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GREAT AND PERILOUS TIMES

IN a small, unpretentious book published in 1959 by the University of New Mexico, Peggy Pond Church tells the story of the life of Edith Warner. The title is *The House at Otowi Bridge.* This was the small house beside the Rio Grande in which Miss Warner began to live in 1928, having obtained the job of overseeing arrivals of freight for nearby Los Alamos. She was thirty-five, unmarried, without money, and needed to live in the Southwest for her health. The house was three miles from the San Ildefonso Pueblo. The pay was only twenty-five dollars a month, but she took the job, planning to supplement her income by the sale of gasoline, cokes, and the offerings of a small tearoom. She knew how to make chocolate cake. Somehow, the plan worked, and Miss Warner lived in the little house until 1947, when the Indians, who were now her friends, and a group of young physicists from Los Alamos, who were also her friends, built her a larger guest house and home. The Indians made the adobe bricks by methods practiced by them for centuries, and the physicists and their wives served as hod-carriers, leaving the bricklaying and finishing with adobe plaster to the Indians, who knew how. Edith Warner lived in her new house five years more, then died, in 1951.

One could, with great justification, use this book as a means of emphasizing the serene courage and deep human resources of the Pueblo Indians. Through the Indians, Mrs. Church says, Edith Warner "was in touch with a wisdom that has been almost forgotten." But it does not seem that a deliberate questing after this wisdom occupied Miss Warner. She loved and understood the Indians too much to want to "mine" their riches. When someone asked her whether the Pueblo people had developed a way of life that kept out the tensions and anxieties of the white world, she replied: "These people are human beings like ourselves, with their own full share of human good and ill." Perhaps you could say that, whatever the Indians knew, she was able to find in herself also, because she didn't try to "find out" about it, but enjoyed with them the same reciprocal flow of unexpecting companionship that she had with other people. Mrs. Church says in her foreword:

> She [Miss Warner] found herself unable to speak of her deep friendship with her Indian neighbors. I remember what a dislike she had, really the only sharp animosity I ever heard her express, for the anthropologists who kept intruding in the village, prying like irreverent children into the secrets of the kiva. In all her years at the bridge she allowed herself to learn only a few playful words of Tewa because she wanted the village people to keep, even from her, the privacy of their language. She never asked an Indian what his ceremonies "meant" any more than she ever asked me the meaning of the poems I showed her, knowing that the ritual, like the poem, must be its own communication.

This book about Edith Warner is a good book because the author seems to have the facts in the right relation to the values, and the values in the right relation to one another. Another passage, in which Ignacio, an old Indian of the Pueblo, spoke of their Plumed Serpent god to Miss Warner, will illustrate:

> "Now I tell you about Awanyu," he began. His face was almost invisible in the darkness, yet she could feel his eyes on hers intent as a watchful bird. His words were simple as though he were speaking to a child.
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> "He lives many miles away in a deep lake. Sometimes he does not come for many months. We plant corn and wheat but the ground is hard. They come up. They grow a little, but if no rain comes, they die. We have no *atole,* no bread for winter." His old voice trembled as though he were remembering centuries of hunger. "Then we pray and dance," he went on strongly, "all the men and women and children. We dance all day and all night. And when

> we dance, if our hearts are right, he comes. No matter if the ice be *that* thick"—and Ignacio held his hand several feet above the ground, "he breaks through and comes in the black cloud!" Edith felt he did not merely believe this story as legend. It was something he knew as surely as men know that each day the sun rises.
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> "If, when we dance, our hearts are right, the rain will come."
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> "If our hearts are right. . . ." These words stirred something deep in Edith Warner. She began to realize that the Pueblo dances are not simply magical devices to control the forces of nature. They are a means by which men bring their own lives into harmony with the order and beauty of the world around them.

This book generates afresh what many people have felt about the Southwest, or have come to feel about the world from living in the Southwest—that the earth is a sacred place. It is that the world is a living whole, with men consciously responsible parts of the life of that whole, and needing to live according to the high obligations created by their growing awareness. This is the essential content of the Indian cosmology, theology, and psychology. You find it in dozens of books, and, depending upon the skill with which it is reported, you feel the warmth and fascination of a web of pantheistic brotherhood that is not yet torn or mutilated. Edith Warner lived in such a house of life, and perceptive writing about her makes the rare excellence of *The House at Otowi Bridge.*

The men who built the atomic bomb, hidden away from the world at Los Alamos, felt something of the quality in Edith Warner's life, and they came to visit her, meet at her table, and find some kind of reflected changelessness there, as surcease from labors destined to bring about such terrible change. Robert Oppenheimer, who years before had often packed into this country on camping trips, chose the Los Alamos site for the bomb project. It was he who persuaded the military to permit his research people to have their dinner with Miss Warner, now and then. "There were many people at Los Alamos who felt that only their evenings at Edith Warner's kept them human."

There are passages in this book about these scientists, many of them now famous—about what Miss Warner thought of them, and what they thought of her—and enough "nuclear" comment to lead to a dozen impressive moral conclusions. Mostly, however, there is meditative silence, and a quiet wondering. It is not enough, for example, to say that the Indians, with their deep, mystical alliance with Nature, could never have made the Bomb (what did they know of such things?), although it is certainly correct to say that people pervaded by such natural reverence for life would not have done so.

But the modern world of nuclear enterprise and scientific progress is not the sacred world of the Indians. It could hardly become so, save by some Herculean effort of self-persuasion which would require a supporting intellectual structure filled with elaborations of meaning that correspond to the complexities of scientific knowledge. The modern world is profane. It has evolved and spread its ungainly proliferations outside the fane. Our progress has been technical, not meaningful.

What does it mean to live in a "sacred" world? It means, for one thing, to feel that the limits of one's own being extend as far as the limits of the world. It means that there is nothing that is not a part of, that is outside of, the self. It means that a dutiful, reverential act is in some sense an act by all the world. The sense of the sacred is first of all a feeling. It is what A. H. Maslow calls a "peak experience." It is the rhythmic universalizing of consciousness which Richard Byrd described as coming to him at his lonely, lost outpost in Antarctica. It is what Plotinus called "the flight of the lone to the Alone." It reaches into human life, as the old Indian said, when "our hearts are right." The sacred world is uniquely a place of intuited meanings. One of Edith Warner's notes says:

> Today the sun shines here, but the clouds hang low on the Sangre peaks and beyond Shumo. Again I have touched the fringe of the unknown and been drawn to it, not by my seeking, which is the only real way.
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> As I worked . . . there came without warning a flowing into me of that which I have come to associate with the gods. I went to the open door and looked up at the mountains with something akin to awe. It forced me out into the open where I could look up to those sacred high places on which humans do not dwell. Then it left me—perhaps to return to those sacred places.
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> I had almost forgotten how to lie curled on the ground or here on my couch, content just to look and feel and enjoy the thoughts that come. Rushing with things to be done crowding is such a waste of living. There need to be hours of this.

A not unimportant inquiry is implicit here. One goes to the mountain, we could say, to be enriched, returning strong to do the work of the world. But what is the work that needs doing? Is its fruit here on the mountain, or there, in the world? Which is the utility, the means, and which the high end? Is sacredness some kind of "resource"? What is being served through such operations?

Then these, let us say, are the great questions. The idea is to get them seriously asked, and to avoid all premature answers.

How do you get important questions asked and talked about? Well, you start a Dialogue. You ask them yourself. You say to yourself that if you are right, and these are the important questions, other men will want to talk about them, too.

The first thing you do is make some far-reaching propositions about meaning. For hypothesis, there is the idea that this is indeed a Sacred World. You search for evidence which is acceptable to modern man, finding, for example, the following in a book by a modern psychiatrist (Dr. Harold Searles):

> It is my conviction that there is within the human being a sense of relatedness to *his* total environment, that this relatedness is one of the transcendently important facts of human living, and that if he tries to ignore its importance to himself, he does so at peril to his psychological wellbeing. By "relatedness" I mean a sense of ultimate kinship, a psychological commitment to the structural relationship which exists between man and the various ingredients of his nonhuman environment.

So, you collect such threads of evidence, and you weave them into an essay, maybe even a book. This is obviously a good thing to do. And yet, somewhere along the line, you begin to wonder at your own presumption, or possibly your *naïveté*. What are you trying to do? Well, apart from your virtuous intentions, you are trying to articulate in intellectual terms a world-view that stands in logical relation, in reflected correspondence, to a complex of deep *feelings* about man-and-the-world. For inspiration you have the living practice of ancient and a few modern communities, the intuitive insights of some contemporaries and, with luck, an idea or two of your own.

No doubt it can be done—more or less poorly, but done. Yet as you get on with the project there is borne in upon you the enormous difference between an intellectual mosaic and the living matrix of conviction which made Ignacio say, "Our hearts must be right." You are putting together a synthetic metaphysic, but the Indian spoke from the bowels of his being. You are going to have to "defend" your propositions, while he quietly waits for the rain.

There are other problems. Suppose you are successful in creating out of the endless materials of modern research a fairly symmetrical image of a "sacred world": there is then the question of distilling it into something you can tell your children about. You begin to see that a faith is intellectual only in outline. It has to become a living thing. Its meaning must flow with the juices of life. In great depression, you realize that what you are attempting is the creation of an entire universe of *habitable* vision. Naturally you look for help.

Because the world we now live in—the world constructed by modern man over a period of some two or three hundred years—is a world which, for all its splendor, bears evidence of terrible mistakes, you look first for warnings. The mistakes must be understood and must not be repeated. And because, again, a certain disenchantment haunts your inquiries, you will not, at the beginning, look for great and whole affirmations, but for the subtler half-truths, the crucial qualifications and warnings that got brushed aside during the sweep of Western history. What seems needed, now, in planning reconstruction, is some elemental first principles drawn from what Gerald Sykes called "the wisdom of the smashed."

One might begin, for example, with the Socratic proposition: *Virtue cannot be taught.* (Socrates got smashed.)

We have here a double warning or reproof. And it is at the same time an oblique, back-door assertion of human freedom. It cuts through the pious assumptions of both individual and social conceits. It is a basic denial of the efficacy of *all* closed systems—philosophical systems, political systems. It is designedly a subversion of those progressive structures in either education or politics which tend to substitute direction for free decision, righteousness for choice.

Now what sort of a proposition is this? It is one of those few claims about the nature of things which at once generates furious opposition. Teaching virtue, comes the indignant rejoinder, is the one thing we *have* to do, in order to preserve the good society. This is our obligation to posterity, and our spiritual debt, as human beings, to the young!

Indeed it is, but the question remains: What if Socrates was right, and the thing is impossible?

Let us put the proposition differently. Let us say that education is not a processing plant but a shrine—a place where virtue is *invited,* never presumptuously taught. What could we say of a society which accepts this definition? Well, it would be a society honeycombed with graded places of free decision. It would be an endlessly open society whose institutions would be designed to expose people to choice after choice, instead of repeating shallow reassurances while hurrying them past the critical situations of life.

But suppose the young choose *wrongly?*

This is plainly the betraying question. It is from the logic of this question that we justify serving the hemlock to Socrates, burning Bruno, and forcing Galileo to recant. By this logic we man the brooms which sweep under an already bumpy carpet all the dubious, anxious, and even sick protests of people who have begun to question their own virtue and the virtue of their times. So we unfrocked and sent to a modern monastery Robert Oppenheimer, who dared to wonder if the nuclear offspring of modern physics might not be a changeling of sinful parentage instead of the natural reward of democratic virtue. So we leave to the radical fringes evaluation of the acute personal pain and searching aberration of Claude Eatherly, referring puzzled people to the certainties of his better-adjusted comrades on the *Enola Gay.*

It is a pretty dreadful thought—this idea of having to plan for a society which is not convinced of its own righteousness. Would it, one is bound to ask, be any kind of "society" at all?

Well, if we don't like such questions, or fear to answer them, we had better not read Plato's *Apology,* and we had better leave Dostoievsky entirely alone, since he has only further embarrassments in store for a society which believes virtue can be taught.

And if honesty is one of the virtues our educational progress has planted in us, we had better jettison the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, since these are the political bastions of a free society, and we are not yet, or

no longer, willing to let them shape our institutions.

It is true enough that people who want a truly open society are people whose ideas seem a direct threat to the survival of the kind of a society we have. It seemed so to the Athenians in the fourth century B.C., and it seems so now. And little short of a miracle, a practical man might argue, could make it seem otherwise.

Well, we have not got very far with our project of making a habitable vision. We hang up on first principles. But we hang up only if we insist upon an immediate sociopolitical application of the dream. So the next question must be: Is there any other application worth making?

After all, one great virtue of Western civilization—and one certainly *self-taught*, since the vision of the new men of the eighteenth century was a dramatic revolt against the conventional verities of their time—is its promise of freedom for *all* men, not just a favored few. Standing before this dilemma, perhaps we have reached the place where we must acknowledge that the great revolution in thought of the eighteenth century did not solve the mystery of human life, but only framed it afresh for more universal contemplation. Somehow, in the haste of our newly acquired knowledge, and with the brash confidence of practical achievements in a new world, a world undivided and unexploited by ancient institutions, we have skidded past the most important text in the mandate of our freedom, and have gone back to the guarantees of an older and very different law.

The fourteenth chapter of Luke relates the parable of the marriage of the king's son. When the wedding was ready, it lacked for guests, and the king ordered his servant to go out into the highways and hedges and *"compel them* to come in." While scholars maintain that "compulsion" was not in Jesus' meaning, this verse became, for the impatient piety of Augustine, a proof-text of forcible conversion, and later it doubtless contributed to justification of the urgent labors of the Holy Inquisition. People must be made righteous, no matter what. . . .

Looking back on a thousand years or so of such compelling, the new men of the United States asserted another rule: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." Now that is about as far as a social compact can go in asserting that virtue cannot be compelled—or taught. The rest of the provisions of the First Amendment have a similar intent—to make it plain that there is an absolute limit to the certainties which legislators can impose upon free men. The virtues of individual and even social life are to be left *open* to the unfolding and independent thought of individuals.

This portion of our constitutional law is not a technical restraint on the authority of government, but an embodiment of the spirit and whole intention of men who seek virtue. So, again, we are brought to the fact that the contribution to the learning of virtue that a state may make, through its laws, is in terms of *invitation*, not prescription. As Justice Douglas said recently: "The First Amendment must be accepted in full vigor, as distinguished from a rule fashioned from day to day to fit the mood of the dominant group." Such virtue as a society may attain to is reached *outside the law*, through the spontaneous and self-imposed disciplines undertaken by free men; and it may then communicate a saving grace to the operations of politics and the affairs of state.

This means the fostering of a new *esprit de corps.* It means all honor to the man who has an inspiration of his own. It means the limitation of orthodoxy to statements about predictable units, such as we make out of metal and wood and all such constant and wholly obedient materials. Not poets, but statisticians, will be barred from any inhabitable Utopia. If they like they can count the cars on the freeways, but the thoughts in the minds of people who drive cars, and do other things, the statisticians must leave alone, since we know from experience that publishing reports on idea-counts too easily becomes a way of telling

the young—and the old—what ideas to think. "This is the way *we* do it."

We are probably doing it wrong; at any rate, a way must be found to take all the social pressure out of social science. When badges of courage, virtue, and learning become the means of badgering people into conformity, the plain man with no badges is the only one who remains free.

The great unities of philosophic thought, the uncoerced harmonies, will remain. The kinship of Lao-tse and Socrates will not be lessened by this practice of freedom. The link between the Upanishads and Meister Eckhart will grow stronger from other spontaneous confirmations. The comradeship of Jesus and Gotama will be as plain as the identity of Osiris and Prometheus. And the gods of the Pueblo will gain impersonal reincarnation in the theoretical dynamics of those shy pantheistic philosophers, the psychotherapists, who have been bonded to freedom by the laws of mental health.

This is what always happens. You set out to fabricate a habitable vision—a scheme which combines social with metaphysical truth—and you are stopped by the warnings of the great martyrs of the past, who are our chief instructors. Making theories of social blessedness is a fine occupation, but you have to run them through the mangle of historical experience before, in conscience, you can offer them to anyone else. They have to enter and survive the death cell of Socrates, the Grand Inquisitor's dungeon, and a number of more contemporary ordeals before you can be sure that they'll work.

REVIEW
"FEAR-ENGENDERING CONFORMITY"

BRUCE CAMERON'S *The Case Against Colonel Sutton* is *a* deserving companion volume to Howard Fast's *The Winston Affair*. Although the author is concerned with the manner in which charges of sexual deviation may endanger a good officer's career, this book is singularly free of sensationalism. Yet Cameron has captured the atmosphere of any official "investigation" which subtly ignores the basic democratic premise—that a man is to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. The most telling points are conveyed by a letter in which two army career men nearing retirement discuss "the Sutton case," off the record:

> I'm afraid, Bill, you've been overseas too long to grasp the current atmosphere. When I came home from Germany I discovered there are two worlds, even in the Army. Of course we always kidded about the staff side never knowing what's going on in the field, but this thing I'm referring to is more sinister and hidden. It's not a policy or any one clique, it's a disease that seems to be infecting our whole society, civilian as well as Government.
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> In a sense you hit it on the head when you said, "This Sutton affair strikes me as a sad miscarriage of the way we used to do things. It makes the Army look like it's afraid to use legal methods." Yet it's deeper than that, Bill. Only the other night a group of us were discussing this very point at the house. We all agreed fear governs our simplest decisions. But no one had a solution. That's the tragedy. There is no solution. We are afraid to be caught opposing the majority or power. Even to disagree on a staff study involves a great deal more than it used to. You warn yourself, G-1 is for this idea and if I shoot holes through it, he can get me on my next assignment, sending me where the family can't go. If it's a G-2 project and you're against giving greater and greater investigative power to a few hands, you remember that G-2 clears you and without that clearance, your career ends. What I'm trying to say, fear has made us all cautious. I know I'm oversimplifying a complex problem. Alice's brother works for a big plant out West. The same disease has spread there too. He lost three jobs before he learned he couldn't fight the organization. Now he's an executive, has his own security force and has conformed right down to adopting tests for all his employees in order to weed out the rebels.
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> And that's my point, Bill, you are a rebel. Your cause died with World War II. Your protest would fall not only on deaf ears, but would anger a lot of people who know you're right and can only escape their guilt by attacking you. I know I sound like a psychologist or something, but I have been studying this problem. My own son and I don't see eye to eye any more. Maybe we never did. Maybe that's the trouble. He thinks I'm as old-fashioned as a horse and buggy. If I say something isn't fair, he challenges me with, "What is fair? Only logic can decide that." Logic, Bill, has become a glib rationalization to escape a decision, our conscience and, above all, logic itself.
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> You and I will retire in a year or so. When we look at the world and the Army we've helped create, I, for one, know I failed. I can't understand it. I keep asking myself where did I fail? I still believe in values, among them loyalty, honesty and fairness. But, loyalty now means subservience to those who agree with you or can help you, honesty is so nebulous today that we have forgotten its meaning and have substituted a new definition: Don't get caught. As for fairness, it has become a one-way street, always pointing in our direction. The world owes us everything and we owe the world nothing.
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> From our discussion and letters I know you agree with my feeling, though perhaps not with my examples. That's why I say, you're fighting windmills when you ask, "Doesn't anyone know what's going on today?" I answer: The windmills ask only one thing, that the wind keep blowing. Like the one-way street of fairness, as long as it blows in our direction to spin our own little blades, to hell with the rest of the windmills.
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> And this brings me to Sutton's case. . . . Today, in and out of the Army, accusation is synonymous with guilt. Again not a policy but a contagious disease.
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> One last thing, then I must close. Some of Sutton's friends were discussing the case at lunch yesterday. A few had been interviewed by Flinn's snoopers. One thing was apparent: no one wanted to take a definite stand and stick up for Sutton. They shifted. They said the old clichés, he's honest, brave intelligent. But the idea of defending strongly a friend who has been accused was to endanger themselves, to risk falling out of grace. As one man

said, "Hell, there must be something to it or why would Sutton be in a jam?" There it is. Of course a few friends have given favorable statements but Flinn dismisses such support by saying, "What do you expect from a friend?" In short, if a friend sticks up for you, then it's because he's your friend. If he denounces you, it's because he's honest.

When I retire I intend to write a book about the real weakness of our system—fear engendering conformity. I know several big boys who are planning when they retire to write books and articles on policy because their pet peeves were swept aside. Disagreement and constructive criticism used to be good, even at a staff conference. But not any more. Destroy criticism and disagreement and you have unification, not of departments, but of minds.

A bleak prospect for men in "public service"—the fact that fear of George Orwell's Big Brother tends to increase without anyone quite knowing who Big Brother *is*. There have been ordeals by slander in all periods of history, but the loyalty investigation procedure of our time, whether in government, the universities, or the army, proves to have all the insidious side-effects which Mr. Cameron describes. Of course, things have always been tough enough for the independent spirit in the army, even when investigations of "character" were conducted in a straightforward manner. A short passage from Gene L. Coon's *The Short End* exposes the traditional situation, as viewed by a young noncom who decides to have no part of the army as a career:

It has to be a complete wedding, a complete devotion, which welds heart and soul and mind to an abstract, inhuman, unfeeling mock world of uniforms and uniformity. How anybody can get involved in something which as a prerequisite insists upon the murder of free will is more than I can understand, but where can you go? Sometime in everyone's life, even, it seems to me, there has to come a time when you spit in the boss's eye and tell him to go climb a flagpole and slide down. But in the Army this is how you end up in jail. Hell of a job, when you can't even quit.

To return to the predicament of Col. Sutton: finally, the conclusion of an inconclusive investigation clears this excellent officer of all insinuations concerning homosexuality. His career is saved. But Sutton felt that he had to achieve another kind of salvation on his own, and with these words he explains to his fiancée why he resigns—just two years before full retirement benefits would be secured:

He was deeply serious, his intense gaze drawing her into his mood. "There comes a time, Eileen, in every man's life when he must free himself. He doesn't have to understand why—he just knows he must. It's as if all the men in the world who had been persecuted stirred in their graves and united their voices to tell him. Not just to free himself from the 'investigators.' No, it's deeper than that. It says to free yourself from yourself. You understand, I know."

"I was just afraid, David, you were bitter .

"Of course I was. I'm human, Eileen. But you have to be honest, too; you have to admit the Army had a right to resolve the allegations. The Army has a right to its code. But it's still a free world, as long as a man knows he's free. To free myself I had to resign. If I hadn't, I would have died."

COMMENTARY
TOWARD "UNDERSTOOD DIVERSITY"

A PARAGRAPH from Robert M. Hutchins' *The University of Utopia,* intended as a text for W. H. Ferry's Saskatchewan address (see this week's "Children"), was crowded out, but its point is as useful here. Dr. Hutchins wrote:

> The University is not a center of propaganda for an official doctrine. Still less is it an institution like many American universities that is not concerned with doctrine at all. It is concerned with all doctrines that can have any reasonable claim to be taken seriously. Its effort is to work toward a definition of the real points of agreement and disagreement among these doctrines, not in the hope of obtaining unanimity, but in the hope of obtaining clarity. The object is not agreement but communication. The Utopians think it would be very boring to agree with one another. They think it helpful and interesting to understand one another. The University of Utopia, like the educational system as a whole, aims to bring together men of different attitudes, backgrounds, interests, temperaments, and philosophies for the purpose of promoting mutual comprehension. The University of Utopia is an understood diversity.

The problem, in other words, is to make diversity a source of strength by giving it the order which understanding creates. This is Mr. Ferry's contention. The "pluralism" of modern education is not its strength but its weakness. A plausible "democratic" admiration of disorder among the purposes pursued within a university cannot turn this weakness into a virtue. The diversity remains misunderstood and results in a kind of academic hedonism which has no more to recommend it as a controlling principle of education than the dance-hall slogan, *Obey that impulse!* has as a guide for a philosophy of life.

There is room here, of course, for much casuistry. It can be argued—and *is* argued—that a university should have no "fixed star" to steer by; that centers of the higher learning should today be renamed "multiversities." It is argued that an attempt to order diversity by a hierarchy of aims would stultify the "freedom" of scholarship to pursue the truth. But what if such *unexamined* freedom brings, in practice, a self-defeating blindness to educational failure? What if it amounts to abdication of the responsibility to transmit some account of the meaning of being human, to students who, as human beings, need this help?

Such defenses of pluralism ignore the ideal of the individual educated man. They argue, by default, that the modern university has no conception of how to serve this ideal, and will not attempt to find out. The result may be fancy free, but it produces no freedom. By this argument the Gulliver of education is left lying immobile, tangled in all the little ideas of all the little Lilliputs.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

THE NEW UNIVERSITY—SOME RADICAL THOUGHTS

[On December 14, 1963, Mr. W. H. Ferry, of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, spoke before a faculty planning committee for the new Regina campus of the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Ferry is one of a growing number of distinguished men who, although "without portfolio" (no list of degrees in Education), address themselves effectively to the problems of the "higher learning." Apparently, the University of Saskatchewan is in a mood to listen. Following are portions of Mr. Ferry's address.]

Of course I am a utopist. I am here not to help you find a well-worn rut but to think of the best possible programs. Apart from such considerations, utopists are the people who make the most sense to me these days. No so-called practical politician that I know of, for example, is willing to say that we should refuse under any circumstances to take part in nuclear war. This is called the realistic, or nonutopian, or practical view. The utopist says we should under no circumstances engage in nuclear war, not only because it would be wrong but because national suicide or near-suicide is the ultimate in impractical policy. The utopist is today's ultra-practical man. I turn now to a look at the present scene and its novelties:

First, it is becoming plain that we are advancing toward a workless world, one in which the historical connections between work and reward will one after another break off. In the West they are already doing so. This will mark the end of today's basic economic theory, the end of full employment as a major national goal, the beginnings of a new sociology and social psychology, and finally, the understanding that ethics in politics is an obligatory rather than optional exercise. The prime mover, technology, is also carrying us rapidly into the bureaucratized community, in which the ancient values of individualism crumble before the impersonal organization and the cybernated activities that more and more characterize it. We shall surely live inside national and international plans of various sorts. Just as surely we shall live under the black shadow of a military technology that so far shows no sign of becoming permanently manageable. For the indefinite future we lucky few in the white affluent world will feel the increasingly heavy guilt and apprehension engendered by growing billions of dark and impoverished neighbors.

Second, I come to new circumstances crowding around our own doorsteps. A new industry is growing up to deal with the proliferation of knowledge in every field. This consists mainly of the mountains of scientific papers that we hear so much about, and the foothills of information surrounding each of the manifold specialized activities of man, from business administration to social statistics and international relations. Fritz Machlup of Princeton says that the knowledge industry accounts for 29% of the Gross National Product of the United States.

Perhaps not quite as new a condition is the steady obsolescence of ideas and theories in the academic disciplines. The psychology and sociology and natural sciences that I was taught at Dartmouth 30-odd years ago have undergone recurrent sea changes, many of them in the past few years, according to the testimony of my children in college.

Third, it is becoming evident that technological change does not equal progress except in the most limited sense. One could argue from the present state of Western culture that one of the chief outputs of the techno-scientific age is cultural depravity and spiritual degradation.

By now we sadly realize that it is ingenuous to expect progress in our cultural and political life commensurate with the achievements of the machines we so adroitly hitch together. Some will think that depraved is too strong a word for the current situation, and they may be right; yet events

north and south, from Birmingham to Chicago to Dallas indicate that we Americans are in more brutalized condition than we have been willing to admit. At any rate, there is no doubt about wholesale alienation, apathy, boredom, anomie, and other psychic ailments in the community. I sense that they are not present in Canada to anything like the degree that they are recognized in the United States. I sense that Canadians, for whom I have always had such deep partiality that I went over the brink and married one, are a good deal more urbane and civilized than Americans. However, I am trying to look beyond this moment to a few years ahead, and I have noticed that today's foolishness in my country becomes your foolishness tomorrow. This is not to be attributed to a follow-the-leader spirit in Canada, but to technology, which homogenizes us all.

The cultural rawness just mentioned seems to me to be evidence of community disintegration more than of growing pains or temporary malaise. Perhaps as great a disintegrating factor as any is what we favorably refer to as pluralism. In a human being, pluralism appears as a broken personality, indecisive and wanting to go in many directions, always neurotic and occasionally psychotic. In a human society pluralism is celebrated as a source of strength, quite mistakenly in my judgment, for it shows the same symptoms. I see pluralism as a phase which civilization may have to endure until it discovers something better. Pluralism is the excuse for fracturing the political community, and for ennobling the wheeler and dealer. You have noticed the commissions that have been wandering around the United States of late, peering under bushels in search of "the American purpose." This too is new, this hunt for ourselves, and it is brought on, I think, by pluralism. Harlan Cleveland, Assistant Secretary of State, says that the U.S. is a "protected plurality of systems," and obviously likes this arrangement better than I do.

As against pluralism there is, in my judgment, nothing wrong with unity of the kind echoed in the first words of the Constitution, "We the people." Years of discussion at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions warns me that unity/pluralism is one of the most difficult of all topics to bring into focus, and I leave it realizing that I have made an unsatisfactory presentation.

This is the world before us, beset by novelty on every hand, already deeply perturbing to the individual personality, changing by the hour, promising mainly the unexpected, and conspicuously lacking a doctrine of man. The program I have in mind would seek:

First, to implant the quest for self-improvement in students as a lifelong preoccupation.

Second, to pull away the obstructions that lie in the way of understanding the realities of political and economic life. By obstructions I mean the rubbish produced by any status quo and by its confederates in the mass media for their own protection and enrichment. I mean the corpus of myth and falsehood and semi-truth that J. K. Galbraith labeled the "conventional wisdom." This is a complicated and dangerous world which we can at best hope to see not very clearly, and at the least we ought to be given a chance to see and understand what is really going on. The people are sovereign, but a sovereign that can be deceived by his employees and servants, as is happening in many allegedly democratic countries, is a sovereign on the way out.

Third, the program would develop critical intelligence, and the sense of self-respect needed to exercise it. I believe that individualism is done for, suffocated by bigness. I also believe we must do our best to keep individuality alive, and that the primary means to its survival is the exercise of critical intelligence.

Fourth, the program would cultivate the political openness that permits the contemplation of all plans for human betterment, however radical or varnished over by epithets they may be.

It is much easier to say what should not, as a practical matter, be presented in a curriculum appropriate to our times than it is to say what should be offered, and how. But one need not be unduly apologetic. The assumptions here are those of a revolutionary age, of an era in which the fixed stars of recent educational practice have gone out.

It is of the utmost significance that today's student may expect to live 10 years longer than his father and may also expect to devote far less time to work. We may suppose that he will live far more in the world than his father, travel more extensively and oftener. The chance is better than four in five that he will find himself part of a vast corporation, public or private, for whatever part of his life he labors, and the chances are five in five that he will be exposed to efforts at commercial and political manipulation far more sophisticated than any of us can now imagine. He may expect to change jobs two or three times during his lifetime, and change the cities in which he works as well, not because he wants to but because he has to. He will need retraining each time. And he is likely to be graduated from the ranks of the employed, voluntarily or involuntarily, at a much earlier age than his father, with perhaps as much as a generation of life still stretching before him. Such possibilities—I myself would call them strong probabilities—should make the apostles of vocationalism quaver, and the apostles of liberal studies to rejoice.

Perhaps the single best thing we can do for our students is, as I said earlier, to start them on the road to lifelong education. To this end I would propose the cultivation of intellectuals. In my dictionary an intellectual is a person who is serious about his mind and makes the best use he can of it. We are opting for the man prepared to deal with swiftly altering patterns and problems of the new world. This means, in my definition, opting for the intellectual; not necessarily for the intellectual life, though we cannot have too much of that, but for the intellectual outlook. Even here we walk in dangerous ways, for "the intellect is man's peculiar pride, and pride is man's undoing."

Educators today are not troubled by indifference and lack of attention. There is no vacuum around public education, but a windy firmament full of clashing sounds and voices. It is hard to think of a subject which is at once so unanimously approved and so divisive of opinion. But we are all committed to it because education is, from any point of view, man's best enterprise.

FRONTIERS

Salute to "Dissent"

THE tenth anniversary (Spring, 1964) issue of *Dissent,* the independent socialist quarterly, is a rich confirmation of the vitality, originality, and integrity of the radical thinking of the present. The contributors include R. H. Tawney, Ignazio Silone, Nicola Chiaromonte, Lionel Abel, Norman Thomas, Irving Howe, and various others. The piece by Tawney, who died last year, is called "Socialism and Freedom" and is one of the essays to appear in *The Radical Tradition,* a memorial volume of his work being published in the United States by Pantheon. Those who have enjoyed Tawney's distinguished prose in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* and *The Acquisitive Society* will take similar pleasure in this article.

We have often said in these pages that the best social analysis and criticism to be found anywhere appears in the radical press. We offer this issue of *Dissent* in evidence. It is probably no coincidence that some of the best writing is usually found in the same place. For clarity and strength, Tawney, Silone, and Chiaromonte have very few rivals. Tawney might be called a radical thinker in the classical tradition, while Silone is a novelist and revolutionist whose thinking keeps pace with the changing focus of socio-moral issues, and Chiaromonte is a philosopher who gives dramatic unity to every paragraph. The latter's article, "The Unreason of State," shows how the modern bureaucratic state, from the time of Napoleon, has increasingly displaced individual responsibility by refusing to recognize "any principle superior to its own conservation." The dictates of personal morality may be clear, but they are ineffective and irrelevant:

> . . . we are called upon to obey historical necessity, which in practice means continually adjusting to *force majeure,* modifying action to meet the demands of expediency, and accepting the kind of operation to which politicians decree "there is no alternative." Now the fact is that they simply refuse to see the validity of any choice that does not, in the first place protect their power; and they take it upon themselves to decide which forces are invincible and which are not, the former being those they fear, the latter those they feel they can control or eliminate.
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> Historical necessity and its offspring, political expediency, have the special virtue of relieving of responsibility whoever acts in their name or according to their rules. An action ordered by history has the character of implacable and indisputable necessity; failure to perform it, not the violation of common morality in performing it, is considered reprehensible. When one has carried out the act, he is considered to have absolved an ethical obligation and obeyed a moral imperative, or to say it "in prose" he had no choice, because Necessity knows no law, and orders from above cannot be disobeyed. Ordinary morality, has either no voice at all in the matter or loses itself in casuistry.
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> Although Historical Necessity is very different from the Fate of the Greeks it fulfills a similar function. Historical Necessity is fate minus the supernatural. Concocted in government offices and committee meetings it comes out of computer machines sharp and clear yet this does not keep it from being considered as inevitable as if it had been imprinted on the nature of things from time immemorial. Its greatest value, though, is that it frees its interpreters, executors and instruments from the weight of responsibility to their fellows, their consciences and the God in which they may believe.

And where do these absolute fiats come from? From the readings of political expediency by the managers of states. And this, in time, becomes the effective "reality" to which the people of the bureaucratic states are obliged to respond without question. Chiaromonte concludes:

> We must challenge this false notion with our conviction that "reality" is not the measure of anything. Indeed, it is but a burden to be borne or a torment to be suffered unless *we* measure *it* by a clear idea of something that could be in the place of what is.
>
> Does this mean opposing the unreality of the myth to the reality of the concrete and the calculable? Why not? Myth is an ineradicable part of what men think and do, it is the voice of the unreality that we are made of, and that man continually contrasts to accomplished facts. After all, in Greek *mythos* originally means "natural discourse" and *logos*

"orderly discourse." A just measure of each is perhaps the most that man can hope to achieve.

This issue of *Dissent* has a special report by Jeremy Larner on "The New York School Crisis." Admirers of James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son* have a particular obligation to read Mr. Larner's detailed account of the drive to desegregate New York's public schools, for here, in numerous situations, is example after example of the ruthless attack on the Negro's sense of identity and his self-respect, of which Baldwin writes. Following is a fragment of material gathered by Larner which fills twenty-seven pages:

> In the classroom of a 1st grade teacher who was a militant supporter of the boycott, I was surprised to find cut-out pictures of white children used almost exclusively as bulletin board illustrations. Later I found the purified faces of Sally, Dick and Jane beaming out at me in ghetto classrooms of teachers Negro or white, liberal or not: as if to say, these are what good children are like.
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> *"5th-grade Lower East Side boy:* I have a problem that I am colored. I would like to be handsom but I cant because other people have strait blond hair and they are handsom."
>
> In a 2nd-grade Harlem classroom the teacher, a lively, intelligent Negro woman, has her kids acting out a nursery tale. In front of the class stands a shy, finger-sucking little girl, her hair in pigtails, absolutely adorable and black. From her neck hangs a large square of cardboard, on which an adult has painted the head of a white girl with abundantly flowing golden hair. Caption: "GOLDILOCKS." . . .
>
> *"West Harlem 6th-grade boy:* Teacher! In the caveman days, if there were Negro cavemen, did the white cavemen use them as slaves?"

For single copies (95 cents) or subscriptions to *Dissent* ($3.50), write to Eastern News Co., 255 Seventh Ave., New York 1, N.Y.