

So, the ultimate question is always: Truth in relation to what reality, whose progress, which human goal?

This can be illustrated by one of the tougher sessions at Synanon, when a two-year resident was found to have stolen some pills from the home of a benefactor of the House. (For an addict, a pill—almost any kind of pill—has a compulsive fascination; who knows, maybe it will give him a "kick"?) In this meeting, one of the members (Reid Kimball) rehearsed the facts:

Ted here chose to go into one of our donor's houses the other day and steal some pills out of a medicine cabinet. I don't know if this is the first time. He claims it is. . . . He did this while, at the

same time, we have people out all over this country knocking themselves out for Synanon. These citizens have come to our aid and defense. Donors like this lady and her sister go out on a limb for us and this punk violates her home. She's a registered nurse, and she has been telling people of the miracle they've found and the good work that's being done here at Synanon. Teddy robbed this woman and put her into such a state that she hasn't been able to sleep. . . . Tell us about it, Ted.

TED: I don't know what to say, Reid. I guess the reason I'm still here is because it's not easy to be here right now.

[The group shouts, "We can't hear you!"]

REID: You didn't miss anything. He said something designed to make him look pretty good. He said probably the only reason he's here right now was because it isn't easy to do this. He's some kind of hero now.

TED: Well, I made a mistake. . . .

REID: Why don't you go into more detail about how it "just happened" . . . it just happened that you went into this woman's home, asked to go to her toilet, went into her medicine cabinet, and stole her medicine. To you it's dope, but to her it's medication.

TED: I went in and took the pills. I took the pills. The state of mind I was in, Reid . . . I don't know what state of mind I was in. . . .

JEANNE: I want to ask you some questions, Ted. I'd like to ask you how you could take any pills at all, being completely clean, and come home and not be totally wiped out [loaded]? I'd like to know how you could do this?

TED: Jeanne, I don't know.

JEANNE: I don't see how you can be clean, Teddy. I don't believe that you just got loaded once yesterday. I'd like you to tell me if there is anything [drugs] stashed at our house, where we have children and four other people who could go to jail?

TED: No.

JEANNE: I don't know whether I can believe you or not. . . .

TED: What I've done concerns everyone here, and I think I owe myself and everyone here this much—to stay.

JEANNE: You don't owe me anything, Teddy, except a big fear that I've got junk in a house with

four or five children and other people who could all go to jail.

REID: Let me get one thing clear. Your inclination is to leave but because you think that you can make a contribution to us by this demonstration, you're staying? Is that what you're saying?

TED: Reid, I'm thankful for the opportunity to stay.

REID: Why don't you leave? Let's hear the truth.

TED: I don't want to go. I'm afraid. Look at me. Where could a guy like me go. . . .?

[The group shouts, "Back to jail!"]

DAVE: I was sitting right up there where you are six months ago, and I know just what you're thinking. You're thinking, "If I just cop to just one little slip, I'll probably be able to make my recovery a little bit faster." Yeah, don't deny it, buddy. I've been there. You're thinking, "This is just one little thing. If I make it look like I just got out of touch this one time, they won't all hate me out there quite so bad." That's what you're thinking. I want to tell you something, buddy. You better get it out. . . .

REID: You remember our contract upstairs, Teddy? If we find out any more you're lying about, we're going to throw you out of here.

GREG: I would like to ask everybody to hear this here right now. If there is anybody in here that has anything going on, let's hear it. I don't care about saving lives and all that. . . . But you know, do us a favor. There are some of us here who would like to go ahead and do what we are doing and make Synanon grow and help ourselves. Do us a goddam favor. Either get up and do the thing and maybe save your life, or, you know, *walk!*

Incidents of this sort are not frequent at Synanon, but they do occur, and they are taken very seriously by the members. The integrity of every one of them is at stake—the integrity of the House, and of its public image—and this means, or could mean, their very lives. They don't really "hate" Ted, but they passionately hate what he did. This was one more "facing-reality" session at Synanon, with some truth in it for everyone there.

The thing that seems important about Synanon is the fact that, so long as it preserves

these fundamental qualities—Love and Truth—and insists upon getting at the particular truth it needs, *right now*, without any hiding or pretense, it will have, under some kind of rough control, the essential elements and forces of the therapeutic community. Dederich now prefers to speak of Synanon as an educational community, but it is hard to tell the difference. Perhaps educational is the better word, applying more accurately to people who are learning to practice therapy on themselves.

Since what happens at Synanon is education, and is so deliberately, there is much reading of books, much talk, much conscious seeking and effort toward self-discovery, and probably more half-baked psychology and amateur psychoanalysis, along with other primitive symptoms of a dawning life of the mind, than anywhere else in the world. But these intellectual immaturities don't seem to matter. You could say that, from some ideal point of view, everybody in the world is intellectually immature—everybody has, that is, a lot of things mixed up, some facts in the wrong order, and some ambitious delusions that will have to go; and you could also say that, nonetheless, many of these technically "ignorant" people have learned to live rich, constructive lives and have become useful citizens and good mothers and fathers, and are at basic peace with others; and that *these* are the secrets being found out, at least in principle, at Synanon, and unfolding in the lives of once absolutely desperate people, although in a limited, openly hierarchical environment—an environment in which the bad things and the tough things and the good things are all plainly labelled and people get a pretty good idea of what they are going to have to do. The thing is, they know that *they* are going to have to do it. The basic, primitive, natural, and unchangeable arrangement is that nobody will or can do it for them. When this gets through to people, the Synanon dynamic begins to work.

Of course, as we said before, there is a big difference between thinking that such an

arrangement (*how* would you make it?) ought to work for the larger society, and proving that it will. One thing, however, is clear. The first step would be to start facing the truths we need to face, right now, without hiding or pretense. We're probably not desperate enough for that.

REVIEW

NATURAL OLYMPUS

TIME AND THE RIVER FLOWING, latest volume in the Sierra Club's Format Series, by François Leydet, is an incredibly rich and photographically exquisite study of the Grand Canyon—probably the most gorgeous tract in behalf of the preservation of natural wonders that has ever been produced. (The book is a little larger than ten by thirteen inches. All the illustrations are in full color, and there are too many to count. Leydet's text reports a boat trip on the Colorado River, with particular attention to areas which would be desecrated by present plans of the Bureau of Reclamation for two new dams. Between sections of the text, and interspersed among the pictures, are appropriate quotations from such writers as Joseph Wood Krutch, Loren Eiseley, Wallace Stegner, Frank Waters, Aldo Leopold, and others. The editor is David Brower. The price is \$25.00.)

An obvious purpose of this extraordinary combination of conservationist argument and ardor, photographic talent, and the best of technological skill in color reproduction is to win support for the Sierra Club's opposition to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's present dam-building program. Mr. Brower, executive director of the Club, says on the flap:

The dams the Bureau plans to build in Marble Gorge and at Bridge Canyon, within the Grand Canyon proper, would destroy not only the living river but also the unique life forms that through the ages have come to depend upon the river's life. The major part of the canyon walls would still be there, but the pulsing heart of the place would be stopped. A chain of destructive forces would be begun in what by law was set apart as part of the National Park System, to be preserved unimpaired for all America's future.

And needlessly. With the tinsel removed, these dams are seen as nothing more than hydroelectric power devices to produce electricity and dollars from its sale to pay for projects that ought to be financed by less costly means. The dams would make no water

available that is not available already. Indeed, they would waste enough to supply a major city and impair the quality of the too little that is left: water already too saline is made more so by evaporation, to the peril of downstream users, especially of neighbors in Mexico. All this on a river that already has more dams than it has water to fill them. . . . If enough people care, and act according to what their love for their land and their reverence for life tells them is right, the tragedy will not come to pass.

Lest it be thought that this book is the production of sentimental "nature-lovers," it should be said that the contributors are indeed lovers of nature, but they are not sentimental, and the case for leaving Colorado's Grand Canyon as it is, is put in the strongest possible terms from very nearly every point of view. An appendix provides numerous expressions of expert hydrological opinion. One article of this sort, "Requiem for Glen Canyon," by Richard C. Bradley, associate professor of physics at Colorado College, gives insight into Bureau of Reclamation steamroller tactics in relation to an earlier dam project, now under way:

. . . the Bureau is going blithely ahead making plans for an ultimate storage of capacity of about 80 million acre-feet, almost three times what they need, with a concomitant annual evaporation loss of about 2 million acre-feet.

How does the Bureau get away with this? How did it acquire the license to wreck the most magnificent of our western canyons with reservoirs so manifestly wasteful and superfluous?

The answer is simple. The technical flaws in the Bureau's plan were never seriously considered by Congress. The Hildebrand report on power was virtually ignored, and the Geological Survey reports on river regulation were not released by the Interior Department until *after* the project had been authorized. At the Congressional hearings Geological Survey witnesses (and also National Park Service witnesses) were conspicuous by their absence. All of the experts came from the Bureau of Reclamation and they were not about to advertise that their project was wasteful and superfluous.

We have here the operation of a vicious circle which is very difficult to break into. A large federal bureau draws up a plan for a huge public works

project. It is huge because the bureau needs to justify the existence of its own very large organization. Being huge, the project naturally attracts the interest and enthusiastic support of the local chambers of commerce as no smaller project ever could. Strong business support inevitably means strong political support. By the time the proposal reaches Congress, with all the momentum of an express train, it is already too late to discuss its merits and defects objectively.

The claim, made and documented throughout this appendix, is that the Bureau of Reclamation is high-handed and grossly insensitive to areas of vital responsibility in its work as a public servant.

So much for the argument. The rest of the book opens up to the reader a many-faceted introduction to what is at stake. With the help of the pictures, most of them breathtaking in splendor, you begin to get the feel of this majestic Universe of Life which is being defended, and cannot be entered at all, save by *amateurs*. Here, vision and wholeness are the substances of concrete reality, in the presence of which every voice speaks in naturally hallowed tones, however matter-of-fact. A quotation from Joseph Wood Krutch will illustrate:

The wisest, the most enlightened, the most remotely long-seeing exploitation of resources is not enough, for the simple reason that the whole concept of exploitation is so false and so limited that in the end it will defeat itself and the earth will have been plundered no matter how scientifically and far-seeingly the plundering has been done.

Every day the science of ecology is making clearer the factual aspect as it demonstrates those more and more remote interdependencies which, no matter how remote they are, are crucial even for us.

Well, we said there were too many color reproductions to count, but we counted them anyway, funding an even hundred, a lot of them full-page in size. These pictures, the work of various photographers—among them Ansel Adams, Philip Hyde, Richard Norgaard, David Brower, Daniel Luten, Clyde Thomas, Clyde Childress, and others—draw the reader into the very cauldron of the Grand Canyon's visual magic.

We must apologize to the reader for not being able to do these rare scenes justice, since, for the reviewer, looking at them is a new experience and he comes to the spectacle unprepared. But what can and ought to be said is that this book is both a panorama of the living beauty of the Grand Canyon, and a series of deepening glimpses into the hearts of a number of men for whom the Grand Canyon has become a kind of Acropolis of Nature herself. To share in the moving expressions of these writers and photographers, to see through their eyes, and to begin to care for what they care about, is to find a new plateau of communion between man and the natural world.

This book may be purchased at book stores, or from the Sierra Club, Mills Tower, San Francisco 4, California.

COMMENTARY

UNFRUSTRATED CONSERVATIVE

FOR some years, now, we have had one answer to the question of why we don't pay attention to the conservative point of view. It is that the conservatives we encounter are obviously more concerned with the conservation of property than the conservation of man; the interest which arouses them to action is self-interest; and when you speak to them of the needs of the unfortunate, or of the victims of acquisitiveness, no matter what they say afterward, they always begin with "Yes, but. . ."

The article in *Look* magazine for Dec. 29, "A New Conservative Manifesto," referred to in this week's *Frontiers*, describes a new kind of conservative, one who has stopped saying "Yes, but." While it gives attention to other matters, the article is mainly concerned with Richard C. Cornuelle, a conservative since his college days (he called himself a right-wing anarchist then), who is now an officer of the Volker Fund. After absorbing the "pure" Conservative doctrine from Ludwig von Mises, he began preaching it "as a professional propagandist for right-wing foundations."

"Our theme [*Look* quotes him as saying] was educate, educate, educate—and when you get an effective majority in the country, you sort of call a constitutional convention and straighten it all out." Dick and the other purists believed that the U.S. was creeping far into socialism. The faster the better, they thought, for only in terror would voters panic into counter-revolution. The purists did not fight, as did Taft conservatives to temper welfare legislation, or to improve non-government institutions. No, they aimed for . . . the day when they would spin this huge nation right around and head back where, they thought, we came from.

But Cornuelle sensed unreality in this and found himself less and less able to believe in "the doctrine's permanent rejection of all public charity for the poor and the weak, 'the hard cases' that invite socialistic measures." After expounding the pure doctrine about the Kentucky coal fields—the claim that "the least able producers have disappeared"—he went to Kentucky to see for himself. "They hadn't

disappeared," he said. There were "hungry men" in the mountain towns.

His present position is that the Conservatives must acknowledge the existence of such problems and that responsibility for solving them is going to come to rest on *somebody's* shoulders. He thinks that private agencies could ultimately do the job better than the state. The *Look* article gives a pretty good idea of how he thinks this might work, and he has a book coming out, *Reclaiming the American Dream*, that may just possibly restore some dialogue between liberals and conservatives. Cornuelle proposes that the total private economy is far greater in its resources than the federal government and that the healthy pluralism of numerous private, if loosely concerted, efforts to deal with the socio-economic problems of a mass society may prove the best solution. "For almost any social problem, somebody in the country has developed a solution that works," Mr. Cornuelle believes, adding, "But the independent institutions aren't yet organized to find it and apply it nationwide." More than a talking theorist, in 1958 he organized a private reinsurance corporation, United Student Aid Funds, Inc., to reinsure bank loans to students. Today, "48,000 needy students in 674 colleges draw funds from 5,350 participating banks." Since savings and loan associations will soon offer the same service, students will have access "to more financial resources than would ever be supplied by the government's direct loans."

Mr. Cornuelle's present project—a jump from mickey-mouse to superman proportions—is to work out diverse means of meeting the re-employment problems created by automation. "There should not," he says, "be one war on poverty in America. There should be thousands." Well, we hope the liberals will at least listen to his case and examine his practical efforts before *they* start saying "Yes but." There might even be a psychological spinning-wheel component in what this man wants to do.

CHILDREN

... and Ourselves

MORAL VALUES AND OUR UNIVERSITIES

IN an article with this title, in the *NEA Journal* for January, William Sloane Coffin, Jr., chaplain of Yale University, states his thesis that "there are two things neither society nor the university can risk—alienation or identification." "Moral values" are inspirations to conduct other than self-seeking. In the early days of the American Republic, they were reflected in a desire for public service. Dr. Coffin writes:

At the founding of our nation, when we had a total population of only 3 million (less than that of Los Angeles County today) we turned out a generation of statesmen named Washington, Hamilton, Franklin, Jefferson, Adams—and you could go on to name a list as long as your arm. Since then, the range of vocational choices has expanded a hundredfold. Nevertheless, it is disturbing to note how few people you can name today of the caliber of our first generation of statesmen, even though our population is over sixty times as great as it was then and statesmanship is needed as never before.

Why are there not more? Because as Plato said, "What is honored in the country is cultivated there." Our society is organized with a view to business first and foremost—profits first, people afterward.

The problem with those of us in the university is not that we are incompetent, only that we are somehow insignificant; not that our teaching is not impressive intellectually, only that somehow the philosophy behind it is lacking in consequence.

"Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" were once regarded as symbolic of those relationships within the national community which would give the best minds full scope, which would shield the individual conscience of the smallest minority, and which grew out of the belief that universal education would foster the ultimate ethical potential of every citizen. To work toward "a New Order of Ages" was a high endeavor, and those who conceived this goal were hardly concerned with *their* "pursuit of happiness" in a personal sense. It was not that Washington,

Hamilton, Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams openly made anything of the virtue of self-sacrifice, but that they lived in a continuum of forces devoted to human enlightenment. The later, self-seeking America, in which people practiced their "rugged individualism," set an entirely different moral tone—an attitude which Dr. Coffin identifies with Periclean Athens and the Pharisees in the time of the Prophet of Nazareth:

What Werner Jaeger said of Athens could be said of us too: "Periclean Athens, mistress of a mighty empire, was flooded with influences of many different kinds and origins, and despite her brilliant expertness in every sphere of art and practical life, she was about to lose her spiritual foothold. Intoxicated by the exuberance of her own verbosity, she had in the briefest of moments talked all traditional values out of existence."

Jesus described the Pharisees as those that say but do not. The opposite, then, of action is not inaction, but judgment, and the problem of the academic world is that although it judges everything—politics, religion, art, science—and judges brilliantly, our judgment leads away from decision rather than toward it.

What has often been called the timidity of the academic community is attributed, in part, by Dr. Coffin to feelings of ineffectiveness on the part of teachers who would *like*, but fail, to stimulate courageous stands on principle. There are of course teachers who are men as well—who speak out bravely on matters of civil and student rights, who place the goal of status in subordinate position. And there are others who are *almost* heroic, but somehow never quite expose their commitment to an ideal which may threaten their personal security. The opening words of Alan Paton's *Too Late the Phalarope* might, Dr. Coffin suggests, be addressed to such teachers:

Perhaps I could have saved him with only a word, two words out of my mouth. Perhaps I could have saved them all but I never spoke because he spoke hard and bitter words to me and shut the door of his soul to me and I withdrew. I should have hammered on it. I should have broken it down with my naked hands. I should have cried out, not

ceasing. For behind there was a man in danger, the bravest and gentlest of them all.

Some time ago we quoted a paragraph or two from Timothy Fetler, who teaches "Values and Religion" at Santa Barbara City College. We turn again to Mr. Fetler's paper, now published, for suggestion of how the insights of the true religionist, the inspired philosopher and the non-materialistic psychologist supplement one another. On "The Problem of a Value-Base," Mr. Fetler writes:

Is it possible, without becoming paternalistic or authoritarian, to establish a new value-base in terms of the prevailing naturalism, though not necessarily limited to it, leaving open the possibility for value-extension into spiritual or religious levels?

Psychologist Carl Rogers and philosopher Stace, among others, feel that this can be done. A naturalistic value-base does exist, and though values in one sense may be subjective it does not follow that they are all relative to cultural contexts. The fundamental needs of man qua man can provide the base for a value-continuum, which starting with basic physical needs and progressing through aesthetic and ethical levels would culminate in those peak-experiences known to all great religions as the very essence of spirituality.

Caught between two unhealthy extremes, the seductionistic fallacy of authoritarian schools and the reductionistic fallacy as practiced by our secular institutions, American education will increasingly fail to meet the deeper needs of its students, unless moral-spiritual needs are studied objectively.

How does a man who approaches the question of values in this way define "religion"?

If by religion is meant "ultimate concern," "unconditional seriousness concerning the meaning of existence," linked to a "total commitment to that alternative, which, though more difficult a path, has proven to lead towards increasing freedom and satisfactions," then religion represents the deepest and culminating experience of man, dealing, as it does, with the meaning of life as a whole. It becomes both locus of commitment as well as the goal towards which all other meanings point. Using criteria of degree of depth and continuity of satisfactions obtained, aesthetic, moral and spiritual values form a value-continuum culminating in those peak-

experiences which have produced the great religions of man.

It is important to realize that degrees of religious experience, as opposed to unique dogmatic interpretations, are as much a part of man's nature as any other value level, and that the education of the total man is impossible without taking into account the common spiritual needs of man.

Mr. Fetler concludes:

Value-experience is related to the state and capacity of the knower. This kind of knowledge depends on being, and as being grows and changes, so does depth and scope of value-knowledge. The teacher's primary obligation to his own personal growth becomes evident, for he will be able to lead only as far as he has ventured himself. Here the challenge of life merges with education in its deepest sense.

The value-continuum implies that man has a potential beyond the conditions which oppose and frighten him. If he is capable of transforming his being as an individual, he may be also on the way of transforming society, possibly the only way society can be transformed.

FRONTIERS

"Look" Looks at "The Radical Right"

A FEATURED symposium in *Look* for January 26, "Conspiracy USA," seems a genuine editorial effort in behalf of education for responsible citizenship. Although various organizations such as the John Birch Society are mentioned, and spokesmen are quoted, none of the *Look* pieces can be classified as counter-invective. The chief concern is put by the *Look* editors in these words: "The mutual confidence essential to free government is slowly being cut away by propaganda. Step by step, decent citizens come to tolerate attacks upon the loyalty of loyal men."

An article by Senator Frank Church examines the confusion attending "Radical Right" assertions from a historical point of view. Sen. Church writes:

The treachery theme, in assorted versions, inspires a virulent fanaticism that many Americans have not yet learned to deal with. Most of us recognize, and dismiss, the extremists on the radical front, both white and black, who openly flaunt their bigotry. Such inciters may draw a following for a while, but the great bulk of our people, in their abiding decency, will not be taken in.

The same common sense accounts for the decline of the Communist party in the U.S. Back in 1932, it ran candidates in 39 states and garnered a total of 102,991 votes.

In view of the collapse of the Radical Left as a political force within the United States, the precipitous rise of the Radical Right is all the more curious. Lacking a flesh-and-blood adversary with which to grapple, the Right has improvised one, conjuring up a phantom. It takes the vague form of conspiracy, which supposedly involves the top offices of the land. *The Time Has Come*, a Birch-distributed pamphlet, trumpeted in 1964, "Washington has been taken over! By which we mean that Communist influences are now in full working control of our Federal Government."

The latest summation of the contentions of the witch-hunters is a book called *None Dare Call It Treason*, which sold 8,000,000 copies from February to election day in 1964. It is difficult not

to agree with Sen. Church that "the book's potential effect is sobering to contemplate, for it could work its poison through our body politic for years to come like the slow, half-life chemistry of radiation." Demagogy, whether Machiavellian or simply an expression of ignorant and irresponsible ambition, always seeks scapegoats for personal troubles and confusions. Sen. Church reviews some of the factors which lead to extremism today:

Scholars differ on why so many conscientious Americans are being caught up in the Radical Right. It is, clearly, a revolt against the established order by the discontented, motivated by a mixture of reasons: a quest for some higher purpose than is satisfied by the commercial standards of our times; a fear of the new relationships being generated by the burgeoning growth, urbanization and automation of the country; a resistance to the complexities of modern life, to the bigness of government, to the racial revolution, to a "cold war" that never ends; to the absence of quick and easy solutions; a frustration over the inability of the United States, in the nuclear age, to swiftly work its will upon the world. These are the conditions of life with which we must cope, but they stir many a rebel to go forth in search of a cause.

The rebel may find his cause when asked to join a study group where big things are "considered"—communism, the Constitution, the need for recapturing traditional values. Do the neighbors care about communism? They seem to care only about bowling, bridge and barbecues.

So a convert is made. He is taught that the Communists are corrupting the children by creating an allegiance to the United Nations, which is actually Communist-inspired (by Alger Hiss) and operated (by U. Thant, along with some Red generals and judges). Obviously, in order to save the children the high-school textbooks must go.

Now, the institutions of the town itself are directly challenged. How will the teachers react, the parents in PTA, the ministers in their pulpits, the editors in their news columns? Will the sensible citizens fight back, or remain uninvolved? I can't really blame those who choose the easy way out, when so many men in high public office duck for cover. For too long, too many politicians have used our national repugnance to communism as a convenient crutch in their races. Little wonder that they now hesitate, though many see the need, to take issue with

constituents who regard themselves as super-patriots, waving the compelling banner of "anti-communism."

But the local and national community can no longer afford to hesitate. The Radical Right is not so much the enemy of communism as it is the enemy of freedom.

From the psychological point of view, an interesting contribution is made by an editorial interview with Arthur Larson, chairman of the National Council for Civic Responsibility—"a bipartisan committee of famous names set up last September to counter both the rising clamor of Right-Wing propaganda and Left-Wing excesses." *Look's* senior editor, David Maxey, quotes Mr. Larson as saying:

Did you ever notice that the enemy of these people is always within? The extremist never really attacks the man at the other extreme. He reserves his sharpest shafts for the man relatively close to him in the political spectrum.

I just don't think they realize that the straight-faced things they say can be so chilling. For example, that remark in a televised Birch Society meeting about not wanting any physical harm to come to Chief Justice Warren. Well, my goodness, who even brought up the possibility?

One of the fallacies of the Right-Wing view is that to fight the Communists, you have to use their tactics. You lose doing that.

Participation in [Far-Right] superpatriotic activities seems to satisfy some kind of romantic urge in people to find a storybook identification in what otherwise may be a hard, uninteresting life. Most of these people just need education.

Mr. Maxey concludes:

In that last remark, Arthur Larson is beginning to think, may be the start of a study about why extremism, in an American setting, suddenly looks palatable. *Education* may not be the answer, but something closer to *participation* in American life. (See *A New Conservative Manifesto*, LOOK, Dec. 29, 1964.)

Right now, the National Council is treating the symptoms of frustration, not the disease itself. That is the necessary first step. But if Arthur Larson can also help his adversaries learn to take part in the American consensus, he might do more than quell

their clamor. He might turn the boundless energy of political paranoia into something of value. That would be a large service.

One can hardly object to the idea of increased "participation in American life." But the distinctive feature of the thinking of the men who framed the Constitution of the United States was their belief that every citizen could and should be educated towards respect of the inviolability of individual conscience. This means that the first step in participation is to understand the philosophical basis upon which such a document as the Bill of Rights depends. An educated citizen "participates" because he cannot help it, because what he has learned establishes convictions on matters of principle which he must implement by activity which passes on the results of his learning.