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IMPORTANT TO THE REPUBLIC OF MAN

IT is a curious and paradoxical fact that a man often seems right on the edge of wisdom when he explains that he is no longer impressed by the conventional means of arriving at certainties. He may use—indeed he must use—the fabric of the assumptions of his time, but he doesn't lose himself in it. He preserves some kind of distance. Most of us are ambivalent toward such matters. We want our children to have "an education," and this means, almost always, acquiring a respectable inventory of the prevailing assumptions, yet we find that the best men do not take these assumptions very seriously. They have found deeper foundations, and may spend their entire lives trying to explain what they are.

In an age of comparative peacefulness and moderation, this contradiction does not disturb us very much. Favorable conditions support a general confidence in received opinions, and skeptics are treated with good nature and even some respectful attention. The solid stability of civilization can surely afford the presence of such men, and—who knows?—we may get some leads to further progress from their stubborn questions. But we don't send our children to school to these people, who live rather precarious lives. That's not for *our* children. One goes to school to learn how to fit into the world, not to find it wanting.

Yet these well-considered adjustment policies may endorse systematic blindness toward what is going on in the world. And when the character of the age changes—when the general confidence gives way to justifiable apprehension, and when fearful people begin to long for "stability" which has no relation to common consent—there is a sense in which the wise warnings of skeptics are replaced by quite objective oppressions. Common opinion is now challenged, not by a friendly Socrates, but by events. A new generation of " questioners" now dominates the market place, but these people address themselves to fear, or to other raw emotions. They by no means seem on the edge of wisdom.

The intelligent members of the coming generation obviously feel themselves surrounded by vast structures of irrelevance—artifacts of various acquisitive activities pursued in the name of prosperity and progress and well-being. The equations which justified these structures now involve insupportable assumptions. How can we be sure of this? Well, a great many of the children are leaving home. Salvage is the fastest growing area in science. Biology is becoming a utopian discipline (ecology). The air is as polluted with senseless slogans as with hydrocarbons. One need not go on. Compiling lists of the defeats of civilization, the breakdown of dreams, the failure of hopes, is already a well-paying business. And "futures" as a topic for academic and technological speculations is the coming thing.

Among the twenty-two year accumulation of books in the MANAS office, two have titles with the word "future" in them—one, a slim volume of anarchist essays by Alex Comfort, *The Pattern of the Future,* with good sense in it. The other is Arthur E. Morgan's *The Community of the Future,* containing still more good sense. Especially pertinent are some things said by Dr. Morgan in his Introduction:

> A person reading this book will easily observe some of its limitations. It is not the work of a scholar. There are few citations or quotations, and most of those few are from outside the field of sociological literature. There is no over-all orderly treatment of the subject. Rather there are comments on various matters relating to community. If there is continuity it is of spirit and attitude, rather than of the treatment of subject matter. This is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. When a person, approaching his eightieth year, while deterred by incessant interruptions is trying to make a record of some of his

> thoughts, time steps on his heels and bids him not delay, or be too much concerned with orderly presentation. This is all the more the case when orderly presentation never was a strong point.
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> Nor is there an orderly setting forth of data, reasoning and conclusion. That fact does not trouble me much. Quite generally the appearance of orderly development is misleading. What is commonly presented in serious writing is a series of intuitions tied together by a seeming thread of logic. Sometimes we should get more out of such expressions if the seeming logic were omitted, and if the substance were presented for what it is—an assemblage of somewhat related ideas. Sometimes, as in the case of Ralph Waldo Emerson, this process goes so far that what results is little more than a series of aphorisms, not much more closely tied together than those in the Biblical book of Proverbs, or in Shakespeare's plays.

What would happen if we took this account of the value in serious writing literally? If, that is, we let the "seeming logic" go and concentrated on the timeless intuitions? Well, one thing that would happen would be a vast dissipation of "authority." We would be on our own. Some people claim to be doing this, of course, but often they seem to find it necessary to grow long beards or to attract attention by means other than their wisdom, in order to think for themselves, and this, after all, makes another convention out of the undertaking—the convention of deviation. This, too, is a dispensable "seeming logic." If there is anything to be learned from the debacles of the present, it is that wisdom wears no badges.

Suppose we transposed the priorities in education and made someone like Emerson the main course, and gave the "seeming logic" only secondary attention? Suppose we set out to be deliberately "unprogressive"? Suppose we told the young that the only important thing that people can learn from one another is ways of looking at the questions that must be asked, and that the best answers are never answers at all, but wisely suggestive rephrasings of recurring questions?

This might be the most restorative thing we could do for civilization. Yet, curiously enough, Emerson had his certainties. Usually, progress comes from outgrowing old certainties, but somehow we don't need to outgrow his. He read a lot but he didn't cite any authorities. What he knew just bubbled forth. Now and then he wondered if he ought to sound *so sure*! Yet the character of his certainties may reveal their justification. Harold Goddard speaks of this in *Studies in New England Transcendentalism* (Hillary House, 1960):

> Matthew Arnold called him, the "most modest and least self-flattering of men." "Do not charge me with egotism and presumption," writes Emerson in his Journal (1837), "I see with awe the attributes of the farmers and villagers whom you despise." He was the last man, too, to try to force his opinion on another. Yet he was the author of the essay on *Self Reliance,* the preacher of individualism, and often wrote in a style of Delphic finality, which, impersonal as it was, if we did not know the man outside his essays, might lead us to think that he was sublimely self-sufficient. "For no man," he once declared, "can write anything who does not think that what he writes is for the time the history of the world." It would be idle to contend that he who could enter the following in his Journal did not feel the importance—many will be inclined to say the exaggerated importance—of his mission to the world: "I have . . . slaves to free, . . . imprisoned spirits, imprisoned thoughts . . . which, important to the republic of man, have no watchman or lover or defender but I. . . ."

And more generally, of Emerson and the Transcendentalists:

> In all the transcendentalists, then, in varying degrees and kinds, we may observe a common transcendental pride, somewhat of the function of the prophet. All had had what they deemed a spiritual revelation, and all felt called upon to preach it to the world. Alcott and Emerson wrote very frequently in the omniscient style; Margaret Fuller, and even Parker and Channing, were not free from a positiveness of utterance sometimes approaching it; while Alcott and Miss Fuller employed it largely in their "conversations." They all showed, in widely different ways, somewhat of the feeling that through them an Absolute Truth greater than themselves was speaking. Now such a feeling when exposed to the

> world—even though unaccompanied, as here, with any attempt to force beliefs on others—was simply bound to call forth ridicule and bitter opposition.

Goddard speaks elsewhere of Emerson's belief—expressed in the *American Scholar*—that a man who relies wholly on his inner sense, his philosophic instincts and conscience, will be able to find his way. Goddard comments:

> But when Emerson goes further, and makes this inner sense not merely a guide to conduct, but a diviner of spiritual truth, then the great majority will not follow, then they say to him, "Your words are jargon to us; you proclaim a thing that does not enter our experience." And who can doubt that the great majority, so speaking, tell the truth? The question then for us is not so much, How far is Emerson's position true? as it is rather, How far by resting his beliefs upon an experience that most of mankind does not share, does he show himself thereby impractical? We know what his own answer would have been.

Perhaps we should simply be grateful to Emerson for speaking out. He made in effect a defense in our own time of the oracular utterance, the simple declarative form. Is this how scriptures once were made? If so, how shall we know which ones or whom to trust? How, indeed! The men on the edge of wisdom have had something to say about this.

The diminution of the importance of facts, and of the seeming logics based on them, although frightening, may have its advantage in opening a way to long neglected ways of thinking. After all, it was a reading of the logic of certain facts which made the idea of man as "a diviner of spiritual truth" seem a quaint historical memory, an ancient conceit.

What then shall we learn from Emerson? Ultimately, we may learn little more from him than that he was not struck down by the fear of being left without external authority. That a man can gain some sufficiencies of knowledge about the world by direct, personal inspection. The desperation so widely felt today is mainly in the sense men have of being failed by their facts, by their authorities, and their doctrine of progress. A man like Emerson, then, gives instruction in how to be relieved of this weight of collapse m faith.

What if every man ought to be his own "diviner of spiritual truth," and that his present frustration is the pain of abdication? There are many things we do not know how to do until we try. A man is born, he lives and dies. Technology has no remedy for the accompanying existential pain. Not even its distractions can be made to work, any longer. The seeming logics of external manipulation are increasingly inhuman and pitiless in their consequences. They merely exaggerate what they invariably leave out.

We seem now to be entering an epoch when extravagant new "revelations" are being poured at us with a nervous vigour more suggestive of anxiety and flight than a longing to know. It is as though the world is now presented with a Hobson's choice between the shrill truths of desperation and the pedestrian dullness of inapplicable and unmanageable facts. One thing is clear: conventional education has left us totally unprepared for such events. Our planners have counted without the host of an outraged and groaning planet and a coming generation whose ear is more tuned to cries of pain than to invitations to become well-fed.

Yet there are two classes of men who seem well aware that the conventionally established "facts" and the related "seeming logics" bear less and less actual relation to the lives of great masses of men. Those who are on the edge of wisdom see this, and the seekers after power see it, too. The manipulators of power use "facts" merely for access to the springs of behavior. The manipulator is a utilitarian from the word go. Knowledge is *only* a means to power. Both sorts of men understand something of human nature, but the men on the edge of wisdom love the truth, while for seekers after power the idea of truth has no meaning.

The substitution of history for philosophy—which is really what has happened to us, since we ignore or punish our wise men, and accept only

from the pressure of events what philosophers tried to point out from their insight and their reflection—is a dangerous and costly way of getting,an education. When events are the only teachers, it becomes extremely difficult to extricate the principles of what is learned from the prejudicial indoctrinations of a hostile environment.

Take for example the growing popular disdain for facts. It has intelligible meaning only for men who have become personal knowers of the order of reality represented by facts—men who therefore know the limit of their meaning. For anyone else, contempt for facts is a lunatic faith. But so also is the worship of facts. Both views have grown out of collectivist formulations of what all men ought to believe in order to be saved. Both represent reductions of half-truths to formulas, and both, as belief-systems, breakdown in historical experience.

Fundamentally, Emerson's message was a cry to men to find release from the confinements of their belief-systems. He offered, not a competing belief-system, but a conception of man as a half-god, a self-evolving half-god. He would not dispense doctrines to support this view of human beings, although certain basic conceptions of reality, process, and fulfillment are implied throughout Emerson's writings. Perhaps we can say that there are fact-truths and there are growth-truths; that the fact-truths can be communicated, but the growth-truths can only be intimated: their full meaning must be forged by each man for himself.

Quite possibly, the people in whom this view of man has become paramount are those who give us the feeling that they are on the edge of wisdom. Each one of them has his own language, the terms of his own realization, but they all convey a sense of there being compassionate, redeeming presences in the world. There could well be a more deliberate listening to such men, and a moratorium on arguments about the gods men worship and the techniques they rely on. We could do with more simple demonstrations of the excellences in human beings, independent of faiths and ideologies, and other waning belief-system distractions.

For then there will be those who ask: Where do men get the courage to do this? How is it that there are some *admirable* people in the world? What do such men think about the universe and themselves?

The idea has no novelty at all. It may have a minor freshness from being long forgotten, but it is practically the only missionary conception worth reviving or keeping alive. Pythagoras started his school at Krotona with this in mind. Jesus thought in these terms. Buddhists wandered to Europe and the Near East with their doctrine of the self-reliant decencies of which human beings are capable.

One day it will again be natural to discuss the possibility of the immortality of the soul without either shyness or embarrassment. Emerson's Law of Compensation may rise from the desuetude of nineteenth-century rhetoric to become a major issue in philosophy. The puzzles of good and evil in human life will obtain consideration without waiting for the compulsions of demonic events in history, such as the twentieth century has afforded in such plentiful supply. Skepticism will resume its proper role of preventing any great solution from being obtained too cheaply, at the cost of common sense.

Who are we, after all, to ridicule a man who spoke as Emerson did? Whose mark upon history is most likely to be cherished and remembered—his or ours?

REVIEW
A GANDHI ANTHOLOGY

A REVISED and enlarged edition of *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi,* compiled by R. K. Prabhu and U. R. Rao, first published in 1945 by the Navajivan Publishing House of Ahmedabad, India 14, is now available. This is a valuable anthology of Gandhi's thought, with extracts from his writings arranged according to topics of general interest. There is no better way to become familiar with Gandhi's views and the thought behind them than the reading of a well-edited anthology, which this one is. There is a good index, enabling the reader to look up wide coverage of particular subjects. The Indian price of this book (589 pages) is twelve rupees (readers who write to India for the book might send $2.00 to cover price and mailing costs) .

Today, the importance of Gandhi lies not only in the conception of nonviolence, but in its general foundations in social philosophy. As the contradictions of modern civilization come to maturity, they result in increasing violence. Gandhi saw this. His commitment to the ancient doctrine of *ahimsa* or harmlessness was not in the least an avoidance of hard-headed social thinking, but a form of radical consistency with it. He saw in social justice the key to a nonviolent society. In the section of this book devoted to "Trusteeship," he said:

> A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility, so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor, labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land.
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> A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good.
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> I adhere to my doctrine of trusteeship in spite of the ridicule that has been poured on it. It is true that it is difficult to reach. So is non-violence.

Gandhi believed that the salvation of his country lay in the renewal of life in the villages. He is not alone in this general view. Many men who have studied the course of civilization have found that the small community, as Arthur Morgan once put it, is "the seed-bed of society." Cities seem to maintain their health only if they regularly receive new blood from outlying rural areas. This historic fact will not be changed by desperate rhetoric. What small community life does for people may not be wholly understood. That many small communities in the United States are now culturally sterile and narrow-minded places is no argument against this reality, but evidence of the need for far-reaching reform. Gandhi's view was this:

> You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilization, but it can be built on self-contained villages. . . . Rural economy as I have conceived it eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have, therefore, to be rural-minded before you can be non-violent, and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning wheel.
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> We have to make a choice between India of the villages that are as ancient as herself and India of the cities which are a creation of foreign domination. Today the cities dominate and drain the villages so that they are crumbling to ruin. . . .
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> Today the villages are dung heaps. Tomorrow they will be like tiny gardens of Eden where dwell highly intelligent folk whom no one can deceive or exploit. The reconstruction of the villages along these lines should begin right now. . . . The reconstruction of the villages should not be organized on a temporary but permanent basis.
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> The villagers should develop such a high degree of skill that articles prepared by them should command a ready market outside. When our villages are fully developed, there will be no dearth in them of men with a high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village poets, village artists, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short, there will be nothing in life worth having which will not be had in the villages.
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> Villages have suffered from neglect by those who have had the benefit of education. They have chosen the city life. The village movement is an

attempt to establish healthy contact with the villages by inducing those who are fired with the spirit of service to settle in them and find self-expression in the service of villagers. . . .

We must have an unquenchable faith in our mission. We must be patient with the people. We are ourselves novices in village work. We have to deal with a chronic disease. Patience and perseverance, if we have them, overcome mountains of difficulties. We are like nurses who may not leave their patients because they are reported to have an incurable disease.

American and perhaps some European readers are likely to regard such urgings to village reform with a certain restlessness, since it may seem apparent to them that for modern Western societies, the rural or small community environment, whatever its intrinsic virtues, has become irrevocably a thing of the past. Yet this may be only superficially so. Even a large city has its "village" aspects, and some students of urban decline—Jane Jacobs and Charles Abrams, to name two—seem acutely aware of their reality. There are population segments in large urban areas which need precisely the kind of redevelopment that Gandhi is talking about for the villagers of India. A village is a small society united by a community of interests. For the most part, poor city dwellers live as impotent victims of forces over which they have no control. Gandhi said:

I regard the growth of cities as an evil thing, unfortunate for mankind and the world, unfortunate for England and certainly unfortunate for India. The British have exploited India through its cities. The latter have exploited the villages The blood of the villagers is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. I want the blood that is today inflating the arteries of the cities to run once again in the blood vessels of the villages.

In the great cities of the world, the exploited poor are still "villagers,') that is, they are still victims of the urban process, but they live more directly under its control. The first necessity for change or reform is to recognize the facts as outlined by Gandhi, and then to see how his principles might be applied, even, in some cases, to the cities of the Western world. Works in print by writers such as E. F. Schumacher and Griscom Morgan describe the processes by which rural areas become impoverished wastelands—processes which need now to be reversed. And Schumacher's program for this reversal is basically the same as Gandhi's, except that he puts it into language Westerners easily understand. A paper by Schumacher in *Administration Overseas* (April, 1969) stresses the need in nearly all rural areas of the world for the introduction of low-cost, intermediate technologies as the framework for the self-development of the people. For depressed populations, no other development can have lasting meaning. Schumacher says: "What do we mean by real development? We mean the creation of a kind of social infrastructure of education, organization and discipline which enables people to work themselves out of poverty." In "A Strategy for Development, " published (Nov. 12) in MANAS, Schumacher writes:

Local initiatives for self-help and self-improvement are the most precious asset of all, because without them no organic growth can take place. A population without such initiatives is almost impossible to help. It follows that all such initiatives, wherever they arise, deserve the most careful, sympathetic nurturing and the maximum of outside support.

These are the elementary considerations and Mr. Schumacher spells them out, letter by letter, in various papers. Some day, one hopes, he will put these papers together in an elementary text for use all over the world. Gandhi's extraordinary emphasis on the spinning wheel grew out of this sort of first-hand knowledge of the necessities of village renewal.

The same basic problems exist in the cities of the United States, of South America, and no doubt elsewhere. "Village" problems lose their identity in the vast urban aggregations of people, but they remain real. In Los Angeles, for example, a single housing project provides homes for 3,000 people. The environmental cards are

psychologically stacked against these people. Many are without work, and if the wages of a family bread-winner are raised, he immediately is charged a higher rent! This may make sense from a welfare bookkeeping point of view, but is certainly disastrous for the development of self-reliance and independence on the part of the people who live in that housing project. The entire concept of "welfare" ought to be reviewed from a Gandhian stance. It is now quite plain, for example, that the continuation of present policies can do nothing but adjust urban economics to the support of a large population of unemployables. To see why this is so, a reading of Julius Horwitz' book, *The Inhabitants* (World Publishing Co. and Signet), is quite sufficient.

What is responsible for these terrible mistakes and their accumulating effects, over the years? The answer is loyalty to economic theory which endows economic values with autonomy, to the exclusion of human values.

A social worker in the Los Angeles area has for several months been trying to interest some of the "leaders" among the families in this housing project in starting a community-owned laundromat to serve all the tenants. He has had practically no success. The idea of self-help has become completely alien to them. They voice endless complaints about how they are victimized, nearly all of them justified, but are wholly without confidence that they can do anything about it. Here, as Gandhi says of the villages, those who want to help must say to themselves: "We are like nurses who may not leave their patients because they are reported to have an incurable disease."

We return to the subject of trusteeship, on which Gandhi wrote:

> My theory of "trusteeship" is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. That possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove its falsity; it proves the weakness of the wealthy. No other theory is compatible with non-violence. In the non-violent method the wrong-doer compasses his own end, if he does not undo his wrong. For, either through nonviolent non-cooperation he is made to see the error, or he finds himself completely isolated.
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> Those who own money now, are asked to behave like trustees holding their riches on behalf of the poor. You may say that trusteeship is a legal fiction. But if people meditate over it constantly and try to act up to it, then life on earth would be governed far more by love than it is at present. Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a state of equality on earth than by any other method.

It ought to have been made clear by now that destruction of existing institutions leaves a vacuum that becomes either a state of anarchy or is filled by ruthless power of centralized origin which may put off the development of normal social infrastructure for generations. What is wanted is the redirection of institutional ends, not destruction. How to accomplish this is the great question. Gandhi proposed that it could be done by non-violent means, and in no other way. In the meantime, contemptuous neglect of Gandhi's teaching on this subject may only be putting off the recognition that must come, sooner or later, and at great cost in human suffering from the delay.

COMMENTARY
"THE CULTURE OF POVERTY`'

THE transfer of morality from religion to politics by the eighteenth-century revolution, which was followed by the abolition of "morality" itself by the scientific revolution—in, that is, all thinking which sought to be scientific—has had a far-reaching effect on the practice of the social sciences. Especially today, when university students are showing a marked preference for the social over the physical sciences, is this effect manifest in the repressed moral emotion which seems very near the surface in a great many sociological studies and reports.

The contents of the November *Trans-action,* a semi-popular journal of sociology, quietly seethe with underlying moral feeling, by no means concealed by the supposedly value-free language of research. Article after article proves how conventional institutions dwarf and typical social processes defeat the aims of a humane society. Perhaps most of the important papers in a year's issues of *Trans-action* could be accurately classified under the general heading: documentation of social failure. An implicit goal in many of these discussions is the attempt to fix blame, which is natural enough, and at the same time to point to some finite *administrative* solution. Those who don't attempt this are open to charges of pussy-footing or making excuses. What's the good of having social science if it doesn't point to action? And what sense is there in talk of "action" unless you are ready to use the political tools which get things done?

A book discussed in this issue is Charles A. Valentine's *Culture and Poverty,* just published by the University of Chicago Press. The central question, according to the reviewer, is whether poverty is the sole cause of the "culture of poverty," or if the patterns of behavior typically found among the very poor, when once established, become an independent cause. The reviewer, Chaim Waxman, dissents from the author's view that "it is highly doubtful that any culture of poverty is the main force perpetuating socioeconomic inequality." Mr. Waxman thinks that people obliged to live in straitened circumstances tend to take on habits of ineffectuality and indifference which then become "capable of perpetuating themselves *despite changes in situational circumstances."* "More Money Now!" would not, he says, solve the whole problem.

Surely the only intelligent approach or solution lies in the kind of action Gandhi advocated in behalf of the Indian villagers. The question whether the environment or the population is at fault becomes *academic* in the presence of activities which lead to the rebirth of self-respect. It is clear enough that large numbers of people in the world live in incredible want, suffer from incredible neglect, and that urban and community decay does reach a stage where impotence *becomes* the rule, making Gandhi say: "Patience and perseverance, if we have them, overcome mountains of difficulties. We are like nurses who may not leave their patients because they are reported to have an incurable disease." Schumacher, confronting exactly the same problems, spoke of the necessity of "the creation of a kind of social infrastructure of education, organization and discipline which enables people to work themselves out of poverty." Instead of sociology as a guide to politics—which messes everything up, anyway—why not a sociology of *growth.;* The least this would do is put an end to a lot of fruitless argument. Why, one wonders, is there never any notice of the work of a man like Schumacher in the pages of *Trans-action?*

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE ART OF SELF-REFERENCE

A READER intrigued by the sort of paradoxes one encounters in the study of mathematics speaks of what he calls the Russell-Frege paradox: "Does the class of all classes which do not contain themselves, contain itself?" He would like to see some discussion of such matters, he says. Well, to consider such matters seriously is considerably beyond our competence - and beyond, we fear, much practical utility for most readers.

Yet it seems likely that all such questions, if thought about sufficiently, could find homely illustrations. One example—which hardly qualifies as "homely"—might be in the question: Is one a number? The best answer, so far as we know, comes down to saying: It is and it isn't. But justifying both views is a fruitful undertaking. Something like pursuing the meaning behind: "The Tao that can be named is not the eternal Tao." A man who has spent a large part of his life musing on such matters observed recently that the role of paradox in thought is to drive the inquirer to an act of self-reference. He has to go back to home base and find another way of thinking, project another scheme of meaning, add another axiom, which, as Godel showed, becomes necessary in science, from time to time. Bronowski, too, calls this "self-reference." The breakdown of closed-system thinking compels a return to the system-maker. He has to do better. Or do something different. *He* didn't break down. Paradox, then, is a sign of the exhaustion-phase of some mode of thinking, which has become confinement instead of tool.

It might be laid down as a rule that all symptoms of failure, all breakdowns of system, call for acts of self-reference. Take for example the educational systems of the day, found to be filled with destructive effects on students. Consider the following by Noel McInnis, who teaches at the two-year Kendall College at Evanston, Ill., and is also director of Kendall's Center for Curriculum Design:

My greatest challenge as a teacher of college freshmen and sophomores is the large number of students I encounter who feel that they are inadequate human beings. My greatest problem is convincing them that they are not. It is not difficult to understand why so many students feel personally inferior and why it is so hard for somebody in my position to convince them otherwise. Very simply put, their previous teachers have contributed greatly to their feelings of personal inadequacy, and they now find it hard to believe a teacher who treats them as competent persons.

It is not at all surprising that college freshmen have feelings of inferiority, since *for twelve years their teachers have been telling them they are inferior! Put* yourself in the college freshman's shoes. For twelve years you have been going to school to be told what is wrong with you. Seldom did your teachers emphasize and build on what you did right, unless you were one of the lucky ones who were right most of the time. And even if you were among the "lucky" ones, you still knew what the teacher would be looking for on every examination you took—your errors.

Whether you were at the bottom of your class or the top *yon most likely were made to feel that you were in the school for the same reason: to overcome your ignorance.* You went to elementary school for six years to overcome your ignorance. This qualified you for two years of junior high to continue overcoming your ignorance. This in turn entitled you to four more years of overcoming your ignorance in high school.

No wonder the college freshman feels incompetent. After spending twelve years in a system which assumes his ignorance and emphasizes his errors, it is quite understandable that he feels incompetent. After twelve years of exposure to teachers who assume that only they know enough to make important contributions in the classroom, it is quite understandable that the college freshman finds it difficult to take the initiative from a teacher who thinks otherwise. By assuming the student's incompetence for twelve years, the educational system goes a long way toward assuring it. College freshmen are generally at a loss to take the initiative for their own learning, largely because they have been robbed of that initiative for twelve years.

College educators need to help students develop the sense of personal competence which will enable them to take the initiative. After twelve years of being told what they do wrong, young people are

desperately in need of knowing that they can do something right. After twelve years of being told to sit and absorb the teacher's intelligence, they now desperately need an opportunity to express those things which make up their own unique intelligences. They need learning and living experiences which nurture a sense of self-worth.

Well, one suspects that good things are happening at Kendall.

Looking at the problem more largely, how do you get *at,* in order to change, a culture which consistently violates what it is supposed to believe in? A culture which claims to be based on respect for the individual, yet indoctrinates the young in feelings of inferiority and incompetence, if not self-hate? Whose political managers hardly conceal their belief in manipulation as the only effective means of dealing with masses of people? Whose science, which started out as a great movement for intellectual emancipation, has become the purveyor of doctrines which uniformly deny ideals any decisive role in historical causation, and which reject the language of "ought" as unreal?

What the mathematicians do when their systems fail is find some new axioms. The failure presses them to self-reference. They *start again.* That, quite plainly, is what Noel McInnis is talking about when he says: "They need learning and living experiences which nurture a sense of self-worth."

Spearheads of reform throughout our culture are seeking effective self-reference. The entire humanistic psychology movement began as an adventure in self-reference. Its best representatives are first of all men declaring themselves for what they are—for what they feel themselves to be. For example, Floyd Matson, author of *The Broken Image,* now president of the American Association for Humanistic Psychology, spoke in his presidential address last August of the continuous threat to psychological liberty of the "failure of nerve," which he characterized as any weakening in "faith in the capacity of the ordinary human being to lead his own life, to go his own way and to grow his own way, to be himself and to know himself and to become more himself." Mr. Matson continued:

This failure of nerve is rampant in the field of education; it is a kind of occupational disease of social work, where the aided person becomes a *client* who is treated as a *patient* who is diagnosed as incurable. And it is a pervasive feature of the landscape of academic psychology and behavioral science, in so many saddening ways that it would take a book (which I have already written) to enumerate them all.

But let me mention just one of the ways in which this failure of nerve manifests in the study of man. The old reactionary doctrine of Original Sin, of innate depravity, has lately been enjoying a very popular and large-scale revival. It takes the form of the hypothesis of aggression as a fixed institutional endowment of man—a genetic taint in the blood, as it were, a dark stain on the double helix of each of us. The alleged discovery or rediscovery of this killer-instinct is being hailed in the book clubs and popular journals as if it were the ultimate benediction, the final good news of man's redemption. How are we to account for the popularity of this darkly pessimistic thesis? How account for the best-seller status of Lorenz's *On Aggression,* Ardrey's *Territorial Imperative* and *African Genesis,* and Desmond Morris's *Naked Ape?*

I believe the answer is clear: mass failure of nerve. Nothing could be better calculated to get us off the uncomfortable hook of personal responsibility, of self-control and self-determination, than this doctrine of our innate aggressive propensities. *That's* why we fight; that's why we hate; that's why we cannot love one another or ourselves. People are no damn good—and there's an end of it.

It is Mr. Matson's idea that humanistic psychologists should throw their weight against such dehumanizing dogmas, and against all other demoralizing doctrines "that would move us further down the road to the Brave New World and the technocratic society—that social laboratory of the behaviorist's dreams and the humanist's nightmares."

There is certainly a lot to be done.

FRONTIERS

Carlyle as Futurologist

THERE is a curious contrast between the high anticipations of the more optimistic of the futurologists—that rapidly growing field of operations for systems approach specialists—and certain psychological realities in the population at large. The methods commonly used for prediction have grown out of activities based on quite limited objectives, with correspondingly narrow assumptions. As John McHale observes in the last chapter of his recent book, *The Future of the Future* (Braziller):

> Our present range of societal institutions for monitoring present, and anticipating future changes are markedly inadequate in [respect to] how man should order his life, but are concerned with putting the means for order at his disposal. . . . Their kinds of professional expertise in economic projection, technological forecasting, weaponry analysis, and similar prognostications have proved to be of little service in monitoring and evaluating the kinds of changes in symbolic trends and social movements that do not come within the range of their traditional perspectives.
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> Moreover, as specialist disciplines operating within a fixed establishment format, they tend to proceed on certain static assumptions about the continuing centrality and role of various social institutions—the economy, the polity, the military—regarded as relatively unchanging in their function.

Such prophets also pay little attention to the people out there and the probable state of their feelings in perhaps the very near future. While, on the one hand, Emmanuel Mesthene, director of the Harvard Program in Science and Technology, feels able to say, "We have now, or know how to acquire, the technical capacity to do very nearly anything we want," this broad claim must be compared with the counter-evaluations of acute humanist critics, such as for example, Victor Ferkiss, who observes: "what emerges as the pattern of the future is not technological man so much as neoprimitive man trapped in a technological environment." Robert Jay Lifton's comment in October *Trans-action* may be quoted on some of the human feelings involved:

> The Vietnam War, in its general social impact, has entered a new phase. It has become both boring and unmentionable. It is boring because practically everything that can be said about it has been said many times over. It is unmentionable because, at least from the standpoint of the young it is still insoluble.
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> The students I talk to no longer seem inclined to explore the larger ethical or historical issues of the war. They are absorbed in the question of how they can pursue their own lives without being consumed or destroyed, whether physically or psychically, by this evil. As they confront this problem, betrayals and self-betrayals build upon one another in the most vicious of circles. It is this theme of betrayal—a psychologically devastating one, I think—that I want to focus on here.

Dr. Lifton discusses both war rejection and war-participation at some length, giving attention to the effects of combat experience. His conclusions are in no way encouraging. The point is that the terrible sense of having *no* promising options, no desirable future save an imaginary one, increasingly obsesses a significant portion of the population which is expected to enjoy, staff, and otherwise participate in the hypothetical utopias of the futurologists. Actually, the question of what is going to happen in the future may have long ago left the compass of ordinary inquiry, and we might do far better to investigate the kinds of social enterprise and educational activity which have the capacity to survive various unpredictable dislocations or even social disintegrations.

Fortunately, we are already getting books touching on this subject. Theodore Roszak's *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Doubleday) is a study of gathering energies for human association in new social forms. This is a book with an essentially Tolstoyan inspiration. From other sources it is evident that curious communitarian experiments are going on all over the country, some of them in connection with new schools. A lot of these efforts don't survive. We sometimes

forget, however, that a great many of the "pioneers" who settled the frontier lands of the North American continent didn't survive, either. It was said of the now fertile farms of Nebraska that it took three families to get the land into a productive condition—two families usually failed, while the third made it. So with the new experiments in cooperative living, perhaps. And with experimental schools.

While these practically spontaneous changes are going on—and they are a little too numerous to be disposed of as merely "token" phenomena—it may be time for some humanist scholars to do some research on past attempts in futurology. It would certainly be worth while, for one thing, to compile an anthology of nineteenth-century predictions by great humanist thinkers, to see how much of what they predicted has come true. We think of men like Amiel, Schiller, and Carlyle, for example. Then there were strange prophecies by Heine and Tolstoy. Schiller, incidentally, didn't need Jacques Ellul's evidence to see what Ellul saw, and Schiller wrote back in 1795:

> Man himself, eternally chained down to a little fragment of the whole, only forms a kind of fragment; having nothing in his ears but the monotonous sound of the perpetually revolving wheel, he never develops the harmony of his being and instead of imprinting the seal of humanity on his being, he ends by being nothing more than the living impress of the craft to which he devotes himself, of the science that he cultivates. This very partial and paltry relation, linking the isolated members to the whole, does not depend on forms that are given spontaneously; for how could a complicated machine, which shuns the light, confide itself to the free will of man?

"Machine," here, means the mechanistic social system which grows up around the increasing use of machine power. The English biographer of Schiller, Carlyle, developed this theme. As Leo Marx shows in his perceptive historical study of humanistic resistance to the rising domination of technology, *The Machine in the Garden* (Oxford University Press, 1964), Carlyle distinguished between the outward impact of technology and its psychological influence. Carlyle traces the latter "through every department of thought and expression: music, art, literature, science, religion, philosophy, and politics." He finds everywhere the same tendency: "an excessive emphasis upon means as against ends, a preoccupation with external arrangement of human affairs as against their inner meaning and consequences." Politics in the service of this conception of "effectiveness" becomes virtually a machine. The indictment is subtle and far-reaching, covering the environmentalism of eighteenth-century philosophy, Locke's psychology, and the entire mechanistic tendency of the science of Carlyle's time. Marx interprets:

> To account for a man's ideas and values only, or even chiefly, by the circumstances in which he lives is, according to Carlyle, to divest his thought of will, emotion, and creative power. If the mind is a reflex of what is, how can it possibly control circumstances? Control implies the power to compare what is with what may be. To Carlyle the empirical philosophy is negative and quietistic. "By arguing on the 'force of circumstances'," he says, "we have argued away all the force from ourselves; and stand lashed together, uniform in dress and movement, like the rowers of some boundless galley." In its transactions with the world outside, a mind so conceived responds like one clogged wheel turned by another. Used in this way the image of the machine connotes loss of inner freedom even as it provides outer power. "Practically considered," says Carlyle, "our creed is Fatalism; and, free in hand and foot, we are shackled in heart and soul with far straiter than feudal chains."

Carlyle is not indifferent to the practical benefits of machinery, but calls for balance in its use, daring to say that "in true dignity of soul and character, we are perhaps inferior to most civilized ages." This is an admission that present-day futurologists might consider making, if they hope to approach the usefulness of a man like Carlyle.