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PAUL GOODMAN ON EDUCATION

IF, as Carey McWilliams has suggested, "California is a pace-setter for the rest of the country," what has been happening recently in this state's institutions of learning may be prophetic of far wider dimensions of revolt. Much has been written about the troubles of the University of California—three books, for example, were devoted to the turmoil of the Free Speech Movement which began in 1964—yet the reader who studies this material begins to realize that he nowhere touches bottom. The complexities do not resolve into final questions. He may eventually ask himself: Are the terms in which these problems of education are formulated a source of confusion? Is misplaced moral emotion a major barrier to finding out what has gone wrong?

The current reports of the trouble at San Francisco State College certainly give this impression. In the days of the first protests at Berkeley, San Francisco State was often named as an example of a school where intelligent administration and student balance had eliminated the causes of such conflicts. Whatever was the case then, this can no longer be said. Since late in 1967 San Francisco State has been torn by controversy, and review of the various incidents and student outbursts, together with the solutions found by administrators, leads the reader to the melancholy conclusion that, in situations like this one, all victories are Pyrrhic. Quite possibly, even the battlefield is wrong.

What seems a reasonably accurate account of the crisis at San Francisco State College was contributed to *Transaction* for March by James McEvoy and Abraham Miller, both sociologists at the University of California at Davis. These investigators talked with dozens of students and teachers to "learn some of the reasons for the intense level of conflict—which was occurring on a campus marked, only a few years ago, by a generally phlegmatic student body." Their outline of the events is followed by a discussion of "the implications of the conflict for higher education in the United States." (For the facts, readers of MANAS are invited to go to this or similar articles, since only one or two of the conclusions of these writers will be considered here.)

A comment by McEvoy and Miller that will hardly be disputed has to do with the almost automatic rage produced by bringing police to the grounds of an educational institution. The comment does not argue the necessity of using the police—actually, President Hayakawa is complimented for his restraint—but illustrates what a single, highly publicized misapplication of police power can do toward destroying the normal effectiveness of the police in maintaining order:

> There is no doubt in our minds that one of the results of the "police riot" in Chicago during the Democratic convention—Daley's Folly—is that it has hampered the effective use of the police against students for generations to come. Everywhere today, including State, the reaction of students to the police is completely emotional.

Speaking generally of the solutions obtained thus far in dealing with student disorders in California, these writers say:

> If nothing else, it is clear that the educational leaders, by responding like a 19th century vigilante committee to the problems of both the University of California system and the state-college system, have won a few battles. They have succeeded in removing a few radicals from the campus, in forcing the resignation of unsubmissive presidents (including Clark Kerr), in restricting the academic role of Eldridge Cleaver on the Berkeley campus and in rescinding credit for the sociology course he was giving. The price they paid for these and similar victories was higher than they have imagined or yet realized. In winning the battles, they have in effect lost the war.

The point is that students subdued by threat into submission, or students ejected for rebellion, or students who drop out in disgust are no longer very good students, either for themselves or for society. And the school which finds itself compelled by practical necessity to resolve such problems with stern authority cannot at the same time remain a good school. An absolute law of displacement operates in such circumstances. McEvoy and Miller conclude their paper:

> San Francisco State is not a viable educational institution. Some of its best faculty are leaving. Distrust is high. Deans and counselors who normally serve as advisers sit idle at their desks. Education may be continuing as a shrunken bureaucratic ritual, but the intangible sinew and spirit that bind an educational community together are absent. . . .
>
> Hayakawa claims victory. The school is physically open. The militants claim victory. The school has, for all practical purposes, been shut down. The majority caught between these antagonistic forces may well be asking, "Was it all worth it?" The militants, whose preferred means of social change is destruction, and the authorities, who for too long have been insensitive to social change, would do well to ponder the question.

Whether or not this is too pessimistic a view, we have come to a point where, by changing the meaning of this question ("Was it all worth it?"), we may change the direction of inquiry. For the question might be made to ask: Is the campus of a state college or university the place to fight out the fundamental issues of education? Can the issues be encountered there? Are the contestants in these struggles, instead of being victims of one another, the common victims of a much more inaccessible enemy?

This brings us to a discussion by Paul Goodman in the April 10 *New York Review of Books,* "The Present Moment in Education," embodying ideas on which any lasting reforms in education, whether higher or lower, will almost certainly be based in part. Mr. Goodman has written a lot about education, much of it important and good. His proposals are probably the most fertile conceptions for change being offered by anyone, anywhere. The explanation of his obvious resourcefulness in this area is probably that he understands how free minds develop and grow.

His article states the case for what he calls "incidental education." This is education which proceeds naturally, at the initiative of the learner, and finds its curriculum in life. The idea may seem strange and impractical, as though it suggests no education at all, but this impression only reveals how academicized our thoughts about education have become. Goodman early points out:

> . . . in all societies, both primitive and highly civilized, until quite recently most education of most children has occurred incidentally. Adults do their work and other social tasks; children are not excluded, are paid attention to, and learn to be included. The children are not "taught." . . . In Greek *paideia,* the entire network of institutions, the *polis,* was thought of as importantly an educator.

Goodman contrasts incidental with conventional or "programmed" education, bringing considerable discredit to the latter. He is not exactly "against" all programmed education, but he is clear on the difficulties which attend such efforts and the abuses to which they are subjected. He speaks of what we all know, but too easily ignore or forget: that in deliberate indoctrination—

> elders, priests, and schoolteachers are instilling an ideology to support their system of exploitation, including the domination of the old over the young, and they have to make a special effort to confuse and mystify because the system does not recommend itself to common sense. At present, when formal education swallows up so much time of life and pretends to be practical preparation for every activity, ideological processing is especially deadly. Those who succumb to it have no wits of their own and are robots.

To those who declare that the great truths of civilization need to be passed on from one generation to another, Goodman has a ready and effective reply: "I have not heard of any method whatever, scholastic or otherwise, to teach the humanities without killing them." Well, this may

not be altogether true, but it is surely *statistically* true, in conventional education, and the notability of the exceptions proves the rule. Goodman adds:

> Finally, unlike incidental learning, which is natural and inevitable, formal schooling is a deliberate intervention and must justify itself. We must ask not only is it well done, but is it worth doing and *can* it be well done? There is a line of critics from Lao-tse and Socrates to Carl Rogers who assert that there is no such thing as teaching, of either science or virtue; and there is strong empirical evidence that schooling has little effect on either vocational ability or citizenship. . . .

It should not be assumed, because Goodman is briefly quoted here, that his argument is briefly developed. He has extensive evidence and sound authority and he cites them persuasively. His article is long. The unfamiliarity of what he says comes from the displacement of educational truth by conventional error and accepted pretense. It is hardly debatable that exceptional men throughout history have nearly all gotten their education more or less as he proposes. Writing semi-formally, Goodman says:

> My own thinking is that
>
> (1) Incidental education, taking part in the ongoing activities of society, should be the chief means of learning.
>
> (2) Most high schools should be eliminated, with other kinds of communities of youth taking over their sociable functions.
>
> (3) College training should generally follow, not precede, entry into the professions.
>
> (4) The chief task of educators is to see to it that the activities of society provide incidental education, if necessary inventing new useful activities offering new educational opportunities.
>
> (5) The purpose of elementary pedagogy, through age twelve, is to protect children's free growth, since our communities and families both pressure them too much and do not attend to them enough.
>
> Let me review the arguments for this program. We must drastically cut back the schooling because the present extended tutelage is against nature and arrests growth. The effort to channel growing up according to a preconceived curriculum and method discourages and wastes many of the best human powers to learn and cope. Schooling does not prepare for real performance; it is largely carried on for its own sake. Only a small fraction, the "academically talented"—between 10 and 15 per cent according to Conant—thrive in this useless activity without being bored or harmed by it. It isolates the young from the older generation and alienates them.

Well, what Goodman declares here will find confirmation from an illustrious multitude. We think, off-hand, of Rousseau, Tolstoy, Gandhi, Arthur E. Morgan, and, in certain important connections, Robert M. Hutchins.

What about practical programs? Higher academic studies, Goodman thinks, should be reserved for people who are already out in the world, and who *want* further education. But they need experience first. Higher education is "for adults who already know something, who have something to philosophize." Otherwise, "as Plato pointed out, it is just verbalizing." As for the young:

> To provide a protective and life-nourishing environment for children up through twelve, Summerhill is an adequate model. I think it can be easily adapted to urban conditions if we include houses of refuge for children to resort to, when necessary, to escape parental and neighborhood tyranny or terror. Probably an even better model would be the Athenian pedagogue, touring the city with his charge; but for this the streets and the working-places of the city must be made safer and more available than is likely. (The prerequisite of city-planning is for the children to be able to use the city, for no city is governable if it does not grow citizens who feel it is theirs.) The goal of elementary pedagogy is a very modest one: it is for a small child, under his own steam, to poke interestedly into whatever goes on and to be able, by observation, questions, and practical imitation, to get something out of it in his own terms. In our society this happens pretty well at home up to age four, but after that it becomes forbiddingly difficult.

(For confirmation of these last observations, see John Holt's *How Children Fail* and *How Children Learn.*)

Musing on the reception accorded these ideas, Goodman recalls some wistful attention from people in teachers' colleges—from those who "know how much they are wasting the children's time of life, and [who] understand that my proposals are fairly conservative." Otherwise, no takers, except for reactionary businessmen or old-socialists, who unite in believing in getting an education the hard way. Goodman's comment on the reaction from students may possibly explain his loss of popularity during the term he taught at the Free School within San Francisco State, a couple of years ago. (We have no idea how well Goodman wears in class, day after day, but this hardly seems important. He does enough in other ways, no matter what his classroom performance.) As for students:

> Among radical students, I am met by a sullen silence. They want Student Power and are unwilling to answer whether they are authentically students at all. That's not where it's at. (I think they're brainwashed.) Instead of "Student Power," however, what they should be demanding is a more open entry into society, spending the education money more usefully, licensing and hiring without irrelevant diplomas, and so forth. And there *is* an authentic demand for Young People's Power, their right to take part in initiating and deciding the functions of society that concern them—as well, of course as governing their own lives, which are nobody else's business. Bear in mind that we are speaking of ages seventeen to twenty-five, when at all other times the young would already have been launched in the real world. The young have the right to power because they are numerous and are directly affected by what goes on, but especially because their new point of view is indispensable to cope with changing conditions, they themselves being part of the changing conditions. This is why Jefferson urged us to adopt a new constitution every generation.
>
> Perhaps the chief advantage of incidental education rather than schooling is that the young can then carry on their movement informed and programmatic, grounded in experience and competence, whereas "Student Power," grounded in a phony situation, is usually symbolic and often mere spite.

Well, why, one might ask, if the colleges and universities are so awful, and in such desperate need of reform, do the students bother to go to them at all? Why not go out and get jobs instead, and do as Goodman suggests? Why not get some experience somewhere, get something to philosophize about, and then look around for a place, a man—or even just a book, perhaps, to begin with; a book that deals with education for its own sake, with content that has nothing to do with "making a living," but is centrally concerned with the meaning of life. There are teachers in the world hungry to meet people like that.

How Breadwinners' College was started in 1898, by an itinerant scholar named Thomas Davidson, in the lower East Side of New York City, is one of the really exciting stories of an educational "experiment." The college lasted only eight years, but its graduates included some extremely distinguished people. It began when a young man asked Davidson a question after a talk he gave at Cooper Union:

> "How can people like us who work nine or ten hours and sometimes more a day, who come home tired, who have few books and no one to guide or instruct us, obtain a liberal education?"
>
> Davidson replied:
>
> "That is just the chief educational problem which the nineteenth century hands over to the twentieth. Of course, you do not expect me to solve it. But one thing I can do for you of a practical sort. I cannot procure for you shorter hours, or make you less tired at night. I cannot supply you with home conveniences or with books; but one thing I can and will do if you care to have me. If you will organize a club of people who are really in earnest and who will work with all their might, I will devote one evening a week to it."

Two things are evident. One is that the "chief educational problem" hasn't changed much. It is still difficult, that is, to get a liberal education. The reason it is difficult may be different—Goodman says it's the "phony situation"—but the difficulty remains. There is, however, this important difference: Today there are countless "Davidsons" who would gladly give more than

one "evening a week." Hours are shorter and books are cheaper.

What did Davidson teach at Breadwinners' College? English, mathematics, philosophy, literature, and science. No courses in Zen basketball.

To overcome any impression that Goodman's thinking about "incidental learning" is the dream of an isolated "radical," one might pick up a copy of the *Saturday Review* for April 19 and read "Learning at Random" by Leslie Hart, in the section headed "The Schools vs Education." This discussion is entirely devoted to describing the natural virtues of what Goodman means by incidental learning. One paragraph makes Mr. Hart's contention clear:

> Consider a few twelve-year-olds and their mastery of baseball. This hideously complicated game involves a long list of skills, a collection of concepts, and a good deal of content that the interested child may swell to encyclopedic scale. Yet this impressive learning achievement results from wildly random exposure. Were baseball taught from the second grade on, it would be broken down to "logical" sequences. Great debates would ensue on whether base-running should be taught before fly-catching. Base-running would then be reduced to terminology, theory, projects, and drill. A textbook would be needed, of course, which would further embalm the "only proper order." In time, oldsters would insist that kids don't learn baseball like they used to, because the "fundamentals" aren't taught first, with lots of "discipline." Also, of course, boys would *hate* baseball, and play only under threat of a zero or complaint to their parents.

The rest of Mr. Hart's article makes even more sense. He too is tired of "phony situations" in education. Why aren't these things corrected right away? Is the answer, Because of a desperate loyalty to phoniness? Whatever the explanation, the thing to do is to start taking Paul Goodman's advice.

REVIEW
COMMUNITY ECONOMICS

IN MANAS for April 2, the economist, E. F. Schumacher, wrote definitively of the notorious trend to urbanization, detailing the anti-human consequences of this now worldwide development. Speaking of the "idolatry of giantism" which justifies the growth of cities and industrial concentrations, he referred to the efficiency of modern transport and communications, which has had, he says, "one immensely powerful effect":

> It makes people *footloose.* Millions of people start moving about, deserting the rural areas and the smaller towns to follow the city lights, to go to the big city, causing a pathological growth. . . . While people, with an easy-going kind of logic, believe that fast transport and communications open up a new dimension of freedom (which they do in some rather trivial respects), they overlook the fact that these achievements also tend to destroy freedom, by making everything extremely vulnerable and extremely insecure, unless—please note—unless conscious policies are developed and conscious action is taken to mitigate the destructive effects of these technological developments. . . .
>
> A large country, I am quite certain, can survive the age of footlooseness only if it achieves a highly articulated *internal* structure. . . . So, when everybody and everything becomes footloose, the *idea of structure* becomes a really central idea, to which all our powers of thought and imagination must be applied.

The March issue of *Community Comments* (published by Community Service, Inc.) contains an essay by Griscom Morgan which speaks directly to this point. Writing on "The Community's Need for an Economy," Mr. Morgan begins:

> The growing extreme of concentration of population, power, wealth, and poverty in America's large cities is leading to strife and conflict in the metropolis and to deterioration of life and hope outside the metropolitan areas. This development arises to a large extent from a cause which has not been understood.
>
> The economic problem that most severely affects areas communities and nations away from the metropolitan centers is fundamentally simple. It is that *even if a community has all the requisites for a flourishing economy*, without sufficient money in circulation a monetary economy will be progressively impoverished. The eminent economist, Dudley Dillard, wrote in *Post-Keynesian* Economics about the role of money supply in the economic community, "Money is not just another form of economic wealth. . . . In a money economy all goods must assume a money form, that is, they must be transformed from goods to money. Otherwise specialized producers have only negligible use for the things they produce. . . . These simple facts have not been incorporated in economic theory, perhaps because they are too obvious for sophisticated economic analysis."

One importance of Mr. Morgan's contribution lies in its ABC approach. It is hardly possible to misunderstand his analysis or to fail to grasp the importance of his recommendations. A man who lives in a small community that is losing its young people to the cities can read this essay and the next day go out to do something about reversing the trend. A man who lives in the city, but would like to figure out a way for himself and his family to survive in economic terms in the country, has clear instructions concerning what must happen if he and others are going to be able to make such moves. The first essential is to begin *thinking* in terms of community welfare, and that of course is what Mr. Morgan has done. For example:

> If an individual family spends more money than it takes in it will be on the road to bankruptcy. Small communities and hinterland areas similarly must have enough money for economic exchange within their own economy for their economies to give adequate work and employment. If people do not employ or buy from one another within the community, but buy primarily from the metropolis, more money tends to go out of the community than comes in, and to make a living people are impelled to go where the money goes. Poverty and depopulation characterize even fertile and well endowed parts of our nation, in consequence of the movement of money to the city. According to Orville Freeman, more than half a million people now move to our large cities each year as displaced persons, overwhelming them with trouble.

Mr. Morgan has several examples of small towns where definite efforts, successful ones, were made by individuals and groups to counteract the forces making for urban migration. There are things to do, and local bankers and chambers of commerce can start them going.

When you read about these things, you realize how seldom it occurs to anyone that such activities are really expressions of vital individual responsibility. There is little or nothing in modern community life to stimulate people to think in terms of social wholes. Economic processes are conceived to be controlled by remote, impersonal laws, with the proper economic effects achieved by a hypothetical "invisible hand" which works behind the scenes like a benign deity presiding over all true believers in "free enterprise" and in the old-fashioned "virtues"—which are now, alas, much degraded in meaning by partisan claims. People are early indoctrinated with the notion that all they have to do is concentrate on getting what they want, and then everything else will work out for the common good. Well, it doesn't. The old-fashioned virtues are important, but their use has also to be directed toward an objective that is better than "to have and to hold."

Modern morality has been enormously confused by the claims of economic individualism, just as ideals of social excellence have been caricatured by the power-thrusts of revolutionaries relying on anger and indiscriminate moral emotion. More or less for these reasons, social intelligence now finds itself at practically a dead end, dialogue having collapsed from lack of impartial rational content. And we are all sick and tired of being moralized at from one or the other of these emotional extremes. Meanwhile, the problems have become extreme from practical neglect.

Freedom means living and acting out of regard for the necessities of a free life; and this requires, first of all, investigation of these necessities, not leaving knowledge of them to chance. As Griscom Morgan says:

> Society is inherently an orchestrated relationship of individuals within social wholes. Speech, reading, play, labor—all are outgrowths of community and require discipline for them to be possible. A person has no freedom to drive, or play in an orchestra if he has not the discipline of his own person and of group relationships. The undisciplined are the infants and the tragically ill-brought-up. The tyranny of authoritarianism is the ultimate alternative to inner discipline in fellowship and community. And this applies fundamentally to economic life. Israel's economic success is an outgrowth of a disciplined people. *Inner character control as compared with overt police control can be as much a community as an individual development.*

Mr. Morgan says other things which need to be said:

> Without a foundation in higher values and purposes, economic processes tend to degenerate into ends in themselves and to betray and defeat human values. Preoccupation with profit-making will lead people to sell out all that differentiates a man from a beast and even to descend below the level of the beasts in sacrificing well-being of community, family and children for the getting and spending of wealth.

This has more or less happened, already, in various aspects of our culture, yet the prevailing response to its most ominous symptoms, which are massively evident in the rage of Negroes and the protest and sometimes nihilism of student-radicals, is the cry for law and order. Back of this incredible moral indifference lies the pervasive influence of several centuries of thinking in terms of amoral science, acquisitive economics, and egoistic religion. Today, we seem barely able to recognize concrete evidence of a descent "below the level of the beasts in sacrificing well-being of community, family and children for the getting and spending of wealth."

An almost equal disaster lies in the fact that, when such dark realities become unmistakable, it is often assumed that men who are prominently active in the existing society are so tainted by "the system" that they cannot be expected to play any part in constructive change. It is from this kind of reasoning that the mania for total destruction spreads. Mr. Morgan offers a very different sort

of program for the economic regeneration of small communities and rural areas:

> . . . many communities . . . would do well to make a particular point of spending as much as is feasible within the community, fostering employment, sales and services between its members and developing products which will have a market in the wider world. When so spent, any given amount of outside income can pyramid into many times greater employment and wealth than is commonly the case in American communities.
>
> An outstanding example of sound application of this principle is the way a banker in the county seat of a rural county—Clarkesville, Tennessee—went beyond the usual perspective of the bankers' profession to work for the economic community of his county. He employed a qualified staff and developed a program designed to bring capital to promising local enterprise and an economic order that would make for economic health. During the thirties this county rose from being among the poorest to one of the most prosperous in the state, and the banker, William Bailey, was the first small-town banker elected president of the American Bankers Association. Bailey tried to share with other bankers fundamentally the same concept as we are giving here. As another case of local economic effectiveness the Mennonite farming communities in northern Ohio, through initiative and self-reliance, have become so prosperous that they are continually expanding their area by buying out adjoining farmers who were living by the conventional economic pattern.

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COMMENTARY
THE PAIDEIA SPIRIT

PAUL GOODMAN'S proposals seem less sweeping and "revolutionary" when one reflects that all he is contending for is that the entire community should be *in loco parentis*—should deliberately try to make itself over into a setting for the kind of education that we have read about dozens of times in articles which tell how individual teachers have converted their classrooms into places of wonder and fascination for the young. By individual use of the imagination such teachers overcome the circumstantial imprisonment of the classroom. But with the collaboration of the community, less talented teachers could do the same.

There is no way under heaven that an educational system can be made to correct for the indifference of the community to the young. An uncaring community dooms the schools to be prisons, the children to be "targets" of indoctrination. *Paideia* is a spontaneous community achievement, not the result of plans by "educationists."

How, for example, would you "plan" for the crucial discovery and decision made by the design student described in this week's Frontiers? His insight came from some *paideia* spirit which touched his spirit—a high infection of high intent.

> The student had, almost by default, come to respect these people as human beings and did not want to inflict on them furniture that would be good by his standards, but trivial and useless to people who were concerned with more basic struggles.

According to Goodman and dozens of other perceptive critics, much of present-day education is concerned with the "trivial and useless." More of what is described in this week's "Children" would probably, little by little, change this pattern in the schools and make it seem entirely reasonable to free the children for incidental or random learning from a community that not only accepts but welcomes the responsibility of providing it.

Transmission of Great Ideas, the Eternal Verities? These Ideas would be already *there,* embedded in the practice of the Responsible Community! They are the authentic concern of all high culture. They lead to the recognitions Griscom Morgan speaks of (see Review): "Society is inherently an orchestrated relationship of individuals within social wholes." . . . "Without a foundation in higher values and purposes, economic processes tend to degenerate into ends in themselves and to betray and defeat human values."

The Humanities are not transmitted by people who think the next generation "needs" them, but by people who love them, and put them into practice; by people who delight in the truth but do not pretend to "teach" it.

It happens, of course. Wonders of self-discovery and commitment occur, and in spite of the pretensions of systems and the egotisms of the caretakers of learning. But the way we do things now makes these happenings difficult and is *very expensive* to the great majority of men. It leads to the situation described by McEvoy and Miller: "Education may be continuing as a shrunken bureaucratic ritual, but the intangible sinew and spirit that bind an educational community together are absent." Who is at fault? Scapegoating only hides the reality. As Dr. Hutchins said in settlement of this question: "Any educational system is a reflection of the culture in which it operates."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
AN EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES

WITH all the harsh words about technology that appear in these pages, we ought to give credit where it is due, and technology is at least partly responsible for the excellence and plenty of the educational materials now available for people of all ages in the United States. This thought occurred when, after reading in a newspaper from an underdeveloped country about the serious lack there of books for use with small children, we came across Katherine Wensberg's *Experiences with Living Things* (Beacon Press, 1966). Quite obviously, America has fine books about practically *everything,* for little children—books which could, incidentally, be immediately shared with other lands where English is spoken.

In this volume, after a useful foreword by Dorothy Spoerl, there are fifteen chapters of practical help in introducing children to earthworms, robins, cats, trees, woodpeckers, spiders, moles and shrews, ants, grass, the garden, bees, and caterpillars and butterflies. The reader soon realizes that the author has herself done these things with children over and over again. The book is subtitled, "An Introduction to Ecology for Five- to Eight-Year-Olds." Miss Spoerl sets the keynote of its common sense:

> The experiences described in this guide are rich and varied and should always precede any storytelling. Experience first, with story and discussion afterwards, is the most effective framework for teaching children of these ages. A child cannot form a theory about the interdependence of living things while he is still full of questions about a specific grasshopper! But after he has had a chance to satisfy his active curiosity (and this may require several class sessions), he can then review his own experience as he listens to a story about the experiences of others.

Miss Spoerl adds:

> The underlying reason for teaching ecology to the children of early elementary age is our conviction that children who grow up with some understanding of the intricate interweaving of the web of life will always feel more a part of the universe. They will always be more intelligently aware of what goes on in the natural world about them, no matter where they are at every moment of the day or night. They may live in a world where machines have increasing attention, but they will know the value of living things and will continue to seek answers to their continuing questions about life in its myriad forms.

Lynn White, Jr., in his *Science* (March 10, 1967) article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," expressed the view that profound religious reform would be necessary to correct "Christian arrogance toward nature." His recommendation was a return to the pan-psychism of St. Francis of Assisi. In a talk on science for children of nursery school age, Katherine Wensberg develops a similar theme:

> I consider basic to the development of a mature religion an understanding gained early and thus never lost of the interdependence of all living things. This understanding accepts all life as linked not only to everything else that lives but to the elements of the physical world. It is the understanding that led to St. Francis of Assisi's "Hymn of creation" in which he refer; to "our brother, the sun" and "our sister, the moon," "our brother, fire" and "our sister, water" and "our mother, earth." St. Francis was so at home with the universe he knew, that all parts of it seemed related to him, as of course they are now understood to be related to all of us, since we are made of that related, very active matter, sometimes called "the stuff of the universe."
>
> Giving children experiences to learn from, rather than information alone, teaches them to discover, test, ask about, evaluate, and not accept blindly what they are told. The things we really *know* and therefore live by we learn this way.

This principle of "experience first" seems to be shared by all observant teachers. For example, Frank Lindenfeld and Peter Marin, in their article on "open field teaching" (MANAS, Sept. 7, 1966), show that it is equally important for students of college age:

> We view the process of education as involving a flow from experience to perception to abstraction. Instead of starting out with high level abstractions

such as "social class," or "democracy," we begin more directly with students' experiences. This helps the obvious paradox of intellectual discussion of concepts like "freedom" in an authoritarian atmosphere. Our open field classes arise naturally from what the students are and what the teacher is as they enter the room. They are based on the experience of the participants, and thus start out from a real as opposed to an artificial base. . . .

If the concept comes *first*, the students will apply it like a "title" to their experience without ever letting the experience itself emerge—and their knowledge will tend to remain "abstract," without roots in their personal experience. But if the experience or condition comes first, the concept becomes personally meaningful; it becomes a tool of understanding. What is *most* important is that the students and teacher preserve the relationship between subjective experience and more objective descriptions of experience. That is, the class must be flexible enough to concern itself with whatever enters the room through the students; and whatever the students bring into the room is the fit "subject matter of the classroom, for it reveals what a part of the world is, even if they bring in apparently irrelevant matters.

The "Introductory" Experience in Katherine Wensberg's book has to do with sand. A field trip, if possible, to the seashore is indicated, but even a sandbox will do as the setting, and a miniature seaside can be made either in the box or on a table. This part of the project becomes a venture in landscape design, with the children making props out of paper, clay, pipe cleaners and bits of wood. One point seems specially important:

Whatever is undertaken, it should become the children's own project and can be fun rather than a demonstration. As Emma Sheehy says in *Children Discover Music and Dance,* "One has to consider thoughtfully whether it is *the teacher who is creating by using children* or whether she is the kind of person who really releases children to *create in their own ways."*

There are various ways in which children can encounter sand. Watching it in an hour glass *is* one of them. Its uniform flow is a thing to notice, but "time," Miss Wensberg interestingly points out, "is not of particular interest to the younger children in this age range." Designs can be laid out in sand, and colored sand can be painted with, while wet sand can be sculptured. The action on sand of a jet of water from a hose has its excitements. Sand can be looked at through a low power microscope, and the children can "make" sand by rubbing pieces of sandstone together. At the end of each of the "Experiences" is a story which helps to fix in the memory what has been noticed or learned.

Especially notable is the richness of the bibliographical material. Each of the fifteen sections recommends eight or ten excellent books written for children on the subject of that chapter. And sometimes adult titles are given, too, as in the chapter on insects, where one finds listed Joseph Wood Krutch's *The Great Chain of Life* and Donald Culross and Neal Peattie's *A Cup of Sky.*

FRONTIERS

The New Humanism

LAST fall, in a discussion of the uses of visual intelligence (MANAS, Oct. 2), a quotation from James McNeish's life of Danilo Dolci was used to illustrate how a designer's sense of the fitness of things might lead him to *refuse* to design, when there is evidence that it will do no good and may conceal what ought to be done. Trained as an architect, Dolci had already entered upon a life of social reform. In 1960 he called a conference of sociologists to meet in one of the most backward and degraded towns of Sicily—Palma (population 20,000), on the seacoast. He spoke at length to this gathering of specialists, pointing out the unsanitary conditions which prevailed in Palma—which no one needed to be told, in view of the overwhelming odors in the place. Only ten per cent of the homes had water, and only 14 per cent had toilets of any sort. Illiteracy was 64 per cent and infectious disease was the rule. After his talk people came up to ask him what he planned to do. Dolci did not answer. He just said, again and again, "Go and look at this place yourself." Finally, his meaning got through to a visiting English journalist, who is quoted by McNeish:

> "I now see that Dolci could not have answered me in any other way. To have given an answer in one way or another about the future, as it might be determined by his opponents, would be doing a kind of violence to that present which he was trying to initiate. Though to outsiders Dolci can appear somewhat mysterious, I believe myself this is only because he is so obvious, so naïvely honest, and so consistent."

Dolci's point, in this case, was that the situation did not call for "redesigning" Palma, but for another kind of involvement—involvement of the people of the town more than specialist contributions by visiting sociologists, planners, and reformers. He saw, as McNeish put it, "that it is just as important that fifty men should get together and lay their own drain as it is that they should enjoy the benefits of sewage."

This happened nine years ago. Today, a new spirit of humane understanding and moral sensibility is beginning to show in both the arts and the social sciences. Five weeks ago, in "Grounds for Not Giving Up," Henry Anderson demonstrated the extraordinary change that has taken place in industrial psychology in only fifteen years. And in the current (Winter 1969) issue of *Landscape* (now published in Berkeley), an article by Niels Diffrient, who teaches industrial design at UCLA, begins with an example of the same spirit emerging in this field:

> One of my students in industrial design came to me recently to say that, for his Master's project, he had decided to design some low-cost furniture specifically for the poor in our urban ghettos. He thought that useful, well-designed furniture utilizing mass-production techniques could inexpensively improve their depressing environment. This idea seemed valid and, on this basis, the furniture design could have been started forthwith. The student knew mass-production and he had a good esthetic sense.
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> What he didn't know was the ghetto itself. He didn't know what it is to live there, and what is important to the inhabitants. How do the people feel and what do they do? These things he only surmised from sketchy reading.
>
> Realizing this, the student decided to begin by learning all he could about life in economically impoverished circumstances. He read many of the pertinent recent books. He contacted social workers familiar with the situation, and he also visited the areas. Because he was afraid of visiting the areas alone, he acquired a guide, who knew the locality and could introduce him to local families. For some time, this student thought, and almost lived, the life of a ghetto resident.
>
> He found both good and bad in the ghetto. There was often a healthy, close social structure on a small, communal basis. There was a wealth of human contact that is missing in affluent districts. What was bad was often inflicted by well-meaning persons and institutions outside the ghetto and its value structure, whose insensitive decisions and actions disrupted the valuable aspects of this form of living.
>
> What he saw he recorded and pondered. Then he told me of his research and a decision: he now felt he could not carry out his original program of designing low-cost furniture.

Furniture was not the answer to any of the problems of the ghetto people.

The student had, almost by default, come to respect these people as human beings and did not want to inflict on them furniture that would be good by his standards, but trivial and useless to people who were concerned with more basic struggles.

Understanding this, the student restructured his problem to find a system and products that he could weave into the fabric of ghetto life, without going crossgrain and becoming an irritant rather than an aid. Whether his new project—a flexible system of mobile educational units—will ultimately prove useful remains to be seen.

What, then, is the designer's real task? It is, as Mr. Diffrient says in his conclusion,

to deal with the real problems of a situation rather than to offer an unimportant substitute. Certainly, the problem of the furniture will need to be solved at some point, but that is the easy part of the problem; that much we are already doing.

Many students, with similar sympathies, are eschewing business careers, because they feel the absence of real challenge there. Instead, they are experimenting and communicating new ideas on how to understand and improve our environment. If this attitude grows, design will develop a new stature, able to deal with entire systems, and using the feedback to establish general rules of procedure.

One thing that seems important to notice, at this point, is that "this attitude" is by no means typical of youth alone. It is appearing at every level and in every field of our society. It is affecting advanced scientific thinkers as well as student "radicals." For example, in *Stanford Today* (Winter 1969), in a discussion titled "the New Copernican Revolution," Willis Harman, a scientist who heads one of the two Educational Policy Research Centers set up by the U.S. Office of Education, writes of what he is convinced is a radical and imminent change in the orientation and practice of science. The change involves return to the humanistic foundation where science had its beginnings. As he puts it:

Much evidence suggests that a group of questions relating to the commonality of and interpretation of man's subjective experience, especially of the "transcendental," and hence to the bases of human values, are shifting from the realm of the "philosophical" to the "empirical." If so, the consequences may be even more far-reaching than those which emerged from the Copernican, Darwinian, and Freudian revolutions.

Use of the word "empirical" in this context need not be upsetting. It means doing no more than what Mr. Diffrient's student did—finding first-hand human meanings for guidance in one's work. It means something like what Josiah Royce had in mind when he suggested that only mystics are pure empiricists. In a few pages, Prof. Harman surveys the evidence of this great change as found in the work of men such as the pioneer humanistic psychologists, philosophers and scientists like L. L. Whyte, Teilhard de Chardin, Lewis Mumford, and John Rader Platt, and various others. Prof. Harman shows the fundamental unity of these themes, and concludes:

To whatever extent the science of the past may have contributed to a mechanistic and economic image of man, the new science of subjective experience may provide a counteracting force toward the ennobling of the image of the individual's possibilities, of the educational and socializing processes, and of the future. And if we have come to understand that science is not a description of "reality" but a metaphorical ordering of experience, the new science does not impugn the old. It is not a question of which view is "true" in some ultimate sense. Rather, it is a matter of which picture is more useful in guiding human affairs. Among the possible images that are reasonably in accord with accumulated human experience since the image held is that most likely to come into being, it is prudent to choose the noblest. . . .

At a time when the nation may well be in its gravest peril in over a century, and Western civilization may hang in the balance, it could even come to pass that a new "Copernican revolution" might provide a missing balance in some four-century-old trends started by the first one.

Or, as Mr. Diffrient says in his conclusion, "man must probe the depths of his inner nature to understand himself and provide guidance for these methods which are inherently fallible."