

## QUEST FOR THE ROOT

THERE is an obscure heroism in Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, a serious study and critique of contemporary society. (Beacon, 1964, \$6.00.) The heroism—which has a desperate, Existential quality—lies in his resistance to present social reality on the grounds of an intuitive ethics which has only the limited humanism of an empirical philosophy for its inspiration and guide. An idealist would say that Prof. Marcuse is a materialist who has grown bitterly and brilliantly critical of the fruits of materialism, yet remains skeptical of all idealistic conceptions and often interrupts himself to warn the reader that he is not being "metaphysical," despite appearances. Like the great materialistic and agnostic thinkers of the nineteenth century, he calls metaphysics "obscurantism," and while he argues for "transcendence," the goals he seeks avoid metaphysical taint, as he puts it, "by virtue of the rigorously historical character of the transcendence."

The heroic character of this work is obscure by reason of the fact that the author is attacking and rejecting forms of the degradation of man which are not readily apparent to a great many people. He will not, in short, be understood, except by a comparatively small number. Not enough readers will share Prof. Marcuse's horror of the manipulation of human beings, since they *seem* to be free, and, indeed, speak of their liberty with pride and assurance. Not enough people will recognize the importance of the continuing existence of a platform of analysis and criticism which originates *outside* the assumptions of modern technological society. Prof. Marcuse's book is an attempt to erect this platform, justify it, stand on it, and to write about the future in terms of the perspectives his elevation permits.

Two other books would be good preparation for reading *One-Dimensional Man*—Dwight

Macdonald's *The Root Is Man*, and Roderick Seidenberg's *Post-Historic Man*. Macdonald's volume is an analysis of the breakdown of Marxist revolutionary expectations in relation to the mass society; Seidenberg writes with loathing of the dehumanizing processes of technological rationalization, and wonders if escape from this fate is possible at all.

It would be foolish to ask of Prof. Marcuse what he cannot do: Sound a tocsin that will arouse to action the secret longings of ordinary human beings. Possibly, at the present time, this would be to anticipate historical opportunity; at any rate, he does not write as a crusader, but as an intellectual who has seen the inapplicability of nineteenth-century revolutionary assumptions to the present socio-economic scene and now offers his audience a closely reasoned argument for other assumptions which he believes must be adopted if there is to be any constructive change. The book is abstract, theoretical, but characterized throughout by a firm grasp of primary human values. It is the kind of a book that should be read very carefully by all those who are convinced that something is radically wrong with our existing society, yet find it exceedingly difficult to make a diagnosis which will stand against conventional defenses of the *status quo*.

Briefly, it is Prof. Marcuse's contention that the one-dimensional logic (it can hardly be called "philosophy") of technology has gradually displaced all other views of the ends and means of human life, to a point where it has no serious rivals in the definition of the Good. There is no longer a Great Refusal of that which is. The title of the Introduction, which sets the keynote of the book, is "The Paralysis of Criticism: Society without Opposition." Two main sections follow: (1) a study of the "flattening out" to one dimension of the common socio-political life, and

(2) a survey of the triumph of one-dimensional "positive" thinking over criticism and protest.

In the first section, the author proposes what, at the outset, all will agree with: that the technological society, through its mastery of material processes and progressive fulfillment of material needs, was intended to set men free from the burdens of the economic struggle. Prof. Marcuse puts the advance publicity of the technological revolution very well:

The technological processes of mechanization and standardization might release individual energy into a yet uncharted realm of freedom beyond necessity. The very structure of human existence would be altered, the individual would be liberated from the world's work, imposing upon him alien needs and alien possibilities. The individual would be free to exert autonomy over a life that would be his own. If the productive apparatus could be organized and directed toward the satisfaction of vital needs, its control might well be centralized; such control would not prevent individual autonomy, but render it possible.

Now comes the author's vitally instructive point. This goal, he says, has been the "end" of technological rationality. It is what we have all hoped for and expected, and explained to our children as a major glory of American civilization. But we have been wrong. We have not been made "free" by technology:

In actual fact, . . . the contrary trend operates: the apparatus imposes its economic and political requirements for defense and expansion on labor time and free time, on the material and intellectual culture. By virtue of the way it has organized its technological base, contemporary society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc.

Today political power asserts itself through its power over the machine process and over the technical organization of the apparatus. The government of advanced and advancing industrial societies can maintain and secure itself only when it succeeds in mobilizing, organizing, and exploiting the technical, scientific, and mechanical productivity available to industrial civilization. And this productivity mobilizes society as a whole, above and beyond any particular or group interests. The brute fact that the machine's physical (only physical?) power surpasses that of the individual, and of any particular group of individuals, makes the machine the most effective political instrument in any society whose basic political organization is that of the machine process.

How can anyone but cranks and visionaries fail to recognize the validity of a process which proves itself daily in very nearly all relationships? If you want to do "good," you must avail yourself of the mechanisms of this process—which, in a "democratic" society, are open to the use of all. If you want to help put a conscientious, peace-minded man in office, you will have to buy him bumper strips, printing, radio and television time, and hire a self-effacing and sagacious public relations man who knows how to use the communications mechanisms of the Big Machine. You play the game according to all the rules of access to the Machine's facilities, because there is no other way of reaching the people you have to reach. This is not compromise, because compromise means choosing an easy way over a hard way of doing things, and in this case there is simply no choice. You are not compromising but making a necessary accommodation to Reality. That it may be impossible to put a two-dimensional man into office by one-dimensional means does not occur to you; or you do not let it occur to you, because you don't like "defeatism."

There is, of course, a pseudo-freedom you can enjoy under this system. The fact is that the Big Machine can't *think*, and so you can say almost anything you like and it won't really hear, or notice you at all, unless you throw sand in the gears or seriously distract the motormen from their tasks.

Basically, Herbert Marcuse is a Marxist sociologist; at any rate, he began his serious thinking in Marxist categories. The present book is evidence of his integrity as a materialist thinker. A large part of the first section of this book is devoted to showing that changes in the instruments of production have changed the cultural consciousness of modern man, having had the effect of dissolving the issues which gave the revolutionary struggle meaning during the nineteenth century. We shall not spend time reviewing this analysis, but say simply that it is important and worth reading. There is a sense in which Marcuse's integrity as a materialist thinker and as revisionist in Marxist theory is both his strength and his weakness. He places the Renaissance idea of the good of man first; if analysis according to traditional Marxist categories no longer serves that ideal, Marcuse will not use them; that is his strength. But as a materialist, he looks for causation in the circumstances of human life, and this, it seems to this reviewer, is his weakness. This is not to deny the relative truth in the doctrine of economic determinism, nor the pertinence of Marcuse's revision of Marx. An idealist who fears to recognize the relative truth of determinism, economic or otherwise, is an insecure idealist who prefers some kind of emotional faith to an understanding of the laws of nature. Ironically enough, Marcuse's implicit position—regardless of his denial of "metaphysics"—is that a second set of laws of nature must somehow be smuggled into our understanding of the world, in order to overcome the flattening-out tendency of one-dimensional processes and theories. From the viewpoint of dialectical materialism, he is a crypto-idealist. He has deep humanitarian concern for the common welfare, but no more philosophical ground for it in his thought than can be found in Sartre.

The part of *One-Dimensional Man* which examines the emasculation of the protest in art and literature is extraordinarily perceptive. The affirmations of the artist almost always contain an

implied or explicit criticism of the *status quo*. The artist has made a profession of Platonic idealism. The realized good is never the ideal good, for the artist, who looks beyond. Discussing *artistic alienation*, Marcuse says:

The conflict with the world of progress, the negation of the order of business, the anti-bourgeois elements in bourgeois literature and art are neither due to the aesthetic lowliness of this order nor to romantic reaction—nostalgic consecration of a disappearing stage of civilization. "Romantic" is a term of condescending defamation which is easily applied to disparaging avant-garde positions, just as the term "decadent" far more often denounces the genuinely progressive traits of a culture than the real factors of decay. The traditional images of artistic alienation are indeed romantic in as much as they are in æsthetic incompatibility with the developing society. This incompatibility is the token of their truth.

But since the forms and processes of modern society grow out of the mechanisms of technology—as their *proximate* causes—and since technological mechanisms do not think, have no critical or philosophical position, and indeed, couldn't care less about such matters—all sorts of contradictory ideas can enjoy a kind of ritual existence in the advanced technological society. From the machine point of view, they are only playful, quite unreal. As Marcuse says:

Their mere enumeration shows that they belong to a lost dimension. They are invalidated not because of their literary obsolescence. Some of these images pertain to contemporary literature and survive in its most advanced creations. What has been invalidated is their subversive force, their destructive content—their truth. In this transformation, they find their home in everyday living. The alien and alienating *oeuvres* of intellectual culture become familiar goods and services. Is their massive reproduction and consumption only a change in quantity, namely, growing appreciation and understanding, democratization of culture?

The truth of literature and art has always been granted (if it was granted at all) as one of a higher order, which should not and indeed did not disturb the order of business. What has changed in the contemporary period is the difference between the two orders and their truths. The absorbent power of

society depletes the artistic dimension by assimilating its antagonistic contents. In the realm of culture, the new totalitarianism manifests itself precisely in a harmonizing pluralism, where the most contradictory works and truths peacefully coexist in indifference.

Prior to the advent of this cultural reconciliation, literature and art were essentially alienation, sustaining and protecting the contradiction—the unhappy consciousness of the divided world, the defeated possibilities, the hopes unfulfilled, and the promises betrayed. They were a rational, cognitive force revealing a dimension of man and nature which was repressed and repelled in reality. . . . In the form of the *oeuvre*, the actual circumstances are placed in another dimension, where the given reality shows itself as that which it is. Thus it tells the truth about itself; its language ceases to be that of deception, ignorance, and submission. Fiction calls the facts by their name and their reign collapses; fiction subverts everyday experience and shows it to be mutilated and false. But art has this power only as the power of negation. It can speak its own language only as long as the images are alive which refuse and refute the established order. . . .

Now this essential gap between the arts and the order of the day, kept open in the artistic alienation, is progressively closed by the advancing technological society. And with its closing, the Great Refusal is in turn refused; the "other dimension" is absorbed into the prevailing state of affairs. The works of alienation are themselves incorporated into this society and circulate as part and parcel of the equipment which adorns and psychoanalyzes the prevailing state of affairs. Thus they become commercials—they sell, comfort, or excite. . . .

Their truth value depended to a large degree on an uncomprehended and unconquered dimension of man and nature, on the narrow limits placed on organization and manipulation, on the "insoluble core" which resisted integration. In the fully developed industrial society, this insoluble core is progressively whittled down by technological rationality. Obviously, the physical transformation of the world entails the mental transformation of its symbols, images, and ideas.

Obviously, when cities and highways and National Parks replace the villages, valleys, and forests; when motorboats race over the lakes and planes cut through the skies—then these areas lose their character as a qualitatively different reality, as areas of contradiction.

And since contradiction is the work of the Logos—rational confrontation of "that which is not" with "that which is"—it must have a medium of communication. The struggle for this medium, or rather the struggle against its absorption into the predominant one-dimensionality, shows forth in the avant-garde efforts to create an estrangement which would make the artistic truth again communicable.

Now while this analysis of society comes as a result of close examination of existing institutions, ideas, attitudes, and ways, it represents conclusions drawn by a man who has in himself a strong sense of the opposition of the "Logos" to what is, and will be understood and accepted only by people who share this Promethean view of man. You do not acquire this view by living under proper social arrangements. You do not get it *from* anywhere or anyone, but recognize it in your heart, and nurse it in your mind by acts of the imagination, until it grows into grounds of action which are peculiarly your own. So, at this point, one is obliged to recognize that the logic of socio-cultural criticism is now exhausted; it has reached its "end"; it has returned the question of the nature of man to the individual, where it originated, where it has always been: no matter for how long, or to what extent, the responsibility of giving an account of the human being has been delegated to others—to priests, or to scientists trained in saving "objectivity," or to politicians with utopian plans for universal salvation. All that these specialists have ever done is distract individuals from their real task of understanding themselves.

In this sense, Prof. Marcuse has illustrated in sociopolitical analysis the same full circle that Ira Progoff describes as the course of the psychotherapists in *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology*. In both cases, the conclusion is that we cannot "objectivise" ourselves without fragmenting ourselves. We cannot delegate our responsibility for acquiring self-knowledge without giving away our freedom to administrators who—being as self-deceived as ourselves—can do the job of managing human beings only in terms of their parts, their fragments.

As wholes, human beings are not "manageable" at all.

This takes us back to an earlier portion of Prof. Marcuse's book. After showing how the elaborate development of technological means has not brought modern man freedom, but instead has enslaved him to the requirements of these means, the author asserts that freedom is none the less possible as the result of the achievements of technology. "To the extent to which the work world is conceived of as a machine and mechanized accordingly, it becomes the *potential* basis of a new freedom for man." He here joins hands with the advocates of the Triple Revolution, who maintain that a new philosophy of work and production must be adopted in order to realize the benefits of automation—and to avoid the total breakdown of the economic structure that will result from failing to find such a philosophy. But Prof. Marcuse adds a searching subtlety to the analysis:

Contemporary industrial civilization demonstrates that it has reached the stage at which "the free society" can no longer be adequately defined in the traditional terms of economic, political, and intellectual liberties, not because those liberties have become insignificant, but because they are too significant to be confined within the traditional forms. New modes of realization are needed, corresponding to the new capabilities of society.

Such new modes can be indicated only in negative terms because they would amount to the negation of the prevailing modes. Thus economic freedom would mean freedom *from* the economy—from being controlled by economic forces and relationships; freedom from the daily struggle for existence, from earning a living. Political freedom would mean liberation of the individuals *from* politics over which they have no effective control. Similarly, intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of "public opinion" together with its makers. The unrealistic sound of these propositions is indicative, not of their utopian character, but of the strength of the forces which prevent their realization.

Prof. Marcuse has some proposals on how to overcome these forces—proposals which seem quite reasonable—but another of his statements of the difficulties involved seems more important to repeat:

Can one really distinguish between the mass media as instruments of information and entertainment, and as agents of manipulation and indoctrination? Between the automobile as nuisance and as convenience? Between the horrors and comforts of functional architecture? Between the work for national defense and the work for corporate gain? . . .

We are again confronted with one of the most vexing aspects of advanced industrial civilization: the rational character of its irrationality. Its productivity and efficiency, its capacity to increase and spread comforts, to turn waste into need, and destruction into construction, the extent to which this civilization transforms the object world into an extension of man's mind and body makes the very notion of alienation questionable. The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in new needs which it has produced.

No intelligent reader can fail to feel enormously grateful to Prof. Marcuse for criticism of this sort. He turns back layer after layer of the tissues of our homogenized, one-dimensional life, as with a surgeon's scalpel, revealing dilemma after dilemma. In this sense, his book is a *tour de force* of rational criticism, and it could not have been written, as he early points out, without the use of certain initial abstractions, which are his tools. What ought to be noted, here, is that the writer who uses abstractions makes clear demands of his readers. To understand him—to develop a sense of reality for what he says—they must perform acts of the imagination while they read. To his occasional illustrations, they must continually add their own. Only by this means can the truth in the analysis be felt as real.

Yet here we have, as a final problem, the characteristic and almost routine failure of people

to respond to and act upon the manifest truths of careful rational analysis. One hates to think of this book as one more fine work which, after a couple of years, will have been almost entirely forgotten, covered up by preoccupations with other "penetrating studies" of the dilemmas of modern man.

The seeds are good, but the soil is unprepared. Indeed, the barrenness of the soil for such seeds in a technological society is one of the appalling disclosures of Prof. Marcuse's book. There must be those, in short, who see the need to start at the other end, with other kinds of abstractions, and do what they can to prepare the soil. It is not impossible to create a two-dimensional milieu for one's own life. This has been done, regardless of obstacles, by men of imagination since the beginning of time. We have come to a juncture in our history when we can no longer excuse ourselves from being human because "society" won't let us. Society—the society exhibited in *One-Dimensional Man*—is a panoramic view, an animated parade, of all the excuses men have made for not trying to be *independently* human in the past. Just to stop blaming "society" for our troubles, and expecting it to do for us what we have been unwilling to do for ourselves, would be a long step in the right direction—the only step which can lead toward the transcending historical alternative Prof. Marcuse conceives as the goal.

Unfortunately, his book seems somehow addressed to the managerial mentality. But what he is asking for is a quality in human beings which managers cannot produce. About the only useful thing the managers can do, these days, is resign. So, if you address them to any good effect, it is not as managers but as men. Then there is the problem of inspiring independence in people who have become used to submitting to management and who will doubtless feel lost when they are turned loose. We shall have to have some books on these questions.

## *REVIEW*

### THE APPEAL OF "NO-THINK"

NOVELISTS of today often deal with the confrontation of army service quite impersonally; neither the stirring patriotism of the young nor the principled protest of the conscientious objector has any part in characteristic passages such as the following, from William Goldman's *The Temple of Gold* (Bantam):

I never liked the Army; I never hated it. I don't think you can. It's just something you have to accept, like the law of gravity, since it was here before you were and it'll be here when you're gone. It's ridiculous to go around thinking: "That goddam law of gravity, I'll fix its wagon." How are you going to do it? Answer: you can't. It would be nice, on a hot summer day, to float up a couple hundred feet and cool off. But that's impossible, so why worry about it. The law of gravity has its points, good and bad.

So does the Army. Everybody talks about its bad points, but the good ones are there too. It doesn't ask you a bunch of questions when you join up, such as what you're running away from and why. All it cares is that you can breathe and sign your name, and if you can't even do that, it'll teach you. Which is as fair, I think, as anything you're apt to find, in this world at least. No, the Army isn't all bad! it just seems that way.

And what happens, when you're in it for a while, is that you forget about it. Like everything else that rules you from way off. You don't walk the streets thinking: "I am walking the streets because the goddam law of gravity keeps me here." If you do, you'll go nuts in no time. And so it is with the Army.

The appeal of passive acceptance is partly in the fact that one may be an intelligent observer and train oneself never to be anything more—to simply not care. But the normal mind seeks involvement and it is difficult to live a whole life without passion. George Orwell portrayed a society where all thinking was taken care of, but there were at least surrogate emotions in the structure of daily living. The Beats, however, do not have it so easy; and it is as a Beat without a cause that Goldman's young man is finally moved to personal disaster, knowing that he should have

either a formula or an explanation. In a closing paragraph, having suffered a psychotic break, he comes back to awareness with this broadside at a minister who visits him:

"I asked you a question. What do you think of the temple of gold? Explain that. You're the preacher. So explain it. Tell me!" He started to say something but I stood up, grabbing him by the shoulders, shaking him. "I came for some answers," I said. "I'm twenty-one years old and I can't find the handle." And by then I was shouting, standing over him, pulling at his shirt, staring at his eyes. "And don't try telling me about God. That's all you know about is God. You and your goddamned God! I came for some answers, so just tell me about the temple of gold. That's all I want! Just tell me about the temple of gold and I'll be happy!"

But to get back to a state of mind that enables many to welcome loss of individuality in the mechanisms of the Armed Services: In *I'll Sing You the Death of Bill Brown* (MacFadden), Bruce Dexter describes Tom Green, a rich man's son who had never learned to care about anything.

Of course, he has been *told* by his parents what he should strive for. But they wanted him to become an Important Person. Tom, in the story, wants the Army because it will tell him what to think and what to do about the details of living, but make no pretense of shaping his thoughts in any purposeful direction. Tom wrote to his father: "I got my draft notice. I *need* to go in the army, for my sake and perhaps yours."

Mr. Dexter explains Tom's state of mind:

There is a great deal of difference between peace and happiness but to someone like Tom who had never known happiness they seemed identical. And Tom had peace from the first day he was in camp. They took away everything he brought with him, clothes, emotions and thoughts and issued him with new clothes, new emotions, new thoughts and told him in detail how they were to be used. In the barracks he had a bed and a foot locker and the cadre was marvelously specific on their maintenance, as he was on the maintenance of the most important possession, the rifle. "Lose this piece," he said on the day of issue, "then borrow another long enough to put

a bullet in your head—that'll be the best thing that can happen to you."

Every minute of the day was dictated to them. "Brainwashing" was a word coming into currency and other draftees threw this accusation at the army. Tom didn't argue. Probably they were right but it happened to be what he wanted. He absorbed every instruction, every training film from "The Late Company B" to "Trench Foot," and as near as a tired brain could he memorized the field manuals. Not with relish. With relief.

By the time he was sent to the West Coast before being shipped to Korea, he was what the army called a "good soldier," Corporal Thomas Green. . . . He was quiet, he kept to himself but would help someone out if he needed it; he needed no help on his own jobs and while he didn't join in on the griping he gave no patriotic speeches either. That he kept to himself was interpreted by the others as reflecting some kind of inner completeness which they lacked. Where there was trouble, something not known, something needed, they said, "See Green."

This attitude toward him was the one disturbance for Tom; it made him feel a fraud.

And why? Because for all his short life Tom was waiting for something to make him feel strongly—either love or hate—but nothing ever did. He carried with him the secret of this incapacity—the secret that made him a good soldier yet left him uncomfortably aware that he was something less than a human being:

Sometimes he was elated by his secret, because it was a secret, but more often he hated and dreaded it, yet always it was with him, asserting its veracity. So he grew into young manhood neither expecting appetite nor having it while carrying on his back a great load of doing, doing, doing. Having to do things was not the worst of it; given momentum, he could always do things, the difficult part was deciding what to do when none of the alternatives had flavor. This he hated and when he had to choose between things to do he cursed himself and cursed life and wanted to die, for it was true that as little taste as he had for the world and its things, he had less for himself.

Back from the war in Korea and awaiting discharge, Tom seizes a rifle and kills a man who appears to be escaping from a punitive work detail, after the requisite "Halt!" had been

shouted. This was not because he had learned to be a killer in the army, nor because he liked to exercise an ultimate authority, but simply because he followed the regulations. When Tom is finally killed himself, he dies without being able to make up his mind whether he wanted to live.

## COMMENTARY CORRESPONDENCE

MANAS: Let me get in on the "Monism-Dualism-Pluralism" debate by coining (I think!) a new term whose definition is its own contradiction: "Definism." Definism is the creation of terms to define concepts which can only be experienced and never really communicated.

What "ism" would explain the following suggestion? First, we have the Reality, which is the basic, underlying Truth, defying all analysis, all description, outside time and space, beyond any possibility of conception—the infinite and eternal.

The Infinite creates out of itself the Finite, bringing into being the Dualistic world—good and evil, love and hate, ying and yang, etc. From the Monistic world comes the Dualistic world. Then we recognize the world of individual selves, all having come into being through the sacrifice of the Infinite in becoming Finite, all, therefore, being "sacred," and we have Pluralism.

However, we are aware that all individuals are, at the deepest level, finite conceptions of Reality, and we are back to Monism. We can therefore believe that all suffering comes from the inner experience of separateness from Reality, the imprisonment and limitations of time and space, and the great longing is to become aware of (not return to, because it is always there) our own selves as expressions of the Universal Self.

This may all sound very trite to many readers of MANAS, but I wonder if there might be some real validity here . . . ?

CHARLES D. HORNING

San Jose, Calif.

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A READER with eclectic tastes has passed along to us some of his enthusiasms. The first book he mentions is *Heavenly Discourses* by Charles Erskine Scott Wood, which was published by Vanguard in 1927. Its chapters, which first appeared in the old *Masses* magazine, contain

some of the best social satire this century has seen. The place is Heaven, which turns out to be populated by the most distinguished men and women of the past, regardless of their religious beliefs. Here is the passage selected for quotation by our reader:

*Margaret Fuller:* We were wondering why men are so determined each to be free for himself, each to live his own life, yet so insistent to interfere with the lives of others.

*God:* I suppose I am to blame. I made the life-desire so insistent that from this comes determined individualism and from this arises an egoism which causes each to think that he alone is fit to rule the cosmos. The great advance is for one to know he knows nothing, and is not fit to rule anybody.

*Ingersoll:* Let him be the cosmos for himself, and govern it for himself, but let him permit every other peaceable fellow also to be his own cosmos and his own governor.

*God:* But that would be wisdom. Wisdom comes slowly. Tolerance requires the intelligence to see that no one can ever be sure of anything and that none can be truly free till all are free.

This reader continues:

I would also like to recommend a wonderful book by Hendrik Willem van Loon called *The Story of Wilbur Hat*. (Horace Liveright. 1925.) According to the author, the book is a "true account of the strange things which sometimes happen in a part of the world which does not exist." It is ostensibly a children's book, but it contains many of the author's finest insights.

If there are any among your readers who are not yet acquainted with Antoine de Saint Exupery's *The Little Prince* (Harcourt, 1943), I think reading it could be extremely profitable. Also known as a "children's book," it seems to me to affirm the values with which MANAS is consistently concerned. *Wind, Sand, and Stars*, by the same author, is also deserving of notice. The passages on the civil war in Spain, which the author witnessed at first hand as a correspondent, contain some of the most eloquent and moving testimonials ever written, to the futility of war.

# CHILDREN

## . . . and Ourselves

### NOTES ON ADULT EDUCATION

SAMUEL B. GOULD'S *Knowledge Is Not Enough* (Antioch Press, 1959) is a study of the problems of American education, written by a man whose administrative career has left him no time for alliance with any particular school of "educationist" thought. Still a young man among university administrators, Dr. Gould (now working in educational television) has been president of Antioch College and chancellor of the University of California at Santa Barbara. We are interested, here, in his thinking about adult education—in part a fruit of his experience at Antioch, where students combine working on jobs with going to school.

*Knowledge Is Not Enough* was written at the time of the author's move from Antioch, in Yellow Springs, Ohio, to Santa Barbara, and is incidentally an impressive testimonial to the pioneering work of Arthur E. Morgan. The workstudy plan developed by Dr. Morgan at Antioch naturally involves a concern for continuing education, being predicated on the belief that "vocational and cultural interests should develop in parallel fashion all through life and that education is ever a part of man's existence and growth." The Adult Education Center at Yellow Springs has introduced courses for the entire family, and it was Dr. Gould's task to gain participation and support for this program of continuing educational activity, working as a sort of practical "public relations" expert. But Dr. Gould is also a natural teacher. In *Knowledge Is Not Enough*, he says in a chapter dealing with education about education:

If I were to characterize the past history of adult education in America and much of its present, I would suggest that it has always had the words but rarely the music. This is not said in derogation of the magnificent work done over the years by the pioneers of such an educational movement. Indeed, they did first things first, as they should have done, but the

music of adult education which intrigues me in its present and future is the spirit with which it should be permeated and the concept by which it should be developed. The spirit is identified by a creative urge which has its impact upon people searching for a finer life and for individual maturity. The concept is that of education as a continuing process, a never-ending process in life. It is a concept geared to the active, inquiring mind, stored with the harvest of study and experience but aware that a full consummation of anything never takes place. As Charles Kettering has said, "We never arrive in this world; we are transients in time."

As for Dr. Gould's personal outlook, the following indicates a blend of practical concern with an almost metaphysical idealism:

On October 5, 1957, we entered a new era comparable in its world-shaking effect to the atomic era we entered in 1942 and to a few other eras of the past. In some ways the entrance into the space age is the most tremendous happening of all, for it adds a dimension to life hitherto assigned by most men to the realm of fantasy. All education, including adult education, must be alert to the significance of this new dimension for it places new strictures upon us all. Oddly enough, these are not merely the strictures brought about by the need for more science and more mathematics. They are, rather, those which make all the more impelling the need for men of good will in the world. The path that education provides must be to new understandings of the divine spark in man which gives meaning to his place in the universe. The real problem for education is not the development of scientific theories and tools, but rather the creation of spiritual strength and social consciousness in the soul of man.

The last portion of Dr. Gould's discussion of adult education lists twelve principles upon which effective programs might be based:

1. A broad conception of educational purposes and broad means by which to achieve these purposes.
2. Sound relationships with permanent institutions.
3. Utilization of all community resources.
4. Local sovereignty and grass roots participation in planning.
5. Non-compartmentalization of knowledge.
6. Emphasis upon discussion techniques.

7. Establishment of means for regular training of leadership.
8. Development of a visionary approach in program planning and construction.
9. Provision for continuity of program.
10. Insistence upon financial independence as a goal.
11. Regular and accurate interpretation to the public.
12. Adequate and objective evaluation of results.

Dr. Gould's last chapter seems a description of his own role in education, offering a new interpretation of "public relations" work in this field. The educational administrator, he says, must be a "master of strategy and tactics, but only after he has found a cause for which to fight." Dr. Gould sums up:

The kind of task I am describing, therefore, is not for the journeyman. It is not for the fugitive from the advertising agency whose ulcers nag him to search for quieter arenas of activity. Nor is it for the loyal alumnus who has never found himself in the business world and yearns once more for the groves of academe where he can smoke his pipe and wear his tweeds in a euphorious aura of perpetual youth. It is not even for the faculty member who, disheartened and dismayed by the unwillingness of students to accept his words without challenge, seeks sanctuary behind the modern office furniture, dictaphones, and "incoming" and "outgoing" baskets of the administration. This is rather a task for the man who feels the hot breath of education's emergency upon him in almost searing fashion and who looks upon his college or university as one of the barricades thrown up against the tide of ignorance and spiritual bankruptcy that is a never-ending threat to survival. It is a task for the man with power, with patience, with pertinacity, with perspective, with prescience.

In finding broader horizons for interpreting education, the public relations officer is a key figure. With such a role he takes on stature and significance in the educational scheme of things. With such a role his academic respectability and his place in the sun cannot be successfully challenged for he is equal to his colleagues, a generalist and an expert, a philosopher and a practitioner, a searcher for truth in the best academic and intellectual tradition.

We have, here, one more spirited statement of the rule that institutional arrangements should never be permitted to inhibit the practice of originality and intelligence, and should be *changed* whenever they are seen to block or interfere with vision. There can be no significant reform in educational institutions without the spread of this view.

## *FRONTIERS* On Teaching "Virtue"

[We have a letter from Brian Carpendale, who teaches at the University of Toronto, returning to a discussion begun in MANAS for May 20. He now addresses himself to the question: "Can virtue be taught?" Defining "virtue" as "an attribute giving a tendency to act in such a way as to assist progress toward certain goals (of the individual or the group) which are valued by the group or, more usually, were valued in the past," he denies that there are any "absolute virtues" and objects to the idea of "teaching" virtue on the ground that this consists in "the imposition by the teacher of a set of rules which will ensure that the pupil behaves in such a way as to help progress toward goals which the teacher values, but which might either be beyond the attainment of the pupil in his present stage of development, or no longer appropriate in the social situation." His answer, therefore, is: "Yes, a virtue can be 'taught,' but it is unwise to do so; especially as many of the methods of teaching seem to reduce the ability of the pupil to learn or unlearn."

In the portion of Prof. Carpendale's letter printed below, there is criticism of "the Humanities," but it seems directed mainly at an indoctrinating or stupid use of them. Actually when Prof. Carpendale uses terms like "Reality" or refers to goals such as "more evolved individuals and societies," it is almost certain that he is drawing on resources of meaning represented by what we call the Humanities. You don't abandon the practice of making value judgments by changing your vocabulary and taking the values for granted. So far as we can see, Prof. Carpendale will have none of the self-righteous certainty of traditional moralists, and has put himself on guard against all such confinements. This was precisely the task undertaken by Socrates, who was very nearly the Founder of the Humanities, for Western civilization. Prof. Carpendale is in good company.—Editors.]

I DO think people can be helped to acquire "virtue" in the sense of helping them to "expand their consciousness," and the function of the teacher is to devise exercises and situations in which they can learn for themselves and among themselves appropriate attitudes, and develop appropriate attributes and skills for the existing stage of development in society and themselves as they see it. The kind of exercise the teacher

devises and the kinds of attitude or skills he focuses on will be intended to develop the "virtues" which *he* sees as valuable, but it is up to those learning to accept or reject his premises, and to use or modify the exercises as they see fit. This becomes easier if the premises are stated (or one of the exercises is to discover what they are) and the exercises are as unstructured and open-ended as possible. My own assumptions are that the most useful "virtues" *at present* are those which lead to more evolved individuals and societies. Bearing in mind, however, that if this results in their striving for social change, they (and their teachers) are unlikely to be regarded as virtuous by their elders, or even their contemporaries.

Having taken a swing at "teaching" (or should I have said "preaching"?), I would like also to take a swing at "the humanities." For a long time they have thrived on the myth that this was the only "true education," and uncritical scientists and engineers have duly included "liberal" courses in their congested curricula. It seems to me that intellectual knowledge of philosophies, value systems, psychology, history, and so on does not necessarily (or even usually) result in increased "virtue," "maturity," social conscience or responsibility, or freedom from neurosis. At best the humanities are only one quarter of the way toward an "education," and if they are "taught," may be no better than thermodynamics as a preparation for living.

It seems to me that "virtue" might result from:

1. An ability to perceive, and the psychological strength to face up to, "reality," in oneself and in the environment.
2. A commitment to a complex of goals and purposes for oneself and society, together with an ability to re-evaluate and relearn in terms of meta-goals and meta-purposes.
3. Ingenuity and creativity in devising solutions to abstract, technical and social problems (usually arising from an awareness of the extent to which one's thinking is restricted by what one has previously learned).

4. Confidence and ability in implementing solutions (derived from perceptual, intellectual, technical and social skills) with humor and determination, or flexibility and ingenuity, together with ability to tolerate various forms of stress.

If this is agreed, one can think of education as the process of attempting to help vitalise various crudely defined abilities of the nervous system, some of which would be:

Intellect, or the ability to handle abstract ideas within a logical framework (philosopher, mathematician).

Technical ability, in the handling of concrete problems (the surgeon, sculptor, plumber).

Physical skill, or ability to coordinate the body and muscles, in movement, games and dancing, etc.

Social skill, or the ability to be ingenious and creative in social situations; parties, committees, quarrels, when meeting a burglar, etc.

Psychological ability, or strength, flexibility, and ability to resolve psychological problems, frustrations, fears, and so on.

Creativity, or the ability to be unfettered by existing rules or structure, or previous experience; this divides up into—

- (a) Perception; the ability to perceive accurately in oneself and the environment, to separate observation from inference, and so on.
- (b) Memory; of previous patterns, trends, and regularities.
- (c) Imagination; the ability to recast inputs from perception and memory in new configurations, and to "play them through" to guess at the results.

It seems to me that we cannot call our process "education" until we are fairly sure that useful learning is taking place in all these areas (and probably others). . . . If we want to help people to set up a personal value system resulting in real commitment, and an ability to unlearn and relearn, then we must avoid the temptation to "teach." The patterns presented should be in terms of purposes and goals, gains and costs, rather than absolutes or imperatives. They must then be discussed by peers (i.e., not imposed by a

father-figure) in terms of their own views of the situation, their own needs, stages of development, and so on.\*

BRIAN CARPENDALE

University of Toronto

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\* It helps to shake up some existing prejudice if the scales or definitions discussed contain elements of "therapeutic confrontation" such as some of those suggested by Karl Deutsch (*The Nerves of Government*, Glencoe Free Press), or by Richard Hauser (*The Fraternal Society*, Bodley Head, plus an ever-about-to-be-published Handbook), or some of my own; but one of the main functions of a "teacher" is, I feel, to make sure that the group realizes not only the explicit, but, so far as he is himself aware of them, also the implicit judgments involved, and have a chance to evaluate them. This process can be strengthened by Dr. Johnson Abercrombie's ideas for helping students towards clarity of perception and objectivity (see her *Anatomy of Judgment*), plus Sensitivity Training as a means of helping toward psychological strength and social perception (see Dr. Tom Mallinson, *Gifted Under-Achievers* . . ., from National Training Laboratories, 1201 Sixteenth Street N.W., Washington, D.C.). The methods of Gordon's "Synectics" might be applicable in encouraging imagination, perhaps after some ground-work with Abercrombie. Much of Richard Hauser's work so far has been geared to the academically less gifted, but the methods whereby he activates groups into achieving personal growth in the course of constructive social action could probably be tailored to almost any situation and seem especially valuable in combatting the growing tendency to glorify the academic intellect, to centralize, and to "leave it to the specialist," which are symptoms of our times.