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THE ROOTS OF SOCIAL ORDER

WHILE "Newton's methodology for physics," as Whitehead pointed out, "was an overwhelming success," the "natural forces" on which it was based left Nature "without meaning or value." The World Machine was a *dead* Nature, and a dead Nature "can give no reasons." It aims at nothing. It fulfills no purpose. This is the Nature that the modern world inherited from the great founders of physical science, who gradually became arbiters of all subsequent thought, the source of the premises of all the branches of science. The full implications of this view of the natural world have been long in reaching into every aspect of modern belief, but today the penetration can be said to be practically complete.

Various men have busied themselves in recent years with exposing the consequences of these assumptions. Philosophical essayists were perhaps the first to anticipate the resulting mutilations, starting early in the nineteenth century, but today the critical analysis is proceeding in every major field of inquiry. In the area of law and politics, for example, there is the paper by John H. Schaar, published in No. 8 of the *New American Review*. Mr. Schaar finds that the very foundations of "law and order" have been dug away by a science and science-guided scholarship which proceeded on the assumption of a Nature which has no reasons. While the Founding Fathers of the United States believed they were bringing into being a nation that would be guided by a Constitution embodying, at least partially, an order derived from the Laws of Nature and Nature's God, this conception has been meaningless to learned men for several generations. It has been disregarded by practical men for perhaps a longer period. Mr. Schaar does not suggest, of course, that the sagacious statesmen who shaped the Constitution felt that they "knew" beyond debate the dictates of "Nature's Laws," but only that they believed that natural moral truth existed, that it could and should be sought, and might sometimes be known. He shows that once this conception of a pre-existing moral authority had been abandoned as an ideal, substitutes had to be devised as the basis of social order. His paper is largely concerned with the inadequacy of these substitutes. As he puts it:

> When the secret that nature is no guide is finally known to all—the secret exposed by the Sophists and in our age by Nietzsche—the whole question of legitimacy will have to be reopened. Order will be seen as artificial, the result of will and choice alone, as vulnerable to change and challenge as will itself is. Structures of authority will not be able to invoke the once ubiquitous idea that each thing under the sun has its own right nature and place in the constitution of the whole. For centuries this sense of fitness and rightness of things set boundaries to men's pretensions to control, and shaped their moral ideas concerning the limits within which they might legitimately impose their desires on the world around them. This basic piety toward the world and toward the processes that sustain it will disappear, and all things including politics and men themselves, will come to appear artificial and malleable. Whole new sets of arguments and images will have to be found. And until they are found, the idea and the very experience of legitimate authority cannot have anything like the bedrock importance they have heretofore had in political life.

The far-reaching application of this analysis should be evident. What, it asks, is *meant* by "law and order," today, beyond simple consensus of the propertied and powerful, or beyond the necessities of "progress" and "efficiency"? To what shall a man refer when he wonders what he *ought* to do? If he is a "modern thinker" he has only empirical resources. An authority is to be respected and obeyed because it will help him to secure his ends. There is only this pragmatic rule, developed on a social scale. The idea that justice should rule, though the heavens fall, will not occur to a

modern man. Legitimacy in authority derives from no transcendent principle, but from the engineering of consent. If enough people say you are right and ought to prevail, you are right and should prevail. Summing up the modern view, both in practice and in the view of contemporary social scientists, Mr. Schaar writes:

> Followers believe in a regime, or have faith in it, and that is what legitimacy is. The faith may be the product of conditioning, or it may be the fruit of symbolic bedazzlement, but in neither case is it in any significant degree the work of reason, judgment, or active participation in the processes of rule.

Then, speaking of the sources allowed for legitimacy in modern social thought, as given in Seymour Lipset's *Political Man,* Mr. Schaar says:

> In a most confusing way, an analysis of something called "legitimacy" first equates it with opinion, then goes on to a restatement of the standard Liberal-Pluralist description of the structure of power in the United States, turns next to a discussion of stability, and finally resolves stability into passivity or acquiescence caused by cognitive confusion, conflict of interest, and inability to translate one's desires into political decisions due to certain institutional arrangements. Obviously, we are no longer talking about faith or belief at all, but about confusion, indifference, stability and efficiency. This is where the contemporary social science treatment of legitimate power rests.

With nothing more than "interest" to support the claims of authority, the dignity of office was bound to wear away almost to nothing. "Morality," as Henry Adams predicted more than sixty years ago, has "become police." A moral principle can stand against numbers, but the rights of an "interest" group have only the authority of its strength, and, in this climate of opinion, the manifest errors and partisanship of pressure groups will make it only a matter of time until an individual's guess will seem to have as much validity or importance as the marshalled contentions of a group. No over-arching values are involved. How one "feels" tends to become the canon of decision and behavior:

> Modern prophets rise to pronounce sublimation and self-mutilation the same. We, especially the young among us, presume that an individual can live fully and freely, with no counsel or authority other than his desires, engaged completely in the development of all his capacities save the capacity for memory and the capacity for faith.

Mr. Schaar pertinently quotes Philip Rieff: "The question is no longer as Dostoevski put it: 'Can civilized men believe?' Rather: Can unbelieving men be civilized?"

But believe what? Everyone knows a handful of people who are "believers" in the best sense of the word—persons who carry around with them credos of intuitive verity which give their lives harmony and distinction—but these rare individuals cannot give their faith to others. On the other hand, externally imposed or indoctrinated beliefs are no solution. One notable meaning of "modern" is its indication of a mentality with built-in resistance to uncritical acceptance of anything. Science was supposed to fill the vacuum left by the loss of faith in traditional religion, but accumulating evidence that this is entirely outside its competence seems to be at the root of the present crisis.

Mr. Schaar regards America as a kind of test tube in which the reaction of men in the mass to the loss of a transcendent source of moral authority has gradually worked out to devastating completion. The institutional brakes of the old hierarchical order, which were weakening but still existed in Europe, had no place in the American outlook. Here, indeed, men set out to make a brave, new world, one where—"Each man becomes his own author and oracle, his own boundary setter and truth maker," where "The ego recognizes no source of truth and morality external to itself." This "individualism" was made into the philosophy and even the identity of the nation:

> Our founding took place at an advanced stage of the progress toward epistemological and moral individualism. . . . At the time of the founding, the doctrine and sentiment were already widespread that each individual comes into this world morally complete and self-sufficient, clothed with natural

> rights which are his by birth, and not in need of fellowship for moral growth and fulfillment. The human material of this new republic consisted of a gathering of men each of whom sought self-sufficiency and the satisfaction of his own desires. Wave after wave of immigrants replenished those urges, for to the immigrant, America largely meant freedom from inherited authorities and freedom to get rich. Community and society meant little more than the ground upon which each man challenged or used others for his own gain. Others were accepted insofar as they were useful to one in his search for self-sufficiency. But once that goal is reached, the less one has to put up with others the better. Millions upon millions of Americans strive for that goal, and, what is more important, base their political views upon it. The state is a convenience in a private search; and when that search seems to succeed, it is no wonder that men tend to deny the desirability of political bonds, of acting together with others for the life that is just for all. We have no mainstream political or moral teaching that tells men they must remain bound to each other even one step beyond the point where those bonds are a drag and a burden on one's personal desires.

The sudden development of technology, together with a vast expansion of bureaucracy in government during the past fifty years, needs to be considered against the background of the decline of belief in old ideas of authority, in "moral law," or in any philosophic foundation for the conception of law and order. Mr. Schaar shows how rational-legal administration gradually took the place of the older forms of authority, reaching into the lives of everyone as the demands of complex social organization increase, and establishing, through habits of conformity, the authority of the process of control. The moral authority behind the techniques of control was now only a memory, no longer an operative conviction:

> The system works not because recognizable human authority is in charge, but because its basic ends and its procedural assumptions are taken for granted and programmed into men and machines. Given the basic assumption of growth as the main goal and efficiency as the criterion of performance, human intervention is largely limited to making incremental adjustments, fundamentally of an equilibrating kind. The system is glacially resistant to genuine innovation, for it proceeds by its own momentum, imposes its own demands, and systematically screens out information of all kinds but one. The basic law of the whole is: because we already have machines and processes and things of certain kinds, we shall get more machines and processes and things of closely related kinds, and this by the most efficient means. Ortega was profoundly right when a generation ago he described this situation as one of drift, though at that time men still thought they were in command. That delusion is no longer so widespread. This development of control processes is not, of course, limited to the nongovernmental sector. In 1908, Henry Adams wrote: "The assimilation of our forms of government to the form of an industrial corporation . . . seems to me steady though slow." By now, any distinction between public and private in both process and substance would be very hard to draw in the United States.

The best of Mr. Schaar is in the last part of his paper, which he devotes to the kind of leadership which is needed to restore dignity and moral legitimacy to the ordering of human affairs. All this, of course, has little to do with what we ordinarily think of as politics. There is for example this passage on the use of language:

> The language in which humanly significant leadership is expressed is also very different from the language of rational and objective discourse. It is a language profuse in illustration and anecdote, and rich in metaphor whose sources are the human body and the dramas of action and responsibility. This language is suggestive and alluring, pregnant, evocative—in all ways the opposite of the linear, constricted, jargonized discourse which is the idea] of objective communication. Decisions and recommendations are often expressed in parables but translucent to those who have eyes to see. Teaching in this language is done mainly by story, example, and metaphor—modes of discourse which can probe depths of personal being inaccessible to objective and meaningful discourse. Compare the Sermon on the Mount with the latest communiqué from the Office of Economic Opportunity in the War on Poverty, or Lincoln's Second Inaugural with Nixon's first . . . . Most of what modern information theory calls noise is of the essence of human authorities and their followers.

What Mr. Schaar is really urging upon us, in these "Reflections on Authority," is a return to the world-view Robert Redfield called the idea of Immanent Justice in his book, *The Primitive World and its Transformations.* He is arguing that without an appeal to the spontaneous moral sense in human beings, there can be no authentically legitimate authority, no "law and order" that men will respect. Today's crisis in legitimacy—for which the evidence is all about—is to be explained, he proposes, by saying "that the basic features and tendencies of modernity have produced a situation in which the established processes and formal structures of control are at war with the conditions necessary for authority." It is a battle in which "legitimacy is destroyed."

It should be noted that in the desperate struggle to regain what we are losing, or have already lost, our feeling of vast sophistication becomes our worst enemy. What is diminishing is simplicity of conviction, our sense of human worth and elementary moral identity. And the means for the recovery of these qualities cannot be put into the technical language we use so well, for this language shuts them out.

There is also a sense in which such simplicities are not simple at all. That is, the idea of a moral order behind material existence, once we leave the realm of ideal postulates, becomes difficult to apply. It is difficult, that is, without elevated vision, and elevated vision seems to be something that has to be earned—grown, achieved, striven after, sacrificed for. Getting it involves transactions which have no relation to the acquisitive principle. Elevated vision cannot be bought and no one can give it to us. Nor does it come spontaneously except on rare occasions, and then to those who respond in awe and with delight.

It seems evident that intuitive gropings get much closer than the existing rational approaches to what Mr. Schaar is trying to articulate, even though he succeeds better than most. As he says:

> The radical distinction between subjective and objective is unknown in this kind of knowledge, for everything is personal and comes from within the prepared consciousness of the knower, who is simultaneously believer and actor. When it is about men, this kind of knowledge is again personal. It strives to see within the self and along with other selves. It is knowledge of character and destiny. Most of the facts which social scientists collect about men are in this epistemology superficial: information about man's external attributes, rather than knowledge of who he is and what his possibilities are.
>
> One who possesses and values this kind of knowledge bases his claim to its validity on grounds which are quicksand to the objective and rational man. One of the foundations is strength of conviction.

Has such knowledge a "discipline," a "grammar," and are there rules for obtaining it? To ask these questions is to encounter a wilderness of claims. But whatever answer one selects, the learner will probably find that he makes no progress without being willing to become "as a little child." That may seem easy enough at the start, but he can't *stay* a little child. Notice that when Mr. Schaar was looking around for examples of truly human communication, he chose Jesus Christ and Abraham Lincoln. Perhaps we could say that these were men who grew into extraordinary adults without losing their childlike simplicity.

Even so, particular examples are probably misleading, if only because they seem inaccessible or have been ritualized into personified abstractions. To add intellectual underpinning to the intuitive longing, one might turn to the transcendentalist thinkers of the mid-nineteenth century, especially Emerson and Thoreau. They would be a good antidote to the tendency of intuitive feelings to weaken or short-circuit into little more than emotional barbarism. "Confronted with the structures of bureaucratic and technological coordination, the young," Mr. Schaar says, "fear all authority and flee into the unreason of drugs, astrology, and the *Book of Changes*, justifying the flight by the doctrine of 'do your own thing'—something that has never

appeared on a large scale among any populace outside Bedlam and the nursery, where it can be indulged because there is a keeper who holds ultimate power over the inmates."

Judging by the few examples we have of "ideal men," the right sort of growing up will be at least as difficult as the technological mastery of "things" which has led us so far astray. In fact, the identification of worthy human ends probably involves a self-mastery more demanding than the mastery of things and the forces of nature. Meanwhile, it ought to be admitted that very few of us are masters of the technical skills which are so grandly claimed for our entire civilization. Mr. Schaar accurately remarks:

> For the masses, science is largely a matter of miracle, mystery, and authority. Translated into educational terms, the slogan that through science man has gained increasing knowledge of nature really means that a few men now know a great deal about how nature "works," while the rest of us are about as ignorant as we always have been. Translated into political terms, the slogan that through knowledge man has gained power really means that a few men have gained the means of unprecedented power over a great many other men. On the other hand, there are good reasons for thinking that the scientists and experts may not be able to perform the priestly role with enduring success.

This may define the first step in regaining a sense of fitness concerning what we ought to do next. We cannot possibly acquire an authentic moral sense, a feeling for the order that should govern the human community, without first admitting that we are "about as ignorant as we always have been." The borrowed and hired knowledge of technique is useless in relation to the tasks which lie ahead.

REVIEW
A MASLOW PRIMER

IN *The Third Force—The Psychology of Abraham Maslow* (Grossman, $7.95), the writer, Frank Goble, starts out with a brief sketch of Maslow's career, starting with the days when he was a small boy in Brooklyn who "grew up in libraries and among books, almost without friends." There is just enough to give the reader and admirer of Dr. Maslow, who died last June, a realizing sense of the human being behind a lifework which has played an immeasurable part in the regenerative thought of the time. Actually, this may prove an exceptionally useful book. The author is a retired businessman who devotes his time to the work of the Thomas Jefferson Research Foundation, located in Pasadena, California. Finding in Maslow's theories of motivation, human growth, education, and social order what seemed to him practical ideas capable of wide application, he resolved to present Maslow's major conceptions as simply as he could, in an orderly fashion. This book is the result. In his Foreword, Dr. Maslow speaks of its value in "abstracting, condensing, simplifying," expressing appreciation to Mr. Goble for doing a job that he could not do himself.

The book is mainly organized quotation, material being drawn from five of Maslow's books and more than a hundred papers, articles, and addresses, and arranged under a few basic headings. The chapters, while not a chronological study of Maslow's thought, do give the reader a sense of the sequences in its development. There is first a discussion of the meaning of self-actualization. Next comes the analysis of motivation, in terms of the fulfillment of basic needs. This provides the basis for understanding of Maslow's unique contribution—unique, surely, in clarity and emphasis—his distinction between deficiency needs and being needs. From this distinction grows the recognition of how man is differentiated from animals, which is not only important in itself but also a crucial corrective of the reductionism and oversimplification of earlier psychological theories.

These are the fundamentals of Maslovian psychology. The next several chapters explore their implications in relation to the human potential, psychological growth, education, mental health and therapy, and other areas. There is a chapter on values, on the sort of management Maslow named "Eupsychian," on social reform, and on Ruth Benedict's conception of the high synergy society, which was never published and which we now know only through Maslow's notes and the extracts which Prof. Benedict gave him before she died.

Maslow married early, at twenty. Then he and his wife went to Wisconsin where he studied John B. Watson and, filled with enthusiasm for Behaviorism, completed his doctorate on research with monkeys. It was when his first child was born that he lost his Behaviorist faith. Sight of the wonder and mystery of a new-born child made Behaviorism, which suddenly seemed foolish, impossible for him. After Wisconsin he taught psychology at Brooklyn College. He found the New York of that time a very rich place:

> "I never met Freud or Jung," he writes, "but I did meet with Adler in his home, where he used to run Friday night seminars, and I had many conversations with him. . . . As for many of the others, I sought them out—people like Erich Fromm and Karen Horney and Max Wertheimer and the like. . . . I think it's fair to say I had the best teachers, both formal and informal, of any person who ever lived, just because of the historical accident of being in New York City when the very cream of European intellect was migrating away from Hitler. New York City in those days was simply fantastic. There has been nothing like it since Athens. And I think I knew every one of them more or less well. The ones that I have mentioned in my prefaces are the ones I felt most grateful to and knew most closely. I cannot say that any one of them was more important than any other. I was just learning from everybody and from anybody who had anything to teach me . . . I learned from all of them. . . . So I could not be said to be a Goldsteinian nor a Frommian nor an Adlerian or whatever. I never accepted any of the invitations to join any of these parochial and sectarian

organizations. I learned from all of them and I refused to close any doors.

Goble mentions two other major influences on Maslow's development—one, his term of field study of the Blackfeet Indians in Alberta, Canada, an amiable people among whom hostility was extremely rare, and the other, the outbreak of World War II. The war moved him to resolve to devote the rest of his life to developing a comprehensive theory of human behavior that would serve peace-makers, would be a "psychology for the peace table." He said:

> "I wanted to prove that human beings are capable of something grander than war and prejudice and hatred.
>
> "I wanted to make science consider all the problems that non-scientists have been handling—religion, poetry, values, philosophy, art."

This, he saw, or came to see, would require a psychology of *health.* But what is health? How do you find out? The statistical approach can lead to serious delusions. It can support the egregious error of mistaking "average" behavior for "normal" behavior, as, Maslow suggested, Dr. Kinsey did. It was his contact with distinguished teachers—some of those already named—which made Maslow realize that in order to know the full meaning of health, one must study healthy people, and this, in all its ramifications, became his lifework. Being fully healthy, or fully human, was the meaning he gave "self-actualization." As Goble remarks, "The self-actualized person was the best possible specimen of the human species, a representative of what Maslow later came to call the 'growing tip'." Mr. Goble has several splendid pages telling what self-actualization represented for Dr. Maslow. We can quote only a little:

> Probably the most universal and common aspect of these superior people is their ability to see life clearly, to see it is rather than as they wish it to be. They are less emotional and more objective about their observations. Most people hear what they want to hear from other people, even when it is not entirely true or sincere, but self-actualizing people do not allow their hopes and wishes to distort their observations. They are far above the average in their ability to judge people correctly and to see through the phony or the fake. Generally speaking, their choice of marriage partners is far better than average, although by no means perfect.
>
> Because of their superior perceptions, the self-actualizing are more decisive and have a dearer notion of what is right and wrong. . . .
>
> Without exception, he found self-actualizing people to be dedicated to some work, task, duty, or vocation which they considered important. Because they were interested in this work, they worked hard, yet the usual distinction between work and play became blurred. For them work was exciting and pleasurable. It seems that commitment to an important job is a major requirement of growth. . . . Maslow found creativity to be a universal characteristic of all the self-actualizing people he studied. Creativeness was almost synonymous with health, self-actualization, and full humanness. Characteristics associated with this creativity were flexibility, spontaneity, courage, willingness to make mistakes, openness, and humility. . . .
>
> The self-actualizing people of the type Maslow studied are a tiny percentage of the total population, a fraction of one per cent. They are very different from the average person, and few really understand them. Yet these superior people have a deep feeling of kinship with the whole human race. They are capable of sharing a type of friendship with people of suitable character, regardless of their race, creed, education, political beliefs, or color.

Were it not for the idea of the "growing tip," which is always a small part of the total organism, this last paragraph might be considered discouraging, but it is only in recent years that there has been a general neglect or suppression of the fact that human excellence, in well-rounded form, is an *uncommon* achievement. If Maslow had done nothing besides restore this ideal of human development, giving it fresh currency in a new language, we should still be greatly in his debt. However, being a philosophical psychologist and a theoretician, it was natural for him to take the type of the self-actualizing person and to show its significance as the foundation of a new conception of science, and as normative for every sort of education. This becomes clear in the chapter on Values, where it is suggested that there

can be scientific certainty in respect to the validity of basic values. As Mr. Goble says:

> Maslow strongly feels the need for a usable system of values that does not rest upon blind faith alone. "It is certainly true that mankind, throughout history, has looked for guiding values, for principles of right and wrong. But he has tended to look outside himself, outside of mankind to a god, to some sort of sacred book perhaps, or to a ruling class. What I am doing is to explore the theory that you can find the values by which mankind must live, and for which man has always sought, by digging into the best people in depth. I believe, in other words, that I can find ultimate values which are right for mankind by observing the best of mankind. . . ."
>
> So the free choices of self-actualizing people, normal people tell us what is good and what is bad, and this is the basis for a naturalistic value system. When we separate the healthy specimens from the rest of the population and determine what they struggle toward, seek, desire, as they grow and improve themselves, and what values are lacking among those who are psychologically sick, we have an understanding of right and wrong. . . . The mistake that has been frequently made in the past is to average the values of healthy and sick people of good and bad choosers. "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."

This is enough to give a general idea of the content of the first part of this book. Part II is devoted to review of activities in business management and other areas which reflect the fundamental attitudes and changes that have come to be identified with Humanistic or Third Force psychology.

COMMENTARY
SIMPLE CLEANLINESS

IGNAZ PHILIPP SEMMELWEIS, discoverer of the cause of puerperal fever, and of its remedy—clean hands in the delivery room—died of persecution. Years afterward Joseph Lister was to say, "Without Semmelweis, my achievements would be nothing." But while Semmelweis was alive, few physicians would pay attention to him. He wanted them to *wash their hands* before delivering babies. They were "humiliated" by this request. Were they not undergraduate doctors in the hospital or interns who were doctors already? This Hungarian Jew was insolent and demanding; they would not listen to him. They were not midwives, to be ordered around by another doctor.

But it was the midwives from whom Semmelweis learned the secret of childbed fever. In the hospital in Vienna where he worked doctors did the deliveries in the first clinic, but in the second clinic only midwives delivered babies. And the second clinic had a substantially lower death rate among mothers than the first. Why was this?

Semmelweis reflected. Doctors did dissections. Midwives did not. And doctors would come from the dissecting rooms with soiled hands—hands that had been inside cadavers, bodies dead of puerperal fever—to attend women ready to give birth. No wonder the mortality of these women sometimes was greater than 20 per cent!

Often the women seemed to know what would happen to them. They begged to have their babies in the gutter outside the hospital, so they might hope to live. Obsessed by the death rate, by the dying women, Semmelweis had to find out why they were dying. Finally, he did. When doctors washed their hands mothers did not die so frequently. Why did they die at all? Dirty, bloodstained sheets were another cause. Semmelweis went wild, purchased a hundred clean sheets and pillow cases himself for the hospital. And became a very unpopular man. It was years before the medical profession as a whole embraced his doctrine, which was finally called a "great revolution of modern times in Obstetrics and Surgery," the result of "one idea that, complete and clear, first arose in the mind of Semmelweis, and was embodied in the practice of which he was the pioneer."

The story of Semmelweis is movingly told by Morton Thompson in *The Cry and the Covenant*, a fictionized biography published in 1949 by Doubleday. It is an incredible tale of professional pride, bigotry, and arrogant resistance to plain common sense.

Will the time come, one wonders, when a clean earth will be a matter of common decency and health, and we shall read of the resistance to environmental and related reforms with the same incredulous horror that we feel upon learning of the treatment this Hungarian doctor's discovery received?

The rejection of Semmelweis's ideas drove him mad. Called upon in a faculty meeting to speak on the question of hiring an obstetrical assistant, he read aloud the oath of the midwives. His friends had to take him away.

Rachel Carson was a kind of Semmelweis in behalf of a sickening planet. The ills of the earth are more complex, the solutions much more difficult than the education of a single profession. Yet there is a sense in which the obstacles are the same—hard, stubborn ignorance, prejudice, and self-interest. This week's Frontiers gives some indication of the long struggle which lies ahead.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
ELEMENTARY READERS

A LETTER to the editor in the *New York Review of Books* for Sept. 3 looks at the contents of the readers recently adopted by the State of California for use with children from four to eight years old. The writer of the letter, Virginia Kidd, is in the department of speech communications in Sacramento College. She begins by saying that she is not concerned with how well these books will teach reading skills, but with their "rhetoric," which she finds "alarming." The books, she says, are bland, unoriginal, stereotyped. More than 375,000 children were expected to enroll in the first grade of California's public schools this fall, and most of them will be taught from these books.

When you consider that such books, prepared for a vast audience of young readers, must have—or are believed to require—very broad common denominators of "interest," the lack of originality is not surprising. Literature, even literature for first-graders, does not submit well to being "averaged." The somewhat "hit-or-miss" program of helping little children to read by the use of random materials, evolved by the infant schools of England, seems a much better way to meet this problem—better, that is, than a desperate effort to get changes made in readers which are published by the hundred thousand and are so "synthetic" that they seem written by computers rather than by human beings. This is one of the effects of supposing that a great big edition will supply better educational materials for *everybody*. As we know, education is now an "industry," and technological advantages in production (bringing economy to the state) are applied at the price of dull uniformity.

But the flatness of these books is not the major objection. Much worse is the unrelieved self-revelation of the values of the times. The books are not really about children at all, but about an owning, possessing, and buying culture, to which, *on the average*, children become responsive and conforming organisms. This, you could say, is what we all have in common, and if you write about things that all children experience, no one will be neglected. In one place Miss Kidd says:

> Janet and Mark are inveterate consumers. American business would be proud of them. The value of acquiring objects is illustrated in each of the preprimers, but it is the primer *Around the Corner* that most exactly demonstrates the value.
>
> On page 29, Janet and Mark find a dime and reach one of the emotional climaxes of the book by quarreling over it. Mother, rather than reprimanding them, divides it, giving each a nickel. Janet's instant comment is: "Now we can get something." They leave immediately. . . .
>
> On page 67, Janet expresses a desire to do something exciting. Mother's solution is to buy T-shirts and earrings.
>
> The consumer impulse reaches its height on page 75 when Mark finds a pigeon. His friend David offers to buy it.
>
> "Will you give him to me?
>
> "Will you give him to me for a nickel?"
>
> Mark could conceivably give several replies at this point: you may have this pigeon as a present; you may have the pigeon if you will take care of it; we must let the pigeon go free, etc. The reply given illustrates the viewpoint expressed in the book:
>
> "For a nickel!" said Mark.
>
> "What good is a nickel? . . . You can have my pigeon for a dime." . . .
>
> Janet's role as a consumer is similar. "I am going to have a birthday," she says. "You can get something for me." Daddy's reply?
>
> "Good for you," said Daddy.
>
> "Look out for yourself, Janet."
>
> It is important to be aware of the dangers presented by rhetoric encouraging cultural uniformity. The most pointed warning about these books is to be found in the text itself.

There are of course other themes in these books, but we gather that none of them does

much to catch the imagination. As Miss Kidd says:

> Janet is never a potential artist, senator, scientist. Mark never will be an actor, professor, gourmet. . . . Mother's chief occupation, it is clear from the pictures, is washing dishes, cooking, sewing, ironing, and wearing aprons. . . . Daddy's chief occupation is coming home. Daddy is never seen wiping away Janet's tears or helping Mark clean his room; he plays ball with Mark. Mother never goes to work or drives the car; she helps Janet make a cake. . . .
>
> Mark shows Janet his toys: parachute, rocket, space suit, helmet, gloves and boots. He declares himself Mark the astronaut. Then it is Janet's turn. She shows her toys: playhouse, chairs, curtains, dolls, buggy, doll bed, dishes. . . . And Janet and Mark, like death and taxes, are with us always, and always they act the same confining parts.

At another level, it is this sort of schooling that Ivan Illich is demanding freedom from in South America. In his article in the *Saturday Review* for Oct. 17, he declared that the education of the young throughout that continent is little more than propaganda for "progress":

> The goals of development are always and everywhere stated in terms of consumer-value packages standardized around the North Atlantic. . . . Present development goals are neither desirable nor reasonable. Unfortunately, anti-imperialism is no antidote. Although exploitation of poor countries is an undeniable reality, current nationalism is merely the affirmation of colonial elites to repeat history and follow the road traveled by the rich toward the universal consumption of internationally marketed packages, a road that can ultimately lead only to universal pollution and universal frustration.

There is no big plot. There are no Machiavellian schemers. The writers of these textbooks and the packagers of all these goodies are doing what they have been taught to do, and they believe it is *good* to do. They work hard, and the publishers doubtless have Ph.D. consultants on their staffs. The packagers, of course, hire the best designers in the country. And meanwhile, as Clark Kerr explains in *The Uses of the University*, it is the "business" of higher education to keep the whole process running smoothly and continually expanding, reaching to new heights.

So it is really no wonder that there are revolts all over the place. Yet revolts, if successful, usually reveal that there is very little underneath—little in the way of new structures, better understanding, and great new constructive forces ready to fill the vacuum that a real revolution would leave in its wake. Not revolution, but endless improvisation, intelligent use of existing facilities, small-scale transformations, are what is called for. The infant schools described by Richard Featherstone (see last week's "Children") are an excellent example of this. Herbert Kohl's *36 Children* and Sylvia Ashton-Warner's suggestions in *Teacher* (see also the extract in *Radical School Reform*) are valuable on teaching reading and on the development of language arts in ways that relate to the lives of children. Parents can work at this, attempting a little incidental education along the lines proposed by Paul Goodman. Unfortunately, a great deal of good teaching, today, has to be salvage and restoration. As an experienced teacher has said:

> In most schools there are at least two main groups of children to consider: kids who are just learning about letters and words and sounds kids relatively innocent of reading and with a strong desire to master or at least mimic the skill, and kids for whom "reading" means something understandable, who know their letters and most sounds and who have had such a horrible public school experience that they are by now extremely blocked, with little trust in teachers. Kids in the first group are usually under six; the second group are "older."

This is by Salli Rasberry, who joined with Robert Greenway to put together a book called *How To Start Your Own School* (distributed by The Book People, 2010 7th Street, Berkeley, Calif. 94710, at $3.95), on which there will be a later report.

FRONTIERS

A Long, Long Road

WHILE hardly a day goes by without report of some new action taken against pollution, and projects that will eventually make useful disposal of vast quantities of urban wastes are now under way, other signs are not nearly so encouraging. The frustrated efforts of individuals who attempt to devise remedies for obvious defacements of the landscape could also be reported, day by day, and this would do much to provide a realistic account of the obstacles to restoring the natural environment.

Writing in the Los Angeles *Times* for Nov. 30, Ernest B. Furgurson tells what happened when Robert Keller, a history professor of Bellingham, Washington, took an idea one of his students had suggested and turned it into a proposal that he succeeded in getting on the ballot in the November election. The proposal was for the requirement of a five cent deposit on all soft-drink and beer containers, as a means of getting them turned back to the stores—and off the public beaches and other scenic areas. One lovely region in Washington has had to be closed to the public because of the incredible litter of throwaway cans and bottles left lying around.

The idea seemed sound to many people and one survey reported public sympathy favoring the proposal five to one. The public, however, has a weak voice. Mr. Furgurson relates:

> But in mid-October the opponents splashed a costly media campaign against it. Television, bumper stickers, skywriting—every technique was used to convince the voters that the measure would cost jobs and cost money not only to beer and pop drinkers but to consumers of other products in throwaway packages. Keller says the opposition outspent the advocates by nearly 100 to 1 and that most of the cash came from the can and bottle industries, although organized labor opposed the proposal, too.
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> The initiative was overwhelmed by this spending. By a 52-to-48% vote, Washingtonians turned it down. The heaviest opposing vote came in the Seattle-Tacoma area, where unemployment is running about 11% to because of the recession in the aerospace industries.

An effort will now be made by Mr. Keller and his helpers to obtain the same control measure by getting a bill introduced next year in the legislature at Olympia. However, as Mr. Furgurson says, the reformers will then be up against strong lobbying pressure. To illustrate the power of lobbies, he points to the defeat in the House Ways and Means Committee of a comparable measure—a request by the Administration for a $1.6 billion tax on leaded gasoline. Powerful interests opposed it, and the sponsors mishandled it. Mr. Furgurson says:

> Labor and business both spoke against it. The ethyl people and the oil people were against it. It would hurt the consumer, cause more inflation and, besides, cutting out the lead may not be the answer to smog after all, they argued. . . . The mishandling came when the Administration assumed the bill's passage in making budget estimates for the current fiscal year—thus making it look more like a fiscal gimmick than a genuine environmental measure.
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> Every point of tactical and technical confusion was naturally exploited by the opponents. And every weakness, conjured up and real, of every piece of environmental legislation is going to be fought with comparable expertise.
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> Every attempted movement toward the general good is going to be met by special interests, which sometimes are going to make a convincing case despite the narrowness of their cause. If what happened in Washington state and in the House committee is not to become a consistent pattern, public education and organization are going to have to offset the financial motivation and superior resources of those special interests. An occasional good-natured Earth Day in the spring won't do it.

The "consistent pattern" Mr. Furgurson speaks of has, of course, been long established. Short-term interests have usually ruled both private and public decision in this country almost since its beginnings. All that is "new," in the circumstances he reports, is the gradually awakening human sensitivity to the destroying effects of these interest-controlled decisions on the land, the water, the air, and on individual and

social health. And the "special interests" he refers to are often able to gather support from people at large, especially when their jobs are at stake.

In the *Nation* for Nov. 9 Charles Gillespie tells the story of the brief career of a television newscaster, Charles Thompson, in Jacksonville, Florida, who lasted less than a year when he followed the station's original instructions to do stories on "pollution." He had some support from the viewers, but his disclosure that businessmen active in politics or community headed companies guilty of serious pollution soon caused the station trouble. The Chamber of Commerce declared that he was "against progress." However, there were no threats against his life until he decided to do his part in cleaning up the Atlantic Ocean. A large textile and pulp paper mill in a nearby town—Fernandina Beach—was dumping vast quantities of effluent into the sea. The company, ITT Rayonier, which has nearly five hundred employees, offered to build a pipeline that would carry the wastes two and a half miles out, but this was rejected by the state. In his anti-pollution programs—

> Thompson accused Rayonier of pumping 40 million gallons of fresh water out of the ground each day and discharging 25 million gallons of industrial wastes, daily, into the Amelia River and the Atlantic Ocean—approximately the amount of waste a city of half a million people would produce if they tried hard enough. . . . A Fernandina Beach conservationist, Eber Phillips, appeared on one of Thompson's specials to complain that the pipeline could not be monitored and that "within a week or a month the mill might be dumping anything in the world into this pipeline."

Already, local fishermen said, the daily shrimp catch in that region had fallen from two or three thousand pounds to fifteen or twenty. Conservationists charged the mill with "destroying 10,000 acres of oyster beds, with eliminating the area's clam population entirely, and with soaking every fish in the neighborhood with noxious oils." Thompson put all this on the air, and then—

> Shortly after his report on the destruction of the oyster beds, Thompson began receiving long-distance telephone calls from angry voices identifying themselves as Rayonier employees. They promised to shoot, kill, drop in the river, and otherwise interfere with Thompson's person if he did not lay off that company. "They sounded damn serious," Thompson said later. "When a guy has been working eighteen or nineteen years and the only job he knows is log presser for a pulp mill, and he thinks he's going to lose that job because of a story you've written, he gets scared. Even though he has to breathe that air, drink that water, and can't find any oysters, you can't rationalize with a man who thinks he's going to lose his job. You can't tell him he could have it all if the mill would just live up to the law."

But Thompson didn't quit because of this sort of discouragement. He was fired. The station wanted stories on anti-pollution, but not the kind that would upset the wrong people. "They want good topics like crime on the streets," Thompson mused, "but don't name names." He added: "That's like telling people there's been a murder but not telling them who's been murdered or who did the murdering."

There doesn't seem to be too much to say in comment, except that the way back to decent relations with the land and with one another is surely going to be a long, long road. An entire generation of Americans is going to have to learn to think differently to accomplish this change. Instead of continuing the civilization of "always more," people are going to have to learn to want, have, and use up less and less. It is not impossible, although it probably *looks* impossible to those with large emotional as well as financial investments in the old view. Those who refuse to try will probably find "Nature" a very stern persuader, with whom, finally, no clever delaying tactics will work.