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NON-POLITICAL POLITICS

WHEN a man, pressed by some final extremity, no longer appeals or explains, but simply cries out, he is trying to say *everything* at once. What else can he do? Words have failed. The cry is the sound of his naked will to be understood. For he is a man who can find no distance at all between the world of realities and the world of symbols. The space he once used for resonating meaning has collapsed, so he shrieks with the voice of the horns that brought down Jericho. He turns into an untutored but practicing magician.

There is no more obscene horror in human life than the fact that such cries can be ignored. And no bitterer irony than that they can also be imitated—even "programmed." So society easily finds excuses for creating sound-barriers equipped with filters to transmit only what people want to hear. We have to shut out the noise, they say. The men who remain unheard must now find champions who devise amplifiers, and sometimes these champions are heroic and great, while there are others who make capital out of fear and desperation. Telling the difference between these champions often requires a very sensitive ear. Many people won't bother to try.

Then, after a while, because of the fierce competition of these and other elaborate sound-producing devices it becomes easy for a man to justify whatever he wants to do. Any skillful reasoner can give him reasons. A whole apparatus of explanation can be attached to every position, so that, finally, a popular distrust of all explanation results. The language of humane intent is no longer credible on the surface, and how many people will go down deep for meaning? There has been a combination in restraint of truth.

This analysis seems transparently accurate. It may not give the whole picture—what analysis could?—but it surely discloses some of the facts we need most in this age of muffled cries. The case for this analysis grows stronger every day. It has countless statements. There is for example the case made by *The Inhabitants,* a novel in which Julius Horwitz records his experience as a social worker in Puerto Rican Harlem in New York. The best thing about a humane social worker is almost certainly his intentions. He tries to drill small openings in the social combination for restraint and confusion of truth. In the following passage, the social worker who tells the story keeps an appointment:

> I hurried to Service to see Miss Fletcher. Service is a big ugly room, ugly like all the loft buildings in New York. Long, attached wooden seats filled the room. And on the benches sit the people who have nowhere else to sit. No confessional box. No rabbi's study. No mother who will listen. No father. We have lost our father. That's what I thought as I hurried down into Service. We have lost our father. And no one can tell us where to find him.
>
> I saw Miss Fletcher sitting beside the bare-top desk near the window. She held her baby across her knee, burping her. She looked up when she saw me. And I immediately saw that she had come to Service like everyone else. She had no other place to flee to.
>
> Just as I crossed the middle of the room a Negro girl stood up and screamed. I saw her screaming at the interview desk of Mrs. Nivens. She turned toward the wooden benches to scream. The people on the benches stared dumbly at her wideopen mouth. Mrs. Nivens sat quietly at her desk waiting for the girl to stop screaming.
>
> "Why did she scream?" Miss Fletcher asked me.
>
> "Probably because Mrs. Nivens asked her a question that she couldn't give an honest answer to."
>
> "Do people often scream here like that?"
>
> "Some do it loudly, most do it quietly. But everybody screams."
>
> Miss Fletcher took her comfort where she could find it. She sat up her baby and wiped its face with a diaper. The baby smiled.

"It's just a gas pain," Miss Fletcher said. "She can't smile yet."

"She'll learn," I said. . . .

The Negro girl screamed again. Miss Fletcher dropped the bottle she was holding. The Negro girl broke just as the bottle broke. She stood up screaming, "I'm human! I'm human! I'm human! You dirty son of a bitch, can't you see that I'm human!"

The cry of being human was the most commonplace cry in the Service. I heard it daily. It's the spatial cry of the beggar. Look the next time you see a beggar. The successful beggar always suggests he too is human. I don't know why we should have beggars. But beggars beg you to look upon their face. And they are vicious when you turn from their face. Almost like the anger of a god. I knew one boy who begged on the subways. He had twisted legs and one arm chopped off. He dragged himself up in front of each passenger and stared into his face.

"What does she want?" Miss Fletcher asked.

"She wants to be human too." . . .

The facts behind this story are too complicated to permit isolation of those who may be personally to blame for all these cries of pain. The pain is real and the dissimulations of some of the people who cry out are practiced in order to escape the pain. So, the bureaucracy of the social service has a double function: to deal with the pain, one way or another, so that these people can try to go on living, and to keep the evidence of pain at a bearable distance from the taxpayers. Not many people want to hear cries of pain, so the cries are deadened by the sound-barriers of the system. The life of the poor in the city becomes a long, low, sigh.

If you have a sensitive ear, you keep on hearing that sigh. You imagine all the rest. Some men, after hearing it, find themselves unfitted for hearing anything else.

When a man cries out on the streets of a good, small town, people hear him. They ask him what's the matter. He isn't a stranger. He's one of the people and they'll help him. It is this spontaneous helping which keeps many people from ever getting into desperate situations. The barriers found in cities don't exist in this small, good town. There aren't all those terrible distances between people. They have sensibility for one another's pain. This of itself does a lot to abolish the causes of pain, making unnecessary the cries of the totally ignored.

So the complexity of the arrangements through which people relate to one another is an important factor in the causation of pain. Simple arrangements bring out the good in people; complex arrangements suppress it. The more informal or, as we say, "natural" the arrangements, the less pain they generate. This seems a fact of human life. It is the fact on which the philosophy of anarchism is based.

The proposition of Anarchism is that the State—the sovereign power which creates elaborate structures in the service of ends which are not the natural ends of human beings—is the chief source of evil in human life. The State establishes cold, inhuman distances between people. It replaces natural longings with artificial, anti-human allegiances. It suppresses spontaneous sympathies with the contracts of law. It turns men against their own best qualities and creates situations in which people find themselves unable to do what they want and ought to do. By making them feel dependent upon the power of the State, it develops fear of any life without it. Its benefits lose all semblance of human decency by being suspiciously counted by nervous men who are terrorized by the idea of uncalculating generosity. *You have* to count, they say. Just *look* at all the problems we take care of! The State is both the symbol and the instrument of dehumanization.

Finally, being dependent for information upon the statistics of its own status quo, the State rationalizes a very low estimate of human potentiality and then administers an order based on this technical contempt for people. And it lies about what it is doing. In a brash, hypocritical way it talks about people being "good." This tends to make the people share in the contempt.

So, by these means, the State and its pretentious devices become a major "reality" in people's lives. The State is thus the origin of their self-hate and of their disbelief in the possibilities of a good life for free human beings, "free" meaning without any State.

Anarchism is, paradoxically, anti-political politics. It has a theory of good—the high potentialities of human nature when liberated from the evil confinements and prejudicial influences of the State. But what is anarchism, if anything at all, before it takes on political coloring? To ask what anarchism would be, independent of its conflict with the State, may be equivalent to reading it out of existence for old-time anarchists, whose definitions of anarchism all seem "reactionary"—predicated on struggle with the Enemy. Yet some positive conceptions exist.

In an article in the August *Commentary,* George Woodcock discusses the underlying reasons for the new wave of anarchist ideas to be discerned throughout modern youth movements. As evidence of the fact of this wave, Mr. Woodcock reports:

> A political science teacher in a Canadian university wrote me of the curious results of a quiz on political preferences which he had given to the 160 students in his class on Contemporary Ideologies. Ninety of them chose anarchism in preference to democratic socialism (which came next with twenty-three votes), liberalism, Communism, and conservativism. Most of the students seemed as square as students run in the late 1960's; only a small minority were overt hippies or New Leftists.

Why? A little later Mr. Woodcock answers:

> What the anarchist tradition has to give the radical young is perhaps, first of all, the vision of a society in which every relation would have moral rather than political characteristics. The anarchist believes in a moral urge in man powerful enough to survive the destruction of authority and still to hold society together in the free and natural bonds of fraternity. Recent events—the civil rights campaigns, the revolts in the Negro ghettos, the behavior of have-not countries toward their prosperous benefactors—have shown that even in a materialist culture, non-materialist values will make an irrational but convincing clamor. The relations among men are moral in nature, and politics can never entirely embrace them. This the anarchists have always insisted. . . . The great anarchists—and here I am not considering the embittered last-ditch defenders who represented the historic movement in the 1940's—laid a constant stress on the natural, the spontaneous, the unsystematic. For them individual judgment held primacy; dogmas impeded one's understanding of the quality of life. That life, they believed, should be as simple and as near to nature as possible. This urge toward the simple, natural way of life made men like Kropotkin urgently concerned over the alienation of men in modern cities and the destruction of the countryside, themes that are dear to New Radicals.

Well, these are all pre-political virtues. That is to say, they represent human achievements to which political power is irrelevant, except as an obstacle. And since the goal of anarchism is conceived as the uninhibited flow of these qualities, how can anarchism be conceived of as political at all? It can't, save in its high-noon confrontation with and overt rejection of the State. *Then* it is political, and then only.

If one waters down this idea of confrontation with the State, then, for traditional anarchists, there is probably no anarchism left, but only maundering sentimentality. Yet something like this is happening, according to Mr. Woodcock, who says that the "new" anarchism is distinguished by "the absence of some of the elements which were part of classical anarchism." In particular:

> There is no longer much talk of barricades and revolutionary heroism, and while "direct action" is a phrase continually on the lips of New Radicals, it means something very near to Gandhian civil disobedience, which the Old Anarchists would despise ostentatiously. I believe all these changes are to the good, since they represent the liberation of useful libertarian ideas from many of those elements of the historic anarchist movement which its critics, with a degree of justification, condemned. The anarchists of the past were too much inclined, despite their fervent anti-Marxism, to accept the stereotypes of 19th-century left-wing thinking: the idea of the class struggle as a dominant and constructive force in society, the romantic cult of insurrectionism and terror, and even—though this is rarely admitted—a

> vision of proletarian dictatorship, particularly among the anarcho-syndicalists who envisaged a society run by monolithic workers' unions. Those who openly or unwittingly advocate anarchistic ideas today have mostly shed these outdated concepts, together with much else of the ideological baggage of the Old Left. The revolutionary tactics of Bakunin are as dead as if they were buried with him among the solid burghers of Berne. It is unlikely that we shall see a revival of a movement dedicated to pursuing them, however far libertarian ideas and impulses may spread among the young and influence their social and moral concepts.

As suggested, those who take the essence of anarchism to be absolute confrontation with the State will probably regard what Mr. Woodcock says as destructive of anarchism's identity. But perhaps this does not matter. Definitions will not change things much. The fact is that in an age of intense concentration on political remedies for social agony, the real error was seen to be in politics itself, and the anarchists proposed a single, climactic, political act of revolution to abolish politics. But surely the *essence* of anarchism lies in the capacity to recognize the evil; opposing it involves only a decision about means.

Behind this theory was a deep human longing and high faith in unspoiled human beings. It happens that you can hear this longing and shy expressions of its faith from a great many people who have never heard of anarchism. And when they do hear of it, they crawl a little further into their defensive shells. Why? Because it frightens them. They don't like the anger and the eagerness for conflict. And if the anarchists sound as if they have taken out a political patent on the pre-political qualities which they cherish, and on which the high hopes of their doctrine are based, why, then, since anarchists are often positive people, it may seem to others who listen to them that there is just no hope at all. For the anarchist seems to be saying that there can be no realization of human community, no compassionate relationships or friendly cooperation, without first engaging in searing, bloody, revolutionary struggle with the powers-that-be. As Mr. Woodcock says:

> It was a hard, no-compromise view; either completely non-governmental society, or nothing at all. The Old Anarchists never came within light years of attaining such a goal, hence the glorious record of unsuccess which is now so much to anarchism's advantage.

Its light, that is, has not failed. But anarchism's light, as with Plato's Republic, is the light of a *vision.* It has, you could say, fifty-one per cent of the truth, but it never gets the sort of practical application that might become possible through a little acquaintance with the other forty-nine. Yet, having roots in the ideals and longings of all mankind, the vision can never die. Mr. Woodcock thinks it is now being reborn in a less doctrinaire format. This is also what Paul Goodman thinks (see his article in the New York *Times* Magazine for last July 14).

What, one wonders, would happen to anarchism if it attempted—would submit to—assimilation of the insights of humanistic psychology? What would happen if anarchist thinkers let themselves be drawn into non-political studies such as investigating the roots of human fear? If fear has kept anarchism from spreading far and wide, then preaching *Götterdämmerung* or *Ragnarok* is not exactly the best means of winning friends for anarchism. What sort of constancy and courage can a man devote to a social ideal without becoming a threat to other people?

It is true, of course, that all good men are eventually seen as threats to the survival of evil. But this is an involuntary threat, not something planned, not something brandished to intimidate. . . . And who, after all, will be intimidated? Who, besides the faint-hearted who need rather to be strengthened before they will dare to try to save themselves?

Mr. Woodcock may have a glimpse of the answer to this question, still to be worked out in history:

> The liberalization of a society is, in fact, an evolutionary and not an apocalyptic process, and can only be obtained by concentrating on piecemeal changes. These changes are to be attained not by

> rejecting all laws, since some restraints are manifestly necessary in any foreseeable future society, but by searching out those areas in which authoritarian methods and bureaucratic methods have manifestly failed or over-extended themselves, and by endeavoring to give practical application to libertarian concepts of decentralization, voluntarism, and direct participation in decision-making.

This may be a way of saying that the systems under which men are *living* must be replaced by a combination of diverse activities, including leavening, withdrawal of nourishment, and counter-functions which absorb vital elements, one after the other, into the new structures of an emerging community life. The heart has to go on beating while the changes are accomplished.

REVIEW
THE PARTISAN LOGICS

WHETHER it is a report of the Democratic Convention, the declining health of Mother Earth, the profits and shallow self-justifications of the drug industry, the mindless invasion and take-over of social institutions by the technological process, or the ignominious contentions of the prosecution in the trial of Dr. Spock, the best articles in the best magazines all now seem to bring the reader to the shores of uncharted futility. What can he do? There is no question as to the reality of the evils and abuses these articles explore and anatomize. They exist. They are getting worse. And while one article is an urgent appeal to the people to exert themselves as citizens to bring about reforms, the next discussion may turn out to be a detailed study of the practical inaccessibility of solutions to people like ourselves.

For years we have been warned of the "sterility" in attending to other-worldly visions. Plato, for at least a century, has been called an enemy of human progress for locating "the good" high above the earthly affairs of men, in static, archetypal planes of being. Mystics have been declared short-circuiters of human resolve, quietists without care for the sufferings of their fellows; and philosophers, unless they gave up asking fundamental questions and became rationalizers of Baconian definitions and ambitions, were laughed out of town.

Well, let us turn things around. Let us see what has happened to us under the guidance and in the hands of practical leaders. What have we gained by avoiding preoccupation with Platonic abstractions—with no "pure forms" to take our minds off "real" problems?

Free of all such siren calls, and even of trivial æsthetic interests, we have let a tough pragmatism determine our moral ideas—which, indeed, are simple and few—and left far behind all unprovable metaphysics and "intuitionist" assumptions. Like docile children we have taken the prescriptions of some very confident men of the nineteenth century, and their successors in the twentieth. This is a medicine which tastes like candy, we said.

So, being now in trouble, let us turn things around. Having divested ourselves of "idealism," how do we occupy those few moments left for reflection about what we ought to do next?

If current magazines are any guide, we make inductive studies of failure. We have become learned empiricists of self-defeat, scarcely avoiding the "law" implied. Take for example two of the best magazines published in America—edited out of genuine concern for human good? written by the most competent specializing essayists and humanist journalists of our time, and read by that portion of the population which has legitimate claim to similar virtues. The magazines are the *Nation* and the *Progressive*. The issues before us—the *Nation* for Aug. 26 and the *Progressive* for September—provide particularized studies of the failing enterprises of man. It's pretty hard to find *anything* hopeful in these issues of these magazines. They are not of course willing or eager chroniclers of despair. They are not and are not meant to be that. But for a man who tries to practice inductive logic, who reads these magazines for the facts and something of their meaning, and who recognizes that he will go far to find papers as honestly devoted to impartial report—such a man is bound to feel the pressure of certain over-arching generalizations. They loom at him from all sides. These are the generalizations we have already made. Not much of good is happening in the world. The good exists, but, as in Plato's day, it is in men's minds, in their hopes, and is known only by desperately expressed longings. It is in the sorely confined but undying existential vision of human beings. And the combination of the narrowing aperture of this vision with the "facts" as reported is what makes Sisyphus the culture hero of our time.

So we have these terrible if not yet formulated abstractions of failure occupying the region we decided to deny to Platonic vision. These are the generalizations which rise like ghostly Furies from the facts in our daily reading; we don't yet put them into words—that would confess to "failure of nerve"—but already they have practically frightened the arts out of existence, as might some paralyzing gas which afflicts only painters and poets. Ordinary people come next.

Curiously, these dark abstractions have attributes in common with the scorned Platonic Ideas. Their truth can be *felt,* but what you do about your feeling remains an individual decision. You can't organize an opposition. And while the Platonic forms are still "up there"—which is why we said we had no use for them—the threatening abstractions of the present are all *out* there, and we can't get at them, either.

Well, we keep trying. And those hard-working editors keep trying to help us. They give us the facts, as accurately and as impartially as they can. They certainly deserve no complaint from their readers, who would be totally isolated in a web of misleading propaganda and unrelated partisan logics if they did not read such magazines.

There is, however, one big question. Are we doing the right sort of "reality-testing" in our reaction to all this material? You can derive general principles inductively, from experience, and that is what we have done. But you can also get them from Vision. The question is, do we have a real choice between the two modes? Would we become ineffectual dreamers by saying to ourselves: We must find generalizations about reality which permit us to act in some new way, since the ideas we now have are making action impossible. (And we are dreamers, anyhow, but our dreams are nightmares.) In *theory,* of course, we can still act, but the mechanisms we have devised as the means of action no longer work. There is not much doubt about the fact that these mechanisms no longer work. And now even the *rationale* of action seems to be breaking down. The problem is to face the fact of breakdown. And we *can't* face it so long as we remain convinced that there is no other way to act except through these tried but increasingly untrue mechanisms.

Meanwhile every recognized and ticketed specialist in our society keeps crying out for "radical" change. They all *know* things can't be made to work much longer, the way they are. Anthony Wedgewood Benn, Minister of Technology in Britain's Labour Government, contends (in the *Nation* for Aug. 26) that the autonomous logic of technology has made present systems of government, education, civil service, and law obsolete. If we don't do what we must do—and this "realist" has an overnight revolution in mind for poor "human nature"—"discontent," he predicts, "expressing itself in despairing apathy or violent protest, could engulf us all." He means that it will.

Another article in this issue of the *Nation* is the most urgent brief account of ecological disaster that we have seen. Dozens of experts are made to testify to the extreme situation of the planet—produced by "rocketing population, an insatiable spiral of economic expansion, as well as a gargantuan and pitiless technology." The "or else" warnings come in almost every paragraph. One is a summary:

> The real solution to this whole complex of civilized afflictions is a package of such cultural intricacy—it calls for revolutionary shifts in values and social goals—that time and intense effort alone can bring it about. In the long run, the conservationist cannot really save any natural wonder, any threatened species, any significant open space, breathable air, potable water, or the amenities of civilization unless he grapples with the self-destroying expansionist doctrine.

This is simply a way of saying that the modern theory of Progress is wrong and must be abandoned.

The *Progressive* for September has these articles: "G.M. and the Auto Industry: The Threat of Corporate Collectivism," by Ralph Nader; "The Great Drug 'Robbery'," by Morton Mintz; "Who Are the 'Vietcong'?" by Adam Schesch; and "The Strange Trial of Dr. Spock," by John P. McKenzie. Mr. Nader's article might have been titled, "As GM Goes, so Goes the Nation." Mr. Nader has a first-hand acquaintance with the power of General Motors, having played David to its Goliath in a number of encounters, leading, finally, to a few overdue reforms in automotive safety. Author of *Unsafe at Any Speed*, he is probably the country's most articulate citizen in pointing to the abyss which separates corporate practice from public good—a skill which is matched by his ability to strip away the camouflage intended to conceal deeper canyons of indifference. As for attempts to regulate or control this mammoth enterprise which dominates a market receiving one out of every six consumer-goods dollars, the report is uniformly discouraging. Charges of monopoly bring ponderous grand jury investigations but no action. "The matter is still under study," inquirers are told. Mr. Nader comments laconically: "Anti-trust chiefs come and go, and the reply remains the same." Another of his asides: "All the published research on crash safety by the industry since 1920 can be digested in a day's reading."

Again:

> Would the consumer crave for styling changes if he knew that they are costing him at least $700 of the price of his new car? Especially if he had a choice of not having them and saving the difference?

The drug industry story in the *Progressive* reviews Congressional hearings called in response to the demand of the President of the United States for an end to "robbery of private citizens with public approval." Yet the hearings left unexplained why a druggist in the United States had to pay $17.90 for 100 tablets that were bought by a druggist in Berne for $4.37, or why the price for these same tablets skipped from $12.20 in Rome, to $5.30 in Rio, to $22.70 in Canada.

The point of the article on Dr. Spock is that this kindly man might not have been convicted save for the ridiculous "conspiracy" charge a weapon devised by harassed prosecutors for convicting members of the *Mafia*—now turned against a man who concealed nothing that he did. He is guilty, apparently, of making an open covenant with life. And the article on the Vietcong says in detail what everybody who reads a little on the Vietnam war knows—that the National Liberation Front was of spontaneous origin in South Vietnam; that it united various groups and individuals, among them communists; that it linked themes of nationalism and social revolution and was more reformist than Marxist; and that it showed "a wary determination to deal with the Soviet Union and China in a friendly fashion but at arm's length." This, as the author, a historian of Southeast Asia, says, is "in sharp contrast to the U.S. State Department's monolithic picture of subservient cadres starting on their work on orders from Hanoi." As for the present Paris negotiations, recent published letters between Ho Chi Minh and an NLF leader disclose that Hanoi cannot speak for the fighters in the South. Mr. Schesch concludes:

> This means that the fight will go on until the NLF is recognized by the United States. The Southern-born and Southern-led NLF has made it clear that for peace to come to Vietnam it must be regarded as the major element in the "other side" of today's Vietnamese war.

Well, it is good to have magazines which print such material—facts and analysis which gain the assent of the reader by internal evidence of candor, accuracy, and impartial human concern. But it is even more important to realize that the cumulative effect of knowing all these discouraging things is to produce a general feeling of being shut out from human life. How shall we get back in?

COMMENTARY
THE STAGES OF HUMAN GROWTH

IT is not difficult to recognize the reflections of the "three distinct levels of moral development" (see Frontiers) in social institutions. The police, for example, impose a rude order at the preconventional level, and exercise physical power for this purpose.

Law is an instrument of convention, likewise the vast majority of educational institutions. Law and education give public definition to "the process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values."

The presence among us of institutions serving postconventional morality is more obscure. An institution devoted to autonomy is almost a contradiction in terms, yet groups which guard the individual against excesses of conventional restraint—such as the American Civil Liberties Union—have autonomous morality as their ideal, and religions which cherish the promise of the Inner Light—declaring that no man or institution has authority to put it out—guard the vestibules and ascents to the postconventional level. Yet when we speak of this level we think spontaneously of individuals for illustration, not groups.

We should of course add the anarchists to the list of those devoted to postconventional morality. A great deal of the energy of the anarchists, as Mr. Woodcock shows, has been devoted to condemnation of conventional morality, and to contrasting the dream of a life without confining institutions to the imprisonments suffered by people under conventional rules of security and order. But what anarchist criticism habitually—habitually, but not always—leaves out is the fact that the institutions and "levels" of social existence are not watertight; they are not sealed containers, absolutely predetermining how men behave and what they think. They are more like colanders—forms with numerous openings, holds with escape hatches, walls with interstices. And it is the same with the inner struggles and advances of individuals. The movement from one stage to another is first a subtle change of the balances in individuals—bringing a *flow*, not a violent jump; and the openings in social arrangements can be made to accommodate, more or less, this inner progression. The open attack; on rigid institutions is only a last-ditch action, not the essential engagement. The changes accomplishing *growth* are made up of countless, small, "molecular" alterations, which finally reshape both individuals and society.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
LAMPS TO BE LIGHTED

WHAT we see emerging in the present-day generation gap is a conflict between those who perceive human social growth and development as a process of enculturation, and those who see it as a process of acculturation. Enculturation assumes that human social growth and development is effected by adjusting, fitting, or otherwise conforming the individual to a predetermined pattern of socially defined norms. Enculturation implies the *transfer* to the young of values and behavioral patterns which are meant to be internalized and obeyed without serious question. It implies that the human organism is an object to be culturally programmed.

The concept of acculturation, on the other hand, allows for more initiative on the part of the person being conditioned by his culture. It suggests that human social growth and development is a process of *exchange*, rather than of transfer. The difference in emphasis can be seen by a comparison of definitions:

> *Enculturation:* the process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values.
>
> *Acculturation:* a process of intercultural borrowing marked by the continuous transmission of traits and elements between diverse peoples and resulting in new and blended patterns.

The enculturation concept fits quite readily into the Newtonian world-view of a mechanistic, clockwork universe of well-fitted parts. But contemporary physics is replacing the rigid certainties of universe-as-clock with the ambiguous probabilities of universe-as-field-of-force. In modern physics the separate elements of the experienced universe are no longer viewed as cogs assembled into a fixed relationship, but as interdependent energy systems exchanging their energies within a broader system which remains in continuous flux. The above definition of acculturation, with its emphasis on exchange among diverse elements, is analogous, in the cultural universe, to modern physics' image of the physical universe.

What all this suggests to educators is, quite simply, that contemporary knowledge of the nature of the universe is confirming the observation of the nineteenth-century Russian, Alexandrov, that the student is not a vessel to be filled but a lamp to be lighted. New life does not, except when blinded by the virulent form of romance, cry out, "Bend me, shape me, any way you want me." Its plea is, rather, "Help me, guide me, to be the way *I* want me."

The potential destiny of young people is to find their place in the universe. Their increasingly apparent tragedy is that elders will not let them. Born to a universe which was meant to be discovered, they find themselves thwarted by a told universe—a universe which conforms more to somebody else's experience than their own. Parents, churches, schools, governments—their elders in general and the institutions which their elders have devised—tell young people who, what, when, where, why and how to do, and who, what, when, where, why and how to be. But today's youth are much less prone than their predecessors to accept a hand-me-down culture. Some of them are even demanding the right to establish their own culture (often a different version of the prevailing one). The demand for cultural pluralism inherent in the definition of "acculturation" is a very radical one in American society. Current events illustrate only a limited tolerance for political and ideological pluralism, for which our republic supposedly stands. The trend toward a pluralism of life-styles is totally incompatible with the prevailing mind-set.

The reason for the increasing restlessness of the young at the present time is not, of course, the result of their studying physics or culture. It is merely that the fundamental humanity in their nature is asserting itself against the increasingly impersonal and dehumanizing forces of a rigidly

bureaucratized, routinized, clock-like technological society. They don't need to read about the Newtonian world-view to understand their problem. The *medium* is the message, since world-views are communicated not by intellectual concepts so much as by the unconscious but tangible cultural manifestations of those concepts. To sum up the situation briefly, man conceived of the universe as a clock and structured his artifacts and society accordingly, until at present those forces in human nature which suggest that *we* are the message have begun to demand equal time.

The fact that the yearning of the young for a more pluralistic and democratic social reality bears a correspondence to our growing reconception of physical reality indicates that the young are on the side of time. But time is slow when its subject is the evolution of a new-view and appropriate new cultural manifestations thereof, so that time is not perceived as being on the side of the young. Understanding the situation may help them to hasten the evolution, but no degree of understanding will enable them to transform complex cultural patterns and their technological and institutional props in the short run. Nor will it more than partially prevent tension, conflict, and other disjunctive forces over the long run. We are all in for a long time of troubles. Understanding will help us to live with these troubles, but only time will allow us to resolve them.

Which does not mean that we merely sit and wait for time to take its course. In the educational realm we are challenged to complement our present dissection of the world *à la* Newtonian mechanics by putting it together *à la* field theory. We must cease our exclusive curricular preoccupation with analysis and develop some curriculum for synthesis. We must supplement our present monologue on disciplines with dialogue on issues.

At the basis of student dissatisfaction with the present curriculum is the increasingly obvious fact that while the world will submit to sociological analysis, economic analysis, mathematical analysis, physical analysis, logical analysis, etc., its problems will not submit to a sociological solution, an economic solution, a mathematical solution, a physical solution, a logical solution, etc. The world presents its problems in wholes, and partial solutions often only aggravate the total problem. Today's student discovers that his forebears are presenting him with the problem of managing an entire world, but are preparing him to manage only a tiny discipline.

The solution is not to be found in the creation of what are generally known as interdisciplinary courses. The only difference between an interdisciplinary course and a single disciplinary course is the increased number of single disciplines one uses as a point of departure. In interdisciplinary courses, the fragmented structure of knowledge remains inviolate. Bringing separate disciplines closer to one another does not meet our eventual need to transcend their boundaries, confronting experience as a whole. What we need are some *trans*disciplinary courses. Transdisciplinary courses take one of three forms: dialogue concerning a topic or issue, involvement with a real-life problem, or a mixture of these.

The topical or issue-oriented format allows us to confront the various realities of our existence in wholes. Its only threat to the traditional disciplines is that it forces them to encounter one another. Actually, this is not a threat but a service, since the encounter of several disciplines in the context of a mutually relevant concern results in what the disciplines need most: more relevance.

Transdisciplinary encounter requires dialogue. The appropriate mixture of single-disciplinary insights relevant to any given problem can be learned by no other method. Dialogue, of course, implies more than discussion. It essentially means reality-testing, which requires personal commitment and involvement. Life problems are not solved by thinking alone, even if the thinking is transdisciplinary. They are solved by action

based on thought and further thought on said action which leads to more realistic future action.

We do not lack for topics and issues around which to structure courses: revolution, totalitarianism, violence, poverty, race, youth, public health, education, human rights, law and order, freedom, responsibility—the possibilities are endless. Similarly, we do not lack opportunities for personal involvement with real-life problems. We need only repeat some of the above topics and issues, which in most communities present themselves as live problems in need of solution: violence, poverty, race, education, human rights.

At Kendall College we have had topical and issue-oriented courses for several years, and more recently both these courses and traditional courses are including "laboratory" sessions in which students participate in community action or service projects as part of their regular course-work. For instance, sociology students perform a weekly afternoon of volunteer work interviewing patients at Cook County Hospital, child psychology students spend a similar amount of time at the local day-care center, abnormal psychology students do volunteer work at Chicago State Hospital, and students in our topical course on The City can choose to be involved in numerous community action projects.

There are very few courses, even in the traditional disciplines, which are incapable of adopting a topical or issue-oriented format, or else a real-life or simulated problem-solving experience. If the college curriculum is going to have any relevance to present-day life, it must at some points provide the experience of synthesis. In a few years the college curriculum will be meaningless if synthesis is not a major feature of the educational experience.

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FRONTIERS

Opinion, Science, Illumination

THE problems of teachers, administrators, and legislators would be greatly clarified if close attention were given to the findings of Lawrence Kohlberg, reported in "The Child as Moral Philosopher" in the September *Psychology Today*. The paper is based upon a study of seventy-five boys, aged at the beginning from ten to sixteen, and it traces the development of their moral attitudes until they were from twenty-two to twenty-eight. The objective of this work was to develop "a typological scheme describing general structures and forms of moral thought which can be defined independently of the specific content of particular moral decisions or actions." The research also involved confirming comparisons with moral attitudes of the young in other cultures. Dr. Kohlberg indicates the general fruit of this twelve-year investigation:

> The typology contains three distinct levels of moral thinking, and within each of these levels distinguishes two related stages. These levels and stages may be considered separate moral philosophies, distinct views of the socio-moral world.
>
> We can speak of the child as having his own morality or series of moralities. . . .
>
> The *preconventional* level is the first of the three levels of moral thinking; the second level is *conventional*, and the third *postconventional* or autonomous. While the preconventional child [the level of most children from four to ten] is often "well-behaved" and is responsive to cultural labels of good and bad, he interprets these labels in terms of their physical consequences (punishment, reward, exchange of favors) or in terms of the physical power of those who enunciate the rules and labels of good and bad. . . .
>
> The second or *conventional* level also can be described as conformist, but that is perhaps too smug a term. Maintaining the expectations and rules of the individual's family, group or nation is perceived as valuable in its own right. There is concern not only with *conforming* to the individual's social order but in maintaining, supporting and justifying this order.
>
> The *postconventional* level is characterized by a major thrust toward autonomous moral principles which have validity and application apart from authority of the group of persons who hold them and apart from the individual's identification with those persons or groups.

It is a long haul from the first stage to the third—from response to punishment and superior power to orientation according to "decisions of conscience" and by "self-chosen *ethical principles* appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality and consistency"—yet Dr. Kohlberg finds a steady progression in one direction:

> All movement is forward in sequence, and does not skip steps. Children may move through these stages at varying speeds, of course, and may be found half in and half out of a particular stage. An individual may stop at any given stage and at any age, but if he continues to move, he must move in accord with these steps. . . . In a general and culturally universal sense, these steps lead toward an increased *morality* of value judgment, where morality is considered as a form of judging, . . . Each step of development then is a better cognitive organization than the one before it, one which takes account of everything present in the previous stage, but making new distinctions and organizing them into a more comprehensive or more equilibrated structure. The fact that this is the case has been demonstrated by a series of studies indicating that children and adolescents comprehend all stages up to their own, but not more than one stage beyond their own. And importantly, *they prefer this next stage.*

The gamut of attitudes:

> In the preconventional and conventional levels, moral content or value is largely accidental or culture-bound. But in the higher postconventional levels, Socrates, Lincoln, Thoreau and Martin Luther King tend to speak without confusion of tongues, as it were. This is because the ideal principles of any social structure are basically alike, if only because there simply aren't that many principles which are articulate, comprehensive and integrated enough to be satisfying to the human intellect. And most of these principles have gone by the name of justice.

Dr. Kohlberg ends:

> In our studies, we have found that youths who understand justice act more justly, and the man who understands justice helps create a moral climate

which goes far beyond his immediate and personal acts. The universal society is the beneficiary.

One of the first things the reader notices, while thinking about this report, is that its concern with children imposes no limitation. Dr. Kohlberg's conclusions have the symmetry of universal experience and the content of ancient philosophies of education. Their meaning parallels Krishna's account, in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, of the autonomy achieved by the non-attached man, and recalls the old Greek classification of the stages of enlightenment—from Opinion, through Science, to Illumination. There are also correspondences to Blake's "fourfold vision."

Is there, in these days so perilous to autonomy, an area *in* society where the stages of human growth can be studied without inhibition and used for the inspiration, if not the systematic guidance, of men engaged in institutions which are themselves only formal embodiments of these stages?

It is of more than passing interest that of the men of the third level named by Dr. Kohlberg, only Thoreau (who stayed out of politics) escaped martyrdom. The others were victims of the "morality" of either the first or the second levels.

Education is obviously the area where these levels can best be charted and progression through them independently pursued. And this means, again obviously, that education, to fulfill this role, must be both in society and not in it—observant of it but not controlled by it—since the rules of society are inevitably shaped by conventional morality.

How, then, shall we keep education from being infected by convention? In effect Dr. Kohlberg defines the condition: schools enjoying this immunity must be created by men who consciously prefer the third level of moral awareness and who generate *out of themselves* the supporting "moral climate"—which goes far beyond their immediate and personal acts. This is the condition of survival for all true education. A first and indispensable step in this direction is to give more depth and wider currency to the natural language of autonomy—a language with built-in resistance to "confusion of tongues."