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AWARENESS IN AMERICA

THERE are inevitable costs which result from relying on empirical evidence for finding out fact or truth, and from measuring value by the pragmatic rule that what seems to work is good, or good enough. This may be a practical approach for knowledge of physical law, but it justifies fatal delay and inhuman neglect in social affairs. Take for example certain massive failings of the public schools in the United States. Start with Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age*, a book which brought home to many American readers the cruel and anti-child policies and habits which prevailed in Boston—and can hardly have been extensively corrected since—when Kozol first wrote in 1967. Robert Coles tells briefly in his Preface what the reader will find.

> . . . the children were relentlessly and at times brutally tyrannized, and the major portion of this book documents exactly how. The rattan is used. The author describes the welts he saw, and even the serious injury one child sustained. All day long the children learn rules and regulations—to the point that whatever is original in them, whatever is *theirs* by virtue of experience or fantasy, becomes steadily discouraged or denied.

In Kozol's school, the children were mostly black. On the other side of the country, in California, a similar situation exists. In an interview which appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* (*Calendar*) for March 3, William Glasser, author of *Reality Therapy*, said:

> Unfortunately, the schools are filled with children who look upon themselves as losers. Offer a loser a book and he'll say, "I can't read it." Ask him to do a problem in math and he'll say, "I can't do math."
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> A child doesn't say that unless he's had some supporting evidence transmitted to his brain and stored there. In life we establish very quickly what we can and cannot do, and sad to say, schools have served as a clearing house for that information. If you are a Mexican kid in East Los Angeles, you learn very quickly that you cannot make it in school. That has been *communicated* to you through the school system. In that environment, you have to be a really outstanding person to come out of the school system ready for college. Because you've been taught in school, "We are losers. We can't learn."

New York City is of course another urban area where such disasters are common and to be expected. In *The Third Side of the Desk*, Hannah Hess reports the remark of an "acting principal" to a mother that "she had never seen a black or Spanish child who was capable of being in an IGC [Intellectually Gifted Children] class." The point, here, was that the son of the mother to whom this was said was doing splendidly in an IGC class, and the acting principal had never realized that he was Spanish. Her "stereotype" remained intact.

PS 84, where Hannah Hess won community control for the parents and children (see last week's "Children"), is in Manhattan's Upper West Side. A Puerto Rican teenager who was going to school in the Lower East Side at about the same time spoke of the "wall of China" which shut him out from opportunities he longed for. He said this at a settlement house conference attended by John Holt, Paul Goodman, Nat Hentoff, and others. It was well known that school counselors typically discourage Puerto Rican youth from attempting to get any sort of higher education. Larry Cole, director of LEAP (Lower East Side Action Project), said:

> Say Felix, here, wants to be a draftsman. In school they will not let him have the opportunity. They send him to a school where they don't have drafting. . . . I know at least thirty kids who come here who rate well above average in any kind of culture-free symbol test, I.Q., or whatever. Now what they have been receiving in school is not bad education or any education at all. It has been anti-education. It is . . . anti-growing up, anti-being a man. . . . Everything a kid has to do in New York City in terms of public facilities is anti-kid. The

> correctional institutions destroy you. The welfare institutions destroy you. We can talk about a kid dropping out of school, but we must see all of these little incidents together as a total push to keep these kids submerged. What do we do about it?

He well may ask. *Something* is being done. Kozol wrote his book. Dr. Glasser lectures and works with schools. Hannah Hess and a small group of parents transformed PS 84. Larry Cole won't give up working to give youngsters better opportunities. It is interesting to consider why such persons are so devoted to the welfare of children, to the principle of justice to the people of all races. Some of them tell why they became active. Hannah Hess, for one, explains that she had all the conventional notions about "making good," since she, an immigrant with no English when she started in the New York schools, was a "success" and became a teacher. Not until she was a parent did she actually *see* what was being done to the children. She had to have parental, first-hand experience to get fired up, and then, apparently, there was no stopping her. Robert Coles suggests that similar changes took place in Jonathan Kozol:

> The finest moments in this book [*Death at an Early Age*] are those in which the author quite openly examines his own, ordinary ("normal," if you will) willingness to go along with the rest, to submit to the very mean and stupid practices he so clearly recognized. . . . There are moments in this life when to do the practical or wise thing is, in fact, to take the most corrupt course possible. Mr. Kozol lets us see how those moments fall upon all of us—the would-be friends and supporters of what is "good" and "right," and of course "professional."
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> Eventually—inevitably we only know now—Jonathan Kozol slipped and brought down upon himself the self-righteous wrath of what emerges in his book as a hopelessly insensitive bureaucracy. The charges leveled against him were absurd: he taught Langston Hughes and Robert Frost to Negro children; he showed them pictures by Paul Klee, and read to them from Yeats—with surprising responses from his "disadvantaged" class.

These children can and will learn, of course—happily and enthusiastically—when they are treated like human beings. Herbert Kohl proved this in *36 Children*, and so did Daniel Fader in *The Naked Children.* Why has it taken us so long to admit it? No doubt the "hopelessly insensitive bureaucracy" hides the abilities of these children from view, but more from ignorance than from malice. After Mrs. Hess had won her battle with the New York City Board of Education and was in a mood for celebration, a brief encounter occurred:

> My elation was cooled, somewhat, when Mrs. Young [the principal who had been displaced by the community control victory] passed me in the hall. She looked absolutely shattered; and though I had never wanted her as principal and could not be sorry that she no longer was, seeing her made me realize anew that here was a human being who had been hurt. And it did not make me happy. I was well aware of all her faults and her blindness, but she was in the wrong place at the wrong time and it destroyed her. Unlike Mrs. Wachtel [another former principal at PS 84], she was a bright and capable woman, and I think that, in a different school, with different parents and children, she could have been a competent principal. It was clear proof that principals, unlike rifle parts, are not interchangeable. A few days later Mrs. Young went on sick leave and never returned. She subsequently was appointed to a school in Riverdale as principal; and from what I know of Riverdale, everyone may live happily ever after there. unless they realize that the schools are failing their children, too, and begin to demand a voice in the programs of the school.

So it takes a long while for people to wake up to the moral realities in the schools, and those who do generally need an arousing personal experience to make them unable to continue as they have in the past. And then, when they change, they find themselves struggling against society's grain, confronted by the façades of habitual complacent opinion.

If we project this situation to the larger social scene, we find that the observations of Richard Goodwin (*New Yorker*, Jan. 28) apply:

> The idea of America is menaced less by the presence of contradiction than by our awareness of contradiction. Thus, one could identify with the American idea [our ideals of freedom and equality] in

> the presence of slavery until historical change made men aware of slavery as an unavoidable evil. Similarly, through the early part of the boom after the Second World War there was a great deal of poverty and racism in America, yet not until the late nineteen-fifties did the public become aware that those conditions existed and that they were inconsistent with our view of the nation. The idea is threatened when we become aware of the contradiction, aware that it is remediable, and aware that we are failing to remedy it.

The "we" who become aware are of course an uncertain number, but there is a sense in which what Mr. Goodwin says is clear enough. When "the facts" are brought home to us by a riot in Watts, because Kozol's book becomes popular reading, or from some other cause, we are overtaken by doubts and diffuse guilt-feelings. And then we are up against all those "insensitive bureaucracies" which are staunchly secure behind attitudes of self-righteousness and "professionalism," etc. In short, the moral ideas of the culture as a whole are narrowly conceived and limited in application. Long before the "empirical facts" of the injustice to children in our society were made inescapable we should have known, should have seen, what was in the making. But we didn't. The prevailing ideas of the time didn't let us see; or they made us see other things that claimed all our attention.

So, again the question, what do we do about it?

Before attempting any sort of answer, we might look at certain other difficulties, suggesting that an answer may not be easy to provide. Take for example Paul Goodman's comment at the LEAP conference concerning the Puerto Rican boy's aspirations. When Larry Cole said that none of the young people who came to LEAP for help had ever been counseled to work toward one of the professions, Goodman asked if that was a goal worth striving for. Cole said the boy ought at least to have a choice, and asked what could be done to give him one. Then Goodman said:

> Before that, Larry, is the question of what is worth doing; not whether you get a better school or a better education. I feel we have a lot of kids here who have the same kind of garbage in their minds that any kid in Yale or Harvard has. They seem to think the same things are worth while. They have the same ambitions, want to climb up the same way, and who needs it? . . .

It was clear that Puerto Rican boys *wanted* the opportunities that Anglo boys at Yale and Harvard were getting, while Paul Goodman had put all such ideas of conventional advancement behind him, looking to a very different set of personal and social goals. Goodman, most people agree, was a pretty enlightened citizen, but what if he wasn't qualified to define the aspirations of a ghetto teen-ager on the lower East Side? And what then do we work toward? Is there any sort of a common denominator of legitimate goals?

Apparently, a great vacuum is encountered when we look around for universal conceptions and guiding principles on the great question of the meaning of life and the various modes of human fulfillment. There is certainly no adequate instruction or preparation on this subject in the schools, and adults and even radicals widely disagree when obliged to examine their own hardly developed ideas.

There are still other problems when it comes to "helping." Esther Rothman, who tells the story of a rather wonderful ghetto school for aggressive, trouble-making girls in *The Angel Inside Went Sour*, speaks of the difficulties she had at PS 702 (Brooklyn, New York): "Unfortunately, many teachers are drawn to our school not primarily because they are concerned with the girls, but because they are seeking resolution of their own severe internal conflicts." Mrs. Rothman describes a visiting teacher in her school who dressed like a "hippie" and urged the girls in her class to do the same. "It makes them less inhibited," she explained. The temporary teacher wanted a regular job at PS 702, so Mrs. Rothman said:

> "Miss D., our girls are too uninhibited, that's exactly their problem. They need some restraint. That's exactly why they're here. Being totally

uninhibited does not necessarily lead to happiness. It creates anxiety. At what point do your impulses carry you away? At what point do you stop? Drugs? Murder—?

"Look, Miss D.," I said, "It's the upper- and middle-class students, shirking middle-crassness and the bounds of their parents' values, who relate to the hippie teacher. They want a way out of their society. Our girls have never really been in society in any meaningful way, and we have to help them get there, and get them into jobs and professions."

Back to the question: What do we do about it? If this question is asked in general, it means trying to find a way to reduce the obstacles in the path of teachers like Kozol, psychiatrists like Glasser, educators like Fader, social workers like Larry Cole, and reformers like Hannah Hess—the people who stand face to face with the cruelties and tyrannies of existing attitudes and are doing what they can. Requiring change are the basic feelings about human beings and human life which the dominant race or population has had, ever since settling the continent. Our tough-minded pragmatism, our value-free science and ingenious know-how, our intoxicating successes and undoubted efficiency in exhausting the resources of an untouched continent have not been the means of fostering awareness of the needs, rights, and cultural values of other peoples.

Edgar L. Hewitt wrote years ago in *Ancient Life in the American Southwest:*

The European brought to the Indian world [America] a densely materialistic mind developed by ages of experience in a human society that could have no other destiny than that which has overtaken it. It was a racial mind formed by immemorial strife in a restricted environment—an environment which fostered distrust, war, destruction, armament for offense and defense. . . . The European mind was not prepared to understand a race so different from its own in character and culture as was the native American. Its disposition was to subdue, to subjugate and to convert. One can readily understand the paralysis that would overtake a non-warlike race in such unequal conflict. To subdue was comparatively easy with material equipment of horses, guns, and training in destructive warfare. To convert was a different matter, involving the eradication of age-old culture, the destruction of the soul of a race.

Add to these qualities the immeasurable self-righteousness and easy treachery toward the Indians of the Pilgrim Fathers and the Puritans, who gave this country its initial moral tone, and the routine cruelty in relation to minorities becomes possible to understand. Columbus was the first to strike the note that would dominate the colonists' thinking—he predicted to the king of Spain that exploration of the New World would bring great quantities of gold and an unlimited supply of *slaves.* Acquisitiveness has been the rule from the beginning, with what human benevolence emerged taking the form of paternalistic management.

So far, we have looked at evidence found in the United States, but the general psychological picture is the same throughout North America. A writer in *Changes* (a Canadian magazine published in Toronto) for May 1973, P. K. Sakamoto, describes the effects of the Canadian Indian Act:

Legislation such as that found in the Indian Act places stifling restrictions on the very people it was intended to protect. . . . Legislation dating back to 1869 forbids Indian participation in trade or commerce. Wardship is such a way of life that any transaction made between an Indian and an individual not classified as an Indian is held to be void without written consent of the superintendent. . . The reservation is a re-enactment of the long discarded feudal system under which the serfs neither own nor rent nor work the land for their own benefit. Indian Affairs tells them what to plant, when, and at what price to sell. . . . Office Consolidation, Indian Act Revised to 1961, states that "the Minister may in his discretion withhold his approval and may authorize the Indian to occupy the land temporarily and prescribe the conditions as to the use and settlement that are to be fulfilled by the Indian." This means that the Indian who by his claim to aboriginal rights, owns the land, is entitled to a certificate of "occupancy" and may be expelled from the property at the end of two years. This threat of expulsion without compensation can only kill any feelings of stability or motivation to make improvements on oneself or one's "property."

> Life has become unimportant in the face of such seemingly unsurmountable odds. Instances of suicide and, to an even greater extent, unexplained accidents are far above those for the rest of the population. Drunkenness and withdrawal are their defenses. The Indian plays a role—a role he feels is expected of him and thereby avoids conflict with a world that is alien to him. Heather Robinson expresses an interesting interpretation of the problem of Indian alcoholism. She views it as a mass "drink-in" in silent and self-destructive protest to the inequities of the existing legislation on his status. He is hurting himself but is at the same time offending, inconveniencing and often driving away white members of the community. Such a self-destructive approach can only be the result of tremendous despair.

Dr. Glasser has comparable examples of the tragic self-defeat of children in the schools. Made to feel helpless and worthless by the adults who are paid to *teach* them, they don't know how to try. The odds, except for youngsters with innate determination, are too great:

> That's at least 95 per cent of it. There might be a few whose eyeballs don't focus. But generally when you see a kid not reading, it's because he's *working* not to read. He actually won't look at the words. He turns his eyes away. Now, obviously, if you won't look at the words, you cannot read. . .
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> They weren't born that way. They learned it. We spend a tremendous amount of time and money in school teaching people that they aren't worth much and that they aren't capable. It isn't very good grammar, but my objective in the schools is to *not* teach people that they are *no* good.

The answer, he says, is to work against the stereotypes, the habitual judgments of others which we inherited from the past, and have made little or no attempt to change. It is here that the rest of the people—the vast majority that doesn't have the intimate personal experience of a Kozol, a Mrs. Hess, or a Glasser—are able to help. The American assumption—from our early days—that equality means we are good enough the way we are, the way we were born, is itself not good enough. How much more evidence do we need that we, like all other people, need self-improvement? The fact of our enormous responsibility, these days, underlines the need. We can't wait until we have "objective knowledge." We should now be able to see that waiting means "death at an early age."

One last word. Why and how do the stereotypes we have been examining gain such a firm grip on people's minds? They are morally unimaginative, ethically indefensible, and grow as responses to the demands of a purely appetitive, egocentric way of life. The answer must be that a people without philosophical tradition, who have hardly even sensed the need of psycho-moral disciplines to raise and sustain the quality of their lives, easily fall victim to the always available rationalizations of impulse and self-indulgence. They lack the essential structure of mind which civilization requires. To recognize this and to take the first steps toward building that structure is the only way to give our best and most useful citizens the support they need in order to transform their rear-guard action into the positive cultural leadership of which they are capable.

REVIEW
IN TRANSITION: VISION AND CRITICISM

THE key term in Thomas Kuhn's valuable and influential book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* is "paradigm shift," by which he means a change in the fundamental assumptions and modes of thinking about objective or "natural" reality. This term is a conceptual tool of great utility for the reason that it can be applied in almost any direction. The "I am me" experience, well known to perceptive novelists and writers, is an example of initial paradigm formation in individual psychological awakening. The feeling that one is a "person," a conscious center of awareness in the midst of the drama of existence, is basic to human life and takes a variety of forms, although all have the common denominator of self-conscious reflectiveness. With this original orientation, people establish their personal views or conclusions, holding and living by them until the pressures of life, the inconsistencies of experience, and the failure of assumptions and plans call them into serious question. Then, as Eugene Gendlin has pointed out (discussing what Erich Fromm called the "therapeutic leap"), there may come a deep change or "shift" in outlook:

> At such a time the individual may exclaim "Oh! . . . " well before he has had time to formulate words for the shift which has occurred in felt concreteness. After a few seconds he may employ many words. It is one bit of felt shift, yet thereafter, *many* details of what he was wrestling with will appear different, new facets will now seem relevant, different things will occur to him. . . . When such a felt experiential concreteness is carried forward so that it shifts or eases even slightly, all these thousands of implicit facts have changed.

When this sort of radical change occurs as a collective phenomenon, affecting the ideas and feelings of an entire culture, strong enthusiasms are released, and innovative movements are launched, some to contribute to the foundations of a new hierarchy of objectives, others to fall by the wayside as merely reactive impulses which lead nowhere or to sectarian doldrums. Of necessity, the paradigm shift makes a time of deep anxiety for the caretakers of stability and accepted tradition. People polarize into radical and conservative groups, and the outlines of a common world-view are long in emerging to provide the basis for a new cycle of "normal" development. Grown men begin to feel like "children" once again, and spokesmen for establishment attitudes declare that "Whirl is king," seeking antidotes for what cannot help but seem to them a collective fever of shallow intoxications and groundless departures from the prudential wisdom which has served so well in the more orderly past.

To be a part of such a paradigmatic shift and at the same time to give an account of how and why it has come upon us, and where it may be leading, is extremely difficult. A purely "objective" view of such changes must always be from the standpoint of the past, and therefore inadequate and deceiving, since the past is precisely what the change is rejecting or extensively revising. And if the account is provided from the viewpoint of a participant, it is likely to be unmeasured and over-confident, if not partisan, since the ardor attending discovery or "breakthrough," or even "revelation," tends to color all that is said. Yet without *feeling* the drama of the change, how could anyone possibly grasp what is going on?

It seems evident that the entire question of "truth" is locked up in dilemmas of this sort. How can we tell what is "relative" and what is "absolute" under such problematic conditions?

These considerations should stand in the wings of any discussion of books dealing with the far-reaching psycho-philosophical shift of our time. They apply pre-eminently to William Irwin Thompson's new book, *Passages About Earth* (Harper & Row, $6.95), which is both criticism of old assumptions and presentation of new ones, and also an attempt at evaluation in which the writer endeavors to stand outside of change and to provide a timeless perspective. Mr.

Thompson's earlier books are clues to his thinking and direction. *The Imagination of an Insurrection* (Oxford University Press, 1967), is a study of the power of ideas (especially in the hands of poets) to shape the course of events and to precipitate revolutionary action. This book can be read as a strong advocacy of the Platonic doctrine that Ideas rule the world.

At the Edge of History (Harper, 1971), Mr. Thompson's next book—he calls himself a cultural historian—is about the present and begins his enterprise of both criticism and search. While still a young man (he was born in 1938), Thompson is too mature in mind with capacities too comprehensive for him to be identified by "generation." Yet his age doubtless has something to do with the clarifying insight which comes into play when he discusses the changing attitudes of the young. He is himself a conscious protagonist of the paradigmatic shift, yet moves around on its frontiers armed with sensitive philosophical awareness, a scholar's background and sophistication, and at the same time a lively feeling for the deep longings so poorly reflected in the short-lived jargons of the time.

Passages About Earth continues the kind of criticism that was begun in *At the Edge of History*, goes a distance further, then falters, or rather remains deliberately indecisive during an attempt to estimate the importance of certain innovators who seem to deserve attention. How might we "classify" Mr. Thompson? Classification is usually a disservice to any thinker, yet we could call him a classical rationalist and humanist who, for sufficient personal reason, is hospitable to the flow of intuitive inspiration, and who tries to look at the consequences which may result from positions taken on the strength of such subjective leadings, using literature and cultural history as check and guide. We find him in midpassage in this work. Probably the most obscure of all psychological mysteries is the actual relationship between the intuition and the reason; the two are in random conjunction throughout our lives, the latter making a context for the interpretation of the former, and the former giving direction to the deliberations of the latter. To identify the various threads of this collaboration is a task calling for exquisite self-consciousness. Doing so may often be beyond the call of duty. Moreover, to label one's thoughts "intuitions" would seem egoistic and often a claim to certainty that can rightly be rejected by others. We are *all* intuitive at times, but speak best to our fellows in terms of a generous rationalism which simply, by common consent, admits its foundations in the human heart.

What are Mr. Thompson's major targets? Perhaps because he is most of all a teacher—by inclination as well as profession—he begins with education. Of the public schools in general, his judgment is distilled Ivan Illich. After noting certain justifiable revolts he says:

> . . . the power of education had become too great; while claiming to be the protector of liberty in a democracy, the educational system had slowly grown into a center for the distribution of tranquillizers and behavioral modification. The public school system, which had been created to put muscle into democracy, ended up by becoming the closing fingers of the long arm of the state.

Mr. Thompson's experience of teaching in universities brought home to him that he "could not live in a new civilization *and* the university, any more than I could live in the water and still be dry." The contradiction between the pretentious face of higher education and the emptiness within is repeated up and down the scale, even in "the office-building architecture of the universities of the postindustrial state." And after a dismaying account of the "freedom" and "self-expression" motif in the lives of students, he says:

> This is the paradoxical university of the students: a Dionysian bureaucracy. The university of the faculty is its mirror-image: an Apollonian irrationality. All is order and methodology. As soon as consciousness senses a threat, an academic methodology breaks it down in pieces so that the whole problem cannot be seen. Utterly engrossed in the details of committee work, these specialists could

pluck hairs from the face of terror and never have to look it in the eye.

To take full pleasure in Mr. Thompson's *mots* and to recognize the force of his generalizations, it helps to have acquired some background in the cultural and critical literature of the time—books by Polanyi, Mumford, and Roszak, for example. Readers who have this sophistication will find Thompson's devastating comments well supported—as with this one:

> To understand the failure of the modern university, one must understand the failure of social science to provide a secure ideology strong enough and culturally deep enough to support the growth of a planetary civilization. All it could do was bring Indian intellectuals to the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto and teach them how to drink Scotch. Even then, it did not always work, for some of the brighter ones began to realize that American social science, so lavishly supported by the Ford Foundation was simply ideological camouflage for the spread of a world view congenial to the growth of American-based multinational corporations. The failure of the modern university is thus intimately linked with the failure of social science.

This is pedagogical sample-testing. What sort of men do our educational method and culture produce? You have only to expose a litmus paper in a couple of decisive places to obtain the verdict.

What are the positive themes in this book? Thompson wonders about visiting yogis, has had some experience of them, and speaks of his experiments in this direction, including various encounters with both guru- and non-guru teachers from the East. He is sure that there is something to be learned from all this, yet cannot be a go-for-broke believer. (Gurus write such bad poetry!) His present conclusion is jocular, yet has a serious note:

> . . . as Tolkien knew, it is time for all the little hobbits to carry the ring and for the wizards to stand back. The new religious evolution of man requires not one Great Guru with all the others pranaming on their bellies before him, but a Christ-consciousness in many upright men. What happened to one man before would now happen to Everyman, and that was what all the talk of "the Second Coming" was about.

Thompson thinks that the "true prophet of American mysticism and democratic politics is not Sri Anybodynanda but Walt Whitman." The "collective unconscious," he believes, is now surfacing into consciousness, bringing a new sense of reality and demonstrating the need for a new universe of discourse. Naturally, there are many new problems and much confusion. Mr. Thompson is more than a "taster" of new movements; he tries to understand; and he does not pontificate, although one may wish he had avoided repeating a Tantric analysis of the sub-states of *Samadhi,* since one who has truly been there and back would almost certainly say nothing concerning these elevated levels of consciousness. Small talk about such virtually ineffable achievements contributes to no one's enlightenment.

Of Irish descent, Thompson is attracted to the mystical Christianity which developed among the early medieval Celts, and he now is working in a learning center symbolically modelled on their monastic communitarian institutions. In passing, he remarks that "there is really only one universal esoteric knowledge for the transformation of consciousness," which seems a basic realization, although he might have added that identifying the "esoteric" in more than abstract terms must alter its nature into "exoteric," which is doubtless the origin of all the established religions and organized cults. The crucial distinction between private and public truth needs to be preserved, and its importance understood, not blurred.

Finally, Mr. Thompson seems a man who is quite able to find his own way, and to explain with singular clarity why he finds his chosen direction good. As an articulate spokesman and critic of the paradigm shift of our time, he deserves a continuing hearing.

COMMENTARY
WHAT TO DO NEXT?

NOT just the younger generation, but scholars and novelists, as well, have been affected and inspired by the integrities and moral strength of American Indian culture. (See "Children.") Publication of Elliot Arnold's *Blood Brother* marked a turning point in popular feeling about the Indians, while Ward Shepard's ecstatic article on the Hopis in the *Scientific Monthly* (February, 1946) revealed the new spirit in social science. The writings of John Collier, along with the revolution he affected in Indian Bureau policies, were also widely influential.

But, as Peter van Dresser has remarked, "no matter how far back in the woods we go, and how much we pretend we're Indians, I mean we just aren't." He is of course right, but there remains the question of how to evolve a sense of human dignity functional to our lives in the same way that the living faith of the Indians served. Their way of life is not cognitive, their sense of reality is mythic and traditional, and their symbolic imagery unique to their experience. So you could say that Western man, of European-American origin, has need to evolve an intellectually sustainable faith in his own terms, to gain a vision to live by. Until now, that sort of vision has been reserved for heroes, as Ortega's superb essays in *Meditations on Quixote* show. A true *culture*, you could say, is a view of life that holds up a heroic vision for *all* to aspire to, with each one knowing that he is accountable to himself for the measure of his effort to live up to the ideal.

There can hardly be much education worth talking about without this. That, it seems likely, was what A. S. Neill was trying to get at when he told Mario Montessori that he couldn't understand all the talk about teaching children how to read and write. "It's beyond me," Neill said, "because you're talking about education, the three R's and science, and I'm thinking about how we're going to prevent the child from becoming a Gestapo, or becoming a color-hater . . . the sickness of the world." Neill knew what he wanted, but the common denominators of the fulfillment of that longing remain obscure. Yet in spirit and mood, Neill turned a corner for the world of education. What must be done next? How is the vision to be structured and made communicable? We are a people without great and ennobling myths. What can we put in their place?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE VISION OF REALITY

IN *Buttes Landing*, a novel by Jean Rikhoff (Dial Press and Fawcett), a passage in which a Mohawk Indian gives instruction to a boy whose mother is part Mohawk seems to capture the feeling relationship between the generations among the Indians. The time is early in the nineteenth century, the place a wooded lake region in upper New York. The boy's name is Guthrie.

> It seemed to him that Ohguesse was able to make more of things than anyone he had ever known. Take the bow, for instance. Anyone else would have thought learning how to use the bow was enough in itself. Not Ohguesse. "It will teach you patience and cunning," he said. "It will let you learn how far you can take yourself, how much you can rely on your body. Skills come from training the body to do what the mind wants. Some men's minds are lazy and will not carry them very far, and some men feel safe when they come up to the company of most of their fellow-men, but a few men cannot rest until they have pushed themselves to a place where no one else has been. The bow will show you which kind of man you are."

Here, no doubt, was something of the competitive spirit, but more important was the linkage between mind and body, and an implicit conception of the will as master of both. There is also an idea of hunting and the hunter, but distantly if at all related to the activities of those who now hunt for "sport":

> He gave the boy the unstrung bow to hold. When Guthrie tried to bend the bow, he found it so heavy that he could not move it. He was ashamed for Ohguesse to see how weak he was, but when he looked up he saw the Indian was not looking at him. He was laying out arrows. "The bow is reserved for hunting," he said. "The bow does not go to war. Some," he said contemptuously, "like our enemies of old, the Algonquins, used it for war, but never the Iroquois.
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> "The good hunter has love for the bow and love for the animals he has made the bow for. The good hunter does not kill animals without first making an offering to the fire nor without giving the animal spirits warning. The good hunter does not kill the deer who swims nor the doe with fawn; and when he does kill, the good hunter does not forget to thank the spirit of the animal for the meat he eats."

Even from this brief passage we gain a sense of what the psychologists call "ego strength," and of the individual dignity which so many whites noticed in Indians in the early days, and sometimes even today. Here is a conception of human development and excellence that is radically different from the prevailing ideas of the dominant white culture, one with obvious value, yet we hardly know how to acquire such feelings about growing up and behaving well in our lives. Tribal life and clan life provide circumstances which are a spur to personal discipline and achievement. The motives involved may not be the highest, yet recognition of this should not be taken as a reason for ignoring the human need for such qualities. In this story, the boy reflects on the differences between the Indian's way of looking at things and the attitudes of the white community on the frontier:

> Only on the days it rained did Guthrie realize how the lessons with the bow had become the focus of his life, how he was beginning to uncover inside himself strange secrets he did not know lay waiting to be claimed. He was standing in the presence of another person's way of looking at life, a person whose view was totally different from his father's or even Kateri's [his mother's], one who was more a person than anyone Guthrie had ever known, but a strange and disturbing one, for Ohguesse's view of the world was totally that of the Indian. His people might be dispersed or subjugated, sickening, dying, fallen into depravities, but he held himself responsible for what *he* was; and what Ohguesse was in his own eyes was the carrier of a great tradition; so long as he lived by that belief, it endured.

The Indian lived in a world of ideals and remembered excellences that seemed immune to the inroads of time:

> Ohguesse told of things as if they had happened yesterday or last week, perhaps a month before, not as if they were events that had gone on fifty, a hundred years before; time for Ohguesse belonged to the house of greatness, he carried it inside him, there it existed.

> The Federation was still living and vital to Ohguesse, the warriors of the Long House, fierce implacable fighters to be feared; he never touched on the present, the disfranchised, landless penitents who had gone to Canada with Brant, the diseased and despairing ones on the reservations, rum-ruined, cheated out of their lands by unfair treaties. Ohguesse had a world of the past, the one in which his people had been great hunters warriors so mighty that they were feared by all the other tribes; men who walked with pride in long silent strides through the great forests; and in this world Ohguesse lived alone, far away from reservations or white man's towns. He lived alone in the woods, sole survivor of a great race. He could not fight in the old way but he could resist change, assimilation, conversion.

The authenticity of this characterization seems clear. Recent books on Canadian Indians published by Harvest House are filled with illustrations of the same heroic spirit, and John Collier, in *On the Gleaming Way*, describes an experience with the Pueblo Indians in the American Southwest that shows how they, too, lived in their vision of reality:

> . . . at a pueblo which I may not name, the tribe's priestly representative was assisting for initiation into the tribe a young man from another pueblo who had married a girl of this pueblo. Much that he told this young man, the teacher was not free to tell me. But part of the tutelage was the unveiling of hidden names and the spiritual meanings of hundreds of physical places, wide over the land. Mesas, plinths, streams and springs; forests that existed no more, trails unused for hundreds of years. Some of the places had vanished utterly with the passage of linear time; the highest mountain peak, in one of the sacred areas along the Rocky Mountain range, was the highest no longer, and the tree line had moved upward two hundred vertical feet since these tribal memories, as we would call them, this tribal present, had been born. The memories, the present, spanned geological time.
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> "But Geronimo," I remarked, "your tribe does not own these places and boundaries any more." He replied: "We own them in our souls."

What is the relation of this mind-generated reality, we may ask, to "truth"? Can we dispose of such profound conviction by calling it, as Carl Jung might have, "psychological truth"? Is pragmatic justification for the faith of the pueblo Indians all that they can be allowed?

These may be questions which go to the heart of modern cultural and educational problems.

FRONTIERS

Redirection and Reconstruction

IN an article on the possibilities of redirecting the energies and development of the high-technology industrial state, Willis Harman (of Stanford Research Institute) finds the failures of our society to be threefold: (1) The failure b provide each individual "with the feeling of belonging and being useful"; (2) Its failure to develop patterns o individual behavior that do not result in large-scale break down and disharmony; and (3) The failure to provide equitable distribution of power and wealth.

It is questionable, of course, whether a mere "economic system" can be expected to fulfill such ideal conditions since deep-seated attitudes are really involved, of which systems and patterns of behavior are but institutional reflections and rationalizations. This becomes evident in Mr. Harman's discussion of alternatives:

> A dominant theme in contemporary approaches to these three problems has been enlargement of the public sector's role in providing welfare, creating jobs, regulating industry and redistributing wealth. Yet this strategy amounts to admission of a fundamental failure of the free-enterprise system. Furthermore, it suffers from the known ills of big bureaucracy and monopoly, and conflicts with rising demands from individuals and minority groups for increased opportunity to control their own destinies. On the other hand, if the free-enterprise system were to develop highly decentralized goal-setting and decision-making, it could be peculiarly compatible with the apparently strengthening values of self-definition and self-actualization.

These views are increasingly well-established and in the air. Mr. Harman's article seems valuable mainly for his recognition of the major obstacles to change and his awareness of the level where change, to be effective, must begin. He points out that the abandonment of advanced technology and a return to "the self-sufficient individual and the small community" are likely to prove difficult, since "the Faustian decision cannot be simply reversed." Moreover, "the majority of the world still hungers to taste the technological fruits."

Whatever adjustments may be possible, they will come, he thinks, through the combination of an ecological with a self-realization ethic. He notes that this ethic "fosters a sense of the total community of man, and responsibility for the fate of the planet," and that it has been taught through the ages, from Lao tse to Gandhi:

> Its basic assumptions correspond to the pre-scientific assumptions of many so-called "primitive" peoples. Thus the ecological viewpoint can find support not only in scientific knowledge of life on earth, but also in most known cultural or religious systems.

As for achieving such an outlook in modern society, Mr. Harman points to the roots of decision in individuals:

> Macrodecisions influencing the future state of a society come about as a consequence of individual, institutional, and social behavior. But this behavior is shaped by motivations and incentives, and these in turn by individual and cultural values. . . . In describing characteristics of an eventual society which would have resolved the most serious of the dilemmas facing us today, I am not speaking of a system which could be guided into being. The ethics. which guide and control the economic system come to it from outside and depend upon the ambient culture. Changes in moral temper and culture are not amenable to "social engineering" or political control. The values and moral traditions of a society cannot be "designed" by precept; their ultimate sources are the religious or metaphysical conceptions which undergird a society.

For the details of Mr. Harman's proposals, the reader may go to his paper in the Winter 1974 *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, or in the Winter (No. 10) issue of *Fields within Fields*, in which it also appears. We have drawn attention only to his basic conceptions, since he shows so clearly where primary effort is required.

What about the "Faustian" impulse? While Harman is doubtless right in saying it cannot be reversed, it may be given far better use. Work done at the New Alchemy Institute at Woods

Hole, Mass., gives scope to the wholly admirable side of scientific endeavor, in behalf of the extension of communitarian efficiencies and simplicities. Meanwhile, we noticed in *Environment* for last October a report that the Massachusetts Audubon Society is constructing a new office building (in Lincoln) for which solar energy will provide 75 per cent of its heating and cooling needs. And the *Nation* for March 2 describes the conversion of an abandoned nineteenth-century mill in Providence, R.I., into a center for research on solar energy. Occupying this 123-year-old brick structure will be the Research and Design Institute, organized in 1966 to encourage new ideas in design and planning among Rhode Islanders. The building will be equipped with solar collectors, a wind mill, a water turbine, and a "natural" system of air-conditioning. "The aim of all this work is to show that energy conservation works and that other forms of nonpolluting power are available for homes and firms." A spokesman for the Institute said that all the technology for these innovations already exists but is not being used extensively. The more such "models" of comparative self-sufficiency are displayed for inspection, the more chance that such ideas will gain wider application.

It is of some importance to realize that these views have worldwide expression. In *Gandhi Marg* for last October, twelve Indian thinkers discussed the need to move toward a "Counter-Civilization," using Gandhi as a guide. Gandhi established the themes of his lifework and his criticism of industrial society as long ago as 1909, in *Hind Swaraj,* a brief but effective polemic. He maintained that "modern technology is destructive of human autonomy and freedom and that the affluence and power it brings is not worth the candle." In a summary of the issues, the *Gandhi Marg* editors say:

> Unblessed with Gandhi's long vision, generations of Indian leaders not only failed to heed his warning, they just do not know what he was talking about. Having consistent ignored his manifesto—although Gandhi continued to draw everyone's attention to it till his last breath—it was nature that we misperceived the target of his attack. In the result the meaning of his life and message became diluted are weak.
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> Through *Hind Swaraj,* Gandhi called upon India to reject modern civilization—nothing more or less than this—and to return to her proven ancient ways. A total culture revolution—not just nibbling here and there—was what he wanted. Unnerved, we gave him up for easier ways. The result—65 years after he wrote that prophetic book—there for all to see!

A passage by R. R. Diwakar, whose association with Gandhi goes back to the first decade of this century, shows the essential agreement with Gandhi of the reformers and intermediate technologists of today in the West:

> Gandhi was never for total rejection. What he said was that we should invent, accept, and use science and technology (which in themselves are amoral and neutral) without exploitation and without losing mastery over them. This alone can lead to world affirmation.