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HIDDEN IDENTITIES

THE unlikelihood of finding out about ourselves by looking at the outside of how we behave—by accepting what is called an "objective" account of people as an adequate representation of them—is becoming evident to modern thinkers. *We,* we know from first-hand evidence, are *subjects,* and objects are only shadowy reflections of subjects, with nearly everything we care about removed.

If we take this feeling and experience as reliable, we are able to say that people are first of all centers of consciousness, foci of awareness through which we generate desires, hopes, needs, satisfactions, and sometimes explanations and even philosophies. We call our consciousness and its aggregate of activities and inclinations the mind. This is our operative being, which has a considerable range of qualities, capacities, and attractions. We are somehow in the middle of all this, submitting to the necessities of life, trying to change some of them, coping as well as we can, and pursuing ends that seem good to obtain. When someone says "I," he means his feeling of being a unitary being who is active in this way. Basically, he thinks of himself as a composition of purposes and intentions, made into a unity because they are his. Other people's description of this identity seldom seems to cover what "I" includes, least of all the purely objective descriptions.

In his recent book, *The Facts of Life,* Ronald Laing takes note of this inadequacy in the biologist's approach to human identity. The biologist might say that a human being is essentially a body made up of cells. The cells, of course, have parts, and the biologist studies *those,* trying to get at what is fundamental in the make-up of a human being. Dr. Laing wonders if this pursuit of identity can possibly succeed:

> . . . it's a moot point whether this precise knowledge of our microscopic origin and growth into the macroscopic domain changes or settles finally any of the basic philosophical problems attendant on the question "Who am I?"
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> For as early as I can remember I never took myself to *be* what people called me. That at least has remained crystal clear to me. Whatever, whoever I may be is not to be confused with the names people give *to* me, or how they *describe* me, or what they *call* me. I am not my name.
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> Who or what I am, as far as they are concerned, is not necessarily, or thereby, *me,* as far as I am concerned.
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> I am presumably what they are describing, but not their description. I am territory, what they say is their map of me.
>
> And what I call myself to myself is, presumably, my map of me. Where, o where, is the territory?

No doubt this passage comforted a lot of readers who said, "That's exactly what I think, too." They have this reaction because they feel, with Dr. Laing, that the right way to communicate with other centers of consciousness is in the language of consciousness. The right way to talk about people is as subjects, not objects. He didn't say very much about being human except this—that people are subjects—but if you don't say at least this then the quest for identity has no starting-point at all.

The failure to allow reality to subjects makes the quarrel many thoughtful persons have with the scientific worldview. It provides no starting-point for thinking about who we are. Tolstoy noticed this crucial omission and wrote about it at length. Camus noticed it, too. Even some contemporary scientists are noticing it and have begun to ask whether there can ever be access to the world of man through what science refers to as the objective world of nature. Loren Eiseley, for one, wonders whether any sort of explanation of meaning can be found in the natural world. In his recent autobiography he says:

> I can only repeat my dictum softly: in the world there is nothing to explain the world. Nothing to explain the necessity of life, nothing to explain the hunger of the elements to become life, nothing to explain why the stolid realm of rock and soil and mineral should diversify itself into beauty, terror, and uncertainty. To bring organic novelty into existence, to create pain, injustice, joy, demands more than we can discern in the nature we analyze so completely.

Now the question is, why has it taken centuries for us to discover this simple truth about the "objective" world? Everything that we can say about ourselves, the world, our relations in it—all that has meaning to us, is *worth* saying—has a subjective component or base. Why, then, have we been able to suppose, for so long, that the real truth or facts about both the world and ourselves must be *totally objective* in order to be reliable?

Well, in the first place, we have been living under a dual monarchy—we have had two incompatible sources of knowledge until about the middle of the twentieth century. Religious ideas about the inner life of human beings still had some influence until the impact of Darwinism and Freud ground them down to practically nothing. Then, early in this century, the psychology of John B. Watson administered the *coup de grace.* There simply isn't any inner man, according to Behaviorism. The word "consciousness" was barred by the behaviorists from the psychological vocabulary. This is not to suggest, of course, that all psychologists became behaviorists, or that all the people in the world were converted to Watson's doctrines, but that the habitual restriction of scientific statements about man to physiological observations was enormously strengthened by Watson's views. Meanwhile, in science in general, there was no alternative discipline which reserved any sort of metaphysical space for man as a subjective reality present and active in the world. (Although William McDougall contended valiantly against the materialism of the turn of the century, he attracted little support. Only after he established the center for psychic research at Duke University, where J. B. Rhine later pursued his studies of ESP, did McDougall's defense of subjective reality begin to bear some fruit.)

There were of course writers—poets, novelists, and essayists—who didn't submit to this reduction of man to a biological "thing," but they exercised influence only as rebels. Within the area of scientific thought, it remained for Michael Polanyi to expose the forms of self-deception which enabled supposedly scientific psychology to convince a great many people that the objective method is indeed the only way to find out the facts about man's nature. The foundation for this criticism and explanation is laid in Polanyi's books, *Personal Knowledge* and *The Tacit Dimension.*

Human beings, Polanyi shows, exercise two kinds of knowing. We have, that is, two levels of awareness. If we look at another human being, we may observe various signs of his inner state—his delight, his curiosity, his frustrations. We get dues from his facial expression and translate these clues into the terms of consciousness, which gives us the "meaning" of what we have seen. We do this intuitively—tacitly—rather than "scientifically." We don't put calipers on his face to determine that his snarling countenance indicates rage. We take in his appearance, including his posture as a whole, and read it as an emotional condition. This is Polanyi's "tacit knowing." Great novelists and masters of the study of character become adept at tacit knowing. Objective description supplies the clues, but not the insight, in such knowing. In a paper which includes an analysis of Behaviorism, "The Structure of Conciousness" (in *The Anatomy of Knowledge,* edited by Marjorie Grene, University of Massachussetts Press, 1969), Polanyi says:

> We know a chess-player's mind by dwelling in the strategems of his games and know another man's pain by dwelling in his face distorted by suffering. And we may conclude that the opposite process, namely of insisting to look at the parts of an observed behavior as several objects, must make us lose sight of the mind in control of a person's behavior.
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> But what should we think then of current schools of psychology which claim that they replace

the study of mental processes by observing the several particulars of behavior as objects and by establishing experimentally the laws of their occurrence? We may doubt that the identification of the particulars is feasible as they will include many unspecifiable clues, but the feasibility of the program will not only be uncertain, but logically impossible. To objectivize the parts of conscious behavior must make us lose sight of the mind and dissolve the very image of a coherent behavior.

Admittedly, behaviorist studies do not reach this logical consequence of their program. This is due to the fact that we cannot wholly shift our attention to the fragments of a conscious behavior. When we quote a subject's report on a mental experience in place of referring to this experience, this leaves our knowledge of that experience untouched; the report has in fact no meaning, except by bearing on this experience. An experimenter may speak of an electric shock as an objective fact, but he administers it only because he knows its painful effect. Afterward he observes changes in the conductivity of the subject's skin which in themselves would be meaningless, for they actually signify the expectation of an electric shock—the skin response is in fact but a variant of goose-flesh.

Thus a behaviorist analysis merely paraphrases mentalist descriptions in terms known to be symptoms of mental states and its meaning consists in its mentalist connotations. The practice of such paraphrasing might be harmless and sometimes even appropriate, but a preference for tangible terms of description will often be restrictive and misleading. The behaviorist analysis of learning, for example, has banned the physiognomies of surprise, puzzlement, and concentrated attention, by which Koehler described the mental efforts of his chimpanzees. It avoids the complex, delicately graded situations which evoke these mental states. The study of learning is thus cut down to its crudest form, known as conditioning. And this oversimple paradigm of learning may then be misdescribed as it was by Pavlov, when he identified *eating* with an *expectation to be fed,* because both of these induce the secretion of saliva. Wherever we define mental processes by objectivist circumlocutions, we are apt to stumble into such absurdities.

The actual working of behaviorism confirms, therefore, my conclusion that strictly isolated pieces of behavior are meaningless fragments, not identifiable as parts of behavior. Behaviorist psychology depends on covertly alluding to the mental states which it sets out to eliminate. . . .

The higher principles which characterize a comprehensive entity cannot be defined in terms of the laws that apply to its parts in themselves.

Human identity, Polanyi is saying in effect, is something to reach up to, not what is encountered in the mechanisms of behavior at the physiological level.

If we take this idea seriously, adopting it as a stipulation or starting-point in thinking about ourselves, a vast range of possibilities comes into view. For one thing, deliberate action through "the higher principles which characterize a comprehensive entity" almost certainly requires a measure of self-awareness, even though it may be rarely attained and seldom sustained. Yet the literature of history and biography is filled with accounts of this sort of action. Its presence in books makes what we call good reading. In *Meditations on Quixote,* Ortega speaks of the determination which enables heroes to transcend their circumstances—of how they gather their energies to oppose what is, in behalf of a vision of what might be:

Such men aim at altering the course of things; they refuse to repeat the gestures that custom, tradition, or biological instincts force them to make. These men we call heroes, because to be a hero means to be one out of many, to be oneself. If we refuse to have our actions determined by heredity or environment it is because we seek to base the origin of our actions on ourselves and only on ourselves. The hero's will is not that of his ancestors nor of his society, but his own. The will to be oneself is heroism.

I do not think there is any more profound originality than this "practical," active originality of the hero. His life is a perpetual resistance to what is habitual and customary. Each movement that he makes has first had to overcome custom and invent a new kind of gesture. Such a life is a perpetual suffering, a constant tearing oneself away from that part of oneself which is given over to habit and is a prisoner of matter.

We have no difficulty in finding historical figures who illustrate Ortega's account of the

hero. Socrates is certainly an example. Bruno's heroic and self-sacrificing opposition to the tyranny of the church is plainly another. Tom Paine's devotion to freedom—both political and intellectual freedom—makes an eighteenth-century example. We might add that the *kind* of heroism that finds expression probably determines the level of self-awareness of the hero. Psychologists able to accept the method of introspection speak of the "I am me" experience which sometimes has great impact in the lives of children. A strong sense of beinghood comes over them—the feeling of being *themselves.* This, we could say, is a state of reflective awareness, an "I am" consciousness which may precede the question, "Yes, but *who* am I?" An individual impelled by a strong sense of purpose, who is wholly involved in the struggle for fulfillment, may never stop long enough to ask *why* he is pursuing such hopes or dreams. The "higher principles which characterize a comprehensive entity" are in this case not interrogated because the man is submerged in purposeful action. "To the laborer in the sweat of his labor, the raw stuff on his anvil is an adversary to be conquered," as Aldo Leopold says. "But to the laborer in repose, able for a moment to cast a philosophical eye on the world, that same raw stuff is something to be loved and cherished, because it gives meaning and definition to his life." One who says this, sees this, and wonders about it, begins a cycle of reflection. He starts making a plateau of self-understanding. He *has* a character, perhaps a very strong character, but now, in thinking about himself, he undertakes a character-identifying and character-shaping line of deliberation. A clearer sense of "self" may result.

If from this idea we go to the conception of the peak experience, we can conceive of a scale of the possible evolution of "identity" to the heights of universalizing consciousness. The peak experience may last only for moments, yet its overwhelming existential reality may represent the timeless, underived presence of the self—both the symbol and the seed of future human development. What if we all carry around with us such seeds that announce their subtle swelling in moments of wonder, visioning, loving, and delight? It can hardly be denied that there have been individuals—at least a few—who seemed able to enter such states of awareness, if not at will, at least with astonishing frequency. Had they, perhaps, better organized means of self-recognition?

In the first part of *King Henry VI* (Act II, Scene III), Shakespeare makes Talbot reply in terms of this sort of self-awareness. Asked, "art not thou the man?" Talbot answers,

> No, no, I am but shadow of myself:
> You are deceived, my substance is not here;
> For what you see is but the smallest part
> And least proportion of humanity:
> I tell you, madam, were the whole frame here,
> It is of such spacious lofty pitch,
> Your roof were not sufficient to contain'".

Is it, we should ask, mere romantic imagining to suppose that, in between our trips and falls, our embarrassments and humiliations, we hide somewhere all this high potentiality, striving to make itself known?

This is a question—also an intoxicating thought—now much in the air. Theodore Roszak's latest book, *Unfinished Animal,* is concerned with such a view of evolution, suggesting that, in the present, we are all in the pupa or perhaps the Ugly Duckling stage. How else shall we understand the occasional presence among us of an Æschylus, a Plato, a Goethe, or even lesser lights who were animated by undeviating purpose, men who lived because they had work to perform, a mission to fulfill?

Who can take such leaps into the future without the grace of an unflickering inner light? Yet those who feel that to leap would be a folly—an attempt to take leave of reality and live in the structure of myth—are nonetheless able to recognize that such leaps are sometimes attempted by truly heroic men. And those whose lives have been mysteriously sustained by genius, a

Dostoevsky or a Tolstoy, left evidence of great strides toward heights of rich identity, however poorly understood, creating the masterpieces that give tone and quality to civilization wherever it exists. The persisting question of identity requires attention to such achievements, since the matter of what human beings are and what they may become is certainly illuminated by what *some* human beings have accomplished and become. Did they, as we say, actually become *themselves,* and in this way reveal a stage in the creation of identity?

Ortega wrote musingly on how such achievements might be regarded by people like ourselves:

> The hero anticipates the future and appeals to it. His gestures have a utopian significance. He does not say that he is but that he wants to be. . . . As something made to live in a future world, the ideal, when it is drawn back and frozen in the present, does not succeed in satisfying the most trivial functions of existence; and so people laugh. People watch the fall of the ideal bird as it flies over the vapor of stagnant water and they laugh. It is a useful laughter: for each hero whom it hits, it crushes a hundred frauds.

Could we, Ortega seems to wonder, survive in a world with no Quixotes—no would-be hero willing to risk his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor in behalf of a great dream? The hero's life, he suggests, will seem "normal" only in some far-off utopian future; and then, one must suppose, he will appear to be but an ordinary man! Can we imagine such a society? Only with great effort, and with imperfect result. Yet each epoch of history produces a few persons—a saving remnant, we might say—who insist upon trying. They insist on trying to *live* in the future, in order to create some small portion of the future in the present—wonderful islands or oases where, little by little, the people of the world may be able to establish a colony and help it to grow. Such changes begin with the imaginings of people who "want to be."

This, indeed, is the opposite of the method adopted by the behaviorists, as Polanyi showed. They made up a fraudulent language for reducing all the higher, conscious principles in human beings to their physiological shadows, their mechanistic effects. But what is really happening in human beings—*when* it happens—can only be understood through deliberate reaches of the mind. Identity is the fruit of acts of self-creation.

REVIEW
HERDER—MAN OF OUR TIME

THE distinctive contributions of Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), whose lifetime spanned the eighteenth-century age of revolution, make the subject-matter of Isaiah Berlin's second essay in *Vico and Herder* (Viking, 1976, $19.50). Mr. Berlin calls him a leader of "the romantic revolt against classicism, rationalism, and faith in the omnipotence of scientific method—in short, the most formidable of the adversaries of the French *philosophes* and their German disciples." While, with Goethe, he shared in the admiration of the day for the new discoveries and theories of science, he believed, again with Goethe, that these theories were being pressed to false conclusions. The reduction of all phenomena to expressions of mechanistic law seemed to him to obliterate the natural individuality of both men and nations and he insisted that the method of studying physical nature could not be applied to "the changing and developing spirit of man."

From this account of Herder's thought his kinship with present-day critics of scientism is plainly evident. The exciting thing about Herder is the clarity of his recognition of the simplifications and excesses of the Enlightenment long before the extremes of modern materialism were reached. He was not alone in this criticism, but the strength of his defense of the individual and of the social community as a unique vehicle of human development unites him in spirit with the authors of *Blueprint for Survival,* at least in the philosophic aspect of this ecological proposal. Herder's philosophy has been called "a loose synthesis of Leibniz and Spinoza." Mr. Berlin makes this brief statement of his basic view:

> According to Herder the soul evolves a pattern from the chaos of things by which it is surrounded, and so "creates by its own inner power a One out of the Many, which belongs to it alone." That the creation of integrated wholes out of discrete data is the fundamental organizing activity of human nature is a belief that is central to Herder's entire social and moral outlook: for him all creative activity conscious and unconscious, generates, and is, in turn, determined by, its own unique *Gestalt,* whereby every individual and group strives to perceive, understand, act, create, live.

Herder was virtually apolitical. His devotion was to the *polis,* and he abhorred the political state. Mr. Berlin says:

> His central belief was expressed towards the end of his life in words similar to his early writings: "To brag of one's country is the stupidest form of boastfulness. A nation is a wild garden full of bad plants and good, vices and follies mingle with virtues and merit. What Don Quixote will break a lance for this Dulcinea?" Patriotism was one thing, nationalism another: "An innocent attachment to family language, one's own city, one's own country, its traditions, is not to be condemned." But he goes on to say that "aggressive nationalism" is detestable in all its manifestations, and wars are mere crimes. This is so because "All large wars are essentially civil wars, since men are brothers, and wars are a form of abominable fratricide." A year later he adds: "We must have nobler heroes than Achilles, loftier patriots than Horatio Cocles." . . .
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> He believed in kinship, social solidarity, *Volkstum,* nationhood, but to the end of his life he detested and denounced every form of centralization, coercion, and conquest, which were embodied and symbolized both for him, and for his teacher Hamann, in the accursed state. Nature creates nations, not states. "The State is an instrument of happiness for a group," not for men as such. There is nothing against which he thunders more eloquently than imperialism—the crushing of one community by another, the elimination of local cultures trampled under the jackboot of some conqueror. . . . "Millions" of people on the globe live without states . . . father and mother, man and wife, child and brother, friend and man—these are natural relationships through which we become happy; what the *state* can give us is an artificial contrivance; unfortunately it can also deprive us of something far more important—rob us of ourselves.

For Herder, all the world is a divine expression, but he rejects any sort of personal God. His Deity is Spinoza's, although the transition from an infinite, all-pervasive principle to the knowable living world manifesting deific powers remains for him a mystery. What we can understand of deity lies in the powers and forces of nature and of man. He will not accept the Enlightenment dogma that the world is to be regarded as a great machine to be studied in terms of mechanical laws alone. The world is rather a living organism made up of "dynamic, purpose-seeking forces, the interplay of which constitutes all movement and growth." These forces, Mr. Berlin

says, are not mechanically causal, but seem to derive from neo-Platonic and Renaissance mysticism.

Herder's feeling for community is identified by Mr. Berlin as a pure and innocent sort of Populism. He says:

> Populism may often have taken reactionary forms and fed the stream of aggressive nationalism; but the form in which Herder held it was democratic and peaceful not only anti-dynastic and anti-elitist, but deeply anti-political directed against organized power, whether of nations, classes, races or parties. . . . It is, as a rule, pluralistic, looks on government as an evil, tends, following Rousseau, to identify "the people" with the poor, the peasants, the common folk, the plebeian masses, uncorrupted by wealth or city life. . . . It is based on belief in loose textures, voluntary associations natural ties, and is bitterly opposed to armies, bureaucracies, "closed" societies of any sort.

It seems evident that Herder's strong attack on political unification and cultural uniformity grew out of his distrust for the shallow Enlightenment rationalism which became the guide of the ruthless leaders of the French Revolution. Like other romantics, he was horrified by the bloody methods of the Terror in France and the attempt of the Encyclopedists to lay out a single path of human development. He took Hamann's advice "to avoid becoming deadened by the passion for classification and generalization demanded by the network of tidy concepts, a fatal tendency which he attributed to the natural sciences and their slaves, the Frenchmen who wished to transform everything by the application of scientific method." In his most famous work, *Ideas Toward a Philosophy of History,* he emphasized the particularities of human life rather than the elements which can be generalized into categories. Like Vico, he maintained that the task of the historian is to enter into the minds of others:

> For to explain human experiences or attitudes is to be able to transpose oneself by sympathetic imagination into the situation of the human beings who are to be "explained", and this amounts to understanding and communicating the coherence of a particular way of life, feeling, action: and thereby the validity of the given act or action, the part it plays in the life and outlook which is "natural" in the situation. Explanation and justification, reference to causes and to purposes, to the visible and the invisible, statements of fact and their assessment in terms of the historical standards of value relevant to them, melt into one another, and seem to Herder to belong to a single type, and not several types of thinking. Herder is one of the originators of the secular doctrine of the unity of fact and value, theory and practice "is" and "ought," intellectual judgement and emotional commitment, thought and action.

Each phase of individual experience, whether of person or community, is to be worked out to its fruition, and *needs* to be worked out, not interrupted by some overseeing manager of utopian goals who wishes to order the diversities of experience from without. Yet there is a common end, however vague—*Humanität,* the true fulfillment of human kind—which the systematizers should allow to be realized in its own time. Herder wants no abstractly defined goal of the sort that makers of physical definition are comfortable with, but looks to progressive development in the round:

> "Once upon a time men were all things: poets, thinkers legislators, land surveyors, musicians, warriors." In those days there was unity of theory and practice, of man and citizen, a unity that division of labor destroyed, after that "Men became half thinkers, half feelers." There is, he remarks something amiss about moralists who do not act, epic poets who are unheroic, orators who are not statesmen, and aestheticians who cannot create anything. Once doctrines are accepted uncritically—as dogmatic, unalterable, eternal truths—they become dead formulas, or else their meaning is fearfully distorted. Such ossification and decay lead to nonsense in thought and monstrous behavior in practice.

Herder's opposition to planners, because of their inclination to fit human beings into a single procrustean mold, had the effect of weakening his formulation of a common goal, yet this flaw results from the resistance of living process to analytical definition:

> The springs of life are mysterious, hidden from those who lack the sense of the inwardness of the spirit of a society, an age, a movement—a sensibility killed by the dissection practiced by the French *lumières* and their academic German imitators. Like Hamann he is convinced that clarity, rigor, acuteness of analysis, rational, orderly arrangement, whether in theory or in practice, can be bought at too high a price. In this sense he is the profoundest critic of the Enlightenment, as formidable as Burke or de Maistre, but free from their reactionary prejudices and hatred of equality and fraternity.

COMMENTARY
UNITY OF FACT AND VALUE

THE validity of a course of action, according to Herder (see Review), is established by showing that it is "natural" in a given situation. This is accomplished through the fusion of fact and value which, Isaiah Berlin says, "melt into one another and seem to Herder to belong to a single type, and not several types of thinking."

This is the resolution to act against "a sea of troubles," sought, but not achieved, by Hamlet. It is also the "tragic, ruthless glance" of Ortega's ship-wrecked man, looking for something to which to cling, "because it is a question of his salvation, will cause him to bring order into the chaos of his life."

Few have discussed this ultimate confrontation with greater perceptiveness than A. H. Maslow, in the chapter, "Fusion of Facts and Values," in *Farther Reaches of Human Nature.* Facts, he points out, must be stripped of their disguise as morally neutral "things."

But what facts say depends upon our reading of them. Indeed yes. And our reading of the facts depends upon our reading of ourselves—the other half of the fusion. Maslow says:

> Facts don't just lie there, like oatmeal in a bowl; they do all sorts of things. They group themselves, and they complete themselves; an incompleted series "calls for" a good completion. The crooked picture on the wall begs to be straightened; the incompleted problem perseverates and annoys us until we finish it. . . . Facts have authority and demandcharacter. They may require of us; they may say "No" or "Yes."
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> The questions that people ask in the search for identity, real self, etc., are very largely "ought" questions: What ought I to do? What ought I to be? . . . What we have learned is that ultimately, the best way for a person to discover what he ought to do is to find out who and what he is, because the path to ethical and value decisions, to wiser choices, to oughtness, is via "isness," via the discovery of facts, truth, reality, the nature of the particular person. The more he knows about his own nature, his deep wishes, his temperament, his constitution, what he seeks and yearns for and what really satisfies him, the more effortless, automatic, and epiphenomenal become his value choices. . . . Many problems simply disappear; many others are easily solved by knowing what is in conformity with one's nature, what is suitable and right. (And we must also remember that knowledge of one's own deep nature is also simultaneously knowledge of human nature in general.)

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
A USE FOR MONSTERS

IT may be difficult, because of so many multiplications and vulgarizations, to restore to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* the intentions of its author—a nineteen-year-old girl who invented this haunting tale to take part in informal competition of ghost stories suggested by Lord Byron—but in view of its immeasurable influence and continuing fascination, an attempt in this direction should be worth making.

The story came to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (not yet Shelley's wife) in a dream which, according to Martin Tropp, contained the essence of the Frankenstein myth. In his recently published book, *Mary Shelley's Monster* (Houghton, Mifflin, $7.95), Mr. Tropp relates that the story was first published in 1818, with an improved edition issued in 1831. His book collects the various influences that combined to inspire the work, then examines the dozens of films based on the story, beginning with the first major *Frankenstein* movie in 1931.

The keynote of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is the misuse of natural powers by man:

> The dream itself grew out of the mind of a strange, remarkable woman who could see the relationship between the potential of man's newfound powers and the awful destructiveness hidden within the self. . . . Even she could hardly imagine the forms her offspring would take. A Darwinian metaphor is apt; *Frankenstein* has become a species, a product of changes wrought by time and circumstance. The evolutionary process has come so far that the ancestral novel has been forgotten by many. . . . Once we know the story Mary Shelley finally presented to the world, we can begin to see why the world took her nightmare for its own. . . .
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> *Frankenstein* is one of those rare works of fiction that is mythopoeic—myth creating. Like Kafka's *Castle,* it has the timeless feeling of nightmare and a structure that gives form to the experience of living in the modern world. . . . Mary Shelley has written a very modern story that defines the relationships between man, machine, and society that arose with the technological revolution.

Mr. Tropp says that his own book will examine Frankenstein "as Mary Shelley's independent response to the direction she saw the world taking." Its value lies in his detailed account of the seriousness of the author's purpose and of the background out of which she wrote.

Mary Shelley was saturated with the idea of the duality of man's nature. She was probably familiar with the stories of *doppelgangers,* then widely current, and knew something of the work of Anton Mesmer, who, as the author remarks, was "closer to the ancient magician than the twentieth century psychiatrist." She thought naturally in mythic terms and her dream suggested to her the dark side of the Promethean legend, as her subtitle, *The Modern Prometheus,* shows. Hesiod said that the Titans, of whom Prometheus was one, tended to "over-reach" themselves. In Western literature, the mythic figure who chooses the path of self-destruction through over-reaching is Faust. Mr. Tropp says

> There are no direct references to Prometheus in *Frankenstein,* but if Mary Shelley's hero is a "modern Prometheus," then he is a Faustian and not a Shelleyan Prometheus. The subtitle is a reminder of the disastrous consequences of attempting to control higher powers for earthly purposes. Her Promethean scientist plays God, building a creature that he hopes will be the first of a "new species [that] would bless me as its creator and source" but which turns out to be the vulture that carries out his eternal torment.

Mary Shelley sees Frankenstein as a pursuer of a corrupted form of the old alchemical ideal. She knew of this dream from Shelley himself, who in his early years was fascinated by alchemy and its medieval teachers. Victor Frankenstein, Mr. Tropp suggests, was in part modelled on Shelley, since as a young poet he studied the works of Albertus Magnus, Paracelsus, and Cornelius Agrippa. Young Dr. Frankenstein's discovery of "the secret of life," through certain grisly experiments, intoxicates him:

> In describing the events leading to the creation of the Monster, Mrs. Shelley shows again her preoccupation with the reflection of the motives of the creator in the things he creates. On this level, the Monster is symbolic of the mechanistic attitude behind man's new technology; its construction out of the parts of dead corpses is a logical extension of the reductive equation of living things with inorganic matter. The Monster as technological double parallels its function as dream self, giving form to the threatening attitude Mrs. Shelley saw behind much of modern science. . . .
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> Simply put, Frankenstein, a classic megalomaniac, thinks "with mounting excitement that he has grasped and solved great cosmic riddles; he therefore loses all touch with reality. A reliable symptom of this condition is the loss of one's sense of humor and of human contacts."

Frankenstein, Mr. Tropp points out, was the first science fiction novel, although the hardware and methods are less important for Mrs. Shelley than the implications of Dr. Frankenstein's attempt, which reaches into the future of present-day research. Modern biologists now speak of being able to make "duplicate" human beings by the method of "cloning," and the author remarks:

> Whether humans will be next depends upon the outcome of the struggle between power and ethics depicted in *Frankenstein.* But even if actual doubles are never created, the implications of Frankenstein's experiment are still evident. All of the things man makes are to some extent copies of himself. Like human beings, they can be good or evil, benevolent or destructive, attractive or repulsive. But they will always be something more than their creator's conscious intentions. The ambiguous nature of the machine has never been symbolized more effectively than by what has been called "Mary Shelley's finest invention"—the Monster.

The Monster is no Caliban, a coarse evolution of unaided nature, over whom the Prospero-aspect of man exercises necessary and beneficent control. The Monster is indeed "born in sin," out of conscious Faustian ambition and pride. Hence the ominous atmosphere which pervades the story, little if any relieved by Mrs. Shelley's ending, apparently intended to emphasize to the reader that daring experiment at the expense of others must always fail, and that the welfare of mankind is the paramount duty of the scientist and of all others. More powerful than this "lesson" is the fundamental theme beneath the surface, that the Monster is Frankenstein's darker self, projected into existence by a modern sorcery, obtaining an identity which becomes stronger than its creator because its evil is unleavened by moral scruple:

> Born of Frankenstein's megalomania, the Monster through its growing awareness of its identity defines the dimensions of its maker's dangerous madness and ties together the many threads of Mary Shelley's novel. Linked in life and death, Frankenstein and the Monster are separate entities and one being, a Lucifer/Satan who play out the Romantic closet drama of the mind, the myth of self-exploration and self-awareness, on a stage that spans the terra incognita of space and time, the unexplored arctic, the unexperienced future. The power of technology gives Frankenstein's dream self a concrete reality and a separate existence, allowing it to act out its maker's fantasies with terrible results. That it becomes a devil is determined by the nature of Frankenstein's experiment and his blindness to his own motivations. Both creator and creature are presented . . . as an object lesson of where a narcissistic science can lead.

How might a teacher make use of the material in this book? Since practically every child is familiar with some aspect of the Frankenstein story, any reference to it provides means to trace its inspiration back to the legend of Prometheus and the drama of Faust. In *36 Children,* Herbert Kohl tells how he used the street jargon word *psyches,* which a member of his sixth grade in Harlem had applied as an epithet to a classmate. Kohl picked up the term, asked what it meant, then related it to its origin in the story of Cupid and Psyche. Finally, Kohl asked the class what myths did, and a child answered, "They told the story and said things about the mind at the same time."

FRONTIERS
Trusteeship of Earth

LITTLE by little, acquisitive enterprise is losing ground. In many parts of the world it has already succumbed to what is called socialism but is really state-controlled capitalism. In such cases the change, while it may have altered the patterns of distribution, has done little to affect the quality of human motivation and goals. The real change, when it occurs, is rather in the feelings and attitudes of people. This takes place wherever the idea of going into business in order to get rich, to have more possessions and power over other people, is losing its hypnotic power. Something along these lines is certainly happening among the most promising members of the coming generation. They are not accepting the invitations to employment by large corporations. They don't seem to worry much about "security" or their "economic future." When it comes to making a living, they are content to improvise. A generational fraternity, loose and undemanding, unites these young people in casual trust in one another. Often the trust is misused, but it nonetheless persists.

This mood of trust is an implicit declaration that human life ought not to be lived on any other basis. The endless talk about "community" is an expression of the longing for trust. The thousands of experimental communes around the country, while often transient, are a tangible symptom of the same feeling. They keep on springing up in different forms. Quite possibly, by the end of the century, working simply to "make money," or organizing a venture merely to reap profits, will be for a substantial number—enough to set the pace—an outworn and alien idea.

Lagging behind this tendency are tentative efforts to provide some theory to give these emerging attitudes social form. Everywhere ideal theory is confronted by contradictory institutionalized practice, so that change must be ingeniously adaptive, resourceful, and able to gain small footholds through expedient compromise. Theory can only leave blanks to make room for such inventiveness, and must, in consequence, seem vague or weak. Yet loosely structured theory is necessary for a general return to a community sort of life. Until trust is once again established as the only lasting basis for human relations, we shall need a few definitions, some contractual forms, and formulations of goals. Nowadays, if you don't have pieces of paper which tell who you legally are and describe your relations with the socio-economic system, it may be difficult to prove that you exist.

Gandhi was probably the first in this century to propose that the society of the future will have to be founded on trust. Since the present age is obsessed and shaped by economic goals, he began his reform with the idea that all wealth is held in trust:

> Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth—either by way of a legacy, or by means of trade and industry—I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me; what belongs to me is the right to an honorable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community. I enunciated this theory when the socialist theory was placed before the country in respect to possessions held by zamindars [land administrators] and ruling chiefs. They would do away with these privileged classes. I want them to outgrow their greed and sense of possession, and to come down in spite of their wealth to the level of those who earn their bread by labor. The laborer has to realize that the wealthy man is less owner of his wealth than the laborer is owner of his own, viz., the power to work.
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> The question how many can be real trustees according to this definition is beside the point. If the theory is true, it is immaterial whether many live up to it or only one man lives up to it. If you accept the principle of Ahimsa [harmlessness], you have to strive to live up to it, no matter whether you succeed or fail. There is nothing in this theory which can be said to be beyond the grasp of intellect, though you may say it is difficult of practice.

This is quoted from a small booklet, *Humanized Society Through Trusteeship,*

expounding Gandhi's idea, edited and published for the Trusteeship Foundation by G. B. Deshpande, 12, Punam, 67, L. Jagmohandas Marg, Bombay 400 006, India. (The price is three rupees—fifty cents will include mailing costs.)

Gandhi made this proposal in his magazine, *Harijan,* in 1938. Not many people responded—the idea was so "simple," so "idealistic." Today, however, the spirit of trusteeship is in the air. There are businesses in both continental Europe and Britain which are organized to embody various aspects of the trusteeship idea. These often successful experiments are described at some length by Folkert Wilken in *The Liberation of Work* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969). The achievements of the Scott Bader Commonwealth in England are examined in detail by Fred H. Blum in *Work and Community* (1969, same publisher). In the United States, a pioneering work is *The Community Land Trust* by Robert Swann and his associates of the International Independence Institute ($4.00), West Road, Box 183, Ashby, Mass. 01431.

Trusteeship—the idea that land and wealth are held in trust, that we oughtn't to hold or use more land or money than we need—is a conception which gives articulate voice to the spontaneous feelings of people who want to change their lives. Reading about this conception—the practical and moral logic behind it—will be helpful to those who wonder how to start out acting against the grain of the times. It may seem difficult or impractical, but there are ways to do it. Knowing the theory will help. The consistency of trusteeship with present-day thinking about ecology and environmental conservation, and with Thomas Jefferson's vision of America as a place where the people naturally transmit what they use of the earth's resources, undiminished in productivity and bounty, to the next generation, seems completely obvious.

The foundation of trusteeship is the solidarity of the interests of all human beings. Trust is also at the base of the implicit logic of today's economic necessity. To introduce a plan of organization of a trusteeship industry, Mr. Deshpande quotes E. F. Schumacher, who points to the effort that will be required to transform human relations with the earth into a planetary trusteeship:

> The concept of a society in a steady state of economic and ecological equilibrium may appear easy to grasp, although the reality is so distant from our experience as to require a Copernican revolution of the mind. Translating the idea into deed, though, is a task filled with overwhelming difficulties and complexities. We can talk seriously about where to start only when the message of the Limits to Growth, and its sense of extreme urgency, are accepted by a large body of scientific, political, and popular opinion in many countries. The transition in any case is likely to be painful, and it will make extreme demands on human ingenuity and determination. As we have mentioned, only the conviction that there is no other avenue to survival can liberate the moral, intellectual, and creative forces required to initiate this unprecedented human undertaking. . . .

It might be added that while "survival" may supply the compulsion needed for general support of this undertaking, the beginning and initial momentum will come—can only come—from people who are trustees because they find themselves unwilling and unable to live in any other way.