

UTOPIAN CONSIDERATIONS

A CORRESPONDENT has raised a question which should be interesting to all readers, not because of any answer that might be made, but because of the reasons why this question can not, or ought not, to be answered—not, at any rate, in the terms in which it is set.

The question comes, no doubt, as a result of recent MANAS articles concerned with the relation of science—more particularly the social sciences—to the besetting problems of our time. Somewhat rephrased, the question is this: "What should the social sciences be doing, what use are they? What values should be sought, and what should a religious organization do?"

Why, first of all, should anyone want to change the terms of this question?

Well, what is the question really after? A question as general as this one can be after only one thing—the good of man. It is a *fundamental* question. It is too important, therefore, to be entrusted to institutions. An institution is a device for the pursuit of ends which have been given primary definition before the institution came into being. The institution was created to serve those ends. An institution does not think. An institution does not originate opinions. It may *represent* opinions, since the thinking of men about ends and means supplies the pattern which structures the institution, but the institution stands to the idea behind it in the same relation as body to soul. A lot of things may be safely left to bodies, without troubling the attention of the soul. The conditioned reflex covers a lot of delegations of authority in action from the soul to the body. But when the body takes over in policy-making, the soul is in trouble. This is a fair statement of a central problem in human life.

So, it seems reasonable to say that the basic questions ought not to be referred to institutions

at all. They have no competence to deal with basic questions.

But the original question, it might be urged, was not quite of this sort. It asked for proper assignments for the social sciences and for religious organizations. Our point, however, is to insist upon recognition of the enormous responsibility of giving such assignments, since giving them involves the assumption that we know enough about the fundamental questions to justify the existence of institutions which are intended to amplify the answers already arrived at.

Take for example the two great protestant movements in world religion: Buddhism and the Lutheran Reformation. Both Gautama and Luther found it necessary to desert the religious institutions which had nurtured them. Buddha refused to nourish the caste system and many other institutional aspects of the Hindu religion. Luther sought to destroy the spiritual sovereignty of the Roman Church. So there are times, it may be said, when the assignment you give to an institution is to dissolve itself.

Something similar, on other grounds, might be said of the scientific institution. Two charges, for example, could be directed at the scientific institution, or branches of the scientific institution, in justification of an invitation to dissolve. It might be argued that the subservience of much of social science to nineteenth-century mechanism in psychology has led to a paralysis of individual responsibility in human relations. This is no doubt an over-simplification, but there is some truth in it—enough, it seems, to turn a large number of intelligent individuals away from the promise of science as a self-reforming or self-regenerating institution. A number of excellent books appearing in recent years have explored this limitation of the scientific institution. The other

charge is more urgent: the claim that the services rendered by the scientific institution to the political institution in arming modern nation-states for thermo-nuclear war represent an intolerable irresponsibility.

What about the political institution? The same criticisms of course apply. Not long ago we spent an evening listening to a professor of international relations discourse on the foreign policy of the United States. It was his contention—a valid one, it seemed to his audience—that the policy-making leaders of the governmental institution of the United States do not really want peace or disarmament; or rather, they are emotionally incapable of contemplating the moves in diplomacy and international relations which offer some hope of peace and disarmament. These leaders, he suggested, are no doubt both moral and intelligent men, but they are prisoners of the *Zeitgeist*, of the unquestioned assumptions of the time and national culture in which they live. When asked by one of his listeners whether he could think of any historical situation in which a nation, by some means or other, was brought to relate the assumptions of its national policy to the "realities" which are recognized by an impartial observer, the speaker paused and shook his head. It seemed to him that only catastrophe could bring about such an awakening. "Nevertheless," he added, "we have to keep working." With a small smile he said, "One is supposed to end such discussions on a hopeful note."

So far, we have been assembling, in the most general terms, the evidence which supports the revolutionary spirit. By revolutionary we mean "radical"—the radical spirit. What is the counsel of this spirit?

You find expressions of the radical spirit in the annals of both religion and politics, and, more obscurely, in the history of science.

Radical expressions have both positive and negative poles. The positive expression of the radical spirit seeks a direct encounter with *meaning*. The negative expression comes as a

reaction to the frustration of the positive quest for meaning.

The great religious teachers have all been radicals in this sense. They broke out of institutional patterns of religion. Buddha spent the early portion of his life as a seeker in exhausting the potentialities of existing religious institutions. He consulted representatives of every "denomination" but remained unsatisfied. Finally, in a climactic *tour de force*, he intensified the brooding insistence of his questions until he found the answers within himself. He found them by turning himself into the kind of intelligence which has identity with all the rest of life, in whose being the mysteries reside. He learned the truth, one might say, by *becoming* it. The proposition that this kind of discovery of meaning is possible for human beings is the ultimate radicalism of religion. It claims the absolute independence of the individual in relation to institutional religion.

This proposition is not unique to Buddhism. It appears in other words in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the new testament of Hinduism. The teacher, Krishna, says to his disciple, Arjuna:

When thy heart shall have worked through the snares of delusion, then thou wilt attain to high indifference as to those doctrines which are already taught or which are yet to be taught. When thy mind once liberated from the Vedas shall be fixed immovably in contemplation, then shalt thou attain to devotion.

What need would such a man have of institutions? What need had Jesus of institutions? My kingdom, he said, is not of this world. And, "the kingdom of God is *within you*." It is difficult to imagine a religious institution which could survive the presence of a man like Jesus. In his case, the religious and political institutions of his time collaborated to dispose of him, in self-protection.

It would be interesting to make a study of the means sought, throughout history, by the radical religious spirit to cope with the obvious limitations of the religious institution. No doubt

the study would turn out to be, in large part, a history of mysticism, since mystical insight is by definition unmediated by institutional apparatus. It is a form of direct perception. As Josiah Royce once remarked, "The mystic is the only pure empiricist." Such a study ought also to include notes on how religious institutions try to denature the revolutionary consequences of radical religious perception, as, for example, by describing monastic isolation under rigorously controlling vows for people with mystical tendencies.

Then, on the other hand, some attention should be given to the occasional, if rare, provisions made by religious institutions for the free development of radical expression. The Zen sect of Buddhism is probably the most dramatic instance of this intention, although the degree of its success is no doubt arguable. The thing that troubles orderly, sober individuals is the extravagance which sometimes results when the dogmatic barriers to freedom in mystical religion are taken down. Seventeenth-century England was the scene of wild and turbulent religious movements, showing that when the irrationalism of dogma is suddenly turned loose to form alliances with the impulses of undisciplined religious feeling, and political grievances are added for mundane justification, far-reaching and chaotic revolutions are born.

This is the frightening aspect of religion without institutional regulation which makes practical men insist upon some kind of religious organization. The same insistence occurs in political thought. Only the anarchists reject the institution of government and they, if pressed, will probably argue that the offensive element in government is not its function as a regulatory agency—a kind of traffic manager—but its assumption of the sovereignty that belongs only to individuals.

The argument for scientific institutions is practical in another sense. Much of modern science is dependent upon the skills of technology

for carrying out its experimental researches. The mathematical scientist, it is true, needs little more than pencil and paper, but putting his discoveries to work often requires enormous institutional backing—well-equipped laboratories, computers, telescopes, satellites, and the endless publishing facilities which keep the specialist informed of what others are doing.

But again, the problem, as in politics, is not in these services performed to implement the scientific spirit, but in the premature sovereignty of theory or scientific preconception, given fortified authority by the scientific institution.

So, one may say that abolition of institutions seems to be a necessity, or actually becomes a necessity, only when the institution exceeds its function of serving without prejudice the creative impulses of human beings—when it becomes some kind of "authority" which rules over the opinions of men without understanding or taking account of them. An institution is a tool, not a mind. It has no understanding. It is not a conscious identity which can enter into the vision of another identity. The faceless, mindless power of institutions over intelligent individuals who see, feel, love, know, and aspire is the most cruel and intolerable power that can be experienced. It is worse than brute force because of its *pretense* to being an expression of rational order. It is a betrayal of the will to know.

Now we come to the other side of the question. Wherever you look, among societies of human beings, you find institutions. The institution is very nearly the matrix of human life. It is, so to speak, the body of our social existence, as necessary to the processes of our life together as the five senses are to the individual intelligence which uses them as windows into the world. Institutions are, then, social organs. Conceivably, they could function with as much efficiency in the social economy as the bodily organs function in a healthy man. Unless the man gives them special attention, he does not even know they are there.

But the analogy, while suggestive, seems inadequate in certain respects. Our physiological organism seems to require no contribution from the imagination. In fact, it probably works best when left strictly to itself. Animals seem much healthier than humans. In practical terms, then, institutions constitute orderly approaches to the unfinished business of human life. They provide social bases for the work that lies before us, and since by nature we do this work partly together, as well as partly by ourselves, we *need* social bases.

Yet our institutions, or social bases of operations, as we have seen, are the source of many if not most of our difficulties. What is wrong with them? Or why do they go wrong? Is it possible to make models of ideal social institutions? We know that many men have tried to do this. Utopian literature is filled with proposed models for ideal social institutions. And history is filled with the shattered remains of institutions which have been tried and found wanting by societies of men. Models of ideal institutions, whether purely theoretical, or blueprints for political programs, reformist or revolutionary, represent assumptions concerning the nature of man. The question always is, will they work?

Have we found out anything at all in our brief survey of institutions? Perhaps not, but we may have found out something about some human beings. For example, the course to enlightenment of great religious teachers seems to have been a course of freeing themselves from the confinements of religious institutions. Constructive political revolutions seem to have been successful to the extent that they replaced oppressive institutions with others which allowed greater freedom to individuals—with, that is, *less authoritative* institutions. Further, the great break-throughs in scientific discovery have been as much victories over mistaken theories honored by institutions as they were disclosures of natural processes.

If, for a moment, we go to extremes, we might say that in the perfect society there would be *no* institutions. The parallel, here, is with the moment of Buddha's enlightenment under the Bo tree. For a time, the Buddha needed no body. You could say that his enlightenment consisted in a term of perception as a self-existent soul *without* a body—without, that is, a source of illusory perceptions. During that time, his kingdom, as with Jesus, was not of this world.

But Buddha had decided to be a man in the world, like other men. He contrived, that is, to live in a body, but as a soul, maintaining the soul's unimpeded or unmediated perceptions. In other words, the body and its organs of perception gave him avenues of communication, but they lost all independent authority.

Here, perhaps, is the dilemma of the true teacher of religion. He sees the need for some kind of religious institution, as a matrix of growth for human beings, yet he knows that any authority which attaches to the institution will invariably develop into a barrier to that growth. You might think of such a teacher as saying to his disciples: "Have a church if you will; I suppose you must; but don't make me responsible for it. Do it yourself, in your ignorance, and then work out of your ignorance by transcending the limitations of the institution you think you need." Here, possibly, is an explanation for the fact that neither Buddha nor Jesus wrote anything down. And, as for religious institutions, you might say that their first responsibility is to describe the dilemma which prevented such teachers from having much to do with religious institutions.

Yet there is nonetheless the need for some kind of center where people hungering for religious truth may go to find, if not truth, at least orientation. Even a man who feels that he has made himself quite independent of any form of institutional religion may feel an obligation to help in the maintenance of such a center. It might be a place where the inquirer would find charts of the territories explored by other men. It would want

no "authority." In fact, it would shun all religious authority as the most irreligious of claims. Yet it would attempt to provide unprejudiced accounts of the world's resources in religious inquiry. Simply in attempting this, some institutional characteristics would be permitted to creep in, and the individuals who made themselves responsible for the undertaking could only repeat, in the Buddhist tradition, "all human actions are involved in fault," and do the best they can, expecting, if their best isn't good enough, to have the institution dissolved by a subsequent revolution.

What about scientific institutions? Or, in the words of our correspondent, "What should the social sciences be doing?" Well, again, we ought to avoid an assignment to institutions. We might say to social scientists that since what they find out is bound to be institutionalized in some fashion as "social science," they ought to give a great deal of attention to the question of how to make their material resist the distortions of institutionalization. This is probably impossible, but they ought to try. Each generation of men has the need to infect the next one with this determination, to avoid the ruts of institutionalized attitudes. This is an activity of individuals, not of institutions; it is a function of men, not of their professions or of their organizations.

Take for example the use of statistics by social scientists and others. Statistical procedure is a prime tool of the institutionalizing process. You ask what is good for man, then you make a survey, convert your findings into numbers, process the numbers with a statistical technique, and then announce what is good for man. As A. H. Maslow observes:

So far as human value theory is concerned, no theory will be adequate that rests simply on statistical description of the choices of unselected human beings. To average the choices of good and bad choosers, of healthy and sick people is useless. Only the choices and tastes and judgments of healthy human beings will tell us much about what is good for the human species in the long run. . . . I think that

this is the main reef on which most hedonistic value theories and ethical theories have foundered. Pathologically motivated pleasures cannot be averaged with healthily motivated pleasures.

You could make a lot of substitutions in this proposition and obtain conclusions of equal validity. You could say that the religious longings of people who feel themselves violated by institutional religion cannot be averaged with the longings of people who feel deserted without institutional religion. And so on. This sort of investigation leads to questions of exceeding subtlety. Take for example a reflective passage from a letter by Thoreau:

When, in the progress of a life, a man swerves, though only by an angle infinitely small, from his proper and allotted path (and this is never done quite unconsciously even at first; in fact, that was his broad and scarlet sin,—ah, he knew of it more than he can tell), then the drama of his life turns into tragedy, and makes haste to its fifth act. When once we thus fall behind ourselves, there is no accounting for obstacles which rise up in our path, and no one is so wise as to advise, and no one so powerful as to aid us while we abide on that ground. . . . For such the Decalogue was made, and other far more voluminous and terrible codes.

Now here is a statement which would probably frighten some social scientists into the middle of the next century. What can they do with it? Even if they intuit its profundity? The thing that must be realized is that the establishment of categories of knowledge, some of them called "scientific," and some of them "religious," etc., tends to create techniques of discovery and formulation which, in order to qualify *as* scientific, or religious, exclude almost entirely in sights which are at once scientific and religious, or conceivably could become so, as we learn more about our ways of knowing.

We have all had encounters with the people who know what is science and what is not, what is medicine and what is quackery, what is politically practical and what is "dangerously visionary." In the centers of these disciplines, there is always a lot of good, sturdy truth, but we do not get lost or

fall down at the center: our troubles always come at the margins and on the periphery—in the no-specialists'-land which our generation in its wisdom totally ignores.

So, we end this discussion with the suggestion that one task the social scientists might undertake would be to look around for critical areas where exploration could quite possibly produce discoveries that would give their science new boundaries or fewer boundaries. No doubt this is exactly what the best of the social scientists are doing, today. Such science, increasingly, has the quality of wisdom, while losing the identifying characteristics of a professional specialty. The most that any man can do, whether scientific or religious, or just a man, is to contribute to a temper of intellectual and moral life in which the individual is encouraged to become more self-reliant, more responsible, more ardent in his pursuit of the good.

REVIEW

PAINFUL ODYSSEY

STRINGFELLOW BARR'S *The Pilgrimage of Western Man*, first published in 1949 and now available as a paperback (Keystone), is another welcome addition to low-cost libraries. Here is history—1500 to 1961—replete with philosophy. The book begins by contrasting the Augustinian vision of the "City of God" with the Renaissance vision of the City of Man, ending, finally, in a "machine age" which threatens to divorce man from his humanity:

From Robert Owen's cornucopia, the new Machine, poured the goods man needed or desired. And science promised to increase them. Men turned to the Machine.

Its moral authority secure, the Machine whirred on; and had shortly constructed a world community. Or at least a world market, a world economy, that made mankind one neighborhood. But that neighborhood contained scores of sovereign, armed nation-states and profound antagonisms, fears, and hates: the fear and hatred each armed nation inspired in its neighbor; the hatred of a propertyless class for those who owned the Machine and profited by it, of exploited colored colonials for their white European masters. And in 1914, in the heart of Europe, now lifted by Science into a comfortable, prosperous, middle-class heaven, hell itself broke loose. The homeland of the first civilization that ever dominated the whole world was suddenly plunged into the inferno of World War One.

When that paroxysm of violence had passed . . . the men of Europe staggered to their feet and recognized that for weal or woe they now dwelt in a world which the Machine had made one neighborhood. They united their separate armed states in a second league of sovereign governments, along with most of mankind, and they even began to speak of the necessity for world law. To establish world law would be terrifyingly difficult. But what was the alternative? World War Three? With hydrogen bombs and bacterial weapons? Could the resulting balance of terror, with the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in the greatest arms race in history, provide a real alternative for the men of Europe?

This is the story told in the following pages. It is a true story, but it is only one of many true stories that could be told of the Pilgrimage of Western Man, of his long and painful odyssey, of his search for unity, for freedom, and for justice under law. The reason for telling this story rather than one of the others is simply that always, in his pilgrimage, he must review his acts and memories, if he would find his bearings in the strange new countryside; if he would know in the face of new perils and new challenges which of his memories are most relevant and revealing; if he would continue his pilgrimage with faith, with high heart, and with deepened understanding. "In my beginning is my end."

Dr. Barr concludes this edition of *Pilgrimage* by speaking of a different kind of heritage from that of economic abundance and productive power. He discusses the effect of the Gandhian spirit on international politics, examining the concept of *satyagraha*, or "soul force," and its increasing integration with efforts to redress many social and racial injustices. Finally, on the last pages, the author writes of Vinoba Bhave, as evidence, perhaps, that the Gandhian spirit is the spirit of true philosophy and of true religion. Dr. Barr writes:

After Gandhi's death, when Communist violence broke out in Hyderabad, Gandhi's ascetic disciple, Vinoba Bhave, met it with reason. He rejected the Communist claim that starving, landless peasants could get land only by force. He rejected the landlord's moral right to surplus land while peasants starved. So he went on foot from village to village for thousands of miles and lovingly demanded land for the landless. Landowners, rich and poor, responded. By 1961 he had received some five million acres; and word of "Saint Vinoba" had swept through village India as word of Gandhi's Salt March had swept years before. Educated city Indians scoffed. Europeans read of Vinoba's pilgrimage and doubtless most of them were bewildered or apathetic. But some remembered another man who had walked among the villages, teaching and praying like Vinoba, not in India but in Galilee. . . .

The Pilgrim City had apparently reached a fork in its long road. Down one road lay the possible destruction of a civilization—but other civilizations had been destroyed; might not a new and better one arise?—and perhaps the destruction of mankind. Down the other road lay something even better than

the merely physical salvage of a civilization, something like a worthy destiny for a City, something based on the common need of all men for freedom, justice, peace, and on this day their daily bread. Down both roads lay, for Western Man and for all men, great dangers. How would they choose?

Interesting parallels to the themes of *Pilgrimage of Western Man* are provided in Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death—The Psychological Meaning of History* (Wesleyan University Press, 1959). In a chapter headed "Neurosis in History," Dr. Brown indicates that the "pilgrimage" through many cycles of strife may end with a discovery of something that was there all the time. Dr. Brown is much impressed by Sigmund Freud, and endeavors to show why any political or economic interpretation of man's hopes and destiny must be inadequate. Contrasting Marx and Freud, he suggests that the psychoanalytical view actually points to a hopeful future, while Marxism, like any political "ism," is likely to end in a vacuum of its own making:

For Freud, work and economic necessity are the essence of the reality-principle; but the essence of man lies not in the reality-principle but in repressed unconscious desires. No matter how stringently economic necessities press down on him, he is not in his essence *Homo economical* or *Homo laborans*; no matter how bitter the struggle for bread, man does not live by bread alone.

Thus Freud becomes relevant when history raises this question: What does man want over and beyond "economic welfare" and "mastery over nature"? Marx defines the essence of man as labor and traces the dialectic of labor in history till labor abolishes itself. There is then a vacuum in the Marxist utopia. Unless there is no utopia, unless history is never abolished, unless labor continues to be, like Faust, driven to ever greater achievements, some other and truer definition of the essence of man must be found. Freud suggests that beyond labor there is love. And if beyond labor at the end of history there is love, love must have always been there from the beginning of history, and it must have been the hidden force supplying the energy devoted to labor and to making history.

Life Against Death concludes with this passage:

What the great world needs, of course, is a little more Eros and less strife; but the intellectual world needs it just as much. A little more Eros would make conscious the unconscious harmony between "dialectical" dreamers of all kinds—psychoanalysts, political idealists, mystics, poets, philosopher and abate the sterile and ignorant polemics. Since the ignorance seems to be mostly a matter of self-ignorance, a little more psychoanalytical consciousness on all sides (including the psychoanalysts) might help—a little more self-knowledge humility, humanity, and Eros.

COMMENTARY

A FINAL CERTAINTY

THERE are times when what is called for from individual human beings is an intensity of individual purposes and ends which makes the existing institutions of society seem to have no more importance than the physical surroundings provided by nature. It is not that one becomes indifferent to one's fellows, or those among them whose hopes and fears are deeply involved in the fortunes of the social institutions. Rather, the aim is to avoid participating in the low averages of commitment which these institutions represent, and to refuse to contribute to the follies which they produce.

The man who makes an overt break with the patterns of prevailing institutions is by no means of necessity an "alienated" individual. He may be a warmly sympathetic man, but one who is obliged by some inner clarity of perception to turn away from the familiar grooves of human action and response. He finds the daily press a useless mirror of the unreal, far more a record of aimless and wasteful preoccupations than of the affairs of men in serious undertakings. He finds "business" a kind of secular religion so far removed from a pursuit of livelihood by natural means that he usually seeks out some way to support himself which suits his own purposes, often wholly and perhaps ludicrously out of key with the conventional sources of income.

It is a matter, perhaps, of insisting upon a style of life which has some savor of its own, of refusing to barter present felicity for some hoped-for adjustment to external circumstances that is to come about, after a term of anxious and often hateful struggle, at some future date. Such a man does not turn away from the world. Instead, he turns *to* the world, and enters into a real life in the world, as life was meant to be. Other people may make things a bit difficult for him, but what of that? He asks no favors; he has already been granted the priceless privilege of knowing what he wants.

The strength of individuality is sometimes a disconcerting thing to people for whom it is an unexpected encounter. What, they wonder, would

happen if a whole lot of people behaved in this way? In addition they may feel, without quite understanding why, some kind of reproach in a way of life which creates its own atmosphere and system of values, without even casual notice of conventional activities and goals.

What, indeed, would happen, if the strength of a society were to be measured by the presence in it of such people, instead of by the efficiency with which entire populations may be marshalled, guided and propelled in directions chosen by the manipulators of public opinion?

It would become, in no long time, a society capable of making peace—the kind of peace which is without fear and without reproach.

We talk of freedom as though it were some kind of icing on a political cake which is made with the proper constitutional ingredients. We talk of freedom as though it were a quality of life which is possible only for people who are willing to organize into power units capable of annihilating one another absolutely. Serious men, men with long degrees after their names, actually believe this and write learned books to impress upon their countrymen the proposition that there can be no peace, no freedom, except through a careful balance of mutual terrorization among these power units—which must never strike, since that would destroy both the people and the proposition, but remain forever poised, so to speak, for the kill. They tell us this with long and reluctant faces, and with their quiet expert's pride, declaring it to be a necessity of our progressive age, and they ask of us compliance and submission, in the name of their wide experience and knowledge—they believe it to be knowledge—of the laws of human behavior.

There are times, then, when every man who has the least inkling of what freedom really means is called upon to live by the rule of what he knows. Only men who are able to live in some measure of freedom will be able to make any measure of peace. Is there anything more certain than this?

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

YOUTH THEN AND NOW

IN a commentary broadcast over KPFK last July, Hallock Hoffman began by saying something which many of us may observe, nowadays. "I am struck by the difference between my own childhood and that of my children." Those who can look back to a youth of twenty-five years ago may remember times when a junior high school "study hour" was used to draw single- or double-seater airplanes. The thought of becoming a pilot, to move into the comparatively new adventures of the wild blue yonder—that was the thing! Today it is different:

Airplanes are no longer objects of romantic interest. They are more or less useful machines for getting you from one place to another. Movies are no longer the great treat they used to be. Even television, which to me preserves some quality of the miraculous, for my children has become a box around the house to be used, like a phonograph or a dishwasher, to provide a certain comfort from time to time. Automobiles, on the other hand, have been resurrected as the object of daydreams and model-building. My one technically inclined son can hardly wait to ride a space capsule to the moon.

I think that the point is simple. The airplanes I built models of and wanted to fly were flown by a single man, who could manipulate them almost as extensions of his own body. They enlarged human mobility—they connected with the sort of flying Freud discussed in his analysis of dreams. Airplanes are no longer of this sort. They are run by crews according to a set of rules; the man has little to do except to follow procedures. And they are much too big. Nobody can get excited about a thing he has to operate as part of a crew, dragging 130 passengers behind him.

Automobiles, on the other hand, remain objects of personal possession. You can make them over, paint them as you like, experience the pleasure of operating them by yourself—make them yours. They have the same quality that a fast horse had for our grandfathers, or an airplane had for me—they extend the power and range of a man by the use of energy he can control but need not supply. In space capsules,

too, the astronaut rides alone—the television coverage and hero-worship gives my son the illusion of individual accomplishment.

The essence of this seems to be that there is something in the childhood psyche which yearns after activity which has not been "all figured out," is unpredictable as to result, and is still inadequately managed by the experts. If the operator of a motor vehicle is more independent than the pilot of a TWA jetliner, the college student who rides a bicycle is correspondingly less in need of the assistance of technicians for maintaining his wheels than the owner of a car. Significantly, perhaps, many young men and women who enter the university take again to the same bicycles they have scorned during the last two years of high school. Is this, in some measure, because the less one is a slave to a moving contrivance—to its intricate construction and the regulations which bear upon its use—the more free he can feel? A college professor we know, who maintains two automobiles in standard American fashion, found himself enjoying tremendously a six-mile bicycle ride to his place of study during his Sabbatical abroad. His cars remained safely at home across the ocean, where they could no longer demand his attention. Perhaps some of us, whatever the generation, would be happier if we regressed all the way from automobiles to bicycles, and then to skate-boards and foot travel. There is certainly something debilitating in what Mr. Hoffman calls "the perpetual presence of technical equipment." The implication of all this is that we can easily benefit from a few "backward areas" in our psycho-physiological routines. During a recent session at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Prof. Willy Hartner had something to say on this point:

I'm a strict adherent of the benefits of technology . . . but no matter how precise we are there will still be unmeasurable qualities about man and about society and no measurement in the future—it is not simply that there is not enough knowledge now to make these measurements but that there never will

be, never can be, enough knowledge to make such measurements.

Man's irrational components are just as charming and just as important as the rational components that you can define by figures. . . . The tendency of totalitarian states has been and doubtless still is to use man as a cog in a complicated machinery and to allow him to be as happy as possible being such a cog. But what makes life wonderful, overwhelmingly interesting and also charming is just the irrational components which go along with the rational component. If we go on believing in precision, as I have pointed out here, then man will stop being creative. He may invent thousands and millions of gadgets which may be useful or not useful but life will become incredibly dull.

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In the Los Angeles *Times* for July 9, Jack Smith furnishes an amusing and true-to-life sequel to Robert Paul Smith's *Where did you go? "Out?" What did you do? "Nothing."* Children do learn when they are in the mood for learning, and sometimes it matters far less *what* they learn than that they find scope for exploring the principles of learning for themselves. Jack Smith writes:

Recently I was asked to prepare, out of my experience and wisdom, a summer reading list for a couple of boys.

With what a surge of joy and nostalgia I contemplated this challenge!

No other books ever strike us with the lasting force of those we encountered in formative years. To this day, it seems, I can remember every shimmering page of "She," by the indefatigable British romanticist, H. Rider Haggard. I am still awed by the ethereal beauty and matchless knowledge of that woman—She, herself—who already lived 2000 years when I was only 12.

I can't find "She" on any of the current lists of recommended reading for youngsters, however. Perhaps the book is regarded now as trash. I don't know. Or maybe it was even immoral in a way that escaped me then. But it still burns in my mind like a torch, along with the incandescent prose of "Speeches of the President of the Mohawk and Iroquois Insurance Co." I don't know how that rare volume

fell into my little hands. Possibly it had escaped from the shelves of my father, who was much given to bizarre reading matter and had once been a life insurance salesman.

To have read all the speeches of the president of the Mohawk and Iroquois Insurance Co. as a boy may not be regarded by many as great literary training. But these homilies were larded with good advice for a lad about to be thrust into the arena of American private enterprise and gave me an excellent foundation for the later appreciation of the works of Horatio Alger Jr.

My character also was powerfully molded by my acquaintance with the Ford Motor Co.'s illustrated manual on the Model T Ford. Acquaintance? I should say love affair.

From this lucid treatise, and later from the remarkable machine which had inspired it I learned such traits as simplicity, reliability, cussedness and indifference to abuse, ridicule and time.

I would be less than grateful for my good fortune if I failed to list among the literary treasures of my tender years the Mother's Home Medical Cyclopedica. This trove of folk lore introduced me to the frailties of the flesh and gave me a grasp of pathology and a flair for diagnosis which awes my doctors to this day. Every boy ought to be able to tell the difference between angina pectoris and a stab of pleurisy and know what to do until the doctor comes.

I owe a great deal, also, to "The Half Nelson and Other Secrets of Wrestling," by Ed Strangler Lewis. Mr. Lewis was the champion wrestler of the world when he penned this engrossing monograph, which I obtained by sending in a coupon clipped from the pages of "Captain Billy's Whiz Bang," a periodical for boys of that era.

I had no intention of becoming a professional wrestler any more than a mechanic, a physician or a life insurance salesman; but the half nelson and other secrets were very useful in defending myself against a powerful neighbor girl named Lucille.

I suppose a lad also ought to read Freud and John Kenneth Galbraith.

FRONTIERS

Old Question, New Discussion

IT is always reassuring to find that distinguished thinkers, when brought together to consider essential questions, turn out to have their differences on the same issues as those which divide undistinguished thinkers. A case in point is the Corning Conference on the subject, "The Individual in the Modern World," held in May of 1961 under the joint auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Corning Glass Works Foundation. The names of the ninety participants in this conference read like the beginning of a roster of the world's intelligentsia. It includes such persons as Raymond Aron, Victor Gruen, Jay Lovestone, Franz Alexander, Muriel Rukeyser, Ritchie Calder, Harold Ourman, Oscar Handlin, Salvador de Madariaga, Merle Curti, Alfred Kazin, John Dos Passos, Frank R. Moraes, and many others of like distinction. The fruits of this conference are reported in a book, *The One and the Many*, edited by John Brooks and published by Harper and Row (1962, \$6.00).

As the basis for our discussion here, we take some passages from Mr. Brooks' opening chapter:

There was bitter disagreement as to whether, in dealing with . . . emerging nations, the developed industrialized countries should or should not think first in material terms and only later in spiritual or cultural ones. . . .

It was easy to agree on what industrialism is; the controversy came in what it does for people, and to people. Industrialism was accused of progressively causing unemployment as machines do more and more of the work of men, increasing the amount of leisure time to the point where the use of such time becomes a psychological and sociological problem; fostering materialistic attitudes to the exclusion of spiritual ones; having an adverse effect on physical and mental health due to increased tension; resulting, through its size and complexity, in individual lack of understanding and sense of powerlessness; destroying craftsmanship and pride in work through specialization; crowding people in inhuman, unbeautiful cities; causing bewilderment and neurosis by offering the individual too many choices; and,

finally, threatening to destroy culture by subverting and denaturing the thought habits of the guardians of culture themselves, the creative artists, scholars and critics. . . .

On materialism, some insisted that spiritual values underlie industrialism as it is now, and others that they might in the future. On physical and mental health, some participants who have personally moved from agrarian to industrial culture offered themselves as examples of improved well-being caused by the change; others expressed the view that life under tension tends to promote individual self-fulfillment rather than oppose it. On feelings of confusion and powerlessness, many saw an answer in a re-dedication to old goals and ideals that have been largely lost. On the question of craftsmanship some insisted that industrialism has created new and equally valid crafts and skills to replace the old ones. As to industrial cities, planners like Victor Gruen still saw the possibility remaining for our cities to serve the individual for both living and leisure. As to the adverse effect of industrialism on culture, here the concern and eloquence on the negative side tended to carry the day—but there was the countervailing argument that for a culture that possesses the power to know its weaknesses so well and criticize them so savagely and tellingly, all is not lost.

We weren't going to quote so much, but as we get into this chapter the material, so skillfully summarized by Mr. Brooks, seems to increase in importance. We said that the distinguished thinkers tend to set the same problems as the undistinguished thinkers, but now we come to views concerning these problems which are marked by great sophistication, and almost as important to take note of as the problems themselves. For example:

Professor Herskovits of Northwestern, perhaps the conference's leading champion of primitivism, suggested that a beginning might be made by the attainment of "cultural modesty"—a general recognition by the people of developed societies that theirs are no better than undeveloped societies, but merely different. In a certain sense, cultural modesty was rampant at the conference. It was the industrialists—with exceptions, it is true, but by and large—who were fiercest in their criticism of industrialism as it is practiced. It was the writers and critics who were fiercest in their criticism of industrial culture, or lack of it; it was the educators

who were the first to say that Western education has often failed. The only question Professor Herskovits might raise was the extent to which those self-criticisms were only family quarrels not necessarily inconsistent with snobbery and smugness as soon as outsiders are involved . . . Perhaps, as the psychiatrist Dr. Sibylle Escalona suggested later, self-criticism can be an easy way out—almost a form of boasting.

What seems missing from this discussion, for all its psychological insight, is a direct inquiry into the possible relation of industrial activity to "spiritual or cultural" values. The conventional way of looking at this question is to say that first you take care of man's material needs, and then you give attention to the "higher" things of life. But the result of this approach is that material ends get defined in terms of themselves and, almost inevitably, grow in importance to a point where other values are treated as pious afterthoughts to be attended to when we have the time—and we seldom have the time, except, perhaps, at conferences like this one sponsored by Corning Glass, which might be described as a special kind of luxury that the successful members of the acquisitive society decide they can afford.

What other approach is there? The one that would probably work best of all is not one that can be "adopted" by a group of sagacious planners who would like to find a proper balance of "material" and "spiritual" activities in behalf of the symmetrical development of society. We have in mind the ancient idea of a correspondence between the inner and outer lives of human beings, in terms of which even the most mundane tasks are seen as reflections of higher fulfillments. Essential to this attitude toward daily life is a philosophy of immanent meanings, in which there is no place at all for merely acquisitive pursuits. This is a philosophy which absorbs and eliminates the distinction between "material" and "spiritual," leaving only the idea of work done at different levels of man's being. A simple account of this view is found in Robert Redfield's anthropological study, *The Primitive World and its Transformations*:

Primitive man is . . . at once in nature and yet acting on it getting his living, taking from it food and shelter. But as that nature is part of the same moral system in which man and the affairs between men also find themselves, man's actions with regard to nature are limited by notions of inherent, not expediential, rightness. . . . "All economic activities, such as hunting, gathering fuel, cultivating the land, storing food, assume a relatedness to the encompassing universe." And the relatedness is moral or religious.

People who feel seriously a "relatedness" of this sort in their lives would need no experts to help them to resolve the split which comes from thinking of material activities as something alien to and apart from their cultural existence. But even if we grant the desirability of such a mystical sense of participation in the life of the natural world, and of the other aspects of our environment, the question remains: How shall we get it? A world-view and cultural atmosphere of this sort is not something to be devised by the managers of a society, however well intentioned. It is a spirit that has to grow from countless individual seeds, seeds which send down roots into the foundation soil of civilization and which flower at multiple elevations and on every sort of psychological terrain. To achieve it would be to gain for the mechanical contrivances of industry a full series of organic relationships with the normal needs of human beings, and to transform our present methods of rationalization in technology into some kind of vital system of extended meanings—in the same way, perhaps, as the serious artist now and then turns elaborate industrial techniques to the service of the creative spirit.

This would obviously be nothing less than a complete cultural revolution. But that—again, quite obviously—is exactly what we need.