VOLUME XXXIII, NO. 41
OCTOBER 8, 1980

A MORAL TO RECITE

PROBABLY most writers are also readers, and if at all reflective they become well aware of the deceiving plausibility of words. This is no new discovery. Responsible writers, from, say, Plato on have warned readers about the tricks and impositions practiced by those skilled in the arts of persuasion, yet these critics go on writing, using the same arts as a means of exposing the deceptions of which writers are capable. There is a further problem in the fact that a writer may himself be deceived, becoming peculiarly persuasive through the ring of sincerity evident in his words. Sincerity is a necessary but not sufficient virtue in a good writer. Sincerity is not uncommon in grossly ignorant men, who may nonetheless have aptitude in persuasion. Nor is a great background of learning required to discover that most people prefer confirmation of their prejudices to laboriously impartial search for truth. The manipulation of prejudice in the direction of a desired end is, then, the common use of the arts of rhetoric.

Present-day novels about politicians are full of illustrations of this. "Sincere" people are quite able to tell plausible lies in order to get people to do what is "best" for them to do. The persuaders call this being "practical" for a good end, and a surprising number willingly accept the explanation. After all, what observer of present-day politics and political campaigns could be made to believe that candidates for office win elections by telling the truth? A politician might use a few carefully selected truths, but would have to avoid with equal care exploding popular illusions. There may be occasional moral watersheds in history—such as the American Revolution and the Civil War—when popular issues touch the nerves of deep human conviction. Then extraordinary humans are able to become leaders, but such moments are few and far between.

The cultural and moral climate of a society plays more than a background role in relation to persuasive activities. If people are lied to by the "authorities" over a period of years, a point is reached where they become indifferent to nearly everything that is publicly said. The most fundamental quality in human relations—*trust*—has been worn away. This became the theme of the famous trilogy by Ignazio Silone, the Italian novelist. In *Fontamara, Bread and Wine,* and *The Seed Beneath the Snow,* he set down the hard lesson of a life spent working in behalf of justice to the peasants of his and all countries—the "men who cause the earth to bear fruit and go hungry themselves." These three books relate the story of Spina, a radical revolutionary who is determined to arouse common folk to action. After years of underground activity, writing and circulating closely argued pamphlets intended to awaken the peasants to revolt against Fascism, Spina realizes that the "social philosophy" expounded in his writings had *no* meaning for its readers. For the peasants all political ideas had become the currency of deception. They responded to nothing but raw appeals to self-interest; abstract conceptions of justice were only gibberish to them.

At last, in *Seed Beneath the Snow,* Spina sees that there is only one thing to be accomplished—the restoration of the trust of human beings in each other. Writing pamphlets is a waste of time. There is no longer any intellectual structure for their comprehension. With a comrade or two, Spina begins the long task of restoring trust. They plow a widow's field without being asked; seeking no thanks, they smile at her suspicious glances and go away. The plan for revolution is now—to perform unexpecting acts of kindness. Spina has turned away from ideological commitment to what has become the primary reality for him. As a

character in a later Silone novel says: "Revolution is the need to cease to be alone. It is an attempt to remain together, and not be afraid any more."

Silone's hero realizes that it may take generations of simple honesty in human relations to establish once again the basis for serious intellectual discourse. The disciplines of effective thinking and the development of theory—essential to any sort of grasp of our complex world—are quite useless without the foundation of mutual trust, which in this case means general acceptance that the participants in dialogue are actually seeking the truth, not using their skills in pursuit of some predetermined end. The exercise of the mind merely to win arguments—at which politicians try to excel—eventually destroys the common ground of social and public life.

A similar conclusion was reached by Michael Polanyi in his investigation of the nature of scientific inquiry, recorded in *Science, Faith, and Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1964). Polanyi became convinced that the very ground of scientific inquiry would be destroyed by the claim that "the critical faculties of man unaided by any powers of belief could establish the truth of science and the canons of fairness, decency, and freedom." The heart of science, Polanyi maintained, is human devotion to truth, and confidence that one's colleagues in research share in this commitment. Speaking of the empiricists and logical positivists, whose ideas had shaped the prevailing philosophy of science, Polanyi said:

> They are all convinced that our main troubles still come from our having not altogether rid ourselves of all traditional beliefs and continue to set their hopes on further applications of the method of radical scepticism and empiricism.
>
> It seems clear, however, that this method does not represent truly the process by which liberal intellectual life was in fact established. It is true that there was a time when the sheer destruction of authority did progressively release new discoveries in every field of inquiry. But none of these discoveries—not even those of science—were based on the experience of our senses aided only by self-evident propositions. Underlying the assent to science and the pursuit of discovery in science, is the belief in scientific premises to which the adherents and cultivators of science must unquestioningly assent. The method of disbelieving every proposition which cannot be verified by definitely prescribed operations would destroy all belief in natural science. And it would destroy, in fact, belief in truth and in the love of truth itself which is the condition of all free thought. The method leads to complete metaphysical nihilism and thus denies the basis for any universally significant manifestation of the human mind.

While Silone discovered the importance of mutual trust by living through the time of extreme corruption of ideas during Mussolini's rule, Polanyi saw the source of this degradation at the intellectual level, in the denial of transcendent ideals by scientific materialists. As he put it:

> In order that a society may be properly constituted there must be competent forces in existence to decide with ultimate power every controversial issue between two citizens. But if the citizens are dedicated to certain transcendent obligations and particularly to such general ideas as truth, justice, charity, and these are embodied in the tradition of the community to which allegiance is maintained, a great many issues between citizens, and all to some extent, can be left—and are necessarily left—for the individual consciences to decide. The moment, however, a community ceases to be dedicated through its members to transcendent ideals, it can continue to exist undisrupted only by submission to a single centre of unlimited secular power. Nor can citizens who have radically abandoned belief in spiritual realities—on the obligations to which their conscience would have been entitled and in duty bound to take a stand—raise any valid objection to being totally directed by the state. In fact their love of truth and justice then turn automatically, as I have shown, into love of state power. . . . A society refusing to be dedicated to transcendent ideals chooses to be subjected to servitude. Intolerance comes back full cycle. For sceptical empiricism which had once broken the fetters of medieval priestly authority, goes on now to destroy the authority of conscience.

Spina encountered a society in which the authority of conscience had been undermined for centuries by authoritarian religion, and then stamped out by the dogmas of totalitarian politics.

Silone's conclusion was the same as that of Polanyi: The only task of significance is the restoration of devotion to and respect for truth.

How have these distintegrating cultural tendencies affected intellectual life in the United States? No doubt an elaborate case could be made to show that materialism has become the ruling principle in politics, using the prosecution and justification of the Vietnam war and the igominies of Watergate for illustrations, but a delicate handling of this question may be more revealing. What about the attitudes of students? Interviewed by Stewart Brand in *Harper's* for November, 1973, Gregory Bateson a perceptive teacher, spoke at length of the lack of conviction of any sort in the students he was teaching. People who have no strong beliefs, he maintained, can't find out anything important because they won't try to cope with paradox and contradiction. He takes for an example the current argument about whether or not telepathy or ESP is possible:

> You have a rigid belief that there is no action at a distance, we will say, and you have a case of apparent telepathy to account for. Now you've got the data on one side and a stubborn enistemological assertion on the other, and you wrestle with those two somehow. My complaint with the kids I teach nowadays—graduate students and such—is that they don't really believe anything enough to get the tension between the data and the hypothesis. What they may find out doesn't really impact on theory, because they don't have any theory they're willing to hold tight enough to get an impact. It *slides* all the time.

So much, then, for the question of the audience of readers. Indifferent, convictionless readers make it possible for large amounts of shallowly entertaining and frivolous (convictionless) writing to be published and sold, while serious writing born from an inward necessity to say something worth saying tends to embarrass the casual reader, who finds it unfashionable. Yet good writers with deep convictions sometimes get through this screen and obtain recognition.

What is the aim of a good writer? We mean a particular sort of good writer, one who knows quite well that knowledge is not found in books—that there is an enormous difference between, say, a book about swimming and knowing how to swim, or a book about good government and being able to govern. The actual knowledge of how to do things is not something that can be communicated and the writer who pretends that it can is either self-deceived or a fraud. In *Personal Knowledge,* Polanyi gives some examples of this incommunicability:

> . . . I have come to the conclusion that the principle by which the cyclist keeps his balance is not generally known. The rule observed by the cyclist is this. When he starts falling to the right he turns the handlebars to the right, so that the course of the bicycle is deflected along a curve towards the right. This results in a centrifugal force pushing the cyclist to the left and offsets the gravitational force dragging him down to the right. This maneuver presently throws the cyclist out of balance to the left, which he counteracts by turning the handlebars to the left; and so he continues to keep himself in balance by winding along a series of appropriate curvatures. A simple analysis shows that for a given angle of unbalance the curvature of each winding is inversely proportional to the square of the speed at which the cyclist is proceeding.
>
> But does this tell us exactly how to ride a bicycle? No. You obviously cannot adjust the curvature of your bicycle's path in proportion to the ratio of your unbalance over the square of your speed; and if you could you would fall off the machine, for there are a number of other factors to be taken into account in practice which are left out in the formulation of this rule. Rules of art can be useful, but they do not determine the practice of an art; they are maxims, which can serve as a guide to an art only if they can be integrated into the practical knowledge of the art. They cannot replace this knowledge.

He broadens the discussion to include scientific inquiry and practice:

> Again, while *the articulate contents of science* are successfully taught all over the world in hundreds of new universities, *the unspecifiable art of scientific research* has not yet penetrated to many of these. The regions of Europe in which the scientific method first originated 400 years ago are scientifically more

fruitful today, in spite of their impoverishment, than several overseas areas where much more money is available for scientific research. Without the opportunity offered to young scientists to serve an apprenticeship in Europe, and without the migration of European scientists to new countries, research centres overseas could hardly ever have made much headway.

It follows that an art which has fallen into disuse for the period of a generation is altogether lost. There are hundreds of examples of this to which the process of mechanization is continuously adding new ones. These losses are usually irretrievable. It is pathetic to watch the endless efforts—equipped with microscopy and chemistry, with mathematics and electronics—to reproduce a single violin of the kind the half-literate Stradivarius turned out as a matter of routine more than 200 years ago.

The good writer knows this secret—he knows that having information is not knowledge; or, if it is, that such knowledge is not the same as the beinghood of one who practices well the art which the knowledge is supposed to be about. What can be told in words is only the shadow of some finite—measurable, and therefore communicable—aspect of the practice, and such description, if pursued through changes in the practice, could go on forever and never be complete. The true secret is a matter of independent discovery by the would-be artist. The most the teacher—or writer—can do is help to create an atmosphere which encourages self-discovery. This is why the poetic, having the similitude of discovery, is often resorted to by an inspired teacher, and why great scriptures have naturally the form of beautiful speech and rhythmic periods.

There are then these descriptive and the inductive arts available to the writer. He sets the stage and invokes. More he cannot do. In some way or other, he makes this plain, and by doing so he gains in power because of the trust-inspiring quality of what he says. He will not publish mere description, an account of the external shadows of experience, as though it could convey the living truth. Nor will his capture of the resonances of experience be presented as the original vibrations. He is indeed a songster, a poet or "maker," one who is himself a kind of instance of the world, but only an instance; he cannot give away his art, but only practice it.

Whitman spoke of these matters in *Specimen Days.* After telling how much he enjoyed the seashore, and of his visits to Rockaway, Coney Island, and Montauk (on Long Island), he said:

I remember well, I felt that I must one day write a book expressing this liquid, mystic theme. Afterward, I recollect, how it came to me that instead of any special lyrical or epical or literary attempt, the seashore should be an invisible *influence,* a pervading gauge and tally for me, in my composition. (Let me give a hint here to young writers. I am not sure but I have unwittingly followed out the same rule with other powers besides sea and shores—avoiding them, in the way of any dead set at poetizing them, as too big for formal handling—quite satisfied if I could indirectly show that we have met and fused, even if only once, but enough—that we have really absorbed each other and understand each other.)

What does he want to get at? He had explained earlier:

Even as a boy, I had the fancy, the wish, to write a piece, perhaps a poem, about the seashore—that suggesting, dividing line, contact, junction, the solid marrying the liquid—that curious, lurking something (as doubtless every objective form finally becomes to the subjective spirit) which means far more than its first mere sight, grand as that is—blending the real and the ideal, and each made a portion of the other.

How well Whitman puts it the writer's irrepressible longing to somehow get the incommunicable into words, while knowing it is quite impossible! Interestingly, what he does say is far more likely to be understood today than a hundred years ago when Whitman wrote. Today there is a better grasp of the burdens and responsibility of the writer, and of what he can and cannot do. For example, a reviewer of the May *Smithsonian,* Paul Piazza, says this at the end of his account of John Fowles' *The Tree:*

As a finale to this many-branched essay, Fowles attempts what by his own admission is nearly impossible, yet what he has been approaching since the beginning: an account of his own response to

> nature. He chooses a landscape in southern England, Wistman's Wood, "a half-mile chain of copses splashed, green drops in a tachist painting. . . ." Attempting to name the nameless, he recognizes the futility of his misappellations: "It, this namelessness," is beyond science and the arts because its "secret is being, not saying."
>
> Certainly Fowles' ideas are not original. Plato first perceived that our notion of reality is several removes from reality itself. Great thinkers from Aristotle to Aquinas to Kant have only concurred. But what is arresting is Fowles' presentation: his graceful blend of the personal and the general, the symbolic and the factual, the past and the present. His prose is allusive, complex, multilayered. With Horvat's eloquent, exquisite photographs, *The Tree* is a distinctive achievement.

Well, we have a moral to recite, and have been overlong in getting to it, but this reference to Plato makes it clear. The useful writer must have conviction, must care about what he has to say, yet recognize that he is nonetheless "several removes from reality itself," while striving with all his might to reduce this distance.

What makes the distance? Our senses and the mind make it. With what miraculous organ of vision and by what infinite intellect could we see or know "reality"? Yet the mind does somehow overcome the limitations of the senses, as all genuine science instructs us. But then, however close we may come in thought and feeling, there remains the terrible obligation of putting it into *words!* Words are the crudest of vehicles for the leap of ideas and the flow of feeling. They also have strange and often unseemly associations. Yet words are also practical instruments for revealing the wonder of the human mind, demonstrating its heroic capacity to correct itself even while performing, in Platonic terms, one failure after another.

REVIEW
THE VALUE OF HISTORY

THE Introduction to *Co-ops, Communes & Collectives* (Pantheon, $5.95), edited by John Case and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, begins with the story of a woman teacher, Laura Wilson, who left her activity in Pennsylvania with the Students for a Democratic Society community-organizing projects, and with her husband bought a farm in Vermont. They made it work, and went on with their social concern projects locally, getting involved in the local food co-op. The co-op, they found, was in a complete mess of mismanagement. After some business school graduate students took the books, promising to help, but then disappeared, it finally developed that the co-op was deeply in debt because it had been systematically marking up its goods with too small a margin to cover operating costs.

All this came out at a meeting around the kitchen table in the Wilsons' farmhouse.

> After Laura told this story, others chipped in with similar experiences. An alternative school that couldn't pass building code requirements. A commune that bought a house collectively, only to find that the title search had not been properly carried out. A new left research institute that nearly fell apart in angry recrimination over how much staff members were to be paid. Some patterns emerged quickly, for the problems of various co-ops, communes, and collectives turned out to be much the same. The encouraging part of the conversation was its indication that, despite their difficulties, "alternatives" like food co-ops and parent-run preschools continue to exist. The depressing part was the realization that, year after year, they make the same mistakes. Musing on that fact, Laura said somewhat plaintively, "Where are our historians?"

Once again we are reminded of the ancient Persian aphorism: "Truth is of two kinds—one manifest and self-evident; the other demanding incessantly new demonstrations and proofs." And reminded, also, of Heywood Broun's pithy remark: "The children of light have to be at least half as smart as the children of darkness."

The "we" of the question asked by Laura Wilson, the writers explain, are made up of the generation which came of age in the 60s, animated by ideas of "participatory democracy" and counter-cultural experiments, but also, they add, the "we" includes "everyone whose life has been touched—or may yet be touched—by the beliefs, values, and ultimately the institutions created by that generation." They continue:

> The left in the United States suffers from a peculiar historical amnesia. Few free-school founders or food co-op enthusiasts in the sixties learned anything from their predecessors in previous decades, because they had never heard of them. The lessons of the recent past are just as obscure to the scattered activists of the present. New arrangements for living and working persist, but often in a vacuum. Without the support of a movement behind them, many soldier on in ignorance of the victories or mistakes of similar efforts in other parts of the country. A careful retrospective analysis of the last decade can help break that isolation.
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> Of course, the new left of the last decade was not limited to media events and massive demonstrations on the one hand and small-scale alternative organizations on the other. The history is more complex. It includes the consciousness-raising groups of the women's movement; it also covers the growth and in some cases the decay of political organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society and the New American Movement, to name only two. And it encompasses an immense variety of local organizing efforts, ranging from neighborhood action groups to tenant unions and welfare rights organizations. Like the alternatives, these too persist, and suffer from the same lack of attention and the same historical amnesia. And unlike the alternatives, these efforts have often had a noticeable impact on poor, minority-group, and working-class communities.

The fortunes, struggles, partial successes, failures, and in some cases the maturation of the alternative organizations make the content of this book, to which twelve knowledgeable and competent writers contribute. The temper which the editors wanted to investigate, and which makes their book worth while, seems summed up in a paragraph by David Moberg, who writes on "Alternative Institutions and American Socialism":

Increasingly, as the movement and the counterculture spread and deepened in intensity, more people developed a need to find a way to live life and make history at the same time. Instead of working at one's trade and being a member of the party, many new leftists wanted to practice their vocations directly for social change and to find ways to support an alternative, surrogate style of living. Actually, a great many people drawn to various alternative institutions were only slightly concerned about making history or about politically acting to change relations of power, wealth and privilege in society. Although I will be judging the past decade of alternative institutions in large part in terms of how they may help to bring a humane, democratic socialism to the United States, not every practitioner applied such criteria and few thought of it as their only objective in starting an underground newspaper or radio station, forming a commune, working in a free clinic, encouraging urban gardens or community factories, or teaching in a free school. They were looking for a better way to live and work.

Historians are valuable because they—if we attend to what they say—make it unnecessary for us to try to "reinvent the wheel." Their reports and counsels also serve as antidotes to the youthful conceit that only the present generation has defined the issues of life and society with penetration. For example, there is a great to-do today about holistic, intuitive thinking, in contrast with linear, logical analysis, as though this distinction had never before been recognized. Yet from Archilochus to Michael Polanyi, thoughtful men have been well aware of this polarity, and while the present-day association of right and left brain capacities with the two modes of thinking may be of considerable interest, drawing particular attention to the way our minds work, it would be difficult to improve on Archilochus, who said: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." And in the eighteenth century, Giambattista Vico launched his critique of Cartesian abstraction and mechanistic explanation, declaring that we may become able to enter into and learn about the past by finding in ourselves corresponding feelings and thoughts which bring understanding of peoples of other times and places.

Co-ops, Communes & Collectives is an attempt to distill the meaning and lessons of recent experience in various alternative enterprises in order to obtain a reliable psychological foundation for the continuation and evolution of such efforts. This is history in psycho-social terms.

A particularly interesting contribution is Jane Mansbridge's "The Agony of Inequality," a detailed study of the experience of forty-one staff members of a Chicago agency called Helpline, an urban center which "ran a twenty-four-hour switchboard for drug and crisis counseling, a medical emergency van, a house for runaways, and a commune counseling and placement project." Since nonhierarchical equal power for every member of a working group became the principle which distinguished the new left from the old, Miss Mansbridge studies the pursuit of this objective, remarking at the beginning:

I argue here that the anguish of radical collectives over the idea of equal power derives from a confusion between ends and means. Because the ends for which we value equal power are so rarely achieved in the modern nation-state, we seldom experience a time when equal power is not useful. It therefore easily appears as an end in itself. Traditionally, however, equal power has been seen as a means to other ends.

This illustrates the value of the historian's perspective. The writer makes it clear that when the reasons for equal power are satisfied, it becomes less important: that is, less important in situations where there is equal protection of interests, equal respect, and equal opportunities for personal growth or development. In general, *Co-ops, Communes & Collectives* is rich in this sort of understanding of the social movements of the immediate past.

COMMENTARY
TWO CHEERS FOR CO-OPS

A CHAPTER on food co-ops by Daniel Zwerdling in *Co-ops, Communities & Collectives* (see Review) reaches some interesting conclusions. There is a new wave of these friendly enterprises—"scattered from Louisville to New York City, from Chicago to rural Maine, from Austin to Puget Sound"—and all together they are doing more than half a billion dollars' worth of business each year. Yet the complaint is that they lack "clout." They need to organize, it is argued, and get government funds for greater buying power to make the movement strong.

But this is not about to happen. Zwerdling says:

> Efforts to unite food co-ops on this scale will confront formidable odds. The major obstacle is this: the food co-ops across the country, even the food co-ops within a single city, do not share the same political and philosophical visions and goals. Most co-ops share a common desire for cheaper and more nutritious food, and a belief in community self-help. But beyond that, there is no clear movement of co-ops that share a common political vision of what is wrong with the U.S. economic system and just how food co-ops fit into the strategy for changing it.

Some of the co-ops serve the affluent, who are not in the least interested in political change. In the same town there may be another co-op in a poorer section whose members talk about launching "radical programs which will help to bring about the demise of capitalism." The co-ops are doing their basic job, but the larger purpose of co-ops is very differently conceived. "A few years ago," Zwerdling says, giving an example, "food co-ops in Madison, Wisconsin, agreed to contribute 1 or 2 per cent of their monthly incomes to a 'community sustaining fund,' which would finance community political and economic projects, but the co-ops fought bitterly over how to spend the money, and the fund fell apart." He comments: "Food co-ops could be on the verge of receiving crucial financial help from the federal government—yet even if co-ops did get large-scale financing, many would not be sure what to do with it."

One of Zwerdling's concluding remarks:

> The new-wave food co-ops do give encouraging evidence that ordinary citizens—with few resources but enthusiasm, vision, perseverance, and plenty of hard work—can create neighborhood economic institutions that provide important if temporary, alternatives to the corporate style of buying food. Whether these alternatives can grow beyond their neighborhoods will depend to a great extent on whether co-op members can unite in some common political vision.

Co-ops are practical affairs through which people help themselves and one another. That's how they began and usually that's how they survive. Quite conceivably, these practical, well-intentioned Americans are not *ready* to adopt "a common political vision." Maybe we have to "grow" the vision, not "adopt" it. Zwerdling continues:

> Co-ops may not yet be the vanguard of a social upheaval. They may not put the supermarkets out of business. But for the people who shop and work there—for the people buying bags of cheap bulgur wheat and filling their recycled jars with natural peanut butter—food co-ops offer the beginnings of an alternative way of providing this precious resource, food. Without the food co-op alternative, however fragile it may be, there would be none.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
BOOK REVIEWS

WHAT is a Wrinkle in Time? Well, if a bug is walking on the hem of your dress and you reach down and lift the edge of the dress up to your waist without disturbing the bug, you have transported it instantly to some place else—making a "wrinkle in time." This is the way three children are transported through space by Mrs. Who and Mrs. Whatsit, two Star Angels in disguise. Madeleine L'Engle tells their story in *A Wrinkle in Time* (Strauss and Giroux, 1963).

Meg, her little brother, and their friend Calvin, who are two teen-agers and a five-year-old so bright and "odd" they are considered stupid in school, want to find Meg's scientist father. He has been gone for two years. The star-angels give them cosmic transport by the "wrinkle" method, which is really, says Mrs. Who, "travel in space without having to go the long way around. In other words to put it into Euclid, or old-fashioned geometry, a straight line is not the shortest distance between two points."

After visiting several other planets they arrive on Camazotz, which can't now be seen in the heavens because it has been completely covered with a black cloud. The children get through the cloud and find this planet exactly like Earth, except that the people are mental robots. Time doesn't seem to exist there because it's "turned in on itself." They find that the cloud is a Mind with no body which controls everything—nothing on Camazotz has a will of its own except the autocratic Mind. Meg's father has been locked in a mental struggle with the Mind for two years but, being unaware of time, he thinks it has only been an hour or two. The children manage to save their father, but then Meg has to rescue her little brother who has been occupied by the Mind. She does it by turning her "faults" into virtues—stubbornness into will, impatience into taking shortcuts, her inability to learn by the conventional methods in school into seeing through the Mind—which knows nothing of love. She saves her brother by blocking out the Mind with Love for her brother.

The earth is also threatened by the black cloud, Mrs. Whatsit tells the children. When they wonder what they can do, she says:

> "If we knew ahead of time what was going to happen we'd be—we'd be like the people on Camazotz, with no lives of our own, with everything all planned and done for us. How can I explain it to you? Oh, I know. In your language you have a form of poetry called the sonnet."
>
> "Yes, yes," Calvin said impatiently. . . .
>
> "Kindly pay me the courtesy of listening to me." Mrs. Whatsit's voice was stern, and for a moment Calvin stopped pawing the ground like a nervous colt. "It is a very strict form of poetry, is it not?"
>
> "Yes."
>
> "There are fourteen lines, I believe, all in iambic pentameter. That's a very strict rhythm or meter, yes?"
>
> "Yes." Calvin nodded.
>
> "And each line has to end with a rigid rhyme pattern. And if the poet does not do it exactly this way, it is not a sonnet, is it?"
>
> "No."
>
> "But within this strict form the poet has complete freedom to say whatever he wants, doesn't he?"
>
> "Yes." Calvin nodded again.
>
> "So," Mrs. Whatsit said.
>
> "So what?"
>
> "Oh, do not be stupid, boy!" Mrs. Whatsit scolded. "You know perfectly well what I am driving at!"
>
> "You mean you're comparing our lives to a sonnet? A strict form, but freedom within it?"
>
> "Yes." Mrs. Whatsit said. "You're given the form, but you have to write the sonnet yourself. What you say is completely up to you."

A Wrinkle in Time won the Newberry Award in 1963, and is still a favorite.

Thimble Snmmer by Elizabeth Enright (Rinehart & Co., 1938), while published forty-two years ago, is still in demand at the library. Miss

Enright spent many of her summers on a Wisconsin farm and has captured the smells and sounds of a farm, and the charms of small town life. She realizes that children are well aware of the troubles of grownups and may worry almost as much. Garnet Linden, age nine, knows that her father is oppressed by the long drought. If his crop fails they will be unable to get a badly needed loan, and then the farm animals won't have enough feed. In spite of the anxiety, the summer hours are filled with work and play. One day, while playing with a friend near a dry creek bed, Garnet finds an old silver thimble and decides it might bring her good luck. Sure enough, the drought breaks, her father sells his crop, and the animals are saved. Ever after, Garnet thinks of this time as her Thimble Summer. Children, especially city children, learn all sorts of things from this book—how butter is made; how to make lime, how crops used to be harvested. The author never talks down to her readers. Garnet, her family and friends, are warm and real. The problems are the ordinary ones that happen to all farmers. Unless completely jaded by television, a child will savor the quiet warmth of *Thimble Summer.*

From the *Parents' Bulletin* of the School in Rose Valley (School Lane, Moylan, Pa. 19065), we borrow from a fond review of Grace Rotzel's book about the school which she helped found, and where she served as Head Teacher (principal) for thirty-six years. The reviewer is James Reid, who now has Miss Rotzel's job. He is interested, as we are, in getting *The School in Rose Valley* read. He tells his audience of parents:

> My first picture of Rose Valley was formed from a borrowed copy, skimmed in a Media [Pa.] motel room, the night before my first interview. Each time I've reread it, new messages have surfaced, new shadings emerged. Many of us are here, at least in part, because of that book. Perhaps the same is true of you, or your child. . . . If you'd like to purchase your own, the School has a few hardcovers on hand at $10; but if you find that a little steep in these inflationary times, the Johns Hopkins Press is reissuing the book in paperback at $5. . . . Order through our office or write directly to The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland 21219.

Mr. Reid has discovered, as we did, that the best way to review Grace Rotzel's book is by quoting from it. He chooses foundation ideas, and we reproduce some of them here, under the headings he gives them:

> *On Learning*
>
> The concept of what constitutes learning was what every teacher had to work on. If memory and obedience were not the most valued assets of a learner, what were they? Those qualities enabled him to pass examinations, but we were interested in the whole child, in what goes on as he thinks, acts, talks, and behaves.
>
> *On Science*
>
> Naming and intepreting were not the main objectives in our science work, but seeing likenesses and differences, observing carefully, over and over again. These were important. Since this over-and-over-again technique . . . is the child's normal method, it is easy to apply. If this is encouraged, and he finds out something for himself, his natural curiosity is kept alive, and he is helped to formulate his own questions and find satisfying ways of answering them; he is, in effect, working as a scientist works. If, on the contrary, the emphasis is on the right answer, with no concern for the process, he accumulates facts, but neither the ability nor the desire to go further on his own.
>
> *On Language*
>
> Judged by the standards of schools where teachers do the talking and the children keep still, our children talked too much; but we adhered to a philosophy of "learning by doing," and thus we encouraged the pupils to speak freely. Language, being a means of communication, has to be acquired in a social atmosphere.
>
> *On Graduating to Other Schools*
>
> One boy, talking over what it was like in the seventh grade (they always came back to visit us on holidays), said, "You know I'm busier this year, but not working as hard as I did here."

FRONTIERS

Souls Controlled by Technology . . . and Geography

READING about the Senate approval, by a vote of eighty-four to three, of a weapons bill that will cost more than fifty billion dollars, authorizing the start of production of the MX missile and the development of a new "strategic bomber," we wondered why the government of the United States is so determined to make Gandhi's ominous prediction come true. Long ago he warned his countrymen, "Industrialize—and Perish!", and under this phrase as a title the Navajivan Publishing House (Ahmedabad, India), has collected in a small book the essentials of what he said on this subject. Here are two passages, the first written in 1908, the second in 1944:

> Formerly, when people wanted to fight with one another, they measured between them their bodily strength; now it is possible to take away thousands of lives by one man working behind a gun from a hill. . . .
>
> There are two schools of thought current in the world. One wants to divide the world into cities and the other into villages. The village civilization and the city civilization are totally different things. One depended on machinery and industrialization, the other rested on handicraft. We have given preference to the latter.
>
> After all, this industrialization and large-scale production was only of comparatively recent growth. We do not know how far it has contributed to our development and happiness, but we know this much, that it has brought in its wake recent world wars. This second world war is still not over and even before it comes to an end we are hearing of a third world war. Our country was never so unhappy and miserable as it is at present. In the cities people may be getting big profits and good wages but all that has become possible by sucking the blood of the villages.

Gandhi, it should be noted, was not against machinery, but only against machinery which enslaves instead of liberating. "I would prize," he said, "every invention of science made for the benefit of all." "I would love," he also said, "to secure the engineering talent of the West to give me a village wheel which will beat the existing wheels, though deep down in me I have the deep belief that the improvements that indigenous talent has made are by no means to be despised." He regarded the Singer Sewing Machine as an ideal machine, since it saves human labor. "The saving of labour should be the object, and honest humanitarian consideration, and not greed the motive."

He wrote in *Harijan* in 1946, two years before his death:

> Ours has been described as the machine age because the machine dominates our economy. Now, what is a machine? one may ask. In a sense, man is the most wonderful machine in creation. It can neither be duplicated nor copied. I have, however, used the word not in its wider sense, but in the sense of an appliance that tends to displace human or animal labour instead of supplementing it or merely increasing its efficiency.
>
> This is the first differential characteristic of the machine. The second characteristic is that there is no limit to its growth or evolution. This cannot be said of human labour. There is a limit beyond which its capacity or mechanical efficiency cannot go. Out of this circumstance arises the characteristic of the machine.
>
> It seems to be possessed of a will or genius of its own. It is antagonistic to man's labour. Thus it tends more to displace man, one machine doing the work of a hundred, if not a thousand, who go to swell the army of the unemployed and the under-employed, not because it is desirable but because that is its law. In America it has perhaps reached the extreme limit.

Well, we have certainly industrialized, and as for "perishing" as a result, the progress in that direction sometimes seems almost as certain. This is brought home by a letter by Scott Herrick in the July/August *Fellowship:*

> There is a law, and quite rightly so, against threatening the life of the President of the United States, and I would assume that there is in the Soviet Union a similar law, making it a crime to threaten the life of Party Leader Brezhnev. Where, however, is the law prohibiting either head of state from threatening the lives of hundreds of millions of innocent people, not only in the United States and the Soviet Union but in the world at large?

Where is the law which would prohibit Mr. Carter or Mr. Brezhnev from blanketing this planet in a shroud of radioactive fallout without so much as a "by your leave" to the eighty-nine per cent of the people who do not come under the jurisdiction of either head of state?

Already there have been seventeen major nuclear alerts in the United States, and how many the Soviet Union may have experienced we have no way of knowing. It is during these alerts that a handful of men must, under extreme pressure and in the space of fifteen or twenty minutes, make decisions that may affect every human being on earth and could well put the entire human experiment in jeopardy. . . .

It is my view that when the Soviet Union and the United States engaged in the manufacture and deployment of not simply weapons but global exterminators, both nations stepped outside any rational framework of laws which we the people of the world should be required to respect or adhere to. In so doing, both nations and their leaders became outlaws by definition.

Neither the Soviet people, the American people, nor any other people owe allegiance to leaders who advocate death as a way of life.

With all due respect to the office of the President, and no personal malice toward Mr. Carter, I find myself repeating Thoreau's words when he found disagreement with President Polk's policies. Thoreau said quite simply: "He is not my President." To paraphrase George Santayana, we dare not allow our souls to be controlled by geography.

Were I a Soviet citizen, I would hope that I would have the courage to respectfully say the same to Mr. Brezhnev.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION
(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Title of Publication—MANAS

1A. Publication No.—968640

2. Date of Filing—September 24, 1980.

3. Frequency of Issue—Weekly, excepting July and August.

3A. No. of Issues Published Annually—44.

3B. Annual Subscription Price—$10 00

4. Location of known office of publication—3630 McKenzie Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90032.

5. Location of the headquarters or general business office of the publishers—3630 McKenzie Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90032.

6. Publisher—Manas Publishing Company, Inc., 3630 McKenzie Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90032.

Editor—Henry Geiger, 3630 McKenzie Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90032. Managing Editor—None.

7. Owner—Manas Publishing Company, Inc., a non-stock, non-profit corporation.

8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding I percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities—None.

9. Not applicable.

10. Extent and Nature of Circulation

A. Total No. copies printed (net press run)—Average No copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,950 Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—3,000.

B. Paid circulation 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—190; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—230. 2. Mail subscriptions—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,250. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,221.

C. Total paid circulation—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,440; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,451.

D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means; samples, complimentary, and other free copies—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—110; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—120.

E. Total distribution (Sum of C and D)—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,550; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,571.

F. Copies not distributed. 1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—340; Actual No copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—364. 2. Returns from news agents—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—60; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—65.

G. Total (Sum of E, Fl and 2—should equal net press run shown in A)—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,950; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—3,000.

11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

DIANE LAWSON
Circulation Manager