

RESERVOIR OF VALUE

WHAT a man learns in absolute isolation, alone with himself—or, as we sometimes say, with "the universe"—seems indispensable for the purpose of giving priority to other sorts of learning. This "knowing" in and of oneself is almost impossible to define, and in a time when efficiency in practical affairs has been obtained from precise definitions, there is a tendency to ignore it entirely. But we come upon the need for undefinable knowing in another way. There is now a large literature on the traps of linguistic certainty, on the prisons of the way we tell what we know. And the psycho-social determinism that results from habits of conformity has been so much analyzed and exposed that another kind of paralysis seems to result from all this "objectivity" concerning the grip of circumstances, the rule of the past. We see the inevitability of generalizing and labelling the forms and ingredients of experience, and then, after everything has been *over-classified*, there seems to be nothing we can do, of ourselves, to change the patterns. And there isn't, the way we have learned to think. We have defined ourselves in terms of our circumstances, so getting "more knowledge" can only mean making another "study" of the presiding deities outside ourselves.

Put simply, the problem is never to let any names or classifications of experience turn into substitutes for the immediacy of experience itself. We find this very difficult to avoid, since direct contact with experience means individual evaluation, and, quite often, a refusal to classify. And this, we discover, *feels* like a state of primitive ignorance. Well, then, perhaps our knowledge hid ignorance. It seems obvious, for example, that there should never be easy classification of *people*. What good is a "knowledge" which makes the moral sense possessed by all men narrowly selective, leading

to the classification of people according to rubrics productive of wars and social injustice, century after century?

We have hundreds of books which recount in great detail the stupidities and cruelties of this habit of classification. But they are all analyses after the fact. These critical studies are no doubt necessary, but they are of little help in arming us against the weaknesses they describe. They are, in fact, only more classifications. The hair of the dog. What we need is a kind of education which does not generate implicit confidence in verbal forms of knowledge, in convenient classifications. A literature which does not pretend to dispose of human problems by sorting people according to stereotypes of one kind or another. A conception of health which does not borrow its meaning from the categories of disease.

Something of a half-way house on the road to this sort of education is found in the familiar criticism that blames most of our ills upon language itself. But not all language offends in this way, nor to the same degree. And language does not really confine people who know its limitations and bend it to their intentions. But since this is a profound *subjective* consideration, and such men are quite exceptional, we blame the language instead of bad habits in its use. Of course, language also embodies such habits, and may require the vitalizing reforms of original expression.

The chapter, "Cognition of the Individual and of the Generic," in Maslow's *Motivation and Personality* is a good general introduction to this large subject. One thing becomes quite evident: relying on classification is a refuge from daring and independence in thought. The unique, the individual, the apparently inexplicable and unpredictable are avoided in this way. So you

don't blame language, which only reflects the defense-mechanisms of this timidity. You don't tinker with the machine, but take a long, critical look at an educational system which has given no attention to the development of the virtues according to the old Greek scheme. Courageous men would not take flight from novelty in experience, but would practice the daring that is essential to all human growth.

Actually, men who live above their times—who refuse to ignore problems and puzzles by the device of reductive definition—have no serious difficulty in making their meaning clear to us. In their hands, language has fewer traps in it, although effort is demanded of the reader before there can be an actual meeting of minds.

These are the sort of men who, when it comes to final questions, allow no one to pull rank on them. They *know* that no rubrics could ever reach up to the level of the final questions. Well, how did they find this out? Not, it seems practically certain, by asking or listening to other men. Plato wrote about this in his seventh epistle, and, in modern times, Michael Polanyi, in *Personal Knowledge* and *The Tacit Dimension*.

Now and then a man captures and puts on record the circumstances under which he became aware of the independent resources of his being. In *Alone*, published in 1938, Richard Byrd tells of his psychological life while isolated at an advance outpost surrounded by snow and ice in Little America. In one place he wrote in his diary:

I've been trying to analyze the effect of isolation on a man. As I said, it is difficult for me to put this into words. I can only feel the absence of certain things, the exaggeration of others. In civilization my necessarily gregarious life with its countless distractions and diversions had blinded me to how vitally important a role they really did play. I find their sudden removal has been much more of a wrench than I had anticipated. As much as anything, I miss being insulted now and then, which is probably the Virginian in me.

. . . The silence of this place is as real and solid as sound. More real, in fact, than the occasional

creaks of the Barrier and the heavier concussions of snow quakes. . . . It seems to merge in and become part of the indescribable *evenness* as do the cold and the dark and the relentless ticking of the clocks. This evenness fills the air with its mood of unchangeableness; it sits across from me at the table, and gets into the bunk with me at night. And no thought will wander so far as not eventually to be brought up hard by it. This is timelessness in its ultimate meaning.

Eventually, majestic thoughts about the universe and its endless harmonies swept into Commander Byrd. Somehow he knew that man, despite all his contradictions, is an expression of these harmonies. Byrd's isolation produced a sense of profound, pervading unities. "My sense of values is changing," he wrote, "and many things which before were in solution in my mind now seem to be crystallizing." The human race, he thought, "is as much a part of the universe as the trees, the mountains, the aurora, and the stars." He concluded this section in his diary:

"The universe is an almost untouched reservoir of significance and value," and man need not be discouraged because he cannot fathom it. His view of life is not more than a flash in time. The details and distractions are infinite. It is only natural, therefore, that we should never see the picture whole. But the universal goal—the attainment of harmony—is apparent. The very act of perceiving this goal and striving constantly toward it does much in itself to bring us closer and, therefore, becomes an end in itself.

While we do not find in these reflections—and there are more of them—anything that could be regarded as "practical answers," one does get, at least, a sense of the *independence* of the conceptions Byrd arrived at. They came at a time of deep discouragement and utter loneliness. Is the capacity to *endure* without loss of balance "knowledge"? Well, it is, if knowledge is virtue. It seems important for men to write books like that. It seems important for every human being to realize or consider that he can find such profound instruction inside himself. Yet it doesn't take place altogether inside oneself, but results rather from an unexpected collaboration between one's

self-awareness and some few more or less absolute relationships of human life—rhythms, laws, presences—which may fill the preternatural dimensions of what we suppose is only void, when, one way or another, the distractions have been removed.

It seems fitting not to label these matters. A long apprenticeship is needed in order to write usefully about even the vestibule to such experiences. The object should rather be to begin to create an environment which does not compel people to go to the South Pole or some equally remote spot in order to have unmediated experience of the universal harmonies of Nature. In quest of just such a scheme of education for the young, Herbert Read (in *The Redemption of the Robot*) returns to Plato and Pythagoras for a practical program. After summarizing Plato's proposals in the *Republic* and the *Laws* for education in the arts of song, music and the dance, song being "linked with poetry, and dance with gymnastics, and a natural expansion of education . . . envisaged which will finally include arithmetic, geometry and astronomy," Read says:

What is important to appreciate, and indeed to accept, is the basic principle—that aesthetic training is at the same time moral training; and to understand why Plato could put forward such an idea with complete seriousness and without any feeling of paradox. He was basing himself, of course, upon a doctrine generally accepted throughout the Hellenic world—the doctrine of universal harmony, of which Pythagoras had been the original exponent. Werner Jaeger (in *Paideia, the Ideals of Greek Culture*) has emphasized the significance of this doctrine for the whole background of Greek thought:

"All the marvellous principles of Greek thought—principles which have come to symbolize its most essential and indefeasible quality—were created in the sixth century. . . . One of the most decisive advances in that process was the new investigation of the structure of music. The knowledge of the true nature of harmony and rhythm produced by that investigation would alone give the Greeks a permanent position in the history of civilization; for it affects almost every sphere of life. . . ."

"This harmony was expressed in the relation of the parts to the whole. But behind that harmony lay the mathematical conception of proportion, which, the Greeks believed, could be visually presented with geometrical figures. The harmony of the world is a complex idea: it means both musical harmony, in the sense of a beautiful concord between different sounds, and harmonious mathematical structure on rigid geometrical rules. The subsequent influence of the conception of harmony on all aspects of Greek life was immeasurably great. It affected not only sculpture and architecture, but poetry and rhetoric, religion and morality; all Greece came to realize that whatever a man made or did was governed by a severe rule, which like the rule of justice could not be transgressed with impunity—the rule of fitness or propriety. Unless we trace the boundless working of this law in all spheres of Greek thought throughout classical and post-classical times, we cannot realize the powerful educative influence of the discovery of harmony. The conception of rhythm, relation, and of the mean are closely akin to it, or derive from it a more definite content. It is true not only of the idea of the cosmos, but also of harmony and rhythm, that it was necessary for Greece to discover their existence in 'the nature of being' before she could employ them in the spiritual world, to find order and method in human life."

Principles very different from "harmony" have supervened to dominate the affairs of mankind since the times of Pythagoras and Plato, and we may be at a loss to know how to restore this ennobling conception; yet to recognize the *need* for it would be no small achievement; and there can hardly be any doubt that the sort of education Herbert Read proposes would open the senses and feelings of children to the reality of harmonies in nature. We should add' however, Read's own qualification:

I am willing to admit that art, in taking on such an important role in the educational and social development of mankind, must itself be modified. It is too often a wayward, partial, even perverse expression of universal harmonies. It is too often but an expression of personal fantasies, of egoistic and aggressive impulses. It is prostituted to purposes which destroy its aesthetic nature. Our whole conception of art will have to be at once enlarged and purified.

The most important by-product of education of this sort is the liberation it would accomplish of men's minds from subservience to the rubrics of ideology and the classifications of men by social theories which have all proved their inutility when left without a regenerating philosophy of education. The intellectualization of education has contributed to pathetic faith in rubrics, when even the best of categorizations of men and social arrangements, once made, becomes a little less true or accurate, every day, for the reason that men change, but the classifications do not, and cannot possibly keep pace with the flow of life. Maslow writes acutely on this:

Language is primarily an excellent means of experiencing and communicating nomothetic information, i.e., rubricizing. Of course, it attempts also to define and communicate the idiosyncratic or idiographic, but for all theoretical purposes it fails. All it can do with the idiosyncratic is to give it a name, which after all does not describe it or communicate it, but only labels it. The only way to know the idiosyncratic fully is to experience it fully and to experience it oneself. Even naming the experience may screen it off from further appreciation, as one professor discovered when walking down a country road with his artist wife. Upon seeing a lovely flower for the first time, he asked its name. He was thereupon scolded by his wife. "What good does the name do you? When you learn its name, you're satisfied and don't bother enjoying the flower any more."

To the extent that language forces experience into rubrics, it is a screen between reality and the human being. In a word, we pay for its benefits. Therefore, while using language, as we must of necessity, we should be aware of its shortcomings and we should try to get around them.

If all this is true for language at its theoretical best, the situation must be far worse when language gives up altogether the struggle to be idiosyncratic, and degenerates completely into the use of stereotypes, platitudes, mottoes, slogans, clichés, battle cries, and epithets. It is then very obviously and frankly a means for obviating thought, for dulling the perceptions, stunting mental growth, and stultifying the human being.

Yet language, let us note, affords means of warning us against itself. This was really the point

behind Plato's criticism of the mimetic poets. They used language only for its hypnotic effect, without any warnings of its glamor. An emotional sense of finality was thereupon mistaken for knowledge and truth.

So much of great literature seems an account of the struggles of men who consult themselves, with other men who are bound by the rubrics of their time. This was Ivan's ordeal in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Prince Myshkin's in *The Idiot*, and Socrates' contest with his fellow Athenians.

Yet to attempt to *tell* people how to consult themselves would simply be to start another religion, giving out "rules" for getting self-knowledge. Philosophers won't help with this. Plato made his position clear in the seventh epistle, and there has never been an organized Platonic religion, although there have been some rather wonderful Platonists here and there in history. Yet great educators have had something to say about the environment propitious for self-discovery, and they point to preparatory disciplines in self-reliance which are said to be practical aids. But any serious consideration of these things will naturally depend on thinking of human beings as *having* substantial inner resources—as being *capable* of this sort of development. This idea of the human being, in fact, is the initial platform and credo of all Humanism in Western thought, and its currency since the Renaissance began with Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*.

In our own time, a kind of empiricism in pursuit of human possibility seems the most persuasive argument for what Dr. Maslow calls the idiosyncratic reality of the individual. Some kind of a time-lapse seems necessary for recovery after a long cycle of cultural denigration of the human spirit, before there can be a renewal of *theory* concerning the inner nature of man. Social control systems, curiously enough, seem always to jam up and come to an end in either overt or sly denunciations of the human species. With the crude weapons of scientific materialism, the social

reformers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries threw off the heavy weight of guilt and sinfulness imposed by the Church-State conspiracy on the nature of man; but then the doctrines of materialism were matured into claims that man is nothing but the pawn of blind forces outside his control, so that in time science became hardly more than sophisticated manipulative technique, with no moral authority at all. The effect of the spread throughout the culture of the worship of technique has been to wear the original Renaissance declaration of man's moral independence to a very thin abstraction. It is just as Herbert Read puts it: "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."

Well, we shall soon have to get back to theory about these things—if only to fill the intellectual vacuum left by the failure of technique—but meanwhile there is the practice of an education which has recognition of the underlying harmonies of nature as its chief aim. Where else can be obtained the inner stabilities and individual strength that every child will need, as he grows up, in order to resist the strident and hysterical rubrics of a dying age? For the old age *is* dying, and the young need no classes in "disillusionment," but only courage and the resources to survive it. There might, for example, be instruction in the biographies of men who brought to their time a noticeable independence, who insisted on going behind names and labels. Such men function as bridges during floodtides of change. Change comes through them, it does not operate on them. Not "progress," but the forms of encompassing vision could be made the objects of study; not "revolution," but the rainbow dreams no politics can contain. There is no knowable ratio between the ideal and the actual except in the lives of men.

REVIEW

NO WORDS FOR IT

A MAN'S successful effort to preserve a Thoreau-like foundation for his life is the delighting theme of a recent novel, *The Glass Dove*, by Sally Carrighar (Doubleday and Avon). The story develops with the coming to maturity of Sylvia MacIntosh, daughter of an Ohio farmer who, just before the outbreak of the Civil War, decides to turn his prospering sheep ranch into a station on the Underground Railway. He completes the arrangements for this, then goes off as a middle-aged volunteer in the Union Army, leaving his daughter and widowed sister in charge of the dangerous secret activity of harboring and passing along escaping slaves on their way to Canada. Eventually the family is joined by a young Union soldier who needs convalescent time to recover from a shoulder wound which interferes with his sharpshooter's skill. Daniel makes himself enormously useful to the two women, but his "principles," which gradually come to the surface, are a puzzle to Sylvia, and a frustration to impulses growing out of her affection for this attractive young man. One summer afternoon, when they are lazing on a hillside pasture, Sylvia is a little intimidated by Daniel's way of looking beyond the surfaces of things, of seeing people's longings. This makes her shy. Daniel senses this, and says:

"If everyone wanted what I do, we would need to possess so few things. We could get by if we worked very little. And I think it would be a much happier and more peaceful world. We wouldn't be trying to beat each other at everything: we'd just live and enjoy it. . . . There's a wonderful sweetness about time spent like that."

There was a wonderful sweetness about Daniel too, as he had reached out to Sylvia with his words. He seemed to be reaching with more than his talk. For the look on his face was so poignantly beautiful, and so urgent, that it was hard not to drop down and lay her cheek against his.

He had one more thing to say: "I believe so much in this living acutely that I should like to

convert children to it. For that reason I might like to teach. I'd rather be teaching a one-room school than be Secretary of State. And I might do that some day, in some small village."

"Maybe children could learn it, Dan. I'm afraid most people wouldn't know what you are talking about!"

"That's true. I'm not even sure that you know. There aren't any words for it. We haven't them."

Sylvia thought of the new and intimate sensations that she was having these days, and how no one ever could speak of them, and so they never would enter a language. And she recognized that there might be other kinds of experience which had not been named—this for instance, whatever it was, that Dan had in mind.

Now he rolled onto his back and lay silent, and his eyes obviously were not even seeing the sky. When he spoke again his voice sounded thin. "My father knew it when I left Washington, but he thinks I was getting ready to join the Army. The Southern states had begun to secede by then. So far I haven't told him my final decision about the government. He wouldn't want me to be in politics if I couldn't do it and still be myself, but its going to be a big disappointment to him. There's no need to have him know in case—"

Some inner retrenchment cut off his words.

Sylvia's mother, Sophronia, who had died years before, was a sweet and beautiful woman, but a gently expert manager. Sylvia's father combined writing with farming, and he needed, Sophronia felt, "guidance" in practical affairs. Sylvia had had much instruction from her mother in the arts of loving manipulation, and she tried to apply them to Daniel, but they didn't work. After marriage, she thought to herself, she would find ways of turning him into "a stable, successful husband." But when Daniel's "proposal" came, it had strings attached: she must agree not to try to make him over! He hopes to have clear discussion of the matter; *could* she agree to it?

Dan strode away a few steps and when he came back his manner had softened. He took one of her hands and enclosed it in both of his. "It's very touching, Sylvia, the way you always try so hard. It's one of the things that make you so dear—the earnest

way you want to fix everything up. But don't try to fix people up—not me, anyway."

"How do you know I do? How can you prove it?"

"I can't. But you haven't denied it. You have not reassured me!"

Her breath was catching in gasps. She withdrew her hand and took her kerchief from inside her sleeve. Daniel was heartless not to be giving in. But the very quality of his firmness appealed to her.

"One more thing and then I'll be through," Daniel said. "It isn't my manners that I'm afraid you will tamper with—it's my mind, remember. There is something we might call freedom of thought, but you don't respect it. You would put in a little idea here, and another idea there, and because I'm so fond of you, I would be soft—your tools would cut deep. And pretty soon you'd have turned me into the shape of a slave—a slave in a much more degraded sense than the Negroes are.

"The foreman stands by with a whip so the Negro will work. His leg may be chained so he can't run away. But any Negro can hate the foreman. He's a free man within himself. The kind of husband you want will not see his chains. He'll be docile, he'll go your way without ever knowing he hasn't a chance to do anything else. And the deceit will ruin the love between you. Your marriage eventually will become only one of those working arrangements—endless, small, practical routines, meaningless, basically without trust. . . . I wonder and wonder about you, Sylvia—how you can be so illogical. You spend all this effort to pass on the slaves, you take all these risks for the cause of freedom, the big beautiful cause the nation has gone to war about; but you won't let your so-called equal be free. You won't admit that the white man who is close to you has any right to be free in his mind. . . ."

Well, this is a romance and things work out. Sylvia learns some things, and so does Daniel, and the ideas we have quoted find expression so naturally that they aren't preachy at all.

Why, then, should we do a kind of violence to the story, and *extract* this conflict for inspection? After all, the quality of life which Daniel finds so precious does not really submit to dissection. It barely submits to identification. Yet making this distinction between the excellences of being

oneself and the advantages of fixing things up, of improving circumstances, has grown, today, into the fundamental diagnosis of the ills of modern man. The definition of human needs and goals wholly in terms of countable and arrangeable satisfactions has led to a condition which many now regard as comprehensible only as a stage of *gross pathology*. The affliction presents the curious problem of needing, not just a few new terms for adequate diagnosis, but a whole new universe of therapeutic discourse! The remedy seems to lie, first of all, not in correct treatment by wise doctors, but in the treatment of the idea of treatment, by doctors who are wiser than the rest. Doctoring, after all, has been a fix-it profession for centuries, and here we have the massive symptoms of an ill which grows out of neglect of the unfixable reality in human beings. Obviously, there is need for a profession skilled in the arts of *unfixing*! So, naturally enough, we have all these cautious anarchists, secret iconoclasts, and shy amateur philosophers practicing a wonderful variety of psychological medicine.

Their false starts, ingenuous "new" discoveries, and hot gospel credos are not their fault at all, but side-effects of the heroic responsibilities laid upon them by an age filled with desperate longings for philosophy, but almost wholly unwilling to pay its asking price. The fix-it experts have told people they won't need to. So a generation of doctors is surrogate for all the rest in learning that they *must*. This seems quite evident, today. When you philosophize a fix-it discipline, the discipline is made to turn against itself. So you find teachers declaring that teaching is harmful, psychoanalysts withdrawing from all authoritarian postures, educators denouncing curricula, and other strange abdications in behalf of exactly the feelings of freedom and immediacy defended by Daniel in this story.

COMMENTARY

WHO NEEDED TO DO HOMEWORK?

THE confusion of means with ends in education is effectively illustrated by Postman and Weingartner in their recent book, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. In this brief dialogue, we have a dutiful, conscientious father, but also a man unable to recognize clues to the fact that his son is being conscientious, too. So the father comes very close to denying the *reason* in his effort to install "discipline" in his son's life—which is to develop the boy's capacity for responsible decision-making. The scene is the home and the time is 7:30 P.M.:

FATHER: Where are you going?

SON: Out.

FATHER: Out where?

SON: Just out.

FATHER: Have you finished your homework?

SON: Not yet.

FATHER: I thought we decided (that's the way parents talk) that you wouldn't go out on week nights until you'd finished your homework.

SON: But I have to go out.

FATHER: What do you mean you have to?

SON: I just do.

FATHER: Well, you're not going out. You just have to learn to live up to the terms of the agreements you make.

SON: But . . .

FATHER: That's all. I want no back talk.

MOTHER: Please. Let him go out. He'll be back soon.

FATHER: I don't want you butting in.

MOTHER (to son): Go ahead. It will be all right.

(*Son exits.*)

FATHER (in a rage): What the hell do you mean by encouraging his impertinence? How do you expect him to learn responsibility if you side with him in an argument with me? How . . .

MOTHER (*interrupting*): Do you know what tomorrow is?

FATHER: What the hell has that got to do with it? Tomorrow's Thursday.

MOTHER: Yes, and it's your birthday.

FATHER: (Silence.)

MOTHER: Your son has been making a gift for you at Jack's house. He wanted it to be a surprise for you tomorrow morning. A nice start for the day. He had just a bit more work to do on it to finish it. He wanted to get it done as early as possible tonight so he could bring it home and wrap it up for tomorrow. And then he'd still have time to do his home work.

So the father retires from the field in embarrassment and confusion. But *how*, he asks himself, was he to know? The question then becomes: How interested had he been in *testing* to find out to what extent his son was already able to run his own life? What homework had *he* done? Discipline imposed beyond need is invariably tyranny, and the ruin of the educational situation, which has existence only through the reciprocities of trust.

Restoration of trust is the problem, today, not vindication of the contract theory of morals. Not many of the "confrontations" which start out as this one did have such happy, story-book endings.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING SITUATIONS

THE Wellesley College *Bulletin* for October prints portions of a letter from a 1968 graduate who spent a year teaching English and art in an all-black school in a southern state. The letter was to the Wellesley professor with whom this graduate, Jean Arrington, had studied beginning Greek and the Hellenic heritage. It says:

My tenth-grade section was the slow section, made up of nineteen big, energetic boys and four girls, most of whom were tragic examples of the school system. I'm afraid they are irremediably caught up in the uneducated bag now, but with all their energy and creativity, and, best of all, their positive, constructive attitude toward things, they shouldn't be there. My year was made more difficult because the State never got around to issuing textbooks to that particular class. Consequently, as the months progressed, I came to base my class almost wholly on their own writing. They liked to write, liked to read before the class what they had written, and each one could go at his own speed. We made our own book of some of their final projects—autobiographies and scripts for a TV show.

My ninth-grade class, on the other hand, had about the most wonderful literature book possible, and included in it was I. A. Richards' translation of *The Iliad*. . . . It took all the way until late spring to get up my guts and the confidence of the class to attack such a problem as *The Iliad*. But they loved it. Even the people who couldn't read were fascinated while the rest were talking about what was going on, then were able to retell the stories themselves. I just sat there amazed, listening to people talk about what they had read the night before.

In the beginning I mimeographed the Greek alphabet (which some of the class memorized) and the first five lines in Greek telling them the meanings of each word so they could put them together in a sensible translation. They loved hearing it read in Greek. You would have cringed! But I'm glad I did it because maybe it helped make clear that it was Homer, not I. A. Richards, who wrote *The Iliad*, and that other civilizations have existed besides the U.S.A.

Really, every student I had was fifty times smarter than I am, and that's why I learned so much. One day I remember sitting there open-mouthed at all the good ideas popping as they argued about whom they liked better, Achilles or Hector.

The big problem teaching there was that in every class there were maybe ten people who could read fine, ten on fourth to sixth grade level, and ten who couldn't read at all, so the problem was keeping all these different levels interested. Mythology was a good solution, since pupils who could read could tell it to those who couldn't and everybody came out knowing something.

I'm very happy that this whole year happened because now I know what I really want to be—a teacher.

This was at the high-school level, in the South. The Summer/Fall issue of *New Directions in Teaching* (State University, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402) has a report by Norman Leer on a class in the Literature of Modern Revolutions, involving students and faculty from Roosevelt University and students from Crane Junior College, a city school in the west-side ghetto of Chicago. Few Roosevelt students tame, so that the two teachers, Mr. Leer and Barbara Kessel of Roosevelt, met on the first day with students, "mostly black and radical," who were arguing about the strategies of the black movement before the period had begun. The teachers had planned to work non-directively, but as this writer says—

I had never defined the non-directive posture as implying my non-participation. Rather, I had seen, and still see it as a type of relationship structured to be as non-manipulative and non-repressive as possible, so that the parties—in this case, students and teachers—can respond to each other openly and without coercion. The wild discussion on that first day was a non-directive teacher's dream. And yet, it was also disturbing, and the fact that it was disturbing raised for me some very tough questions. I felt that I didn't want to tell the black students about their revolution; this would have only perpetuated the usual white stance, and, besides, I honestly didn't know as much about their revolution as they did. Instead, I hoped to learn from them, and to share with them some of my own experiences as a skeptical radical-liberal, along with some of the history of the left

during the twentieth century. But such reciprocity was not easy to find.

Mr. Leer found himself virtually unable to make any contribution at all:

Where I was full of questions on the value of revolutionary means, the group was already anxious to discuss strategies, the value being an area of prior agreement. Later, the class would turn into a microcosm of black rage, and while there was surprising variance among the black students, I didn't know how to add anything without sounding like a party-pooper. . . . There was also a pull away from sustained discussion and even from the black-centered readings, and this left Barbara and me wondering about the value of non-direction for this particular class. At the same time, for both of us, or I know at least for myself, there was a suspicion that maybe this airing of rage and experiencing of freedom were in themselves valuable, perhaps more valuable than assigned texts and structured discussions, and we weren't sure if we wanted to go back. Besides, we had committed ourselves to a student-run class, and couldn't retreat, even if we wanted to.

When they finally got around to some reading of Eldridge Cleaver, many of the black students, "finding in his writing a reflection of their own lives and a reminder of their confusions, felt that he had 'nothing new to say'." And Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* was not read by most of the black students from the ghetto junior college—they found it too abstract. One of them remarked in class that "Fanon must be a white man because he wrote like one." In the end Leer found himself simply prevented from doing any teaching. He wanted to get through, but couldn't think of any way to do it without sounding like "a white paternalist." He concludes:

We gave the class an opportunity to run itself, and they ran things, but in such a way that I came to feel my own quasi-silence, although necessary was a kind of dishonesty, and I was not really sure of the intellectual value of the whole experience. What Barbara and I did, in effect, was to create a permissive situation, where the students could express their own feelings about the black revolution in America and one side of me felt that this permissive situation was in itself significant at this historical time, given the fact that ghetto students have

experienced so little institutional freedom. But another side of me countered with the question of why Barbara and I were there at all. What happened in the group might just as well have happened, perhaps, better, without us.

We can't think of anything to say to this, except, perhaps, "Go South, young man, go South!"

FRONTIERS Home on the Range

HAVING just watched the first moon-landing, I had a different view of our planet that day. A friend and I were enroute to visit what can only be called a Hippy Commune, but ought not to be called anything at all. These people cherish their privacy and anonymity, so I won't say who they are or where they live. It was a long way from Los Angeles, anyway. As the country along the interstate highway grew wilder and wilder, we drove deeper and deeper into the agrarian past. The man in the gas station said, "Whether or not we're ready for the moon, we're not through looking around down here, yet." We stopped to ask an old man standing by a blown-out clapboard barn where Clement's Butte was. He pointed with his eyes toward the tall mountains in the distance.

As we drove off that page of history, the paved road was broken up a bit and the camper we were riding in began to feel like a buckboard. Then the pavement disappeared and we found ourselves on a dirt road, looking more like a footpath in some places. As we wound our way for five hours into the mountains, I caught myself peering through the big trees for a glimpse of Roy Rogers, who had now displaced Buck Rogers as the symbol of exploratory forays. Was this "regression into the past," after the moon-flight, or some better kind of looking ahead?

When it got dark we had to go even slower; there were some sheer drops that just swallowed up the beam from the headlights. But we made it that evening to Clement's Butte Ranch and Commune, tired but nonetheless intrigued by the isolation and the curiously domed domiciles of the Commune, looking like so many small planetaria under the stars. All was asleep, so, the night being warm, we turned in with the back door of the camper open, to be awakened by a donkey's probing proboscis just as dawn was breaking. We could now see that we were parked on a small dirt trail between two vegetable gardens, fenced in with files of saplings carved to points and laced together with vine to keep wild animals and the Commune livestock out. We didn't see Crusoe or Friday anywhere, but three young men

came toward us. One said, "Can we help yez?" Another offered, "You know this is private property." Then the trio just stood watching. They sounded like a street gang in the Bronx but looked like a Quaker work team, complete with whiskers, long hair, and country overalls.

"We're friends of Fred and Sally," I said, explaining that they knew we were coming sometime that month. No phone, of course. Whereupon they immediately made us welcome. This seemed natural. Fred was a drop-out newsman and Sally was a drop-out actress. They had lived together in some communal arrangement in the Hippy quarter of a major city before this land was acquired. What with Fred's talent for absolutely everything, I knew he would enjoy happy respect anywhere he went.

One of the trio asked the one who hadn't spoken to run quick and get Fred before he left with the wood-cutting crew. The other two shared some of our cornflakes and milk and fresh fruit. They said they hadn't had much of a fruit crop. We quickly gathered that there was no cash and no place to spend it anyway, so they enjoyed the fruit and the milk, observing that their milk was all goat's.

Fred came up the road walking fast, and when he recognized us broke into a run, then threw down his wide-brimmed Western hat and gave us a welcoming hug. There wasn't much time to chat. Fred had to get back to the only pick-up which was taking the wood-cutting crew to the farthest point of the Commune's 100 acres. This work was done in the morning because it got so hot in the afternoon. They meant to cut enough wood. Last winter was their first on this place and they ran out of wood while snowed in for several weeks. One soon got the idea that the business of staying alive out here claimed large amounts of time. This must have been a big change for these forty men, women, and children, nearly all fugitives from the indolence of big-city alienation.

Fred invited me to come along on the wood-cutting expedition and directed my companion to a lower garden where vegetables were being picked. I was full of questions, but determined not to act like a sociology student on a field trip. Between puffing

exertions and the buzz of a chain saw I tried to penetrate Fred's natural taciturnity with some open-ended comments instead of questions. "I see you have no objections to power tools," I said. "Hell, no, take all we can get," was the answer to that. "I suppose," I mused, "the bears have learned to stay away by now." "No," he said. "Took a shot at one last night. We shot a prowling bear last winter. That was the only meat we had. We used everything but the growl."

Some things could be discussed openly, like the order of the commune, which Fred maintained was not authoritarian. He said he had no more say in how things were run than the next guy. Their basic theory was to make as few rules as possible, and those few rules were decided upon at a general gathering—of the "family," is how he spoke of it. On one of the work-breaks we sat around with some of the other men and talked about the good things and the bad things of the natural life. One said, and another agreed, that he needed dope to function in the city. When they left I asked whether a rule excluded smoking of marijuana. "No, it's not against the rules, but. . . ." Fred started up the chain saw and didn't finish.

From other things that were said, I gathered that the basic living unit was one man and one woman in each of the home-made domes or cabins. (There were no building codes, a man could build any kind of structure he wanted. Most of them were plywood domes, after a Buckminster Fuller plan, that were cheap and easy to build and held in the heat. The cost for each, fully equipped, was under \$80.00.) Apparently monogamy prevailed, but the family unit was not the couple in the cupola but the whole tribe. The eight or so children were everyone's responsibility.

By the time the sun was high all of us were dripping with sweat. One of the girls came up the path and called out through the woods in several directions, "Lunch at the main house in one hour." Then some shouts came across the hill from one of the other work pairs—"God's Hand," and other voices echoed, "God's Hand, yeah, God's Hand." Whereupon work ended. We trudged through the woods, up some hills and down some, costing more

sweat, it seemed to me, than the wood-cutting. We arrived at what appeared at first to the steaming senses to be a mirage. There, in a cleavage of the forest, three creeks converged, held in an almost perfectly shaped semi-sphere to spill a waterfall down to another, lower basin surrounded by large stones. On the face of one of the flat-faced stones that was several stories high was what seemed an enormous handprint—hence the name, "God's Hand." Some girls and children were swimming in the upper pool. The wood-cutting crew quickly disrobed. Although nudity was neither a custom of the Commune nor forbidden, it seemed completely natural here. I asked Fred if the lower pool was deep enough for a dive from the ledge on which we stood, whereupon he demonstrated and I followed. The water was crystal clear and had the temperature of melting snow. The contrast between a hot sweaty body and this water brings a physical ecstasy the like of which I had never experienced. Thoroughly refreshed and almost giddy, Fred and I climbed out to bake for a while on a flat rock in a shaft of hot sunlight. Then Fred decided to finish his answer to my question. "This is our dope, man," he said, laying his body on the warm, flat stone.

We came back from the swim to the main house where lunch was served. It was a deserted hotel of the sort belonging to the days of the loggers and miners. It certainly would not please the modern traveler. There was no electricity anywhere in the Commune, and no plumbing, except for some crude channeling of the streams in the spring to irrigate the gardens and bring water by some of the domes. No refrigeration, of course, so lunch was a variety of fresh garden vegetables, some cooked, mostly raw, in a salad, and rice. Two kinds of bread were served, cornbread and something called a "Cornell loaf" which is supposed to have everything you need to live baked in. In the patio beside the main building were three small clay domes, the ovens. Some of the girls build a fire in each dome; then, after a time, drag it out with sticks. Apparently the ovens absorb enough heat this way to bake evenly all the bread they need. This is done every day.

In the afternoon we sat around and talked. The goats were milked and the milk given to the younger

children and pregnant women. A young man played the guitar crudely. He said he had always loved the guitar and planned some day to progress beyond the few folk songs he knew, but there was just no time for it now. Later in the afternoon it got hot enough to warrant another trip to God's Hand. This time we stayed longer, until a message came for Fred to come and look at Bill, who wanted to come out of his hut.

I learned that Bill had arrived a month or so before with infectious hepatitis. Several of the others had come down with it, but for some reason they recovered more easily than Bill. On the way over to Bill's hut we stopped again at the main house, where Fred showed me the medicine cabinet, complete with every kind of medicine that I ever heard of, and a stethoscope and some other medical-looking devices. One of the girls was a nurse, but all of the members by means of private study and instructive fireside sessions were becoming versed in the general practice of medicine. Fred, of course, had become quite good at it. This was one of the more fetching aspects of their self-sufficiency. Short of cases requiring hospital care, any medical exigency could be handled right there. (I sort of assume these people just won't get any really complicated, "modern" diseases!) During the snowed-in time last winter two babies were delivered.

We arrived at Bill's hut just as a girl was coming out with luncheon plates and utensils to place them in a boiling caldron atop an outdoor fire. Fred examined the patient, gave him some medicine, and agreed to call a meeting that night to consider whether it was safe to lift the quarantine on Bill. Bill was grateful.

We spent the evening supping and sitting around a campfire, chatting and eating fresh berries. The next morning we took off on the dirt road, down the mountain to the county road, then back into the interstate highway, feeling that we had left our time for a while, but hardly sure whether we had gone backward or forward.

JOHN CIAMPIA