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TIMES OF AWAKENING

THE great transitions of history are times of extravagance, irrationalism, and often of violence, but they are also attended by extraordinary inspiration leading to heights of vision—vision later to be diminished, conventionalized, or forgotten in the period of social and intellectual consolidation. During a transition the caretakers of orthodoxy become fearful and rigidly severe. Having little imagination themselves, they cannot tell the creative spirits from the fools, the authentic philosophers and prophets from the charlatans. Even if driven into the streets and market places, the men who bring seminal changes in human attitudes bypass the institutions which revere only the past, spreading their doctrines among the spirited young and those who are still young in spirit. So it was with Socrates, and so, again, with Giordano Bruno. Socrates, possibly the greatest educator of youth the world has known, was tried and executed by irate Athenian parents, and Bruno, herald and prophet of the modern world-view, was burned for his emancipating heresies by the Church.

Both are honored in modern times as champions of the right to free thought and speech. We hear more, however, of Socrates than of Bruno, who was not only a courageous human being but also a philosopher of extraordinary vision. The men of great periods of transition often seem to have much in common. Thus Bruno, cherished by freethinkers for his bold defense of the Copernican theory, was equally outspoken in expounding his philosophy of mystical and transcendental vision. Ultimate knowledge, he believed, comes only with the transformation of the self. The seeker must become that which he longs to know, and in this transformation he dies in his finite self to unite with the dimensionless reality. Actaeon, hunting Diana with his hounds, sees the mirrored image of the goddess bathing in a stream, whereupon the magic of her beauty changes him into a stag and he is devoured by his own hunting dogs. Thus intellect is slain by divine wisdom, which it pursues. In Bruno's interpretation of the fable, *"The great hunter becomes the game."*

> . . . the moment he came into the true presence, carried away, beside himself, at the spectacle of such great beauty, he saw himself changed into the thing he was hunting; and he discovered that he himself had become the longed-for prey of his own dogs, his thoughts; for, now that he had compressed divinity into himself, there was no longer any occasion to hunt it elsewhere. . . .
>
> He is dead to the world, free from the prison of matter. The walls are now cast down, with full unobstructed vision he looks out upon an unbroken horizon. He is beginning to see the whole as a unit, no longer through differences and numbers; to behold Amphitrite, the fountain of all numbers, species, classes; to behold the Monad, the true essence of the being of them all—the monad which is nature, wherein the divine monad may be contemplated in reflection as the sun in the moon, by which it gives us light, when it has passed into the hemisphere of intellectual substances. . . .

This is taken from Arthur Livingston's translation of *Heroic Exaltations,* as given by Giorgio de Santillana in *The Age of Adventure* (Mentor). Later in this dialogue the question of the pain of the seeker is raised. How is it that the human spirit, striving upward, will endure such suffering? "What is the source of that urge which spurs it forever onward beyond what it already possesses?" The reply comes out of Platonic doctrine:

> TANSILLO: I was coming to that. When the intellect has arrived at the apprehension of a certain definite intelligible form, and the will at an out-reaching commensurate to that apprehension, the intellect does not stop at that point: for its own light brings it to realize that it contains within itself every genus of the intelligible that is desired, up to the point

of its apprehending in its vision the supreme source of ideas the ocean of all truth and goodness. It results from this that whatever species is presented to the intellect and is comprehended by the will, from the very fact that it has been so presented and comprehended, the intellect concludes that above this species are greater and greater ones, and so it is in a constant state of a certain kind of activity toward new motion and abstraction. . . . From the beautiful that is comprehended and as a result limited, and therefore beautiful only by participation, it makes a perpetual progress toward that beautiful which is truly beautiful without limit or constriction whatsoever.

CICADA: A futile search, it seems to me.

TANSILLO: Not at all. It is contrary to the facts of nature that the infinite should be comprehended, thereby becoming finite. If that were the case, it would no longer be infinite. It is however perfectly in accord with nature that the infinite, from the very fact of its infinitude, should be infinitely pursued, the pursuit of course not partaking of the nature of physical motion in space, but of a certain metaphysical motion, which progresses not from the imperfect to the perfect, but goes circling through the degrees of perfection till it reaches that infinite center which is neither form nor formed.

CICADA: I would like to know how by going in a circle you can ever reach the center.

TANSILLO: I can't imagine.

CICADA: Then why do you say so?

TANSILLO: Because that is something I can do, leaving you to think it out. . . .

Called before the Inquisition, Bruno declared the universe to be infinite, containing an infinite number of worlds, and he declared nature to be the "shadow and vestige of the Deity," saying also that God is present in all "in a way that cannot be explained." Eight years later, Bruno was consigned to the flames, since he would not give up his philosophical conviction of the immanence of deity, and this could not be reconciled with dogma.

Bruno's great achievement, de Santillana says, was in "a new understanding of a possible relationship of man to the universe." He adds that the Platonic inspiration of his dialogues also gave Bruno strength for his final decision not to submit to the Church:

> He knew that it was only in death that Socrates has begotten in his disciple's mind ideas that were to prove henceforth immortal. Like Socrates, he was offering himself up not for a mature doctrine but for free thought itself as a "beautiful risk"; not for an ideology but for an idea. Unlike Socrates, he was not allowed to give words to the inflexible simplicity with which he met his fate. But we like to imagine that he would not have disdained—for he too was capable of lightheartedness—the words of a contemporary of ours, Lauro de Bosis, written before a similar fate: "There is a message which has to be delivered; whether I live or die has little importance. But if I die, there is a chance that it may go registered and special delivery."

It seems well to give new life to the thought of Bruno in these days when other architects of the scientific structure of thought are being called to account for the moral emptiness of the edifice they erected. For, as de Santillana says, Bruno's Naturalism was not a "setting up of a nature alien to man, as appears already incipient in Galileo." On the contrary—

> The Nature of Bruno is not mechanical as it will be for the materialist, or darkly inimical as it will be for the later pessimists. It is conceived as containing our highest values "according to its own principles." . . . Bruno sees the implicit richness of the universe, and such truths cannot be explored by investigating phenomena, but by going deeper into oneself.

The Middle Ages may be said to have ended in 1450, when G. A. Bussi, the secretary of Nicholas of Cusa, named them *media aetas*. It may be foolish to try to fix a date for the beginning of an epoch such as the Renaissance, but in the century which followed—from 1450 to 1550—America was discovered, the Copernican Theory published, the Reformation burst over all Europe, and printing replaced laboriously copied manuscripts. The awakening of philosophy was, de Santillana says, "a helter-skelter advance, a reconnaissance expedition into unexplored territory." It began in Italy and reached its first and most brilliant peak in the work of the Platonic Academy in Florence, under the inspiration and

supervision of Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. With the support of Lorenzo, Ficino translated the Platonic dialogues and studied Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Porphyry. As Platonists, these ardent scholars and teachers saw hardly any difference between philosophy and religion. (Indeed, until the time of Newton, there were scientists who thought of themselves as religious teachers, devotedly identifying the hand of the Cosmic Artificer in the works of nature.) Ficino's Neoplatonic mysticism, says de Santillana, "strives, like Pico's, towards the conquest of 'natural magic,' the capacity for command that comes to man's soul from standing thus in the cockpit for the universe." Writing in his Introduction to *The Age of Adventure*, de Santillana continues:

> The creation of new habitable planets, as we unashamedly discuss it today, would have been quite within the range of credibility for this kind of imagination. It believes that we can reach out for as yet unknown harmonies and powers, for "nothing is incredible, and nothing is impossible. The possibilities that we deny are those we do not happen to know." To this bold affirmation of Ficino, Pico brings a new and strikingly original content in his *Dignity of Man.* Man's central position in the universe would be, by itself, an old story many times rehearsed, and so, too, is the mystic correspondence between the Microcosm of our nature and the universal Macrocosm. That correspondence involves the idea of two closed and achieved orders. It is an essentially ancient idea. The true distinction of man according to Pico is, much rather, that he has no fixed properties but has the power to share in the properties of all other beings, according to his own free choice. He is a universal and protean agent of transformation, hence it behooves him to orient his soul properly towards the good, so as not to use his powers wrongly. It is not so much his universality as his liberty which is stressed.

These are nearly all ideas which have been entirely dropped out of the currency of modern thought, marked "speculative" or "poetic" when not branded as visionary invention or superstition. In place of the ranges of spiritual intelligence taught by the Neoplatonists, we adopted the forces arising out of the fortuitous concurrence of atoms, and for explanation of the manifest intelligence in human beings and its variable expression in plants and animals we accepted the theory of emergent evolution, which proposed that consciousness and intelligence were somehow secretions of organic processes of impenetrable complexity. Blind, mechanistically ruled energies were the origin of all, while man is an extraordinary sport of nature, unrelated and indeed unexplained so far as all his higher qualities are concerned. He is but the best of the cosmic accidents, and meaning and purpose are notions which he has invented all by himself, since he alone has them.

In this view there is no need for reconciliation of man with nature. Indeed, it cannot be said that nature has a "nature," but only properties which we learn how to manipulate and devise uses for. This is a philosophy of deliberated alienation, a creed suited to the exploiter's drive and the imperialist's dream. It sees the world as no more than a store of raw materials, waiting to be turned into a smorgasbord by the skills of technology. It supports human attitudes which allow the nations to launch programs of wholesale slaughter with the nonchalance of professional executioners, and gives legitimacy to questions such as how much poison both man and nature can absorb into their systems and still survive. It is the view, finally, which has been refined and perfected by those whom we call our "security managers," who wrote the material published in the *Pentagon Papers*, and who, in the words of a *New Yorker* review, "seem to have suppressed all human faculties except certain overdeveloped accounting abilities, which are too narrow even to be called intellect." Seen through such lenses, the reviewer adds, "the world grew remote and dim."

The present turmoil and revolt, and the determined search for new ways of life and thought, are an outspoken rejection of this world-view. It is a spontaneous uprising and declaration of the human spirit which is now taking place at very nearly every level of human affairs. In a

recent volume, *The New Religions* (Doubleday edition, 1970, Pocket Book, 1972), Jacob Needleman considers the impoverishment of the traditional religions of Western civilization, especially in America, to be due to the loss of what he calls the "cosmic dimension," in which man's relations with the natural world are regarded as a form of psychological science and personal discipline. They were this in the Neoplatonic scheme, and they are this in the philosophic forms of Eastern religion, but such conceptions have long been lost to the West. In his Introduction Mr. Needleman says:

> We are really very far in time, and perhaps in practice as well, from the Christianity of the early fathers and the medieval monastic communities, and from the Judaism of the great rabbinic followings in the Middle East and Islamic Spain. In Europe the scientific revolution destroyed the idea of a sacramental universe, and religion became a matter between man and God; science took care of the cosmos—and very quickly erased all concepts of mind and intelligent purpose from it. Only in the Eastern Orthodox Church does the idea still live that nature and the universe itself is involved in man's religious life and in his quest for self-perfection.
>
> By eliminating the cosmos from man's relationship to God, the European came to emphasize more and more the ethical and even legal aspect of religion. Religious life became a matter of belief or performance; the question of man's *ableness* to believe or act faded into the background because his dependency on the universe with all its forces and purposes was no longer taken into account.

Mr. Needleman investigated several of the new Oriental religions which have gained many followers in the United States, reporting on them sympathetically. In his book are long sections on Zen Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism. Most valuable, however, is his general discussion of what the young people who flock to these centers are seeking, and his testimony concerning the earnestness and commitment of a great many of them. Trained in philosophy and clinical psychology in New England universities, Needleman came to San Francisco in 1962, to teach philosophy. He was, as he explains, a sophisticated academic with the usual disdain for exotic religions and "mysticism." He had, however, the virtues of an inquiring mind, and in California, as he says—

> I witnessed at close hand the birth of the hippie movement, the flower children, the drug scene and everything that went with it. I was quite convinced that drugs led nowhere and I am still convinced of that; but what I underestimated was the sincerity of these young people with regard to the religions of the East. . . . I see now that conventional psychological analysis of that interest is of secondary importance, especially as the religious systems we shall be dealing with contain their own psychodynamic categories which in many cases strike much deeper, in my opinion, than those formulated by twentieth-century Europeans like Freud, Jung or Heidegger.

Why this turning to the East? There are doubtless several explanations, but one that clearly applies would point to the impoverishment of Western religion. Mr. Needleman says:

> Men turn to religion and find, to their ultimate dismay, that religion turns to them, to their sciences, their ideas of action and accomplishment, and their language. This is what is known as secularization: the effort by religion to be "relevant," to "solve" human problems, to make men *"happy."*

At this point the author commits his first Western heresy—by repeating the Buddhist teaching that happiness does not come from the satisfaction of desire. In his last chapter he returns to the conventional idea of happiness:

> One of the most serious obstacles to discovering the sense of genuine religion is the belief that its function is to create a "heaven on earth," an external paradise composed of angelic beings formerly known as men. Perhaps the new religions, where their cosmology presents a universe of multileveled intentions, can disabuse the Western mind of that belief. If so, then perhaps some of us will face what we call evil in a new way, questioning our own judgments at least as much as we question the offending world. It is not a matter of approving what we formerly hated—that could surely be grotesque when what is hated is, for example, the suffering of innocents. It is a matter of searching for a new relationship to our hatred, realizing that perhaps it exists at the same level as what we hate and is part of

> the constellation of forces which have produced what is hated.
>
> The cosmology of an organic universe compels men to ask: at what level do *I* exist?

Here, again, is the idea of the Great Chain of Being, known to the Florentine Neoplatonists, and of the levels of which Plato spoke in the *Phaedrus.* The absence of this idea of levels in Western thought is responsible, Mr. Needleman thinks, for much misunderstanding and simplification of Eastern metaphysics. Shorn of degrees of being, Buddhist metaphysics seems to support the scientific world-view. However—

> . . . if one looks at the totality of Buddhist metaphysics—for example in the Tibetan tradition—it bears absolutely no resemblance to the Western scientific view of reality. . . . The single idea of a higher intelligence or of a more compassionate energy is in itself enough to make us question our own intelligence. Buddhist metaphysics begins to resemble the scientific only as long as we omit the idea of levels of energy and purpose. But when we omit that idea, we have left out the heart of all religious thought, Eastern as well as Western.
>
> We cannot begin to question our own powers nor seek to discover our unfathomable possibilities without thinking about the cosmos and our place in it. Only by such thought can our intention be formed at all. As we have suggested, the thunderbolt of the Buddha's practicality struck at minds already engaged—perhaps to the point of exhaustion—in metaphysical contemplation. In that sense, the Buddha doubtless spoke to a people whose minds were very much better prepared for experience than our own. It is possible that for certain societies and people, a discipline can be *too* practical in that it provides experiences without the means to understand or value them. To accuse a discipline of such a thing is only to say that it is as yet incomplete, if not imprecise, for *us.*

This seems wise counsel indeed, during these years of anxious if not desperate inquiry. Yet the hungers this writer describes are genuine, and the reaching after inward knowledge is a natural response to the higher longings which are insistently emerging in this transition age. Meanwhile, a deeper understanding of both these longings and ourselves might be gained from reflective study of the great figures of an earlier awakening and transition—the Renaissance in Italy.

REVIEW
EDWARD WESTON; THE PRIESTLEYS

AN art which involves elaborate technology always has trouble gaining definition—and recognition. The technical achievement keeps crowding out other considerations, concealing the delicacies and the strength of the human contribution. This is certainly the case with photography. If you believe the camera ads, almost anybody can take a great picture, and almost any time, if he spends enough money to get the right equipment. In a situation like that, the photographer who is concerned about his "image" as an artist is likely to suffer from an inferiority complex and be led into pretentious or imitative paths. Then, along comes a man like Edward Weston whose sense of purpose, clarity of intention, and mastery of his tools are so intense and strong that the question of what photography is or ought to be is raised to a new plateau of meaning.

Edward Weston: The Flame of Recognition, a collection of his photographs together with selections from his daybooks and letters, edited by Nancy Newhall (Aperture Monograph, published by Grossman, 1971), comes close to being the most delighting visual experience a man with a camera can provide, so far as this reviewer is concerned. And the text explains more of the meaning of Weston's achievement than anything else we've read. For Weston, the camera was a way of seeing into the world and of feeling and knowing it more deeply. The pictures in this book were taken between 1922 and 1948 and he stopped keeping a daybook in 1934. He lived in Carmel, California, most of his life, but spent time in New York and Mexico, also. He died in 1958.

In her Foreword Nancy Newhall says:

> Films were slow in those days [in the 1920's] and exposures long; his old 8 x 10 was rickety and his bellows often leaked. And to the last he trusted his own feeling for light more than any photoelectric meter. Deliberately he stripped his technique, his living, and seeing of unessentials and tried to concentrate on the objective and eternal—only to find that he could not and would not be bound even by his own dogma. How could he tell what he would see on his ground glass tomorrow?

Robinson Jeffers, whose portrait by Weston is in this book, said of him: "He was one of those who taught photography to be itself." How did Weston think of photography? He wrote in 1930:

> I don't want the play of sunlight to excite the fancy, nor the mystery of gloom to invoke the imagination—wearing colored glasses—I want the *greater mystery of things revealed more clearly than the eyes can see*, at least more than the layman, the casual observer notes. I would have a microscope, shall have one some day.
>
> On the other hand what a valuable way of; recording just such passing moments is the camera! And I certainly would be the first to grasp the opportunity, if I were ready at the time! I can not, never have been bound by any theory or doctrine, not even my own.
>
> Anything that excites me, for any reason, I will photograph: not searching for unusual subject matter but making the commonplace unusual, nor indulging in extraordinary technique to attract attention. Work only when desire to the point of necessity impels—then do it honestly. Then so called "composition" becomes a personal thing, to be developed along with technique, as a personal way of seeing.

Then, in 1932:

> I feel that I have been more deeply moved by music, literature, sculpture, painting, than I have by photography, that is by the other workers in my own medium. This needs explaining. I am not moved to emulate—neither to compete with nor imitate these other creative expressions, but seeing hearing, reading something fine excites me to greater effort (*inspired* is just the word, but how it has been abused!). Reading about Stieglitz, for instance, meant more to me than seeing his work. Kandinsky, Brancusi, Van Gogh, El Greco, have given me fresh impetus: and of late Keyserling, Spengler, Melville (catholic taste!) in literature. I never hear Bach without deep enrichment—I almost feel he has been my greatest "influence." It is as though in taking me to these great conceptions of other workers, the fallow soil in my depths, emotionally stirred, receptive, has been fertilized.

Again in 1932:

> I am the adventurer on a voyage of discovery, ready to receive fresh impressions, eager for fresh horizons, not in the spirit of a militant conqueror to impose myself or my ideas but to identify myself in, and unify with, whatever I am able to recognize as significantly part of me: the "me" of universal rhythms.

Weston also writes of the meticulous attention given to light, and of the importance and uncompromising fidelity of the glossy print. Glossy paper, he said, "deprives me of a chance to spot—repair—a print from a damaged or carelessly seen negative." He said in 1930 that his objective was to show "the Thing Itself," getting rid of the "photographic" quality. He also wrote in that year:

> Sometimes being broke, facing an uncertain tomorrow, has a stiffening effect on my spine. It makes me hard, and even reckless in spending, as though I said to myself—I have nothing anyhow—I might as well go to the limit. I bought a new Bach album for $10.00, I decided to put a sign in my showcase, similar to the one on my wall—"no retouching." . . . Now I will change my sign on Ocean Avenue to read "E. W. Photographer—unretouched portraits."

The pictures? They are diverse and seem invariably to bear the signature of the man who took them. They make a splendid answer to the question, "What is photography in itself?"

Early in the 1950's, J. B. Priestley and Jacquetta Hawkes—man and wife—visited the American Southwest. Mr. Priestley did some lecturing and Miss Hawkes visited the sites of old ruins and the villages of the Pueblo Indians. Together—he a novelist, she an archaeologist—wrote a book about their adventures, *Journey Down a Rainbow*, which was published by Harper in 1955. They take turns writing chapters, often in the form of letters to each other, since on this trip they went their separate ways. Miss Hawkes wanted to see the Pueblos in New Mexico and Arizona, since they are "a peaceful sedentary people who have never moved from their ancestral lands," and who "still preserve much of their ancient culture, far more (as we shall see) than is generally realized by European archaeologists and prehistorians."

But why did Mr. Priestley go to Texas?

> Because there, just across the state line from New Mexico, warmed by the same hours of sunshine, may be found the latest men, living in what are for their size the richest and most rapidly expanding cities in our Western world. If our newest urban civilization cannot be found here, then where can it be found? . . . Dallas and Houston represent the newest, the most prosperous, the most "progressive" America, just as American life itself represents a pattern of society to which all our urban Western civilization is beginning to conform. Here, you may say, is the cultural pattern of the mid-twentieth century.

In terms of external signs and symbols, the choice of Texas as a representative "sample" was doubtless justified. And the pattern, the Priestleys say, "blazes out" when Texans are at play, spending their money, feeling easy and relaxed. Would another state have been more "representative"? New York? Massachusetts? California? In any event, the Priestleys were interested in polar opposites and found them in the Pueblos and in Texas.

Mr. Priestley is a temperate and even friendly critic, but Texas had him gasping for breath on several occasions. The interesting thing about his comment is that it is seldom dated by the passage of more than fifteen years. After being wined and dined in Dallas, he spoke of the need of a balance in both men and women of the masculine and feminine elements, if there is to be good conversation. Then he said:

> But here was a society entirely dominated by the masculine principle. Why were so many of these women at once so arch and so anxious? There was nothing wrong with them as women. Superficially, everything seemed blazingly right with them. But even here in these circles, where millionaires apparently indulged and spoilt them, giving them without question or stint what women elsewhere were for ever wistfully hoping for, they were haunted by a feeling of inferiority, resented but never properly examined and challenged. They lived in a world so contemptuous and destructive of real feminine values

> that they had to be heavily bribed to remain in it. All those shops, like the famous Neiman-Marcus store (a remarkable creation) here in Dallas, were part of the bribe. They were still girls in a mining camp. And to increase their bewilderment, perhaps their despair, they are told they are living in a matriarchy.

Miss Hawkes entered into the life of the Pueblo Indians and wrote at length about their attitudes and ways. In the integration of the daily round of duties of the Hopis, she saw the working of a principle of harmony reminiscent of the old Egyptian concept of *ma'at.* "Certainly like the ancient Egyptians they had established an exquisite harmony between man, nature and divinity." There seemed no distinction between the religious and secular life of the Pueblo Indians. Always in Miss Hawkes' mind was the contrast of these people, whose ways have been unchanged for a thousand years, with modern man: What can be learned from the comparison? In one place she says:

> I have to be severe with myself. I know that I should feel frustrated, cut down, if I had to live in a pueblo with a few possessions such as these. I know, too, that a greater degree of social organization and technical skill has been needed to nurture the highest genius and human achievements. There could have been no Dante or Leonardo among the Indians. Nevertheless, I am truthful when I say I would rather share in the life of a pueblo than in that of any of the scurrying little robots I saw in my vision [of a New York store]. I believe it to be not only a happier life, but one more worthy of our kind.

Elsewhere, speaking of the carefully selective way in which the Pueblo Indians choose what they will adopt of "modern improvements," rejecting the rest—such as, in Taos, piped water and electricity—Miss Hawkes asks why we are so little masters of our own discoveries, being unable, apparently, to reject *anything* that is "new." While we may neither desire nor need to go back to primitive conditions, "can we not, like the Pueblos, make some conscious refusals?"

In a chapter toward the end of the book, Miss Hawkes wonders if modern man is not reverting to some of the limiting and confining ways of primitive cultures: "In this society, just as among the Pueblos, the exceptional, difficult individual is looked at with disapproval and must generally submit to being rubbed smooth, pulled down—or thrown out." Then she asks:

> In short, are we watching society turning from a point where the individual hasn't tried to one where he has failed? It seems to me that if the intermediate stage, the individual humanism which we still try to serve, is to control the next revolution of the wheel we have got to see that the acceptance of the irrational is a part of reason—which is to say that reason must honor what is still beyond its grasp. These Indians live by an intuitive psychological wisdom which we have lost. We, with all the handicaps of our greater consciousness, have got to try to incorporate psychical factors fully and generously into the life of the mind—hitherto much too narrowly defined by Western man.

Comment of this sort seems both balanced and prophetic, a philosophical anthropology which might help us to understand ourselves.

COMMENTARY
"HANDICAPS" OF CONSCIOUSNESS

THE Priestleys were not the first to draw an instructive contrast between the harmonious culture of the Pueblo Indians and the disorderly and destructive ways of modern man (see Review). Reviewing *The Hopi Way* by LauraThompson and Alice Joseph, Ward Shepard said in the *Scientific Monthly* for February, 1946:

> The fateful choice of our civilization is not between guns and butter, but between half men and whole men. The Hopis cannot give us the blueprint for a new civilization, but they can instruct us in the nature of society as the nurturing ground of whole men and in the essence of true democracy, in which the eternal and yet infinitely malleable substance of human nature is wrought out to its full beauty.

The excellences of Hopi life moved Shepard almost to ecstasy. He believed that here, in this tiny, model culture, might be found the secrets of social reconstruction which the West was so much in need of. The Hopis, he said, had "almost no political government," and among them selfishness, competitiveness, and aggressiveness were practically unknown. "Their wealth is people, not goods."

A more contemporary reference to the Hopis comes in William Irwin Thompson's comment on the Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth* (*Time,* Aug. 21), in which he points to the neglect of the inner side of man's life in this sophisticated scientific study:

> What's a nonpolluting culture, a non-growth, a non-Faustian Western culture going to be like? The people who have really been doing the research and development on that kind of culture have obviously been in the counterculture. The non-growth culture is closer to the Hopi Indian way of life than it is to that of the jet-setting industrialist's. Frank Waters' *Book of the Hopi* is the most directly relevant book to something like *The Limits to Growth.*

Mr. Thompson speaks of the mystical element in new forms of consciousness which is able to reach to the heart of things; and this recalls Jacquetta Hawkes' observation that the Pueblo Indians "live by an intuitive psychological wisdom which we have lost." Miss Hawkes adds that to learn from the Indians would be to "try to incorporate psychical factors fully and generously into the life of the mind—hitherto much too narrowly defined by Western man."

She also speaks of "the handicaps of our greater consciousness." Why handicaps? This emphasis may be peculiarly important, since we are well aware of the advantages of the heightened awareness of modern man. That "handicaps" are also involved is a possibility that cries out for attention.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
SOME WANDERING THOUGHTS

PEOPLE concerned with children will find much of value in *Books, Children & Men* (Horn Book, Inc., 1947) by Paul Hazard. This is a book filled with the graces of Old World learning, gentility and cultivation, a brief and engaging history of stories and books for children. Anyone pondering selections for a child's library needs to read it.

Hazard turns up curious facts, such as that despite its many other cultural riches, the South of Europe is notably inferior to the North in literature for children! At the end of a long chapter in which he argues the matter, country by country, producing illustrations, he proposes that the imagination of the people of the North lends itself more to tales for children. Then he says:

> But the superiority of the North is due, above all, to the fact that the Latins lack a certain feeling for childhood, for childhood understood as a fortunate island where happiness must be protected, like an independent republic living according to its own laws, like a caste with glorious privileges. The Latins begin to relax, to breathe, really to live only when they have reached man's estate. Before that they are merely growing, a process that the Latin children themselves finish gladly. If you look at the physiognomy, ages being the same, of a young Spaniard, of a young Italian, of a young French boy, on the one hand, and on the other hand, at the physiognomy of a young English boy, of a young American, you will notice how the former is already more mature. In the same way, the mind of the former is farther advanced, as they say; farther advanced on the road of life.

Hazard apparently thinks some geographical or climatic determinism plays a part:

> In countries where stalks grow more slowly because the sunlight is weaker, in countries where adults wear out more quickly from the time they begin life's struggle, they encourage childhood to last longer. They judge the early age happy, not because it does not know reality, but because it experiences a reality better adapted to the consciousness that it has of itself. The ideal of life is not an inaccessible future, but simple happiness, immediate, tangible. Youth possesses it; it would be a crime to take it away. For the Latins, children have never been anything but future men. The Nordics have understood better this truer truth, that men are only grown-up children.

This explanation, if explanation it be, sounds like a casual invention; at any rate, the reader senses potential controversy here. Yet Hazard's essential kindliness is the first quality of everything he says, so that his extravagances may not irritate, but only provoke thought in other directions. When it comes to the early maturity of the young, there are so many possible explanations! Hardly anyone, for example, who has lived for a while in Southern California can have failed to notice the maturity in adolescence of the *Nisei* children. During the years when the faces of the Anglo boys and girls are often lumpy, spotted, and slack-jawed, these young Americans of Japanese parentage seem carved out of ivory, as though both their bodies and visages had been through a long, racial refinement, bringing them effortless psycho-physical maturity and finish.

Whatever the reason, the difference exists and is notable.

Meanwhile, critics of a later generation than the one Paul Hazard belonged to (he died in France, his native land, in 1944) are able to turn his observations around and make a virtue out of the Southern neglect of childhood. How can this be justified? On the ground that misunderstanding of childhood and elaborate abuse of the young in the name of education are far worse than indifference. Ivan Illich warms to his campaign for deschooling by pointing out:

> Since most people today live outside industrial cities, most people today do not experience childhood. In the Andes, you till the soil once you have become "useful." Before that, you watch the sheep. If you are well-nourished, you should be useful by eleven and if not, by twelve. Recently, I was talking to my night watchman, Marcos, about his 11-year-old son who works in the barbershop. I noted in Spanish that his son was still a *"niño."* Marcos, surprised, answered with a guileless smile: "Don Ivan, I guess you're

> right." Realizing that until my remark father and son thought themselves equal, I felt guilty for having drawn the curtain of childhood between two sensible persons. Of course if I were to tell the New York slum dweller that his working son was still a "child," there would have been no surprise. He knows quite well that his 11-year-old son should be allowed childhood, and resents the fact that he is not. The son of Marcos has yet to be afflicted with the yearning for childhood; the New Yorker's son feels deprived.

Illich is speaking of things as they are, rather than drawing a moral, here, yet his point might be that no sort of "progress" or "educational opportunity" will justify the distortion of basic human attitudes, and the boy in the Andes, while limited in outlook, is also free from the corruptions of learned pretense. He is not yet in danger of being unmanned by cultural fraud. There are things worse than a hard life.

The threat of fraud is not imaginary. Last spring, in the commencement address at Brooklyn College, New York, Oscar Handlin, the cultural historian, told the graduating class that the protective regime of the modern American college resulted in a "prolonged detachment from life" which leaves many students less experienced and independent than their ancestors were at thirteen or fourteen. A *New York Times* (June 1) account quoted Prof. Handlin:

> "In the nineteen-seventies we sentence more of our youth to more years in school than ever before in history, so that never before have Americans been as poorly educated as now."
>
> He did not blame the graduating seniors, but rather the current trends in American educational theory and administration.
>
> "More time is spent in talking about learning than in learning," he said.
>
> "Reform invariably multiplies committees, complicates apparatus and sucks the student into a procedural maze so that he cannot conceive of learning other than in terms of courses and credits.
>
> "Who would believe that it was once possible to read a book or see a movie or play the guitar without consulting a dean or filling out a course card?"

In a chapter in a forthcoming book, Ronald Gross draws an interesting parallel between the backwardness of Latin America and the "detachment from life" of secondary education in the United States:

> Paolo Freire talks about the culture of silence to which the illiterate of the Third World have been condemned. But high school students anywhere in the U.S.—the brightest and most successful of them—will tell you that they don't have any idea of how or why to write anything if it isn't assigned as a paper. Thinking and writing are things one does for the teacher. The basic human capability to articulate, examine, share, and preserve their best thoughts has been stolen from these youngsters by their schooling. . . .
>
> In John Holt's fine phrase, "the theft of learning" acts like the Enclosure Laws did in rural England, blocking off vast areas of experience from direct engagement by the student. Literature and writing became the province of the English teacher, political judgment the domain of the social studies teacher, curiosity about how the world works the curriculum for science. Rather than developing as powers of the growing person, these are dominated by an alien style which freezes them, codifies them, chops them up into courses, classes, and textbooks, to be tested by quizzes and tests, legitimatized by grades and diplomas. The flower of learning, yanked from its soil in the individual person, shrivels and dies, or at best is processed into incense or perfume: an ornament of the environment or person, but no longer alive.
>
> Those who have learned their lessons well will never forget that knowledge and understanding are the possession of experts, and that we know who the experts are by their diplomas.

Manifestly, to recapture the virtues of the life of the young under the regime of "benign neglect" which Paul Hazard finds characteristic of southern Europe, it will be necessary to restore the sort of environment in which youth has natural encounters with the workaday world and its varied responsibilities. This requires no pursuit of "illiteracy" nor contempt for scholarship, but it does involve radically changed relationships with the external world for the adult members of the family. Such changes will have to begin one step at a time.

FRONTIERS

"Agenda for Tomorrow"

IN 1963, Stewart Udall, then Secretary of the Interior, published *The Quiet Crisis,* sketching the history of the conservation movement in the United States and outlining the careers of its principal figures. The book brings vividly to life some men whose ideas and efforts ought to be known to all, and embodies the deep ecological concern of the author. He planned to follow this book with another that would provide the substance of needed conservation plans for the future. However, in 1968, in *Agenda for Tomorrow* (Harcourt), he did something different. By that time, he explained, he had realized that conservation issues could not be separated from the broader problems of the decay and disorder of urban life, racial injustice, the misapplications of technology, and the failure of both local and national governments to recognize and accept their responsibilities. Accordingly, the programs proposed in this book deal with far-reaching urban reform and regeneration, and seek reanimation of political life. Mr. Udall has been a participant in government for years and doubtless knows something of what ought to be done. Yet he makes it plain that the success of all such undertakings will depend upon the "leadership" provided and the quality of the men who work to carry them out.

It is here, however, that the skepticism of the reader is likely to take over. By what magic are we to find officials who will create a government better by far than we have had before? Could the people be expected to elect them through the political processes which now exist? Mr. Udall says in this book:

> It is a sad fact that governments often conspired to encourage the forces of disorder and decay. The federal government abetted fragmentation and encouraged non-planning. The Federal Housing Administration actively encouraged the worst forms of suburban sprawl. Federal public housing programs more often than not replaced the old slums with super-slums of tomorrow, and all too often urban renewal was perverted into Negro removal. Until the late 1960's federal aid for air and water-pollution control was negligible. The one vast public-works program of the 1950's—the highway act of 1956—sliced up cities and compounded the congestion of car-inundated streets.
>
> The squandering of the land, water, air, light, sky, and open space of our cities has been the conservation scandal of this century.

The reversal of such tendencies will surely take more than a changing of the political guard. In another place, Mr. Udall says: "To rebuild our cities with style and distinction will require interdisciplinary teams of architects, engineers, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, lawyers, and managers, bound together by a common commitment to the humanizing of the urban milieu." But what if one of the first requirements of genuine renewal lies in recognizing that these labelled specialists don't know enough to plan so extensively for other people? Each of these professions has in it a handful of brilliant critics showing how blinded by the past the rank and file of its members are.

Nonetheless, *Agenda for Tomorrow* is a useful book. It condenses into a few pages a clear account of the essential ills of the United States from a "public" point of view. Mr. Udall gives an over-all perspective on the failures of both metropolitan and federal government which are now, as he says, no longer debatable. They have been certified by history. What is wanted is "the sound surgery and humane therapy of a dedicated generation."

This is a stirring call, but hardly different from countless similar calls made by men who see where the present course of the country is leading. But the plans of these men are limited to what a "dedicated generation" must do: they say nothing about the virtually unknown processes by which a dedicated generation might come into being.

Just conceivably, what is needed is a form of *enantidromia,* defined by William Irwin Thompson as "a dialectical movement that begins in one position but ends up in the directly opposite

position." For example, Mr. Udall wants a great mass movement of aroused citizens, filled with dedication for the reform of the man-made environment. The enantidromic approach would be to start at the opposite end—with individuals. Mr. Udall wants an awakened sense of public responsibility; to get it, it may be necessary to begin with a revival of private responsibility.

Consider this diagnosis, offered by Wendell Berry in his new book, *Continuing Harmony:*

> What we are up against in this country, in any attempt to invoke private responsibility, is that we have nearly destroyed private life. Our people have given up their independence in return for the cheap seductions and the shoddy merchandise of so-called "affluence." We have delegated all our vital functions and responsibilities to salesmen and agents and bureaus and experts of all sorts. We cannot feed or clothe ourselves or entertain ourselves, or communicate with each other, or be charitable or neighborly or loving, or even respect ourselves, without recourse to a merchant or a corporation or a public-service organization or a style-setter or an expert. . . .
>
> In this state of total consumerism—which is to say a state of total helpless dependence on things and services and ideas and motives that we have forgotten how to provide ourselves—all meaningful contact between ourselves and the earth is broken. . . . Most of us, for example, not only do not know how to produce the best food in the best way—we don't know how to produce any kind in any way. Our model citizen is a sophisticate who before puberty understands how to produce a baby, but who at the age of thirty will not know how to produce a potato. . . .
>
> If we are to hope to correct our abuses of each other and of other races and of our land, and if our effort to correct these abuses is to be more than a political fad that will in the long run be only another form of abuse, then we are going to have to go far beyond public protest and political action. We are going to have to rebuild the substance and integrity of private life in this country. We are going to have to gather up the fragments of knowledge and responsibility that we have parcelled out to the bureaus and the corporations and the specialists, and we are going to have to put those fragments back together again in our own minds and in our families and households and neighborhoods. We need better government, no doubt about it. But we also need better minds, better friendships, better marriages, better communities. We need persons and households that do not have to wait on organizations, but can make the necessary changes in themselves, on their own.

Mr. Berry calls this chapter in his book, "Think Little." He himself has two professions: he teaches English and he practices organic farming. He has a number of suggestions concerning what one man might do in the way of recovery of responsibility. "A man who is willing to undertake the discipline of mending his own ways is worth more to the conservation movement than a hundred who are insisting merely that the government and the industries mend *their* ways." Mr. Berry, too, believes that this "insisting" is necessary, but that by itself it will accomplish very little.