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THE STUFF OF BECOMING

GREAT truths about man and nature are not diminished in times of historical disaster and social disintegration, but they are likely to seem irrelevant. Fragmented men tend to accept only fragmented truth; there is nothing strange about that. Unless he has a vivid memory or unusual powers of imagination, a man confined in a dark tunnel will find discussions of color harmony uninteresting. The savage beauty of a frontier landscape will hardly impress the inmates of a concentration camp placed there because of the region's need for some slave labor. Profound books may have no appeal to a generation of young lately exposed to a four-year cycle of academic sterility.

Such responses are not remarkable. They are no doubt as inevitable as the psychic mutilations accomplished (psychologists say) in infants left without love. Adults could learn a great deal about themselves and about the inhumanity of much that they do from child psychologists. If only a little of what they have discovered could be put into practice in international relations, wars might soon become a thing of the past.

Meanwhile, we go on accumulating facts about the unfavorable effects on human beings of bad and distorting environments. We have a great deal of this information now. We know comparatively little about the effects of *good* environments for the reason that they are so few; moreover, theories about how to produce or arrange a "good" environment often generate bitter controversy. Educators impatient with the status quo tend to get into a lot of trouble. Humanity generally has only narrow tolerances for deliberated environmental change. The polarities of emotionally acceptable environmental change are vision and desperation, and we know what a confusing field for action is stretched between these extremes. All the religious feelings of ultimate hope and ultimate fear find focus there.

We also know the solution, of course. We say "of course" because it has been repeated many times. The solution is to conceive of man as a being who is capable of transcending his environment. The idea relegates all deterministic factors to only a second-degree reality. They are still there, but they are no longer absolute. On the other hand, these factors have a tendency to inch back to absolute authority in theories about man and human good. It seems much easier, more practicable, to try to fix up the circumstances of life than to invite an undefinable and often inaccessible quality in man. Moreover, talking about such qualities is an excuse for not *doing* anything! This is a specialty of people who have very comfortable environments. And who knows anything, really, about transcendence? It has almost no established *social* significance. The conception insists on a heroic potential in human beings, and there is a very strong statistical case against this assumption. So popular political decision generally goes the other way.

Yet the human capacity to transcend the environment is one of the great truths about man. It is intuitively grasped by all human beings and ultimate values like "freedom" are grounded in its verity. So considerable ingenuity is applied in avoiding its implications. It is well known, for example, that vulgar political polemics almost invariably define "freedom" in terms of particular environmental situations which are claimed to secrete the true essence of freedom. Freedom can't really be defined—no more than transcendence can be "arranged"—but we do it anyway. We do it, and do it, and then, after a time, the people accept this debased account of who and what they are. They begin to think that there is no difference at all between what they are

and what they might become. That is the sole achievement of the *acquisitive* society. It is wholly natural that power should be the only goal of such a society.

Well, if a society succumbs to such tendencies, is there some way to preserve classical truths from irrelevance? Could they be made to "transcend" social conditioning? It seems, sometimes, that very important truths, even though they ought to be kept "independent"—that is, transcendent—lose their meaning from being preserved in a prejudicial context. For example, back in 1955 Nathan Pusey, the President of Harvard, declared in a speech that the fundamental responsibility of a university lies in "the pursuit of learning almost for its own sake." One can see the sense of this. There ought always to be places where calm can be preserved and tendencies debasing to the mind and its works resisted. But today even Harvard, along with other universities, has been subjected to attack by angry students. They objected to ROTC and certain of the University Corporation's alliances. And as some of them pointed out, President Pusey also said in that 1955 speech:

> It is possible for a university without being aware of it to slip into a servile relationship with the culture in which it finds itself and so betray its real reason for being. This danger . . . is apt to grow as colleges and universities look increasingly to government and business for the sustenance they must have to keep alive.

It was, the students said, this "servile relationship" which they now attacked. Replying, an indignant member of Harvard's governing body told a reporter: "Slapping ROTC in the face is like slapping a lion in the face. It is a crazy thing to do, especially at a time when every university is dependent on Federal funds."

It is not hard to see where this argument will go. What hope is there for preserving independent thinking and the ideals of freedom and transcendence in a university "dependent on Federal funds"? The students didn't really wreck Harvard—they weren't trying to—but some students are trying to wreck some universities and some colleges are already fairly moribund places as a result of their efforts. What the students did didn't make the colleges any better.

But, musing about these bumptious victories over defenseless institutions, one might also remember the refusal of Socrates to violate Athenian law in order to save his own life, on the ground that the least he could do was not to add to the corruption of the city's government. On balance, Socrates was the only one who kept the ideal of transcendence of the environment alive. He refused to let his behavior be shaped by the times. He lived by rules "laid up in heaven," as he put it in the *Republic*. *So,* with unintended irony, the Athenians did what they could to send him there.

But why, one wonders, if the students have such contempt for the universities, do they still appear to *want* something from them?

Having rules "laid up in heaven" sounds something like those "static" conceptions for which Plato is commonly condemned—the theory of Ideas, or Ideal Forms—but if Plato was after transcendence, as he seems to have been, then some such theory may be every bit as necessary to the inward development of man as ideal triangles and other figures are to the practice of geometry.

The gist of the matter lies in the question: Is there any difference between what a man is and what he can be? If there is, then ideals are more important than facts.

If there is no difference between what a man is and what he can become, then it is difficult to see how education has any meaning.

Yet paradoxes haunt all such considerations. There seems unavoidable truth in urging that we already are what we must become, and in what, then, does the "becoming" consist? Feeling accommodates to this puzzle better than language, and expressions like "self-realization" or "self-actualization" present no special difficulties in usage.

We started out with the problem of maintaining full-bodied content for such truths in times of extreme social disorder. It seems evident that the central need is to penetrate the corruptions of classical or familiar forms of their expression in order to keep alive what lies behind. We need our skepticism, our clean-up programs, our new brooms and scouring compounds, but we also need classical, humane meanings. You can't nourish human life on abrasives and disinfectants.

We say "we" all the time—what *we* need—in discussing these matters. Yet the greatest need of all is to learn to stand alone. There are so many people who choose to embrace views which in their better moments they know to be illusions, simply to enjoy prosperous company! So honesty with oneself—a very private affair—comes first. There is also the problem of figuring out how to identify illusions. In *Motivation and Personality*, Dr. Maslow gives some attention to this. Discussing what he calls "Low-Ceiling Psychology," he says:

> The most widely used and time-honored method for blinding oneself is the semantic one. It is simple, and consists only of defining science strictly in terms of the past and what is already known. Every radically new question, every new technique is then stigmatized as unscientific. Just as the old shoes feel more comfortable than the new, just as we tend to improve our homes by adding rather than by rebuilding, so do most scientists also prefer comfort, safety, and the familiar. Human beings that they are, they find it easier to work within a well-established frame of reference, with familiar techniques, concepts, and questions. The paradoxes that result are shocking.
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> *Examples:*
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> 1. A professor in psychology instructed the graduate students under his guidance to do what he called an apparatus experiment. It turned out that he divided experiments in general into those that used apparatus and those that did not, and earnest talk followed on the superiority of apparatus experiments. It is my belief that this ludicrous point of view is more often held than psychologists would admit.
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> 2. A student at a major university was forbidden to do the problems that she had outlined for her dissertation on the grounds that the results might be negative and then the dissertation could not be accepted. She was willing to take her chances, but she was forbidden.
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> 3. A graduate student asked me with some worry to help him find a bibliography for his dissertation, since he felt that if he did not have a bibliography, he could not use that subject for a dissertation. When I suggested that any problem for which there was a large bibliography was probably *less* worth doing, he did not understand my point.
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> 4. One student also at a major university was forbidden to use as a subject for his Ph.D. dissertation a study of love and friendship relations, the grounds being that "this was not a scientific problem."
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> 5. Most graduate students have no time for research or writing or even self-selected reading because graduate instruction has slowly come to be the study of what *other* people have done rather than the doing itself.
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> 6. I suggested to a graduate student that she visit Wertheimer's seminar at the New School on a certain Thursday afternoon. She did not go, and the excuse she gave was that she had to go to her class in systematic and historical psychology. It would be too pat to say that the lecture for the day at the class was on Wertheimer, but it might very well have been so. This can remind us only of what was said about a certain Swiss gentleman, that if he were given a choice between going to paradise or a lecture about paradise, he would choose the latter.

Where does the capacity for transcendence of one's environment come from? We don't know. It is in human beings. How can it be developed? We don't know. But we do know how to suppress it. The six examples given here by Maslow all represent typical means of suppressing it in formal education. In orthodox religion, you call it heresy. In orthodox science, you call it unscientific. In all relationships, you systematically substitute the past for the future. You suppress transcendence by generating concerted social pressure against it, and you do this best when you think you are being reverent, patriotic, scientific, loyal, brave, and true, at the time.

Like every other good thing, transcendence is subject to imitation. In the young this becomes simple rejection. There are young people who now declare that they will read no books, that they feel no need of them, having "inside" all that they wish to become. Judging from experience, this will lead to a very ordinary becoming. But such young people only confirm the half-truth believed by their teachers, that the environment makes the man. They confirm it in reverse, by reaction. An education which substitutes lectures for life, abstractions for experience, machines for generalizing reflection, precision in small matters for rich uncertainties, is bound to give off airs subversive of respect for any real learning. A young man who declares himself in no need of books is the victim of a complex conspiracy. An ancient truth—that final responsibility for both knowing and decision lies within oneself—has been made to seem to him the *only* truth he needs. He has been made unmindful of the fact that the resources of a larger self need to be variously sought. Those resources have been dishonored by misrepresentation.

Well, why *do* we need books? Because in books are found tracings of the transcendence accomplished by men who lived in times every bit as confining and distorting as our own, yet who were not pulled out of shape by either the times or their efforts. We can learn something from books about the many varieties of self-discovery, and of the wonderful turns and twists by which men free themselves of the blinders of environment. Little by little, an enduring sense of what these men have had in common may come to view.

We have of course to penetrate their language. This means getting behind their use of the art of the poet, of the dramatist, and reaching to their store of the kind of knowledge in which, our learned men tell us, no "progress" can be made. These writers assert less, inquire more, yet they have their wonderful certainties. These are certainties unavailable to men unless they earn them, and how can even the wise tell about such matters? Well, they try. Sometimes, if they are fortunate, they become the architects of great change, but then, all too soon, their followers and successors turn that change into the foundation of a historic conceit, and transcendence lapses into ritual. Like the sacrificial act which in the Christian myth accomplished our Salvation, it becomes something that happened in the past. Certain scholarly obligations become ours when this is understood. We have to try to find out when and how transcendence became fixed in men's minds as only a past event. For this is the betraying use of the study of history, which makes men turn against it at last. But what *is* the past? It is that part of ourselves on which we stand. It is increment, not climax. It is the shell of yesterday's being, and, if there seems some virtue in it, the track and structure left by men who looked ahead. One can also discover from reading books that a *manual* of transcendence which takes its meaning from past events alone needs only a comparatively short period of time to turn into a handbook of inquisitors.

Basic to such enterprises is the prevailing theory of human nature. A low estimate of human nature commonly results from inspecting the status quo and relying on statistics. A very different estimate grows from study of what the best men have made of themselves. You study, not the past, but transcendence in the past, as representative of a goal that may with reason be set for all men. This is the natural foundation of a psychology of human becoming. Without such a psychology, we are left with judgments of human nature based on the status quo, and then, ignoring potentiality, education turns into a vast scheme of indoctrination in the ignobility and incapacity of man. It endorses a tacit philosophy of self-defeat, against which, finally, the repressed moral instincts of outraged men will declare some new form of nihilist revolution. Denied transcendence, they turn it inside-out and punish the deprecators of man.

This subject is really far larger than an academic discipline, as Dr. Maslow shows in another passage:

> Such men as [Alexander] Hamilton, Freud, Hobbes, and Schopenhauer have built up theories of human nature that are based on the study of men at their worst. It would be as if we used as our main technique for studying human nature the study of men cast away on a raft in the middle of the ocean without food or drink and expecting at any moment to die. Certainly we should learn less about general human nature in this way than we should about the psychology of desperation. Hamilton generalized from poor, uneducated people. Freud generalized too much from neurotic people. Hobbes and other philosophers observed masses of mankind under very bad social and economic and educational conditions and came to conclusions that ought not to be generalized to men under *good* economic and political and educational conditions. This we may call low-ceiling or ample or jungle psychology, but certainly not *general* psychology.

Before you can call attention to the mutilating effects of reductive psychology, you have to *see* them, probably in comparison with something else, and this requires elevation above the level of common assumption and practice. How does a man get up there? Well, he has to believe he can. He has to be convinced that an "up there" exists. He has to feel that it's worth trying. And then, when he gains the elevation, he has to provide rational structure for what he sees. How else can he speak to the secret yearnings for transcendence in others? And this he must do. For past, present, and future all testify that we are not separate, private islands unto ourselves. Transcendence has some deep dependence upon the solidarity of mankind. Yet a man needs to go up there in the wild airs of no-knowledge, where there is no well-received opinion, and think by himself.

It is a big, big step to restore the conception, and to begin to elaborate the principles, of visionary reality for modern man. To practice commonsense demonstration of the proposition that we *are* the stuff of which dreams are made.

REVIEW
CANADIAN PAINTER

PAINTINGS by the Canadian artist, Lawren Harris—representative of work done over a period of nearly sixty years—are reproduced in color, accompanied somewhat contrapuntally with text by the artist, in a large and exceptionally well-designed book, *Lawren Harris*, published this year by Macmillan of Canada. The pictures were chosen and arranged by Bess Harris, and the text was prepared by R. G. P. Colgrove from writings set down by Harris at various times, including, fortunately, poems first published in 1929. The fifty-three works (all oil on canvas) presented fall into three broad categories: Canadian mountain scenes, houses in towns, and abstractions. An introduction is contributed by Northrop Frye.

We offer some notes on this book for the reason that, while "art" is difficult to write about, the richly perceptive prose of the artist deserves attention, but most of all because the paintings of Lawren Harris have a health and wholeness that surprise and delight at this moment of history. Those are qualities which come mainly from the man, but they also have an origin in the country where he chose to work. In his Introduction, Northrop Frye speaks of the seven painters, of whom Harris is one, who many years ago set out to revitalize Canadian painting:

> They felt themselves a part of the movement towards the direct imaginative confrontation with the North American landscape which, for them, began in literature with Thoreau and Whitman. Out of this developed an interest for which the word theosophical would not be too misleading if understood, not in any sectarian sense, but as meaning a commitment to painting as a way of life, or, perhaps better, as a sacramental activity expressing a faith, and so analogous to the practising of a religion.

Most likely to impress the lay enjoyer of this book is the artist's unabashed striving for unqualified affirmation, his successful effort to invoke majesty. He conveys what must have swept over him from the stark, sullen heights of the Canadian north—relentless waves of an impersonal splendor which would be savage save for its almost molten repose. These paintings have the kind of completeness which at the same time rejects limit or any finite dimension. They can have no casual inspection—no more than the titanic visual rhythms of William Blake, which they sometimes recall. Something of the universe has gotten into these paintings, perhaps it is the presence of "informing cosmic powers" of which the artist wrote.

Among the paintings of the north country are some of Harris's abstractions. Abstractions, as he explains in the text, have the particular virtue of setting an artist free. But they also burden him with heavy responsibilities. The limits set by nature no longer frame his effort, and he must invent his own. Lawren Harris writes well on this subject:

> The purpose of painting abstracts is different from that in landscape painting; it has to do with movements, processes, and cycles in nature.
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> One abstract painting of this kind is thus meant to convey more than is possible in a representational painting.
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> Abstract painting cannot be done in a mechanical way. It is done more in terms of a dance of the spirit. Its discipline is the discipline of a cosmic dance—or in the rhythm of living exfoliating flowers. The one role is that the work of art is autonomous, a living and satisfying relationship within itself. . . .
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> In non-objective art we are freed from our associations, released into a realm wherein we can experience away from the here and now, and thus enlarge our life gamut. . . . So long as painting deals with objective nature, it is an impure art, for recognizability precludes the highest æsthetic emotion. All painting, ancient or modern, moves us æsthetically only in so far as it possesses a force over and beyond its aspect.

If it is the intention of all art to intimate untold secrets, and if abstract art has the greater purity, and therefore richer potentiality, what incredible demands it must make upon the artist! Yet the landscape has great powers of intimation.

In this book Harris has two paintings of the same lighthouse. Both scenes are sombre, yet one has a sharp clarity. So the paintings say different things. Their ocular references meet very different trains. One seems more explicitly about a lighthouse and its duties; the other—well, it lets you go out to sea.

Now we are in a no-man's-land of uncertain speculations, yet such questions ought to be raised. A man who looks at something—a painting, anything—is bound to need some kind of home base. What is the obligation of the painter? There can of course be no rule. Only the question.

In the light of these considerations, this book by Lawren Harris becomes all the more useful, through its presentation of both landscapes and non-objective paintings, together with the artist's explanation of why he was drawn to do the latter. The reader may perhaps agree that sometimes there is a subtle sublimation of the north country in the abstract forms. A small jury of artist-reviewers whose help we solicited agreed that Harris's last abstract paintings, completed in 1967, achieved a rare synthesis of feeling and were the most successful of his non-objective works.

A passage from the painter's essay, "Symbolism in Art," has this to say:

> Symbolism and Art have different values and different functions. Yet, there is an art of symbolism and there is symbolism in certain forms of Art. There is also a phase of art wherein they fuse and interpenetrate and unite to the enhancement of the particular type of art suited to and created by this fusion.
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> The purpose of Symbolism is primarily to instruct, to point the way or a way—to such an extent that we can speak of the language of symbols, for instance in science and music and mathematics. Religious symbols are also definite—the halo signifies saintliness, holiness; the cross, sacrifice, sacredness. There are national symbols, the Swastica, the Hammer and Sickle, the British Lion, our own Beaver; and there are flags. In some Eastern teachings the symbols contain the whole of the philosophy; there is the square, and the triangle with the apex pointing upwards—the four lower principles and the triad of divine principles together symbolizing the sevenfold man, the microcosm, and the sevenfold cosmos, the macrocosm.
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> Symbols thus represent something definite, they are intellectual counters, and form a language that is primarily scientific, and meant to be precise and unmistakable; they always point to some quality or idea in man or the universe or in nature that is not actually in the symbol.
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> Now, the contrary is true of a work of art.
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> A real work of art has a definite life of its own—embodies a definite experience. It does not refer to anything outside itself; it does not refer us to an idea or quality as symbolism does—it must embody that quality, be that idea—if it is a work of art. That means that if it is a work of art it is autonomous, self-dependent, has a life of its own, its own organization as a living thing. . . . The Beethoven "Eroica" symphony is a noble and grand work. It does not refer to or describe nobility and grandeur; it is noble and grand within itself—in its very substance, the very flow of its sound.
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> In symbolism, one may ask "What does it mean?"; but in Art, one should ask "What experience does it contain?"

This is in all ways a beautiful book. It is exquisitely designed, the typography is just right, and the color reproductions are dramatic and probably quite faithful. The binding is comely and durable. We lack a notation on the price, but such a volume would have to be quite expensive. However, all libraries and institutions concerned with the arts and education in the arts should have this volume.

COMMENTARY
BACK TO PLATO

THERE is a passage in Herbert Read's book, *The Redemption of the Robot* (Trident, 1966)—of the Credo series—which locates the missing factors in our cultural and educational resources with particular clarity. He says:

> When Plato and Aristotle insist on the priority of moral education, these philosophers are assuming that knowledge and power, all the attributes of science and learning, are not merely ineffective, but positively dangerous, unless they are used to promote the well-being of mankind. It is surely not necessary to demonstrate that axiom to a world cowering under the threat of the atom bomb! But in our present state of moral indecision, or moral *atrophy* as it should be called, no universal (i.e., politically effective) recognition is given to any moral values; or such recognition as is given is of a purely intellectual character, and has no emotional sanction. We recognize evil when it is objective—that is to say, when its social consequences are evident to our senses; but there is no compulsion to pursue good; good deeds are private deeds and are supposed to be their own rewards. We might say that our civilization has no natural habits of goodness—only certain intellectual concepts of goodness, some of which we try to enforce by legal sanctions.
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> Admittedly there are many decent people in the world today who aspire to the good life and conduct themselves in a manner which they would regard as sober, industrious and reasonable. But such people—our bourgeois selves—are secret promoters of our nihilistic decadence. We shrink from the violent extremes of fascism and totalitarianism, but that does not exempt us from seeking a solution of the problems which brought fascism and totalitarianism into being. In the state of our civilization today, moral passivity, even in the disguised shape of intellectual indifference, is no state of virtue. There were millions of good respectable citizens in Germany, and we can now see clearly that their inactivity was perhaps the greatest crime of all—certainly the decisive factor in a fateful situation.

We must not let these too easily found political illustrations of Read's point distract from the accuracy of his analysis. This *waiting* for social consequences to prove the presence of evil, the supposition that intellectual concepts of goodness are somehow enough, and that we can do without those "natural habits of goodness" which were the positive ends of education for the classical Greeks—these are the causes not only of familiar political disasters but also a Pandora's box of other afflictions as well. Positive virtue is active virtue, Read maintains. Its development becomes possible by use of the Platonic model of education of the young through the arts:

> The essential means are, as Plato argued, aesthetic activities: the sense of goodness and nobility is inculcated, ingrained in the living substance of the human being, by the practice of the concrete arts, which alone have that basis of harmony and rhythm found in nature. Such harmonious forms and relationships are qualities or essences which we can disengage from the material universe. . . . creative freedom within that world of harmony—that is an individual achievement, the product of long exercise in aesthetic disciplines—poetry, dance, drama, the plastic arts. These disciplines should begin at the earliest age—in the nursery and the kindergarten—and should be the basic disciplines underlying every sphere of knowledge and education.
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> This, which is the substance of Plato's educational theory, was not advocated by Plato with the idea of creating more poets and artists—as we know, he did not believe in professional poets and banished them from his ideal republic. His aim was to create integrated personalities, human beings capable of good living—good citizens of the republic.

The arts are not the whole story, but so conceived they would go a long way in nurturing habits which support positive virtue. Equally necessary are the inquiries outlined by Ruth Nanda Anshen, editor of the Credo series. In her introduction to this book she speaks of the background intention of the series:

> It is our endeavor to show that man has reached a turning point in consciousness, that his relationship with his creative self demands a clarification that can widen and deepen his understanding of the nature of reality. . . . These volumes endeavor to indicate that it is impossible to know what constitutes a good society unless we know what defines a good individual. . . . It is this increasing intellectual climate that is calling into birth once more the compelling Socratic questions "What is the purpose of life, the meaning of work?" "What is man?" Plato himself could give us

> only an indirect answer: "Man is declared to be that creature who is constantly in search of himself, a creature who at every moment of his existence must examine and scrutinize the conditions of his existence. He is a being in search of meaning."

The arts are the secular mode for the search and embodiment of meaning, and education of the sort Herbert Read advocates would begin the formation of character through active participation and individual achievement, forming in the young the matrix for natural habits of goodness and inviting the spontaneous compulsion to do good. Meanwhile, it seems obvious that an adult generation which had recognized the need for this education would develop its own richness of life and would no longer present to the young a front of moralizing hypocrisy—a pretense that underlines instead of hiding the aimlessness and futility which are the hallmarks of the present civilization.

Herbert Read gave lifelong study to the role of art in education. He saw and described what happened to children to whom free development in the arts had been denied. He came to grasp the essential role of ideal archetypes in human life, and verified in educational experience the part they must play in "the discipline of conscience." "That," he wrote at the end of this book, "is the dogma first enunciated by Plato on which we must base a philosophy of education through art."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
SCHOOLS AND PROBLEMS

STARTING schools leads to the discovery of unanticipated problems, and these sometimes grow in direct proportion to the amount of attention given to them. A school, for example, has little resemblance to any other human enterprise. Its goals lie in the flowering of certain human qualities, and there is really no formula for their "production"—no more than there can be a formula for a creative act or a work of art. A good school must somehow develop a mysterious sense of self-confidence in what it is doing. This is difficult enough to do, but much more difficult to "explain." For this reason some rare human being usually has a strong presence in a really good school. The exceptions are probably due to the presence of several unusual persons.

The Nov. 8 *New Schools Exchange Newsletter* presents a brief extract from a seven-page letter dealing with such questions. The writer is a father of children in a California free school. The complete letter is available to subscribers to the *Exchange.* Following is the extract:

> Free and experimental schools frequently run into a common problem—unless they are guided by a godlike benevolent despot (like A. S. Neill at Summerhill), or a mother-earth goddess figure (like Sylvia Ashton-Warner or Maria Montessori), or a deep and commonly held set of religious or ethical principles (like in the founding of Pacific High School, Palo Alto). The problem? The anxiety of the parents.
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> It seems to me that this anxiety that gets aroused about "What's happening to our kids" is understandable and inevitable. In a public school we turn our children over to the wardens; there is no illusion about the possibility of influence to torture us. To become involved in a school run by a benevolent despot is like intruding in God's own kitchen. But a truly cooperative venture arouses every possible hope about involvement in the growth of our children—and probably every latent frustration about what we think *didn't* happen to us as well.
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> Most of us are involved in this school because we want to be involved in the growth of our children (and ourselves)—and we want a richer and more open, more turned-on environment, more congruent with the freshness and energies of our children. . . .

Probably there would be less of this sort of uncertainty and embarrassment if peoples' homes were a more natural educational environment, with not so many differences between them and a school. This is a common problem. The good and the natural are so remote from ordinary, everyday experience that we get the idea we need some kind of "program" to recapture what is missing in our lives. So we have "sensitivity training" to teach us how to be natural, spontaneous, and free!

Often the best things we see on education are in the pages of the monthly magazine, *Anarchy* (published by Freedom Press, 84a Whitechapel High Street, London, E. 1, single copies 30 cents, seamail annual subscription, $3.50). The September issue (*Anarchy* No. 103) is entirely devoted to education, under the general heading, "The Rights of the Young." A hitherto unpublished paper in this issue, "A School without a Head," by Anthony Weaver, was written in 1946, for the internal purposes of the teachers who were running Burgess Hill, a school started in 1936 as a progressive, coeducational day school. In 1940, five of the staff agreed to take over management of the school as a shared responsibility. The school had been obliged to move, become a boarding school, and then had more than a hundred pupils. It was generally recognized that the headmaster who had been in charge since the beginning was abusing his power, and these five teachers proposed this change, which was accepted by the directors of the school. The following paragraphs are musings after six years of experience under this arrangement:

> It is essential for any school community to state its purpose continually and that its members should understand it. Otherwise the adults may imagine that they have assembled for the sake of their own personal relationships, or that they must live under one roof, or subsist in poverty, whereas the essence of community is shared responsibility, and these other characteristics, though common, are incidental. That a school is run without a head is of far-reaching significance, but discussion of it may throw too great an emphasis on the role of adults in a school.

> To wield power jointly, we thought, would compel cooperation between us, not merely lip service to the ideal of mutual aid. How were we to get people really to understand each other's point of view, and themselves to recognise their own limitations by not pressing their opinions on matters over which they were not competent. A person should be respected, we thought, for the value of his opinions, not on account of a position of authority he held. To put a person in such a position over others suggested (1) that by argument alone he would be expected to fail to persuade them of his point of view, and (2) that those under him could not be entrusted with responsibility; whereas under a joint system all would be free, and indeed encouraged, to make their maximum contribution to the welfare of the school.

This old argument about freedom versus order will never, it seems, be settled in terms of a nice, logical balance between opposing values, but is much more likely to be mopped up, covered over, and forgotten through the strength of a common inspiration Contradictions which cannot be eliminated probably need some living with, anyhow. Something like this seems implicit in Mr. Weaver's closing words. Meanwhile, these are some of his asides along the way:

> We tried to take a "clinical" attitude to the behaviour not only of the children, but of ourselves towards the children, and towards each other. We attempted to recognise the emotional and temperamental background of our strongly held convictions, and to treat the behaviour of the children primarily as an expression of their emotional life. This called for patience and tolerance on the part of the staff and a genuine affection for the individual child—though it would be unconvincing to pretend that we always succeeded in maintaining this attitude.
>
> If it is a mistake to accustom children to the idea of one person holding final authority, it is as much a part of their education that they should be given opportunities for coping with disorder. The perfectly efficient school does not do this. On the other hand, they need to be given responsibility appropriate to their age and temperament—for instance, if *trained* in first aid, really to be left to deal with someone who comes in with blood pouring from a gash in his leg.

As for shortcomings:

> The greatest defect, in my opinion, in the internal working of the system as it has been, was that full members (the teachers who participated in management) were self-appointing. However harmonious were the relationships between them, the group inevitably took on the characteristic of a clique in eyes of the others. . . . A better plan would have been for the staff either to have elected a small executive or simply to have appointed certain individuals with absolute responsibility for specific functions—such as housekeeping, building plans, or charge of a particular group of children. . . .
>
> Although the Directors were legally liable for the school, and the staff as a group responsible to them, in practice when a Director retired the staff was asked to suggest a new one for nomination, and so long as the staff were united they formed a kind of trade union, and could bend the Directors to their will. One vexed question was over salaries which the Directors wanted to raise, but the staff kept down for the sake of low fees.

Among the advantages:

> That the staff were directly engaged in running and building up the school gave them a devotion to their work which produced such feats as painting a staircase throughout one night, and living for years on a salary equivalent to that of an agricultural labourer. Besides this, difficult decisions taken jointly would tend to be seen through to their conclusion months later, whereas under another system they would be burked if not actually sabotaged.

Finally:

> We have seen that a joint enterprise depends for its success, more than other systems, upon there being a nucleus of people whose friendship and identity of practice, even more than their theory, has been tested by time. Given this, newcomers can be absorbed, and a proportion carried who do not fully share the aims. But where there is a rapid expansion in total numbers, it is a mistake to imagine that the nucleus, which can only grow with time, has expanded, too.
>
> One lesson to be learned by others interested in our experiment is that it is not sufficient for the staff to cooperate in their work, but that they must also become the legal owners of the enterprise. Mere cooperation is no guarantee against futility, and that people may establish excellent relationships between themselves does not necessarily show that their pursuits are valuable.

FRONTIERS

Days of Our Years

How many people took part in the November anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C.? The main event, which came on Saturday, Nov. 15, was a mass march ending in a rally on the Mall running east and west from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial. It brought to Washington somewhere between a quarter of a million (minimum) and a million (maximum) protesting citizens. Observers with experience in estimating crowds agree that half a million people participated, and that it was on the whole a well-conducted and peaceful demonstration. San Francisco was the scene of a similar march and assemblage in which 300,000 took part.

The New Mobilization Committee plans more monthly, peaceful, but growing demonstrations—each month adding a day to the protest activities. The first Moratorium was on Oct. 15, which gained wide support. The second, held on Nov. 14 and 15, began on the evening of Nov. 13. A frontpage story in the *National Observer* (Nov. 17) gives this description:

> The first event, from 6 p.m. Thursday until 7:30 a.m. Saturday, was "the March Against Death," in which each participant carried a placard bearing the name of a U.S. serviceman killed in Vietnam, one for each U.S. death there, about 40,000 in all. The March Against Death was a four-and-a-half-mile pilgrimage from Arlington Park past the White House to the Capitol, where each placard was deposited in one of twelve wooden coffins.

The silent marchers carried lighted candles and had the placards hanging from their necks. The *Observer* story continues:

> The paraders moved down Constitution and up 17th Street to the White House, broken into bunches as they stopped for traffic lights. Passing the White House along Pennsylvania Avenue each marcher was instructed to shout the name on his placard. . . . Down Pennsylvania Avenue and to the west steps of the Capitol and to the black-draped bier containing the coffins at the base of the statue of U.S. Grant, and the march was over. Silently, like pilgrims, the row of candles approached in almost total silence, broken only by an occasional whisper and the scuffling of shoes on concrete. . . .

Another article in the *National Observer*—apparently to report the "other side"—collected reports of some counter-demonstrations, possibly in evidence of the support of the "great, silent majority" which the President has claimed. This story has, however, a curiously unexciting conclusion:

> But, somehow, despite the thousands and thousands who marched and demonstrated from Washington, D.C., to Redlands, Calif., it was clear last week that the majority of the average Americans stayed at home.

Other indicators are "somehow" more impressive. There is for example the letter by Michael Ferber in the Sept. 26 issue of *Now*, the Unitarian-Universalist magazine. Ferber and Dr. Spock, it will be remembered, were acquitted last July "of the charge of conspiracy to urge others to break the draft law." In this letter, Ferber said:

> I am concerned that we do not forget the desperate struggles for self-determination, adequate welfare, or the right not to kill in an immoral war. These struggles . . . are the raw edge of resistance and renewal in America.
>
> Let me speak here only of the anti-war movement and its systematic repression by federal, state, and local government. Dr. Spock and I had become symbols of the older and younger branches of the draft-resistance movement, and now that we have been acquitted it will appear to millions of Americans that justice has been done. In the symbolic repression case the court proved lenient; many will conclude that those whom we symbolized were also treated leniently. The truth, unfortunately, is the opposite. Only where there is massive public outcry—as in the case of the Presidio 27—is leniency likely, but most cases go unnoticed. So Harvey and Daniels rot in Portsmouth under six-year and ten-year sentences ignored until recently by those who should be at their side.
>
> Let me cite some figures, and as you read them, try to overcome their mute and faceless abstractness and imagine each cipher as a human life, no less important than your own.

—As of May 1969 there are over 60,000 draft-age American men in exile in Canada. The number who went in 1968 was double that of 1963.

—There are now about 2000 American military personnel living in Canada, and over 275 deserters living in Sweden.

—The number of men in Army prisons is now over 10,000. In 1964 it was 3100. Thousands of these are for going AWOL.

—In 1968 well over 1200 servicemen applied for conscientious objector status. This year the rate is double that of last year. Of those requesting discharge, however, only 25% were granted it.

—During the fiscal year 1968 the average sentence for draft refusal rose to 37.3 months, compared to 32.1 months the year before, and 26.4 months the year before that. Of those sentenced 104 received the maximum (5 years), twice the number last year.

—On March 20 of this year 8 men were indicted for conspiracy to incite a riot at the Democratic National Convention, a riot that the Walker Commission said "can only be called a police riot." Those 8 men are national leaders of the anti-war, student, and black movements.

News-briefs in *Peacemaker* for Oct. 18 include the following:

Compared with other federal spending during the same period (fiscal 1960-1970) the war has cost ten times more than Medicare and medical assistance, fourteen times more than support for all levels of education, and 50 times more than was spent for housing and community development. . . .

While draft calls have tripled in the past four years, the number of those charged with criminal violation of the draft has increased about ten times. In 1965, when inductions began a sharp increase, there were 341 draft defendants. In 1966 the draft went above 300,000 and the defendants increased to 516. In 1967 there were 996 defendants and 1192 in 1968.

All of which brings us to the perhaps prophetically titled War Resisters League Calendar for 1970—*Days of Civil Disobedience*, now on sale for $2.00 a single copy, $5.00 for three copies, $10.00 for six. The WRL address is 339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012.

The Calendar is a fairly thick book with space for writing in appointments on each day of the year. The text of Thoreau's essay, "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience," is spread throughout the pages, which are filled up with photographs showing recent instances of civil disobedience in the United States. Scene after scene recalls to mind some memorable moment in the activist phase of the peace movement. The sojourners of the first Freedom Ride, back in 1947, are shown in a group before they set out. A. J. Muste is often seen. There is a picture of Lawrence Scott being arrested after the AEC test-site "trespass" at Mercury Flats, Nevada, in August of 1957. Dr. Benjamin Spock is shown standing in front of the Pentagon in 1967, just before his arrest. A camera caught the manhandling of Bill Henry by police for demonstrating against a Polaris submarine in 1962, at Groton, Conn. The first sit-in lunch-counter group in Greensboro, North Carolina (1960) is illustrated. Cesar Chavez is shown ending his 23-day fast in 1967. The segregationists who beat Jim Peck almost to death in the Birmingham lunchroom in 1961 are seen at their work. A. J. Muste, at 74, is shown climbing over the fence of a missile base near Omaha, Neb., in 1959, to nine days in jail; and again, in December, 1966—two months before his death—he appears in a paddy wagon after a sit-in at a New York induction center. Dick Gregory looks a bit worn after fasting for twenty-two days. Best of all, perhaps, is a striking photo of Dave Dellinger, Staughton Lynd, and Bob Parris, splattered with red paint by unsympathizers, singing as they march on Congress on Nagasaki Day in 1965. These are but a fraction of the illustrations in the Calendar. Thoreau's Essay is good, too!