

## AT THE EDGE OF TOMORROW

essay by Joyce Carol *Saturday*  
for Nov. 4) and portions of Theodore  
*Where the Wasteland Ends,*

running current of change to which a number of  
*Saturday*  
editors introduce Miss  
with this statement:

fresh look at human history and human destiny.  
and "transformation." Yet this is not a collaborative  
simultaneously; few of the authors could have drawn  
science, with its shimmering visions of unseen

These rational men, these sober investigators of  
of all artistic endeavor: They would have us change

Yet some of these writers are strongly critical  
presentday science, seeming to find inspiration  
"scientific," and, as with  
criticism of the confining and distorting effects of  
addition to altering our view of the world, is to

One parallel between Miss  
"New Heaven and Earth," and  
their both calling for an end to the narrowing  
Roszak provides

culture by this canon of "truth," and Miss  
celebrates the new spirit already in process of  
systematic alienation of man from the world about  
Roszak points out that man's now faint

life are at total odds with the very principle of  
We still have our "progress," it is true, but we find  
science must be "true" because it we are  
scientific worldview does work."

Oates confronts this sense of threatening

*There are said to be creative pauses,  
and dead as death itself.  
change takes place.*

What appears to be a breaking-down of  
forms by life itself (not an eruption of madness or  
inevitable. Perhaps we are in the tumultuous but  
consciousness—a few of us like theologians of the  
of the Renaissance. What we must avoid is the  
always misinterpreted a natural, evolutionary  
conclusion of all history.

Oates also sees going on in the United  
individualism of the Renaissance. Her analysis  
Roszak's close  
worldview shaped by the thinking of Francis  
knowledge that gives power became the central  
While the spirit of the Renaissance had other  
and Bruno—Bacon's outlook became the popular  
Roszak shows, it could be made

purposes of commerce and state. Miss says:

powerful, its voice tyrannical. will, want, demand, think, am. This voice tells us that we are pushing out into a world of other people or of nature us, and that we must conquer. has meant *I will impose my will on others.*

Oates recognizes its spread throughout our industrialists. "In other words, I see no difference American capitalists and the meticulous, joyless, Now comes a long and richly suggestive passage:

be? A simple evolution into a higher kind of in which all substance in the universe (including the equal right.

with, the "objective," valueless philosophies that have archaic. We are tired of the old dichotomies: Nature, Victor/Vanquished, and—above all this necessary to get us through the exploratory, analytical no longer useful or pragmatic. They are no longer . Far from being locked inside our own skins, to recognize that our minds belong, quite naturally, to everything that is mental, most obviously language boundary at all but a membrane connecting the inner our wit, our cleverness, our unique personalities—all world's. This has always been a mystical vision, but truth. It is no longer the private possession of a articulate offering of a Claude

anthropology is "part of a cosmology" and whose including man, in its own place. It is the lifelong Maslow, the psychology from the realm of the disordered into that people who would once have been termed mystics and voice of "human minds and brains may be essential in the argument of R. D. mystic, who has denied the medical and legal has set out not only to experience but to articulate a become joined. All these are men of genius, whose expressing views once considered the exclusive Reason/Intuition has vanished or is vanishing.

Oates goes on to say that the higher irrational but "a logical extension of what we now Oates had and her claim that Eastern mysticism is "too seem details by comparison with the main thrust

On the question of the monopoly enjoyed by Roszak proposes that the theologians, so far as the natural world was disproportionate prestige of science. Moreover, made the fact that science "works" even more identified science as the ally of all emancipating Roszak adopting uncritically a theory of knowledge which humanist conceptions and intentions. It may go

humanism as a contradiction in terms, or as a distortion produced by partisan polemics, but this now seems the verdict of history.

As a philosophical scientist, Bruno sought to expand the Christian cosmology to dimensions that would prove hospitable to the Copernican discovery and its implications, only to suffer death at the stake for his pains. Roszak comments:

One need only compare the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic universe with the stupendous world-systems projected by other religious systems—most notably by Hinduism, but even by many primitive religions—to realize how lacking the old Christian cosmology had grown in dramatic scope. . . . In the cosmological closet of traditional Christian thought, the scientists have been those who dared to cry out for room. They have won the attention of people because they have been prepared to think big; they have stood forth as giants among the theological pygmies. How much less dazzling their achievement would be had it been matched by a mainstream religion whose worldview was proportioned to the visionary magnitude of a Bruno or Blake, of the Hermetic philosophers, or of the Hindu and Jainist cosmologers. As it is, science and not the religious tradition has been the liberator of cosmological speculation in the west. Christianity has paid dearly for the smallmindedness of its inherited orthodoxies.

This also seems a way of suggesting that the conquest and dominance theme of science in harness with human enterprise was in no way necessary, but resulted from narrow Christian doctrine which, indeed, is the implication, in another way, of Lynn White, Jr.'s studies of the Christian underpinnings of the exploitive psychology of modern technology and acquisitive economics.

But if it is time to abandon the scientific theory of knowledge, to cut down to proper proportions the value of our famous technological know-how, and to recognize that conquest is a radically isolating and finally self-destroying way of life, to what alternative guide shall we turn? What can we find that "works" in the same reassuring way that science has worked for us in the past?

The question is a difficult one to answer, since Miss Oates' idea is that the new respect for subjectivity comes from the perception and vision of a few pioneers of the new age—bringing attitudes which, if not exactly "objectified," have raised the level of rational understanding and discourse—and this view suggests a dependence upon these pioneers which is something like our present dependence upon the genius of scientists and expert technologists. Well, her idea is *something* like our past relation to scientists, yet it is also different. First, there are "feelings" in a great many people which respond to the thought of these pioneers. And involved are individual ethical and moral attitudes, not ingenious devices with which ignorant and irresponsible men are able to blow up the world, if not merely to poison the air and the water. The new spirit is religio-philosophical, not manipulative. It is a spirit that can't be copied, although it can be emulated.

Let us look once again at science and scientific knowledge. Its great advantage, we have told ourselves, is that it is "progressive." Up to a point, that is certainly true. But the same idea can be put in less complimentary terms. Roszak quotes the definition of Max Gluckman: "A science is any discipline in which the fool of this generation can go beyond the point reached by the genius of the last generation." This could be rendered, again, as the claim that ordinary men, without exceptional personal effort or discipline, can know all that there is to know about anything of importance—surely a formula for human disaster. Regarded critically, the *hubris* of this claim shows why it is possible to say that science "works," but that the scientific world-view does not.

Which amounts to what Plato implied in the allegory of the Cave.

The project, then, is to rescue the idea of Progress from its scientific-collectivist version, and to restore the Platonic and Tolstoyan conception of human growth. This, naturally enough, will take some doing. Miss Oates seems

to think a spontaneous movement in this direction  
 greater self-consciousness, which it doubtless  
 requires.  
 with a more searching examination of possible  
 alternatives.

Tolstoy say?

In an essay published in *Polyana*

(

I see no necessity of finding common laws of  
 history, independent of the impossibility of finding

of each man. The law of progress, or perfectibility, is  
 written in the soul of each man, and is transferred to

personal, this law is fruitful and accessible to all;  
 when it is transferred to history, it becomes an idle,

insipidity and to fatalism.

The perfection of the soul, for  
 Plato, is the task of human life, and this is an  
 outgoing function, not something that isolates the  
 quietistic withdrawal from the rest of  
 the world. An intelligent pantheism, which means

and substance—in the universe, is a moral  
 foundation for choice, and simply to restore some

expecting the final word on either the  
 metaphysical archetypes of the universe or the

human development, may be what is needed right  
 now. To act is surely the first step, since

It is only the manipulative equations of science the  
 formulas for closed system "production"—that

before we begin. This other kind of knowledge is  
 concerned with growth, and one may think that

horizon, a greater diversity of options, with, at the  
 same time, a more decisive narrowing down or

the difference between the production line and  
 human growth; it is a fundamental difference; and

world-view and the pantheistic/ethical conception  
 we are seeking to take its place.

distinguish between theories and actual  
 knowledge, they give support in hours of doubt

They are found in the great philosophies and high  
 religions, if one can extricate them from their all

Roszak speaks of this:

The religion I refer to is not that of the

which is, I think, the last fitful flicker of the divine  
 fire before it sinks into darkness. Rather, I mean

Vision born of transcendent knowledge. Mysticism,  
 if you will—though that has become too flabby and

rhapsodic powers of the mind from which so many  
 traditions of worship and philosophical reflection

religious impulse was exiled from our culture what  
 effect this has had on the quality of our life and

transcendence must now play in saving urban-  
 industrial society from self-annihilation. By the time

that fill these pages, I will be content if intellect  
 divorced of its visionary powers looks to you rather

of eternity appears more relevant than the politics of  
 time than you once found it convenient to admit.

united with the visionary powers? Are the flights  
 of

imagination? Supposing such a man wrote out of  
 deep reminiscence of past knowledge and present

precisely—more "scientifically," as we say—than  
 he did?

powers work above the level of imagery or  
 sensuous perception. What if richly endowed

potentialities—are the best language for  
 communication concerning transcendental reality?

What if the "precision" in all such matters *must* be contributed by the reader or hearer? What if myth is the basket which gathers in the meanings that can be absorbed by an age or generation, and by each one according to his capacity, and what if the master myth-maker is the most accurate truth-teller, at certain stages of human progress?

Miss Oates writes of the straining, groping efforts of the artists of our time:

It is easy to misread the immediate crises, to be frightened by the spontaneous eruptions into consciousness of disparate groups (blacks, women, youth, "the backlash of the middle class"); it is possible to overlook how the collective voices of many of our best poets and writers serve to dramatize and exorcize current American nightmares. Though some of our most brilliant creative artists are obsessed with disintegration and with the isolated ego, it is clear by now that they are all, with varying degrees of terror, saying the same thing—that we are helpless, unconnected with any social or cultural unit unable to direct the flow of history, that we cannot effectively communicate. The effect is almost that of a single voice, as if a communal psychoanalytic process were taking place. But there does come a time in an individual writer's experience when he realizes, perhaps against his will, that his voice is one of many, his fiction one of many fictions, and that all serious fictions are half-conscious dramatizations of what is going on in the world.

Readers of Miss Oates' stories may be helped to understand them by what she says here, and to be heartened by her expressed intention. "I still feel my own place is to dramatize the nightmares of my times, and (hopefully) to show how some individuals find a way out, awaken, come alive, move into the future."

There is a great hunger for being able to see "a way out," a path "into the future." But this seems a moment in history when such paths have to be *invented* by resourceful individuals. One of our ills has been too much following, and the remedy for this is more individual discovery. Well, America is famous for being the land of "do it yourself." The talent now awaits transfer to another level.

## *REVIEW* ART AND POLITICS

THE name of William Irwin Thompson's first  
*The Imagination of an Insurrection:*  
1916 (Oxford University Press,  
the work which marked the end of the author's  
would doubtless have sounded pretentious in  
study of how men attempt to embody the Politics  
why this almost always fails—except, as Plato  
problem is set in classical form by Plato, at the end  
*Republic*,  
declares that the philosopher will engage in  
being constructed imaginatively in the  
it being doubtful that such a city will ever exist in  
implied that corruption would ensue if the high  
up in heaven" were to be stepped down to the  
make a heaven on earth springs eternal, and there  
may not be fruitless. In the  
Krishna declared to his disciple:

Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an  
thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation  
establishment of righteousness.

to go about his work and what he could expect to  
that in a great work like the myth and  
that the half- or quarter-gods seeking fulfillment  
the work of destiny, even while ignorant of its

impatient missionary attempts through war and

Poets, it is fair to say, have a touch of both  
see the meaning of the politics of eternity in the  
Mr. Thompson's book examines the work of Irish  
1916, which cost the lives of sixteen men—shot  
sees history as the result of an interplay between  
precedence, being something like the question of  
creations of the mind, through our modes of  
raw material of the mind, the building blocks of  
conceptual constructions. And so on, and on.

development of Irish culture, and Irish culture

Butler  
playwright, Sean  
Thompson's main players, viewing the Irish revolt  
imagination. This ought not to suggest a lack of  
the revolt attained its white heat of intensity  
tragi-comic externals of the event, heroic fires  
and then lit by Irish poets.

romancers? Was not Shelley's claim that they are  
egoistic extravagance? This book is a full-scale  
wish that Mr. Thompson would turn his analyzing  
events in history, making similar illuminations.  
draw his attention.

Poets are indeed often men of peace, and certainly George Russell, or A.E., was a man of peace. For men of this sensibility, the cause of Irish liberation was very much the appeal of the Abolition movement to poets like Thoreau and Emerson. As Freimarck and Rosenthal say in *Race and the American Romantics* (Schocken, 1971), Emerson was permanently troubled by the conflict between "the call to political activism and the call to self-perfection." They continue:

Ultimately, like Thoreau, Emerson gave his stamp of approval to the total political commitment of John Brown. But to do so he had to resort to rhetorical magic and equate John Brown's action with an act of divine love. Never comfortable with public action, and never quite finding a key for the regeneration of the world in private contemplation, Emerson ultimately found neither course satisfactory. His transcendental theology was too ingrained to be shaken loose by an institution he regarded as vile, but the institution was too heavy a weight to be borne by transcendental doctrine. In the end, Emerson could commit himself wholly neither to public activity nor to private theology.

The same struggle existed for the Irish poets, for which they found differing solutions. Yeats became something of an incendiary, while Russell chose to give his strength and vision to the Irish community movement, as represented by Horace Plunkett's *Irish Homestead*. But this prosy simplification ignores the unearthly beauty and power of Yeats's verse and the depth and transcendental splendor of Russell's vision. You have to read the book.

Mr. Thompson generalizes the issue confronting the poet:

By refusing to commit himself to political action the artist is insisting on discovering what he senses has been ignored in the politician's demand for an immediate commitment. In bringing this vague and intuitive perception into the distinct and articulate shape of art, the artist is only doing in symbolic form what society at large will do later when it comes to its own awareness (often through the help of the artist himself) and gives this awareness shape in political decision and military action. . . . Perhaps the reason that art and politics are often at odds with one another even when they are embedded in a single ideology, is

because great art most often realizes itself in a tragic or comic perception of the nature of human existence. To live out his role the politician must believe or pretend to believe that the next revolution or piece of legislation will make a difference and that the difference is worth living and dying for. The artist, with an older sort of wisdom knows better. Like the anarchist Bakunin, he sees that the revolution that is to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat will only bring about the dictatorship of the ax-proletariat. But this avuncular wisdom does not appeal to a younger generation yearning for commitment. . . .

The rebels of 1916 were something like the rebels of the student New Left today. Impatient with the philosophical, the ambiguous, the tragic, and the complex, they demand that issues be approached "at gut level." The career of such a rebel seems to fall into two phases: in the first phase the adolescent rebel attempts to defeat authority at its own game; failing in that, the rebel kicks over the table and attempts to destroy the game itself. The student who at twenty-nine is so violent a member of SNNC was at eighteen trying to write poetry in the manner of T. S. Eliot.

These forces are shown at play in men of different temperaments and inner callings—the poets, mainly, who gave shape to Irish culture. Russell was not the poet Yeats was, but his vision was more stably grounded and consistently expressed. He cared little for the promise of material benefits from Irish independence, saying,

What use would it be to you or to me if our ships sailed on every sea and our wealth rivalled the antique Ind, if we ourselves were unchanged, had no more kingly consciousness of life, nor that overtopping grandeur of soul indifferent whether it dwells in a palace or a cottage?

Writing with the ideal of the Golden Age before him, and concerned with the lessons of cooperation and harmonious life needing to be learned by mankind, Russell reflected (in *The National Being*) on the conceptions of unity provided by various political systems:

The national soul in a theocratic state is a god, in an aristocratic age it assumes the character of a hero, and in a democracy it becomes a multitudinous being, definite in character if the democracy is a real social organism. But where the democracy is only loosely held together by the social order, the national being is vague in character, is a mood too feeble to

inspire large masses of men to high politics in times of peace, and in times of war it communicates frenzy, panic and delirium.

The very expression, "national being," comes close to being anathema, today, but Mr. Thompson points out that A.E. was no apologist for the national state. He did feel that men need to grow together, and, though not a socialist, had something of Bellamy's view of the role of the state rather than Orwell's. Like Bellamy, he would have declared against such an organization if it threatened individual human freedom, and he lacked the perspective that so obsessed Orwell from looking at Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. Russell's social views, which grew out of the Theosophical background gained in his youth, prevented him from placing any trust in violence. These ideas were expressed in *The Interpreters*, where he makes one of the characters ("Brehon") say: "You will find that every great conflict has been followed by an era of materialism in which the ideals for which the conflict ostensibly was waged were submerged." Passionate conflicts, he declared, "result in the interchange of characteristics." Thompson comments:

"We become what we hate" is a *Yoga* maxim, but the notion is really common sense dressed up in a loin cloth, for hate is as severe a form of bondage as love. If one hates something, he is not free of it, if one hates something with the full force of his being, then the hated object blocks out everything else in sight, until the individual has been distracted from the values he cherished in opposition to the hated object. The lover of freedom destroys the Constitution in fighting communists; the judicially unchecked chief of police becomes a criminal in fighting crime; the celibate becomes pathologically lascivious in fighting lust. The exchange of opposites in passionate conflicts is a common part of personal experience, but Brehon is willing to extend it to revolutions and wars. Brehon's position has its base in common experience, but the summit is definitely beyond the common level of experience, for it points upward to an almost Buddhistic state of non-attachment to human life. Since violence destroys its agent, Brehon concludes that nations must wage psychic and moral wars to conquer as Christ and Buddha conquered.

Mr. Thompson wonders why Russell cannot hold the reader with the same power that Yeats exercises, and his speculative answer is that Russell never confronts evil with the same directness as Yeats does. He also says:

There are of course simpler reasons, for A.E. never mastered English prose; there is always a sense of strain and stiffness, as if he were trying to round off a neat period in the manner of Dr. Johnson. A.E. could rise to a few eloquent moments, but his writing is nowhere as graceful as Yeats's in *A Vision*. The speeches, though weighted against one another with a sense of drama, do not reach the level of the drama of ideas in Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell*, and as a work of political fiction, *The Interpreters* cannot be compared in quality to either *1984* or *The Magic Mountain*. And yet, for all the work's limitations, A.E. succeeds admirably in showing how five men of conflicting philosophies can all be simultaneously right, and that is the work's singular merit. If A.E. had the blind spots of a religious thinker, he at least did not have the blindness of the moralist who can see the truth of no position other than his own.

This is an endlessly provocative book, but our space is gone. But what, finally, is Russell's "Politics of Eternity," and how does he relate it to the politics of time? Mr. Thompson finds his answer to this question in a passage in *The Interpreters*, which we quote in part:

Through ignorance of spiritual law idealists who take to warfare are perpetually defeated, for they do not realize the dark shadow which follows all conflict and which must follow this present conflict. . . . Therefore we ought to regard none who differ from us as enemies, but to contemplate them rather with yearning as those who possess some power or vision from which we are shut out but which we ought to share. If we seek for the fulness there can be no decay of what is beautiful in the world, for what is right always exercises its appropriate might.

## *COMMENTARY* "MASS" EDUCATION

BOOKS on various aspects of education now seem to be coming in by the dozen and there are moments when it also seems like a good idea to review them by the dozen. But you can't read books by the dozen. However, a letter from a reader who has spent a long life in teaching suggests a way to generalize about some of these books. She writes:

It has seemed to me that ever since we made high school obligatory, our standards have gone down. Today many colleges are no better than high schools of the period when I attended (early 1900's), (1) because not every child is high-school material (intellectually) and (2) it is hard to find enough teachers who are capable.

Colleges for most people have become a matter of finances. If you can pay, you can always find a college that will accept you and give you a degree. And most young people only want a degree to get a better job and earn more money.

Some of our so-called experimental colleges are no better than places to mingle with other young people, choosing anything you may want to learn, even if it is some kind of manual work. I know a young woman who attends one of them, and she is majoring in weaving. She is sent to various places where they specialize in this craft in order to learn it better.

What do you think? I wonder where most of the great men of long ago got their education—many of them did not go to colleges. . . .

Well, maybe the weaving is better than a second-rate academic education. As to the reason for going to college, what our correspondent says is hardly disputable. There are teachers who don't think of what they do in that way, and students who are looking for something more than a passport to affluence, but the book discussed in this week's "Children" article shows that education is commonly seen as fitting students to take part in the "race for spoils."

Something might be said about the few individuals, the autodidacts that our

correspondent mentions in her letter. Not even public education, committed to mass needs, should ignore the existence of such rare individuals. The Richard Wrights, the Malcolm X's, the James Baldwins, broke all the rules of the statistics in this book. Such men and their meaning for education are too seldom mentioned. Only Ortega has written about them openly in recent years. In terms of genuine growth, it could be argued, and perhaps shown, that a human being's education does not really begin until he becomes an autodidact. And the society cast in such deadly uniformity as *Schools and inequality* describes may not be able to change itself at all without help from a heroic band of autodidacts.

## CHILDREN

### . . . and Ourselves

#### A SISYPHUS PROJECT?

As Robert Hutchins has remarked (MANAS, Dec. 6), the idea that education is the means to higher status and income is now "the universal creed." And, as Arthur Jensen said in his much-debated paper in the *Harvard Educational Review* (Winter, 1969), "Whether we like it or not, the educational system is one of society's most powerful mechanisms for sorting out children to assume different positions in the occupational hierarchy."

A book of research, *Schools and Inequality*, by James W. Guthrie, George B. Kleindorfer, Henry M. Levin, and Robert T. Stout, published last year by the MIT Press (\$10.00), takes this situation as a simple fact of life and examines how this sorting-out process works, finds its operation grossly unjust, and proposes remedies. This book is probably as "scientific" as a study of public schools can get. Nearly a hundred of its 250 pages are devoted to appendices containing tables and the results of computer analysis. The purpose of the book is to show how badly the American system of public education fails to provide equality of opportunity. The research is based mainly on the state of Michigan for the reason that this is a large state with diversified population where the best study of equality of educational opportunity has already been made. If anyone still doubts that the public educational system now confirms the shortcomings of those who grow up in privation by providing them with a second-class education, he should read this book. The youngsters so treated tend to be locked out of the higher levels of the socio-economic structure of American life.

What is depressing about the book is the total neglect of the idea of education as a portal to human growth. It may be true that the failure of education to serve in this way is not a source of widespread complaint, except from a politically

insignificant minority; and it is certainly true that the injustice of educational discrimination in economic terms is felt as a kind of dehumanization by its victims; but what seems never to be considered is the possibility that the economic excesses of our society will *inevitably* produce the inequalities which arouse the ardor of the men who write books of this sort. This is to say that a society which in practice honors solely material goals will find itself unable to change the inequitable results of this preoccupation by ethical after-thoughts about the distribution of economic rewards.

Anyone who reads this book ought also to read John H. Schaar's searching critique of the idea of "Equality of Opportunity," which, he remarks, "really only defends the equal right to become unequal by competing against one's fellows." (Schaar's essay appears in *Contemporary Political Theory*, edited by de Crespigny and Wertheimer, and was published by Atherton in 1970.) The four authors of *Schools and Inequality* are wrestling with the same internal contradiction that afflicted Henry Ford, as pointed out years ago by a writer in *G.K.'s Weekly*. Ford was an industrialist openly dedicated to more production and unceasing expansion, activities which sow the seeds of war in a variety of ways, but he was also a pacifist who wanted men to live in peace. But peace does not go with aggressive commercial competition and assembly line production and unlimited economic growth. And neither do equality of opportunity and high humanist objectives in education. Somehow, they prove incompatible. The same comment could be made about Adam Smith's proposal for state-supported schools to compensate for the dehumanizing effects of the division of labor in industry. A society which counts its progress in economic terms will hardly tolerate and then finance the moral reproach of a public school system intent upon either the good of human beings for their own sake or erasing the effects of the competitive struggle on those who, through lack of a certain sort of ability or by

reason of hereditary "mischance," have been left behind in the struggle for "getting ahead."

These propositions ought to be clear enough, simply on their merits as statements about the way things are. Obviously they are not clear at all, but have to be proved by bitter experience.

In the closing chapter of *Schools and Inequality*, the authors say:

In our society's present race for "spoils" not all runners begin at the same starting line. As we have described throughout the preceding chapters, children from higher SES [Socio-Economic Status] circumstances presently begin life with many advantages. Their home environment, health care, nutrition, material possessions, and geographic mobility provide them with a substantial headstart when they begin schooling at age five or six. Lower SES children begin school with more physical disabilities and less psychological preparation for adjusting to the procedures of schooling. This condition of disadvantage is then compounded by having to attend schools characterized by fewer and lower-quality services.

What must we do if schooling is to compensate for these disparities and to provide equality of opportunity? What actions are implied in such a goal? . . .

We believe strongly that the task of the school is to equalize opportunities among different social groupings by the end of the compulsory schooling period. This belief is reinforced by the fact that Michigan requires all minors to attend schools until age sixteen. Implied in this mandate is the view that formal schooling will enable representative youngsters from all social and racial groups to begin their postschool careers with equal chances of success. In a true sense, while the race for spoils will still be won by the swiftest, if schools are functioning properly, then typical individuals from all social groups should be on the same starting line at age sixteen. Our society would wish that representative children of each social grouping begin their adult lives with equal chance of success in matters such as pursuing further schooling, obtaining a job, and participating in the political system. It would seem that equality of educational opportunity could be interpreted in no other way.

The authors are after justice in these terms. Their analysis and pursuit are thorough,

conscientious, and, according to the view we have taken, bound to fail. This is not to suggest that their book is not worth reading, even though it is not much more than a nailed-down confirmation of what one feels to be true about the public schools. But the thoughtful reader is likely to long, as we did, for some kind of escape hatch from the total acceptance of "what is," on the ground that action for social justice must begin with the revision of the conception of ends.

## *FRONTIERS* Planning for the Future

VALUABLE comment on the prospects for change, and the difficulties which lie in the way, comes from a variety of sources. In a recent paper, "Problems, Priorities and Imperatives," John McHale, of the State University of New York, Binghamton, observes:

Wholly political and ideological approaches are now patently bankrupt. Conventional politics is no longer the art of the possible, it is now more a device for obscuring and avoiding the inevitable. . . . Our traditional ideologies are inadequate guides to the future, serving mainly to perpetuate old iniquities and rivalries and through them to create new wars and tensions. The full significance of our newly evolving scientific, social, and industrial capabilities is still barely understood—even by those who have invented their components, organized their productive capacities and are responsible for their expansion. Their basic implications run counter to almost every past survival strategy which we have so painfully accumulated.

And as for making plans:

We should emphasize here that no mere cataloguing of scientific developments, and technological possibilities or forecast of possibly impending options and alternatives will suffice to render the form of our emerging futures. It is not these external forces and impending crises which, in the end, shape our futures. Their occurrence, consequences and implications lie more than ever before within human control and decision.

Our core concern, therefore, should be with:

- (i) the necessary changes in values, attitudes, and motivations which determine how we use our now developed capacities.
- (ii) a massive reformulation of our goals and objectives.
- (iii) the recognition that our future(s) are now shaped not only by what is possible or probable, but by what we deem to be desirable in human terms.

We are all poised in the transition from the "old" world to the new—literally on the hinge of the greatest evolutionary transformation in the human condition. In many cases, therefore, much of what we

now perceive as chaos and disorder is indeed the struggle towards emergence of newly evolving forms of order.

Mr. McHale concludes by saying that the requirement of these new forms is a "renewed conceptualization of man himself, of his ideas and beliefs, and of the recognition that he is now in charge of his own destiny."

A two-part article by Bob Overy in *Peace News* for Oct. 22 and 27 subjects the idea of "nonviolent revolution" to critical examination. He wonders whether nonviolence is indeed a tool for revolution, pointing out that the use of nonviolent action to obtain legitimate reformist goals, while it may be a radical politics, is not a *revolutionary* action. His discussion is too long and closely analytical to be summarized here, but his central point seems to be that revolution means the establishment of thriving alternative institutions, and since nonviolence has become known largely through the resistance to evil, it is not easy to see how nonviolence becomes the means of positive social recreation, save in its generalized function of an underlying attitude in all that is done. Bob Overy is in no way a critic of nonviolence, but only of what seems an over-enthusiastic use of the term. "I fear," he says, "that the image of nonviolent revolution is catching on faster than an awareness of the difficulties with the concept."

Those out already "making the nonviolent revolution" almost certainly do not know how the revolution will be made and may be sadly confused and disillusioned before long. That is, unless they hold firmly to a position on nonviolent revolution which is personally and ethically based and therefore not, in the more political sense, a nonviolent revolutionary position at all.

For sources for "a coherent theory of nonviolent revolution," this writer suggests, among others, the works of Gandhi and Vinoba, the mutual aid anarchism of Kropotkin, the economic theories of Ralph Borsodi, E. F. Schumacher and Edward Mishan; and the achievements of Lanza del Vasto in France and

Danilo Dolci in Italy. He also speaks of the development theories of Saul Alinsky and the educational ideas of A. S. Neill, Paulo Freire, and Ivan Illich, adding the ecological planning of Ian McHarg. Such a theory, Overy says, should be required "to show concretely in actual situations how social change made by means of nonviolence could generate a revolution." He continues:

This requires not only that the emphasis on alternative institutions be developed, but also that it be shown how these nonviolent social forms can begin to flourish and grow within the contradictions of the old society, and how they can then go on to sustain themselves and continue to grow without losing their dynamic as a political force.

An article called "The Invisible Army," by Tony Jones, in the August *Harper's* calls attention to the recent report, *Wasted Men: The Reality of the Vietnam Veteran*, issued by the Veterans World Project, Southern Illinois University (Edwardsville, Illinois, \$3.00), which contains the joint work of some sixty men, Vietnam veterans, a third of them black, who responded to an opportunity to describe their feelings about the war, themselves, their needs, their hopes, and the most evident obstacles they find before them. The project was the idea of Peter Gillingham, a Korean War veteran, who became its director, and who saw to it that the report was the conception and the work of the Vietnam veterans themselves. They called themselves "wasted men" because "wasted" had for them two meanings—left unused, since it is very hard for them to find jobs—and "wasted" in the GI sense of put down, humiliated, debased, and cast aside. The report says that there are *eight million* Vietnam-era veterans, most of whom find that the general public would like to forget their "veteran" identity entirely, as an unpalatable reminder of a war nobody likes, and of an army that is supposed to be drug-ridden, made up of men who are likely to go on being a problem. In this report, an apparently representative gathering of young veterans tell what they think about what they have been through, what is not being done for them by

the Veterans' Administration, and how they could be helped to become useful to themselves and their countrymen. One of the things Peter Gillingham suggests they may be able to do is to act as "change agents." They are, he says, "more liberated from the present and the past than most of their fellow men; their experience to date has relatively seldom given them cause to feel attached to their people and heritage by the bonds of success, gratitude received or given, or allegiance." It is a grave mistake, he says, to speak of these veterans in terms of "the sum of their pathologies." Mr. Gillingham adds:

For many veterans, the realities of the war and their contact with a non-Western, non-industrialized society in all its complexity have led them to a questioning of many of their inherent, unspoken assumptions as children of Western industrialized society. Many of them also return with a profound distrust of large institutions and social mechanisms. Not only do they dislike being categorized in any way rather than being considered as individual human beings, but many avoid any involvement with those who would speak for them or attempt to utilize or manipulate them in any way. Again, these veterans feel the society offers no arenas where they can explore the kind of futures they would seek.

The report makes various proposals for loosened-up education for veterans, and the men want a revised, new-generation GI Bill. The objective is defined as "opportunities where they can combine individual and collective self-discovery with study of the sectors of society relating to them." Actually, this is about what *all* the young of the present generation want, and have such difficulty in finding. It is beginning to appear quite plain that everybody who looks to the future is going to have to *invent* the forms of self-discovery he needs for himself, since institutions, government institutions most of all, are notoriously a generation or two behind in such enterprises.