

## BARRIERS TO KNOWLEDGE

NO one has ever found an explanation for evil men. Such men are probably far fewer than we suppose, although their existence can hardly be questioned. Actually, truly good men are almost as great a mystery, since we seem to know almost nothing about how to produce them. We can write books about good men after they die, but we cannot really explain them. There are confident volumes by optimistic managers on how to train the young in ways that will make them acceptable to society, but these methods have little to do with the production of good men. Authentic goodness seems mainly to resist the attempts of educators to shape human beings according to the conceits of an epoch, and it flowers in individuals who are largely self-produced.

Conceivably, this may be the best evidence we have for what the philosophers have called freedom of the will. If we could really explain goodness the way we explain lesser skills and qualities, we should know how to produce it at will, and then the idea of moral choice would lose its meaning. People conditioned to choose correctly don't really choose. They are not, as B. F. Skinner has suggested, *beyond* Freedom and Dignity. They are beneath it.

It was natural for Mr. Skinner, thinking as he does, to believe that in order to improve the quality of man it will be necessary for the Better Minds to decide how people ought to behave and then find ways of getting them to conform. Socrates, believing in Freedom and Dignity, proposed a very different plan. If, he argued, we say that virtue is knowledge and evil is ignorance, then, if we increase the knowledge of people, they will choose wisely and well. This may not *always* be the case, but if it is true most of the time the amount of evil in the world should be greatly reduced by the spread of knowledge. Remains,

however, the problem of deciding what is knowledge.

Suppose we were to take this problem and hand it back to Socrates. We could remind him of his disclaimer of wisdom. He might reply, however, that if knowledge is virtue, then, since every man knows *something*, a man fulfills himself only by acting as well as he can—virtuously—on what he does know. And there he would have us, for it is not difficult to show that very few men are using to the full what knowledge they already have; or, that we diminish and shrivel what we do know because we do not apply it as virtuous men would. Instead, when we have trouble, we grow angry, look for scapegoats and condemn them, in preference to reforming ourselves. How can this be illustrated? Well, take the problems of ecology, which are certainly intensely felt moral issues, today. What, typically, is the charge against the misusers of the environment? The charge, as everyone knows, is narrow self-interest.

But who, then, speaks for the general interest, the public or world good, for the entire planet? How is authority for this outlook established? Who will work for the good of all, for the whole, without self-interest?

Suppose we start more modestly, with, say, our own government. Here, surely, we shall find impartiality and concern for the common good. The assumption seems reasonable, but the creators of our government, we discover, had no clear conception of over-all good. To the first settlers of this country, as later to its economic exploiters, the environment was just "there," waiting to be used, like an inexhaustible bank balance. Only in the past ten years or so has any question been raised concerning man's *general* relationships with nature. In the February 1970 *Scientific American*, two scientists, Harvey

Brooks and Raymond Bowers, make this evident in a discussion of the problems connected with the assessment of technology. They found no habit or tradition devoted to the welfare of wholes. As these writers say:

The assessment of technology that is done by government agencies is . . . profoundly affected by the legal system. The predominant mission of each agency, as set forth in the law, determines its pattern of assessing technology. Weather modification provides an example. The Bureau of Reclamation looks for ways to increase rainfall in the dry Western states. The Department of Agriculture, mainly concerned with reducing crop losses, sponsors research in suppressing storm damage. The Federal Aviation Administration is interested in ways to dissipate fogs that hang over airports. None of these agencies considers the total effects. In the case of regulatory agencies, limitations of law often prevent the agency from considering the complete problem.

The development of technology was itself narrow in aims. It would be wrong to say that this development wholly ignored the good of man, but technological progress, at its best, has been concerned with a limited band of material human needs, and has always been profit-oriented as a matter of course. It is now a cliché to assert that man's material needs have been vastly over-served in some respects, and sorely neglected in others, mostly because of the brute facts of competitive economics. So here, again, there is no habit, no tradition, for thinking in terms of the general welfare, in terms of the whole. Naturally enough, then, the *Scientific American* writers conclude:

The achievement of a better system for assessing technology faces major obstacles. The society is ill-equipped to handle conflicting interests. It does not know how to value in a quantitative way such goals as a dean environment and the preservation of future choices. Analytical tools are primitive, and crucial knowledge is often missing.

Well, if "crucial knowledge" is missing, how can it be charged that we are not using the knowledge we have? According to these writers, not only do we lack the knowledge of how to relate to the natural environment constructively,

but the governmental agencies charged with responsibility in at least some of these relationships are not equipped by legislative intent to accomplish what should be done.

Socrates would probably comment that we both have and lack the necessary knowledge. He might for example quote *A Blueprint for Survival*, published last January by *The Ecologist*—from the Preface, which says:

An examination of the relevant information has impressed upon us the extreme gravity of the global situation today. For, if current trends are allowed to persist, the breakdown of society and the irreversible disruption of the life-support systems on this planet, possibly by the end of the century, certainly within the lifetimes of our children, are inevitable.

Governments, and ours is no exception, are either refusing to face the relevant facts, or are briefing their scientists in such a way that their seriousness is played down. Whatever the reasons, no corrective measures of any consequence are being undertaken.

If one takes the trouble to read the major contributions to ecological literature through the years—starting, say, with George Perkins Marsh's *The Earth as Modified by Human Action* (1874), and ending with *A Blueprint for Survival* (1972)—it soon becomes evident that these writers know what they are talking about. They have *knowledge*, and for the most part their knowledge is not being used. What does this mean?

It means that men for whom power is the first consideration are simply not interested in this kind of truth. They do not really hear it when it is explained to them. The knowledge is in the world, but is beyond their grasp.

Before we charge such men with deliberate evil, it is necessary to reflect on the fact that their devotion to the national interest and to the independent power of their separate political nation-states represents an attitude which affects, even controls, the thinking of a great many people. What national population of today, for example, is ready to abandon unilaterally the tools

of war? Or what people, among the advanced industrial nations, is ready to reduce voluntarily its standard of living? Yet *Blueprint for Survival* is only one of the most recent among the documents which declare this ecological necessity:

The developed nations consume such disproportionate amounts of protein, raw materials and fuels that unless they considerably reduce their consumption there is no hope of the underdeveloped nations markedly improving their standard of living. This vast differential is a cause of much and growing discontent, made worse by our attempts at cultural uniformity on behalf of an expanding market economy. In the end, we are altering people's aspirations without providing the means for them to be satisfied.

Why is the knowledge in *Blueprint for Survival* not more widely understood?

In a recent issue of *World*, Norman Cousins' new magazine, a former *New York Times* editor writes of the growing distrust of people in what they read in the newspapers, charging that "purple prose" and impressionistic, slanted reporting, incitements to violence, and general irresponsibility are making a credibility gap which widens daily for the reader. The cause of this gap is of course the basic commercial bias—unmentioned by this writer—which inevitably develops from the fact that the newspaper does not really sell a news service to the reader, but rents a showcase to manufacturers who are interested only in moving goods. It must be admitted, further, that the readers don't really care about this bias, since they are not yet ready, apparently, to support a paper which accepts no advertising. Quite naturally, "knowledge" which will slow the movement of goods is seldom published.

It is difficult to see how any commercial publication could rise above the basis of its own economic survival and provide reporting and articles which are free of the bias created by the motives for publishing. And so long as the readers do not themselves demand newspapers and magazines which survive through editorial

merit alone, the publishers will continue to apply to their field the principles of a market economy, printing only the truth or knowledge which keeps them alive. But this is not the knowledge that will keep the world alive.

One thinks, here, of what Ivan Illich has termed "radical" or "general" monopoly, by which he means the domination of the entire way of life of a people by certain well-established attitudes. There are, for example, many simplicities of material existence which have become almost impossible for the person who needs to live in or near a city. Only under special circumstances is a man able to ride to work on a bicycle; only in a few instances can housewives avoid the endless "packaging" of the supermarkets by buying their foods direct from producers. Countless patterns of predetermined decision are imposed upon people by the requirements of mass marketing and mass manufacture, so that the imperatives of an efficient production line reach into the daily lives of every one of us, shaping not only our habits but also, in many cases, our ideas of what is desirable and good. In this way minds are schooled to resist changes which may be the only way to the common good and health, since the whole weight and momentum of existing socio-economic processes is against these changes. The knowledge most needed by the people, in order to act wisely, is systematically suppressed, and partly by their own inclinations.

Actually, we have made here, without intending it, a case for the kind of argument that Thoreau presents in *Life Without Principle*. It is the same argument that Plato made against the mimetic poets. The contention is that if a person's mind continually has printed on it the imagery of a particular way of thinking and acting—whether by the customs through which commodities and services are marketed, or by the persuasive rhythms of epic tradition—he has very little chance of freely choosing for himself. He is *molded*; he does not act, but is acted upon. He is

more an involuntary focus for external influences than a self.

This is really the chief justification for the simple life for adopting Emerson's regime of plain living and high thinking. People who are too much involved in living complicated, luxurious lives stop thinking; they mistake what they are doing for the last word in excellence, human progress, and truth. Their minds are dosed by being vastly occupied with impressive triviality. In our case, at any rate, we have been overwhelmed by the reality and desirability of *things*. This is the gospel and the credo of our civilization, learned so well, declared with such passion, politicalized with such pseudo-moral pomp, that the prospect of there not being enough things to satisfy our needs is at once incredible and horrifying. And even when the most eminent thinkers and scientists among us describe and chart the exhaustion of the resources of this once rich planet, all the old habits and ways of doing things grind on in their accustomed manner, as though the warnings had come from small-time rabble-rousers or neurotic pessimists.

Are we yet in the presence of "evil"? Socrates would say, we think, that only ignorance is still the offender, and he might endeavor to show how deeply ingrained in the minds of modern men is the sort of thinking that resists the new understanding of the wholeness of the world. But since Socrates is not available, there is some valuable instruction in an article by David Bohm that seems very close to Socratic wisdom in its application here. David Bohm is professor of theoretical physics at Birkbeck College, London University. We quote from his article, "Fragmentation and Wholeness," which appeared in the *Structurist* for 1971:

Human existence, and indeed, perhaps the very existence of any form of life at all on the surface of the earth, are now threatened by the development of technically advanced means of destruction, in a context in which each man is ruled by a fragmentary and contradictory set of passions, urges, fears, desires, etc. And even if there is no such universal

destruction, mankind is confronted with a series of difficulties that may, in the long run, prove to be almost as severe. Thus, because of our generally fragmentary way of perceiving, experiencing, and acting, the world is faced with over-population, exhaustion of natural resources, pollution of the general environment and interference with the ecological balance of life over the planet as a whole. And beyond this, such a mode of living is leading to an ever more meaningless social structure, in which we experience the very patterns of relationship that we ourselves have created as something separate and "alien" to what is deepest and most essential in each individual human being.

By now, there is a fairly wide realization of the existence of these dangers, and many groups are trying to take measures to deal with the ever mounting series of apparently unsolvable problems with which human society is beset. Unfortunately, however, most of these attempts are aimed, as it were, very downstream at the *results* of fragmentation, and not at its origin in our mode of thinking and using language. This concentration on results has come about to a considerable extent because these modes of thinking and using language are not at all easy to observe. Indeed, they operate in very subtle ways of which we are largely unaware, to interfere with proper attention, by preventing us from seeing how things are related, in ever broader contexts.

In his subsequent discussion, Mr. Bohm suggests that the centuries-old search for "reality" in ultimate units of matter is responsible for the failure of modern man to think in terms of wholes. There may indeed be "fundamental building blocks," such as the physicists of the past hoped to identify and define, but these, in the light of modern theory, are now seen to represent only a phase in man's understanding of the world around him. Particle physics, Bohm proposes, undoubtedly has relative validity, but it is a great mistake to "identify its content with an absolute truth about reality as a whole." During the nineteenth century, he points out, physical research seemed to indicate that everything could be resolved into "a set of constituent particles," but what has been learned in the twentieth century calls for a very different view. Yet physicists, he says, have persisted in believing "that the universe is constituted of *some* kind of basic particles," and

have been convinced "that the only real task is to discover just what the nature of these particles actually is."

It may seem, Mr. Bohm suggests, that the endeavor to define the nature of these particles is an unconfined inquiry, since the physicist has "infinite freedom" in the choice of the properties of these particles, but there is nevertheless a serious restriction. He explains:

One may understand something of the nature of this restriction by considering a man who is walking on a vast, practically limitless, planar surface and who concentrates almost exclusively on a very complex system of paths along which he can continue to walk indefinitely, without noticing that he is limited in not being able in this way to look at what is above or below this surface. Similarly, by keeping one's mind narrowly focussed on the limitless elaboration of complex paths of analytical thought about the supposed particle constitution of the whole reality, one's attention never leaves the "plane" defined by the *particle concept as a whole*.

This, as we see, is really another instance of what Ivan Illich terms "radical monopoly," in which the over-all thinking is limited, while its internal diversity gives the illusion of great freedom. Bohm goes on to show that in the new physics, it is meaningless to seek for reality in the nature of ultimate particles or "things," since the particles were in fact created by nineteenth-century physics, and are transformed into abstractions by later theory in which the particle, as Mr. Bohm puts it, "is now considered to be more like a pattern of movement than like a solid, separate thing that exists autonomously."

In short, the world-views developed by science are never representative of final truth, but must be regarded simply as way-stations in the development of human understanding. After showing that in present-day physics, what we speak of as "reality" now appears to be flow and movement rather than "things," Mr. Bohm points to the necessity for thinking holistically about nature and life, since there can be no understanding of particular things, forms, or appearances without recognizing how they relate

to the larger whole. His point is that the habit of looking for reality in separate, isolated things is rooted in our science and in many resulting attitudes, so that there is deep resistance to more inclusive conceptions.

The latter part of his paper is devoted to considering the artist's and the philosopher's modes of perception, since the artist has no difficulty in seeing reality in relationships and movement, while the philosopher *must* learn to think holistically in order to understand the good. The fragmentation of thought inherited from past science needs, he says, the unifying correction that the artist and the philosopher provide. As he puts it:

As Socrates pointed out, all men desire the good. Indeed, how could a man possibly desire that which he sees as not properly fitting, in contexts which he feels to be important? Even a man who is self-centered, ruthless and ambitious will, for example, generally be found to look on what he is trying to do as good.

The difficulty is, of course, that men have confused and fragmentary notions as to what *is* the good. Such fragmentary notions of the good will inevitably divide men, both in themselves and from each other, and so, must lead to unending conflict. Thus, what is at the origin of evil is just the fact that each man pursues his own fragmentary fraction of the good.

To end this fragmentation is clearly of crucial importance, if man is to cease to accomplish evil in the very act in which he pursues the good. So, what is needed is to pause, and to inquire into the origin of this fragmentation, in a mode of thought in which the separation of art, science and mathematics from each other and from questions of morals and ethics plays a key role.

It is now evident, perhaps, why, lacking Socrates for a witness, we called upon David Bohm. Like Socrates, he recognizes that the dispelling of ignorance is the main task in the reduction of evil and human pain, and not the condemnation of evil men. And, again like Socrates, he is adept in revealing the characteristic forms of ignorance in our time, and in suggesting remedies. (The issue of the *Structurist* containing

this article may be ordered from the publisher at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada, at \$4.50 per copy.)

## REVIEW

### TEACHER OF ORGANIC GARDENING

THE SOIL AND HEALTH, by Sir Albert Howard, reads like an adventure story. The author was the man who made organic gardening a by-word in our time, and this book, first published in this country in 1947, is the account of his discoveries and his efforts to teach others their importance, from the very beginning. The copy we have for review is a well-made paperback by Schocken, issued this year at \$3.95.

This book is a good example of what ought to be taught as both science and economics in today's schools. Very few schoolbooks fire the reader up to some form of useful action. This book will do it. Even older readers for whom it is too late in life to start a garden of their own will feel the strength and validity, even the romance, of Howard's agricultural reform. Everything he says has a fundamental simplicity. The book is restorative, bringing together elements of man's life that have been separated for too long, and demonstrating the unpretentious morality of balanced and cooperative relationships with nature.

Ours is a layman's review, giving a layman's reaction, but those who want testimony concerning expert opinion will find plenty of it included in the book, along with a few necessary passages on the sort of enemies he made. Our reaction is that *everybody* should read *The Soil and Health*.

In a chapter devoted to basic conceptions, the author says that agriculture is a kind of intervention into natural processes. Starting with this idea, he proposes that intervention creates duties and obligations, and that these are best summed up by what he calls "*the law of return.*" This law is explained in Howard's statement of first principles of agriculture:

*The first duty of the agriculturalist must always be to understand that he is a part of Nature and cannot escape from his environment. He must*

therefore obey Nature's rules. Whatever intrusions he makes must be, so to say, in the spirit of these rules; they must on no account flout the underlying principles of natural law nor be in outrageous contradiction to the processes of Nature. To take a modern instance, the attempt to raise natural earth-borne crops on an exclusive diet of water and mineral dope—the so-called science of hydroponics—is science gone mad: it is an absurdity which has nothing in common with the ancient art of cultivation. I should be surprised if the equally unnatural modern practice of the artificial insemination of animals were not also to be condemned. Time will show.

But, provided that the actions of the cultivator are well conceived, that they have been proved successful by long experience, that they follow the essential course of Nature without real disobedience, *that the character of the intervention is comprehended and that measures are initiated to restore the natural cycle in a proper way*, much may be accomplished by man: and *this* is the art of agriculture.

The final proviso is of the utmost importance, we must give back what we take out, we must restore what we have seized if we have stopped the Wheel of Life for a moment, we must set it spinning again.

Having stated his own view—which is, we might add, that of a man well trained in botanical and agricultural science—Albert Howard turns critic, speaking of what seems to him a delusion of laboratory workers and chemists who are often without experience in the actual growing of crops:

Such a conception [his own] is very different from the all too prevalent idea which sees Nature as a parsimonious and very sparing provider of scanty, dispersed, and irregular harvests, a force which has to be stimulated by chemicals into adequate response, and controlled by the ingenuity and inventions of modern times. On this ingenuity and on those inventions rests, so it is claimed, the constantly growing food supply needed by modern populations, and much time is devoted to reckoning up the magnitude of this human achievement. The argument is based on figures of increased crop and animal production over the last few generations of human life and ignores the fact that *these results depend upon the plunder of the capital of the soil*. The conclusions reached are fundamentally erroneous

and are fraught with the certainty of failure and catastrophe.

This want of perspective and lack of humility dominates most of the short-term solutions of the problem of fertilizing, which from its very nature calls for the closest consideration of natural law.

Albert Howard began his work a long time ago. Educated in England, his first job was as a mycologist and agricultural lecturer in the West Indies. This was at the turn of the century. Investigating plant diseases and lecturing other people on how to deal with them, he realized, he said, that he raised "no crops on which I could try out the remedies I advocated." He couldn't prove what he prescribed, and this bothered him. He knew there was a difference between science in the laboratory and fruitful practice in the field. Some time as a botanist at an agricultural college in England gave him experience growing hops, but his real chance came when he was appointed to the post of Economic Botanist at Pusa, in Bengal, India, in 1905. There his responsibilities included the improvement of crops and the development of new species. Determined to unite practice with theory, he began growing the crops he was supposed to improve. He studied the way the Indian peasants had been farming rice for hundreds of years. By this means he gained insight into the principle that he followed and elaborated on for the rest of his life. In his words:

Now the crops grown by the cultivators in the neighborhood of Pusa were remarkably free from pests: such things as insecticides and fungicides found no place in this ancient system of cultivation. This was a very striking fact, and I decided to break new ground and try out an idea which had first occurred to me in the West Indies and had forced itself on my attention at Wye, namely, to observe what happened when insect and fungous diseases were allowed to develop unchecked, indirect methods only, such as improved cultivation and more efficient varieties, being employed to resist attacks.

In pursuit of this idea I found I could do no better than watch the operations of peasants as aforesaid and regard them and the pests as for the time being my best instructors.

In order to give my crops every chance of being attacked by parasites nothing was done in the way of direct prevention; no insecticides and fungicides were used; no diseased material was ever destroyed. As my understanding of Indian agriculture progressed and as my practice improved, a marked diminution of disease in my crops occurred. At the end of five years' tuition under my new professors—the peasants and the pests—the attacks of insects and fungi on all crops whose root systems suited the local soil conditions became negligible. By 1919 I had learned how to grow healthy crops, practically free from disease, without the slightest help from mycologists, entomologists, bacteriologists, agricultural chemists, statisticians, clearing-houses of information, artificial manures, spraying machines, insecticides, fungicides, germicides, and all the other expensive paraphernalia of the modern experiment station.

This preliminary exploration of the ground suggested that the birthright of every crop is health.

The foundation of plant health Howard found to be the presence of humus, and composting was the means of providing it. There are certain vital processes which take place in the soil, around the roots of many plants, which cease to function when there is no humus. The best humus, he discovered by studying Chinese practice, is produced by the right combination of plant and animal wastes. Through systematic observation of the practice of many Eastern peasants, and by testing these practices, Howard began the development of the body of theory which is presented in this book. He also began looking for evidence that food plants raised according to these principles would provide superior nutrition, and found quite a lot of it. From the published work of Sir Robert McCarrison, he learned that the Hunzas, who are in all likelihood the healthiest people in the world, eat food "derived from soil kept in a state of the highest natural fertility."

By the time *Soil and Health* was first published, in 1947, Howard's work had already grown to the proportion of a movement, with practical farmers in many parts of the world applying his ideas, proving his contentions, discovering things themselves, and corresponding with him and with others active in the movement.

Yet the professionals in the agricultural experiment stations were largely hostile to Howard's ideas. While some few research workers on cotton were converted to the organic approach, most of these specialists and advisers—who had no experience with the use of humus—belittled Howard's work and counselled against his practices. Howard makes this further comment:

The research workers on most other crops all over the Empire took a similar hostile view and were naturally supported and sustained in their opposition by vested interests like the manufacturers and distributors of artificial manures and poison sprays who were, of course, anxious to preserve and expand a profitable business. It has been said that even the principle of gravitation would have a hard row to hoe, had it in any manner stood in the way of the pursuit of profit and the operations of Big Business.

Howard was content to challenge the makers of artificial fertilizers to large-scale trials in agricultural production, in which chemical fertilizers and natural fertilizers would compete. Apparently, there were no takers, and the unwillingness of the chemical fertilizer firms to stand this test cannot, as Howard says, "be due to lack of money." They must, he concludes, "fear the verdict of Mother Earth."

Howard's own writing is of course the most important part of *The Soil and Health*, but the contributions of his collaborators add richly to this volume. The more widely this book is read, the sooner will come the over-due and necessary reforms in modern agriculture.

## COMMENTARY

### BEYOND EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY

IT seems fair to say that John Schaar, as quoted in this week's "Children," argues from existential grounds, and that he invites a similar sort of self-reference by the reader. Every parent and every devoted teacher—anyone who has experienced self-forgetful delight in another person—will know what Mr. Schaar means when he speaks of the human relations which lie outside the boundaries of politicalized, equalitarian thinking. The light of dawning understanding in a child's eyes makes comparisons with others irrelevant. The moment of discovery is authentically unique, not to be measured or classified, as though it needed validation by comparison with the responses of other children. And to say that all human beings are "equal" in having this potentiality of awakening is to use a puny word for an indefinable wonder.

To conclude his paper Mr. Schaar quotes from D. H. Lawrence—almost certainly from the same source from which we took passages by Lawrence in "Children" for last June 21—an essay, "Education of the People," published in *Phoenix* after his death. Lawrence speaks of the reality in human beings which remains unknown to political considerations:

One man is neither equal nor unequal to another man. When I stand in the presence of another man, and I am my own pure self, am I aware of the presence of an equal, or of an inferior, or of a superior? I am not. When I stand with another man who is himself, and when I am truly myself then I am only aware of a Presence, and of the strange reality of Otherness. There is me, and there is *another being*. . . . There is no comparing or estimating. . . . Comparison enters only when one of us departs from his own integral being, and enters the material mechanical world. Then equality and inequality starts at once.

There are certain words, much used in our attempts to manage the "material world," which are bifocal in their application. They apply to the world of comparison, measurement, equality and

inequality, but they also have a hidden, inner meaning, deeply allied with high human longing. These are words like freedom and justice and equality, believed to stand for conditions which we make strenuous attempts to guarantee by law and in constitutions. Yet despite our best efforts, the transcendent content behind the external forms of freedom and justice and equality continually eludes us. That deeper meaning may be symbolized by legal arrangements, but it is not *provided*. A grasp of this distinction seems to be the point of Mr. Schaar's essay.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

WE have the habit here—whether or not it is mean activities concerned with the pursuit,

This is to say that in a completely society—an ideal society where no coercion is be authority, but only the unsought authority which moral intelligence. With no seeking of either power

It seems evident that the moral ideas on which a non-political society or community, but a very security on the exercise of graded compulsions. Yet their golden glow for people who are subject to many belonging to a free, non-coercive society. It is by magnanimous exercise of power arise.

Beyond," which appears in *Contemporary Political Theory* (Crespigny and Atherton, 1970), John H. meaning of "equality" as it is typically understood

and then contrasts this meaning with the quite where other motivations prevail. Why look at such a teachers often talk to children about the importance

tone of value with more other word we use, except possibly freedom. As Schaar says: "Every strongly held theory or ethic, a theory of social relations, and a vision of the

Why is the idea of equality so precious to us? currency during the struggles of the eighteenth-world found in it a new conception of the meaning of conditions then imposed upon the great majority by vision in it. A man, simply by being a man, enjoyed other men. There is something of a mystery here, are by no means well understood, but there was no *inequality* century Europe, sanctioned by the privileges of blood essence in all men immediately took on the practical intuition gave moral support to the revolutionary

Thus a kind of reductive violence was done to and mystery and made the moral force behind the years, was oversimplification and perversion. By equality, including its incommensurable or Schaar attempts to show how impoverished modern understanding of the term.

conceived as the means for moralizing the forms and society which places the highest value on material a mask for indifference to the welfare of other human Schaar's paper is long and closely isolation. He maintains, for example, that the practical effect of adding to what might be termed *natural* sanction practices which reinforce these inequalities

The doctrine of equal opportunity, followed

returns it to "nature." What is so generous about telling a man he can go as far as his talents will take him when his

which ten men compete, with the rules being the same for all. Three of the competitors are forty years old, five are

Bannister. What sense does it make to say that all ten have an equal opportunity to win the race? The outcome

will call it a mockery when told that all have the same opportunity to win.

Schaar is not condemning the idea of equal opportunity as having pointing out its inadequacy and misleading character when made the principal moral foundation of human market place mentality to all the spheres of life." And elsewhere he explains this further, observing of opportunity is a poor tool for understanding even those sectors of life to which the notion of equality is

It is a poor tool in that, whereas it seems to defend equality it really only defends the equal right to become

from bringing men together, the equal opportunity doctrine sets them against each other. The doctrine rests

conception of man and society. . . . A fuller conception of equality is needed, one stripped of the antagonistic and

That fuller conception, in turn, requires a broader view of politics than is afforded by the "who gets what, when,

Mr. Schaar certainly means the expansion of regulation of the exercise of power—a thinking which will either enlarge the meaning of politics or trans-political. He says in a closing paragraph:

the existence of necessary and just superiorities and

appraisal. Certainly, some things *are* and more to be preferred. Some vocations and talents are more valuable than others, and more to be rewarded. The

trained, or talented man has no ground either for thinking

himself a better than his less-favored fellows, or for regarding his temporary and limited justification for authority over others. The paradigmatic case is that of the relation

knowledge gives him a just claim to authority over his students. But central to the ethic of teaching is the

only his substantive knowledge but also his critical skills and habits necessary for judging and contributing to that

his duty by making himself unnecessary to the student.

Perhaps this at least suggests the outlines of a boundaries of its applicability. The heart of such a view is its affirmation of equality of being and belonging. That

we should all be treated in a common or average way, so that the minimal conditions of a common life are made

participation in political life, equal right to those average material provisions necessary for living together decently

in and sharing of the common life and culture while striving to assure that no man shall determine or define

What are the limits of the application of equalitarian measures? Mr.

Those boundaries begin where we try to define man himself. Every attempted formulation of equality indefinability of the creature for and about whom the formulation is made. In

that any two men are, because it is impossible to say what a man is. It is easy to abstract from the whole and

with the same parts abstracted from other whole men. Thus, one can define an American citizen in terms that

citizens are equal. But when it comes to talking about whole men and about man, the concept of equality is

recognition of self and others.

It seems evident that there should be no

applications, without first making clear these larger considerations which are prior to politics.

## *FRONTIERS* Some Magazines

THE fourth issue of *World* (dated Aug. 15)—the new biweekly or fortnightly which began publication in July—has the qualities which admirers of Norman Cousins, its editor, have been hoping the paper would embody. A literary magazine gives an editor considerable freedom, and Mr. Cousins has always used his to the limit. Back in the 40's, after the Bikini test shot, he opened the pages of the *Saturday Review* to Lewis Mumford's magnificent diatribe, "Gentlemen, You Are Mad!" Danilo Dolci, neglected by other editors of the large-circulation media, became known to many American readers through the *Saturday Review*, and some of Buckminster Fuller's choicer contributions have also appeared there. A consistent worker for peace, Mr. Cousins was the principal founder of SANE.

Obliged to leave the helm of the *Saturday Review* because of differences with its present publishers, Mr. Cousins started *World*, practically at the demand of the numerous loyal readers who had learned to value his editorial and publishing policies in the past. The Aug. 15 issue confirms their expectations, with an interview with Dick Gregory; an article on covert preparations for biological warfare by the United States; an appreciative study of the work of Edmund Wilson, who died recently; a substantial review of a new book on Einstein; and an illuminating review-essay on the quarrel between Sartre and Camus. Too often, contemporary magazines give the impression that both editors and writers are devoting great skill to matters of no importance. It does not seem likely that Mr. Cousins will let this happen to his paper.

We have just read through two issues of *Resurgence*, a bimonthly which comes from England. For quick identification we list some of the associate editors, most of whom will be known to MANAS readers: Ernest Bader, Danilo

Dolci, Paul Goodman, Jayaprakash Narayan, and E. F. Schumacher. *Resurgence* is published at 275, Kings Road, Kingston, Surrey, England, at 25 pence (60 cents American, but add postage) a copy. *Resurgence* calls itself "Journal of the Fourth World" and explains:

We believe the real questions are about war . . . pollution . . . population . . . despoliation . . . and alienation . . .

We link these problems to one major question—that of size . . .

Most governments are doing horrible and evil things, not because politicians are more evil than the rest of us, but because they are no longer controlling events . . .

That's why we talk of The Fourth World—a world of thousands of small-scale countries which people can control and direct, not just four or five insane uncontrollable political monsters. . . .

The March/April issue of *Resurgence* has an article relating Gandhi's thinking to the counter-culture idea, by Geoffrey Ashe, author of *Gandhi, A Study in Revolution*. This discussion is valuable in showing that for Gandhi non-violence obtained its meaning and balance from the search for Truth. Gandhi's non-violence grew out of positive activities—they were never merely "anti" campaigns. Movements disintegrate by being only "anti." Gandhi's civil disobedience was always in behalf of some clear affirmation. As Mr. Ashe explains:

That, surely, is why Gandhi had so little to do with protest parades and sitdown demonstrations, although both were known in his India. Even when he led his greatest protest of all, his campaign in 1930 against the British salt tax, he didn't tell his followers to march about with placards saying "Down with the Salt Tax." He told them to defy Government monopoly by making salt for themselves. The protest took the positive form of setting up a free democratic salt industry.

Hand-spinning was the foundation of Gandhi's Constructive Program, his "counter culture." All his efforts were toward building a Society that is Good for All—the Sanodaya Society:

hence, freedom of the worker from exploitation by big business; freedom of women from the tyranny of the

religious feuding or persecution; and so forth. On the positive side, it meant decentralization and cottage

For Mr. Ashe, this suggests the need of a

Gandhi, he thinks, showed the way for those who find the present civilization intolerable:

counter-society, a distinct mode of living, on a do-it-yourself basis. Perhaps at first on a small scale,

This is the proper context for future activities for peace in the broadest sense.

has in mind have the peculiar virtue of being subjected to the test of everyday practice. Such

transformed from theory into living applications, so that the weaknesses and fallacies in them, if

theories which require the making of laws usually ignore the fact that modern man knows little or

change, and almost never gives attention to the factors of individual growth which are an essential

Gandhian approach to change relies almost entirely on these factors.

is

serious about such proposals and are making their own plans.

presentation of extracts from Theodore Roszak's *Where the Wasteland Ends*, in its

mention the *San Francisco Fault*,

Coast Review of Books which is not all acids and scalpels. Subscription is \$5.00 a year; address—

Francisco, Calif. 94111.