

THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW

EIGHTY years ago, in a little book titled *On Some of Life's Ideals*, William James told about a journey he had made through the mountains of North Carolina. As he was driven along by a mountaineer, he noticed that many of the valleys between the hills had been newly cleared and planted. The effect was upsetting to him; how could anyone, for any reason, so deface the landscape!

The impression on my mind was one of unmitigated squalor. The settler had in every case cut down the more manageable trees, and left their scarred stumps standing. The larger trees he had girdled and killed, in order that their foliage should not cast a shade. He had then built a log cabin, plastering its chinks with clay, and had set up a tall zigzag rail fence around the scene of his havoc, to keep pigs and cattle out. Finally, he had irregularly planted the intervals between the stumps with Indian corn, which grew among the chips; and there he dwelt with his wife and babes—an axe, a gun, a few utensils, and some pigs and chickens feeding in the woods, being the sum total of his possessions.

James was shocked. "The forest had been destroyed; and what had 'improved' it out of existence was hideous, a sort of ulcer, without a single element of artificial grace to make up for the loss of Nature's beauty." James, of course, is setting himself up; surely he could have found a more durable example of offense against the natural order. He goes on:

Then I said to the mountaineer who was driving me: "What sort of people are they who have to make these new clearings?" "All of us," he replied. "Why, we ain't happy here, unless we are getting one of these coves under cultivation." I instantly felt that I had been losing the whole inward significance of the situation. Because to me the clearings spoke of naught but denudation, I thought that to those whose sturdy arms and obedient axes had made them they could tell no other story. But, when *they* looked on the hideous stumps, what they thought of was personal victory. The chips, the girdled trees, and the

vile split rails spoke of honest sweat, persistent toil, and final reward. The cabin was a warrant of safety for self and wife and babes. In short, the clearing, which to me was a mere ugly picture on the retina, was to them a symbol redolent with moral memories and sang a very paean of duty, struggle, and success.

"Stout fellow!" you say to yourself—or might have said if you lived back in the nineteenth century. James was not only an academic aesthete from Cambridge, Mass. He was a fair-minded man who could enter into the spirit of the frontier—well, a proletarian sort of frontier—and empathize with some self-reliant Americans. He had some of Walt Whitman's blood in his veins.

But then a wave of nostalgia is likely to take charge. People were so "innocent" back in those days! Edison's light bulb was twenty years old in 1899, and only a little more than four thousand automobiles were produced in the United States in 1900. So the oil business was negligible. In that year Los Angeles had 102,500 people. . . . Things are quite different now. They are especially different in Los Angeles, which began as a desert, and now has nearly 2.8 million people living within the city limits, with eight or nine million in the trading area or Los Angeles basin. Lack of water makes deserts, so that if the people of the Los Angeles area had to survive on its "natural" water supply, less than ten per cent of the present population could live there, and they would probably have a hard time. They couldn't water their lawns.

But Los Angeles, like other cities, has been enterprising. It wanted to grow. At the turn of the century, about when James was writing his essay, the bankers and real estate people of southern California knew what they had to do. The story of their action is briefly told in a report called "The Water Seekers" (part of a "Position

Paper" prepared by the Mono Lake Committee early this year):

At that time wealthy development interests realized that southern California's sparse water supply, less than two per cent of the state's total, condemned their plans for massive future growth. In 1904, William Mulholland, the superintendent of the Los Angeles Water System camped among the green fields and Sierra-fed streams of the Owens Valley, a burgeoning agricultural area 250 miles north of Los Angeles and 50 miles south of Mono Lake. Nine years later water from the Owens River was flowing through the newly completed Los Angeles Aqueduct, and Owens Lake, a large saline sea at the foot of Mt. Whitney, was turning into an alkali wasteland.

To promote municipal bond issues to finance the aqueduct, Mulholland fabricated a drought which never existed. According to Mulholland, average rainfall in Los Angeles between 1895 and 1904 dropped to only six inches per year; in fact, national weather bureau records reveal that precipitation averaged a perfectly normal 11.52 inches during this period.

Our parallel is beginning to break down. James's mountaineer, with his sturdy arms and obedient axe, is not duplicated by the California promoters. When you institutionalize human enterprise, certain qualities we all admire are dropped out. There are still "pæans of duty, struggle, and success," but they are written by public relations experts, not Walt Whitmans. The story of water for Los Angeles goes on:

Eventually the city's unquenchable growth led to a bitter, sometimes violent and devious struggle over water rights with Owens Valley farmers. Los Angeles triumphed, leaving a legacy of abandoned houses and barns, "dead trees, weed-grown fields, neglected fences, and empty ditches" as poignant reminders of "shattered hopes and dreams." Although the city invoked the "greatest good for the greatest number" as justification for its actions critics claimed that "the planners of the aqueduct, besides devastating the valley, bilked the citizens of Los Angeles in order to reap swollen profits on San Fernando real estate."

In 1913, when water began flowing from the Owens Valley to Los Angeles, William Mulholland said, "There it is. Take it."

Meanwhile Owens Lake became a sink of alkali dust. But that was only the beginning. More water was available to the north in the Mono basin, from streams feeding landlocked, salty Mono Lake, and in 1934 construction began on a tunnel to carry Mono Lake water—taken from its fresh-water tributaries—down to the Aqueduct and on to Los Angeles. This project encountered engineering difficulties but was completed in 1941. Then, in the 60s, another section of Aqueduct was begun for, as the Department put it, "further salvage of the water in Mono Basin being lost into the saline water of Mono Lake." The Mono Lake Committee Position Paper says:

Since the completion of this aqueduct in 1970, mean annual export of water from the Mono Basin has increased from approximately 55,000 acre-feet per year (1941-1970) to 110,000. Releases into Mono Lake have fallen from approximately 40,000 acre-feet per year to practically zero.

Why do people care so much about what is happening to Mono Lake? Does it matter that one more inland salt sea is drying up?

Mono supports the largest known California Gull colony in the world. About 50,000 adults raise their young at the lake, over 95 per cent of California's breeding population and one-fourth of the entire world population. All nest on Negit Island and the small islets to the northeast. . . .

Gulls so far from the sea surprise many visitors. In fact California Gulls have been crossing the Sierra for thousands of years to raise their young on Mono's islands. They arrive in April and, by nesting on the island, protect their eggs and young from coyotes, ground squirrels, snakes and other mainland predators. The chicks are nourished on brine shrimp and flies. By August the young and their parents may be seen soaring westward over the Sierran crest on their return journey to coastal wintering areas.

Mono Lake is—or was—large, covering an area of more than 100 square miles. It lies between Yosemite National Park and the Nevada line, at an elevation of 6,400 feet, surrounded by inactive volcanos and mountain peaks. Its champions declare that the "thirst of a distant metropolis"—Los Angeles—"is turning this ancient, life-productive sea into a sterile, chemical

sump surrounded by barren alkali." Without something approaching its normal supply of fresh water, Mono will grow so salty that the brine shrimp and brine flies will die away. As the lake dries up, alkali dust will blow in the wind, as it does from the sun-baked bed of Owens Lake, killing pine trees. Threatened are the ancient bristlecone pines of the Mono region. As the water in Mono goes down, year by year, the nesting gulls will have no protection from the coyotes, which are now able to cross to Negit Island on an exposed land bridge and eat the little birds. Already the salinity of the lake has almost doubled, as the water drops at a rate of almost two feet a year. If the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power pumps all the 167,800 acre-feet of water per year it is licensed to divert from Mono Lake's sources, only a few scattered puddles may remain.

Already the recession of Mono Lake has exposed about 10,000 acres of fine-textured lake-bottom sediment impregnated with alkali chemicals. No one who has seen the lake vanish in a windswept alkali shroud 20,000 feet high will question the reality of an air pollution crisis. An airline pilot recently mistook the dust for a massive volcanic eruption. If the lake continues to shrink, the dust pollution can only worsen dramatically. Because of its alkaline chemistry, the dust will endanger the health of plants and animals, including humans, far from the lake itself. Furthermore since the alkali regenerates as quickly as it is blown away, the dust will be with us for thousands of years.

Defenders of Mono Lake want the water level restored to a height that will keep the coyotes off Negit Island (already the gulls are failing to reproduce) and they propose a conservation and water recycling program which, they say, will meet the needs of Los Angeles. (For information apply to Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 2764, Oakland, Calif. 94602.)

Well, we can't with a straight face bring back William James's mountaineer to give a character reference for the L.A. Department of Water and Power. The mountaineer was acting for himself and his family and he didn't do a great deal of

harm. Government officials, banks, chambers of commerce and captains of industry, when it comes to issues like this one, claim to be acting for the "people," which always means people as *consumers*, as customers, not people who, if left alone, might readily understand when some natural limit has been reached. Making an enormous city out of the Los Angeles desert may not be quite as foolish as wanting to fix up the moon or a moon-launched satellite as a place for people to live and carry on farming operations (see Gerard O'Neill), but there are times when it may seem worse, because we have been able to *do* it. Now we are beginning to add up the cost.

Of course, if you take one thing at a time, it may not sound like much. A Los Angeles City Councilman, when told about the gulls who are losing their nesting site on Negit Island, said that the birds ought to resort to "American ingenuity" to find another place. And the brine shrimp, he added, could learn to live with more salt. An aqueduct engineer said skeptically that if enough Los Angeles citizens thought it important to keep the level of Lake Mono where it should be for the safety of the gulls, maybe a conservation program would work. Meanwhile, the Mono Lake Committee, Friends of the Earth, and two Audubon societies have charged in a lawsuit that the Department of Water and Power's diversions of water from Mono violate a public trust and create a "public and private nuisance."

The American spirit hasn't changed much. "We'll *do* it." We're strong and we know how. Elizabeth Madox Roberts captured the temper of the pioneers back in the days of the settling of Kentucky. "If the Indian is not man enough to hold it let him give it over then. . . . It's only a strong race can hold a good country. . . . Strong men will go in and take." Or, as Mulholland said, of the Owens Valley water, "There it is. Take it." That was two thirds of a century ago. This year others are saying, Who cares about a bunch of seagulls? They can learn new tricks.

So now, since we are grown up and civilized, there has to be a lawsuit. A lawsuit to establish the balance of nature. Lawsuits, as William O. Douglas said, will give the streams and rivers, birds and fish, the elk and the deer, their day in court. It's partly a delaying action, of course. The injunction sought to stop the City of Los Angeles from diverting so much water from Mono Lake. It's also a rearguard action, an attempt to shore up what's left of our credit with the planet and with the laws of nature.

Well, we are a nation of lawyers, as de Tocqueville said. So we'll use the courts. We may not change much but we have to try. And make no mistake, some valor is involved in these last-ditch attempts through the courts to establish decent self-restraint. But consider what these brave defenders of the natural interest are up against. Comparing earlier offenses against nature with presentday ecological disaster, Lynn Whyte, Jr., said in his epoch-recognizing paper in *Science* (March 10, 1967):

Hydrogen bombs are of a different order: a war fought with them might alter the genetics of all life on this planet. By 1285 London had a smog problem arising from the burning of soft coal, but our present combustion of fossil fuels threatens to change the chemistry of the globe's atmosphere as a whole, with consequences which we are only beginning to guess. With the population explosion, the carcinoma of planless urbanism, the now geological deposits of sewage and garbage, surely no creature other than man has ever managed to foul its nest in such short order.

And now that even the seagulls' nests have been fouled by human action, a Los Angeles City councilman thinks they should learn to "adapt"! A William James would find no comfort in such a spokesman.

Well, what ought we to do besides take such people to court? We have this problem of needing two fluids—the one that makes a fire and the one that puts it out. Our relations with both are poor, and getting worse. There isn't enough of either one in the Great Southwest. There never will be,

unless we revise our wants and regulate our needs.

Why is it so hard for us to recognize this? Because of our "religion," says George Sibley, who has done the best writing we know of on the water supply of the Southwest. In his 20-page article in *Harper's* for October, 1977, he pointed out that our water shortages have been "due to the nature of our religion—which we of course denied as being a 'religion' at all, and thereby never examined for flaws of faith."

But our faith in technology, science, and rationalized economy has a profane and tragic flaw: We have assumed an infinity of supply, capable of fulfilling an infinity of demand, if we can come up with the technology of production.

Where we came up with such a notion, God only knows; everyone else in the world is not so deluded.

Quite evidently, we need a change of faith. How is this accomplished? Well, first of all, a thorough breakdown, an evident inadequacy of the old faith is required, if the change is to come on a mass scale. The second ingredient is a new conception of meaning—a better religion—as guide to our lives, which means our everyday decisions. The third is the rationale of how the new faith works—the demonstration in logic and science of why it works and will continue to work.

Today we are going through the early stages of the breakdown—you see it in the price of food, of homes, of fuel. And lots of other things—connected, to be sure, but not the same—are also going wrong. Our lives are affected in both obvious and imperceptible ways. The air is often bad. The water, unless you have a well, tastes peculiar. Congestion begins to seem the normal way life. Little by little, it comes over us that we have to make a change—but to what? Well, anyway, a change, a real change.

Something of a parallel to this condition was given by Czeslaw Milosz in explaining, in *The Captive Mind*, how he finally broke away from the Stalinist ideology with which his native Poland had become saturated.

From the outside it is easy to think of such a decision as an elementary consequence of one's hatred of tyranny. But in fact, it may spring from a number of motives, not all of them equally high-minded. My own decision proceeded, not from the functioning of the reasoning mind, but from a revolt of the stomach. A man may persuade himself, by the most logical reasoning, that he will greatly benefit his health by swallowing live frogs; and, thus rationally convinced, he may swallow a first frog, then the second; but at the third his stomach will revolt. In the same way, the growing influence of the doctrine on my way of thinking came up against the resistance of my whole nature.

That's the way some people are beginning to feel about nuclear energy. Increasingly, the idea just makes them feel sick. Reading the papers, or rather reports in particular papers that devote themselves to such issues, they collect arguments for the soft path and against the specious public-relations claims of nuclear advocates and the compromises of their weak-minded political allies. For these people the breakdown has happened, or is happening: There must be a better way, they say, which is a pretty vague faith to begin with. So they look around for a rationale—for evidence that there is another and better way that will *work*. Fortunately, dozens of thoughtful, competent, and committed people have been writing the new Book. Read Schumacher, Lovins, Commoner, for a start. There are others who write at another level—Mumford, Roszak, Berry. They don't all agree about some things, but they have so much in common that a harmony of idea, purpose, obligation, and central meaning comes through in what they say.

REVIEW

VARIOUS ABSTRACTIONS

ABSTRACTIONS are of several sorts. The most familiar are mathematical. This is easy to understand because mathematical abstractions are pure and relate to nothing but themselves. But by being pure they are also empty. Are there rich or full abstractions? Myths seems a good example. Mathematics is used to give order to material things, but myths give order to human life. Galileo, Kepler, and Newton used mathematical abstractions to give predictable order to the notion of the physical world, while dramatists and mythopoeists provide us with archetypal tales which help us to understand other human beings and ourselves. The latter are the great generalizers of what we have come to know about human nature.

A story-teller both delights and instructs. Moral vision is often the Taoist (effortless) by-product of a good story. But if a writer sets out to use his art as a vehicle for moral instruction, he is likely to lose his audience. The best morals are those spontaneously discovered by the reader, as the bonus, not the intention, of art. Second-hand morals do not appeal to human beings. Some natural integrity is violated by preaching. Our only real morality is what we have decided for ourselves, and great myths provide raw material for its construction. What would we do without the story of Prometheus or the tale of Faust? Could there be any worthwhile psychology without the riches of meaning embodied in these myths?

At the beginning of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, a really remarkable book, Joseph Campbell says:

Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished, and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind. It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human culture. Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth.

If you read Campbell's book, the eloquence of this passage seems wholly justified. Even our science, of which we are so proud, does not enter into our lives, as Northrop Frye says, save in the form of myths. They are living generalizations of meaning, the nuclei of our working faith. Yet there are different sorts of abstractions which we use for different aspects of our lives. For example, individual human nature calls for one kind of generalization, mass human nature another. A passage in Erle Stanley Gardner's *The Case of the Howling Dog* makes an effective illustration. Perry Mason, the lawyer hero of Gardner's yarns, is explaining his tactics before a jury to a young assistant. Mason speaks first:

"Did you ever run for a political office," he asked. "No, of course not," said the young man.

"If you had," said Perry Mason, "you'd realize what a fickle thing the mass mind is."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Simply that there's no loyalty in it; no consistency in it," said Perry Mason. "And a jury is a manifestation of a mass mind."

"I don't see what you're driving at," the clerk said.

"On the other hand," said Perry Mason, "you've undoubtedly been to a good show."

"Why, yes, of course."

"You've been to shows where there's been some strong emotional scene, where there's been something that's brought tears to your eyes, a lump in your throat?"

"Yes," said Everly dubiously, "I have, but I don't see what that's got to do with it."

"Try and remember back to the last show you went to that was like that," Perry Mason said, watching the smoke curl upward from the end of his cigarette.

"Yes, I saw one just a few nights ago," Everly said.

"Now, then, can you remember the most dramatic part of the show—the place where the lump in your throat was biggest—where your eyes felt moist?"

"Certainly, I doubt if I'll ever forget it. It was a scene where the woman . . ."

"Never mind that right now," Perry Mason said. "But let me ask you: what were you doing three minutes after that emotional scene?"

Everly looked at him in surprise.

"Why, sitting right there in the theater, of course."

"No, I don't mean that," Perry Mason said. "What was your emotion?"

"Why, I was laughing," said Everly.

"Exactly," Perry Mason said, "I was just watching the play and . . ." Abruptly he smiled.

"Now," said Perry Mason, "I think you're getting my point. What were you doing?"

"I was laughing," said Everly.

"Exactly," Perry Mason said, as though that disposed of the matter.

Everly watched him in puzzled bewilderment for a few moments.

"But," he said, "I don't see what that's got to do with the jury in this case."

"It has everything to do with it," Perry Mason said. "A jury is an audience. It's a small audience, but it's an audience just the same. Now, the playwrights who are successful with plays have to know human nature. They recognize the fickleness of the mass mind. They know that it's incapable of loyalty; that it's incapable of holding any emotion for any great period of time. If there hadn't been a chance to laugh after that dramatic scene in the play you saw, the play would have been a flop."

"That audience was fickle, just like all audiences are fickle. They had gone through an emotional strain of sympathizing with the heroine in her darkest hour. They felt for her. That feeling was sincere. They would have died to save her. They would have killed the villain, could they have laid hands on him. They felt honestly, sincerely and wholeheartedly. But they couldn't have held the emotion for more than three minutes, to have saved their lives. It wasn't their trouble. Having felt for her deeply and sincerely, they wanted to even the emotional scales by laughter. The wise playwright knew that. He gave them an excuse to laugh.

Qualify this passage as you please, allow for the novelist's freewheeling exaggeration, dislike as you will the attorney's skill at manipulation, there is still basic truth in what Perry Mason says. He is talking about an abstraction—human beings abstracted from their individuality and placed in the circumstances of a mass, where they can be played upon by a dramatist or a lawyer or a demagogue. Artists, leaders, and teachers who don't want to manipulate people but to appeal to their individual intelligence and moral awareness don't much like addressing crowds and are averse to big organizations. And Jesus counseled his followers, "Come ye out and be ye separate." If you want your humanity to have expression, Schumacher said, stay out of big organizations. (Small is beautiful.) After feeling what it was like to talk to millions of people over the

air, Ivan Illich decided never to go on television again.

You can't hold dialogue with "the masses." All you can do is put up signs, then jail the people who don't obey them. Hitler understood this and worked it to death. Ortega had seen the same reality and wrote *The Revolt of the Masses* with a very different end in view. Simone Weil, thinking along similar lines in *The Need for Roots*, declaimed against "group opinion":

For when a group starts having opinions, it inevitably tends to impose them on its members. Sooner or later, these individuals find themselves debarred, with a greater or less degree of severity, and on a number of problems of greater or lesser importance, from expressing opinions opposed to those of the group, unless they care to leave it. But a break with any group to which one belongs always involves suffering—at any rate of a sentimental kind. And just as danger, exposure to suffering are healthy and necessary elements in the sphere of action, so are they unhealthy influences in the exercise of the intelligence. A fear, even a passing one, always provokes either a weakening or a tautening, depending upon the degree of courage, and that is all that is required to damage the extremely delicate and fragile instrument of precision that constitutes our intelligence. Even friendship is, from this point of view, a great danger. The intelligence is defeated as soon as the expression of one's thoughts is preceded, explicitly or implicitly, by the little word "we." And when the light of the intelligence grows dim, it is not very long before the love of good becomes lost.

The immediate, practical solution would be the abolition of political parties.

Simone Weil's version of the valid abstractions about human nature "in the mass" may be recognized as affording much light on human life, but she is seldom imitated or even echoed. If we didn't organize mass opinion, how, people ask, would we get anything done?

At this level of inquiry, the only response is, "Well, look at what we have been able to get done lately through political parties! Do you really want to go on that way?" But then people will say, that's as may be, but we already have a mass society.

How true!

COMMENTARY

PREPARATIONS FOR CHANGE

THIS week's lead article speaks of the need for a change of faith. The "faith in technology, science, and rationalized economy," as George Sibley says, "has a tragic flaw." Some measure of the flaw is given by Lynn Whyte, Jr.: "With the population explosion, the carcinoma of planless urbanism, the new geological deposits of sewage and garbage, surely no creature other than man has ever managed to foul its own nest in such short order."

What is a change of faith? Faith, as shown by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, means the conviction on which the heart is placed. A *change* of faith, then, requires first a clearing away of the shells of old convictions, mere habits of acceptance. This is now being effectively accomplished by the writers named, along with some others. A new faith, while not defined, is at least implied in what they say.

Some of the contributors to this strong and spreading current of thinking are enthusiasts and visionaries, and some have mainly a practical bent. One or two of them remind you of Tom Paine—absolutely right in principle, confident in hope, challenging in appeal. But Tom Paine didn't tell the colonists how *hard* it would be to whip the British; he didn't really think about that; he just knew they had to be sent home. He probably wouldn't have made a good official or statesman for the new country. He was too pure in his opinions, too uncompromising in his policies, too outspoken in other ways guaranteed not to win friends and influence people. But if he hadn't put his dream of independence on paper in *Common Sense*, the revolution wouldn't even have got off to a start. Then there was Paul Goodman, who loosened and fired up a lot of people to attempt real changes in education. But Goodman wouldn't ever even try to start a school. He probably would have made a mess of it if he had. He preferred to charge around and tell people home truths in language they couldn't misunderstand.

Out of such efforts, however, along with others, there gradually comes the faith that must be born. And it may be an application of the American way that the rationale—the way things actually work—is slowly formulated inch by inch, without any master plan.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

QUESTIONS ABOUT MASLOW

FROM time to time MANAS receives letters from individuals pursuing a particular course of study or investigation, who ask for some kind of help or suggestion. Recently, for example, we had two inquiries about Abraham Maslow and his work, one from a student, the other from a New Zealand journalist who works with the BBC. The difficult question that comes up in answering such communications is: What would be really helpful to say?

The student, who lives near Kansas City, wrote:

I am working on a Master's in Counseling and Guidance. I am interested in learning more about some of the ideas Maslow pointed out in his book, *Religions, Values, Peak Experiences*. I got your address from this book. . . .

She also wanted to know if there is anyone in her area who is familiar with Maslow's ideas.

Well, the fact is that practically everyone working in humanistic psychology has some acquaintance with Maslow's conceptions and has been influenced by him. But you wouldn't call them Maslovians—apparently what this student is looking for. We suggested that she read more of Maslow's books, naming three: *Toward a Psychology of Being*, *Eupsychian Management*, and *Farther Reaches of Human Nature*.

Another fact is that there are not going to be any Maslovians, in the sense that there used to be and are Freudians, Jungians, and Adlerians. Schools of psychology are characterized by theory and doctrine, and the identification of someone as belonging to this or that school is legitimate only when the assumptions of the school are specific enough to be verbally pinned down. It is of course possible to list the major conceptions evident in Maslow's work. He wrote about peak experiences, self-actualization, and deficiency-needs and being-needs. But in every case the quality of the conception has a rich incommensurable ingredient—made up of the level of Maslow's inspiration, the correlations in his mind

that weren't set down, and the sparks which his thinking gives off as it goes along. These are really the things which attract students to Maslow and which in the nature of things can't be formulated, 1, 2, 3.

This is true of course of all distinguished thinkers and writers. Where would you look for another William James? Another Ortega? Another Whitehead? Someone may say that Maslow was not that great. Our answer is: read him. He was a man who was able to turn a great many people around, and he did it without making them "followers"—an accomplishment almost impossible to measure. What is it about his work that has this effect? You might say that he was able, again and again, to get on paper ideas wonderfully fertile in implication about the meanings which lie behind the old expression, "the dignity of man." He didn't ever say right out what he felt—he couldn't—but he built a context of suggestive expression which made the reader feel in the same key. He arranged launching pad after launching pad for readers of sympathy and imagination. Meanwhile he would not kill the thing he loved with "definition."

It is dangerous to try to support a contention of this sort with illustration, but we'll risk it. There is a sense in which *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962) is the book in which Maslow really announced himself, declared his convictions, and this is the book that first gained him a wide reading public. So we'll quote from that. Chapter 13 is titled "Health and Transcendence of Environment" and begins:

My purpose is to save one point that may get lost in the current wave of discussion of mental health. The danger that I see is the resurgence, in new and more sophisticated forms of the old identification of psychological health with adjustment, adjustment to reality, adjustment to society, adjustment to other people. That is, the authentic or healthy person may be defined not in his own right, not in his autonomy, not by his own intra-psyche and non-environmental laws, not as different from the environment, independent of it or opposed to it, but rather in environment-centered terms, e.g., of ability to master the environment, to be capable, effective, competent in relation to *it*, to do a good job, to perceive *it* well,

to be in good relations to *it*, to be successful in *its* terms. To say it in another way, the job-analysis, the requirements of the task, should not be the major criterion of worth or health of the individual. There is not only an orientation to the outer but also to the inner. An extra-psychic centering point cannot be used for the theoretical task of defining the healthy psyche. We must not fall into the trap of defining the good organism in terms of what he is "good for" as if he were an instrument rather than something in himself, as if he were only a means to some extrinsic purpose.

Well, how *do* you define a healthy person in his own right, in terms of his own intra-psychic laws? One would need to read all or most of Maslow to find out what he means by "intra-psychic laws"—being-needs applies here—but the fact is that Maslow is up against the sort of problem that Joseph Wood Krutch spoke of in a brief essay, "Novelists Know What Philosophers Don't." The author of a novel, Krutch says, "is unwilling to reduce to a formula an insight which he can present without violation only through a concrete situation whose implications he can sense but only sense." As a scientist—a theoretical psychologist—Maslow was working toward appropriate generalizations about the nature of man, but he needed a lot of the right material to base them on. He used biography instead of story-telling—the lives of psychologically healthy people whom he studied throughout his life. In this chapter on Transcendence he describes them. (Science begins with description.) Speaking of an earlier (1951) paper, he says:

I reported my healthy subjects to be superficially accepting of conventions, but privately to be casual, perfunctory and detached about them. In practically all of them I found a rather calm, good-humored rejection of the stupidities and imperfections of the culture with greater or lesser effort at improving it. They definitely showed an ability to fight it vigorously when they thought it necessary. To quote from this paper: "The mixture of varying proportions of affection or approval, and hostility and criticism indicated that they select from American culture what is good in it by their lights and reject what is bad in it. In a word, they weigh it, and judge it (by their own inner criteria) and then make their own decisions."

They also showed a surprising amount of detachment from people in general and a strong liking for privacy, even a need for it.

"For those and other reasons they may be called autonomous, i.e., ruled by the laws of their own character rather than by the rules of society (insofar as these are different). It is in this sense that they are not only or merely Americans but also members at large of the human species. I then hypothesized that "these people should have less 'national character,' and that they should be more like each other cross cultural lines than they are like the less-developed members of their own culture."

Examples of this kind of transcendence are Walt Whitman and William James, who were profoundly American, most *purely* American, and yet were also very purely supracultural, internationalist members of the whole human species. They were universal men not in *spite* of their being Americans, but just *because* they were such good Americans. So too, Martin Buber, a Jewish philosopher, was *also* more than Jewish. Hokusai, profoundly Japanese, was a universal artist. Probably any universal art cannot be rootless. *Merely* regional art is different from the regionally rooted art that becomes broadly general—human. . . .

The point I wish to stress here is the detachment, the independence, the self-governing character of these people, the tendency to look within for the guiding values and rules to live by.

Here was a man who learned how to marshal language so well that it salutes his intentions. His meaning comes across. He rolls his sentences at you like waves, each one adding to the sense of what he is saying. "It's deliberate," he told a friend who pointed this out.

There is system in Maslow's thinking, but strictly under control of an insight that was entirely his own and hardly transferable. It follows that while there are legions who are indebted to Maslow, there are no Maslovians. Yet he has valiant champions and defenders who are known to the world for excellences of their own. Charles Hampden-Turner is one, Joyce Carol Oates another.

This is about what we told the New Zealand journalist, who wondered what had happened to Maslow's conceptions after his death.

FRONTIERS

The Underlying, Unchanging Themes

TRUTH needs and has various masks, some legitimate, some spurious. People relate first to the mask, then to the truth, if it is there. In an age of material enterprise and far-flung economic endeavor, it is natural for writers seeking a large audience to embody what truth they discover in economic terms. The moral energy of their intentions often palpitates within the framework of their analysis, affecting the feelings of the readers and shaping their hopes. In the last century in the United States one such writer was Henry George, who cared most for human freedom and found its chief enemy in the misuse of wealth gained through monopolistic ownership of land. It must have seemed to him that his vision would become operative if he related it to a practical consideration, so he declared for a Single Tax on land—the logic of which everyone could grasp by doing a little thinking.

What sort of a man was Henry George? An extract from his famous book, *Progress and Poverty*, makes a good answer:

Strong, unscrupulous men, rising up upon occasion, will become the exponents of blind popular desires or fierce popular passions, and dash aside forms that have lost their vitality. The sword will again be mightier than the pen, and in carnivals of destruction brute force and wild frenzy will alternate with the lethargy of a declining civilization. . . .

Whence shall come the new barbarians? Go through the squalid quarters of great cities, and you may see, even now, their gathering hordes. . . . In our time, as in times before, creep on the insidious forces that, producing inequality destroy Liberty. On the horizon the clouds begin to lower. Liberty calls to us again. . . . It is not enough that men should vote; it is not enough that they should be theoretically equal before the law. They must have liberty to avail themselves of the opportunities and means of life; they must stand on equal terms with reference to the bounty of nature.

. . . This is the universal law. This is the lesson of the centuries. Unless its foundations be laid in justice the social structure cannot stand.

Such men appeal to the human heart through history and through the experience of everyday life. A little less than a century after George's book appeared, Lewis Mumford put his own appeal in somewhat different terms—writing about technology—while aiming at essentially the same goal. In *Challenges to Democracy* (1963) he said:

Historic experience shows that it is much easier to wipe out democracy by an institutional arrangement that gives authority only to those at the apex of the social hierarchy than it is to incorporate democratic practices into a well-organized system under centralized direction, which achieves the highest degree of mechanical efficiency when those who work it have no mind or purpose of their own.

The tension between small-scale associations and large-scale organization, between remote control and diffused local intervention, has now created the critical situation that has brought us together here. . . . My thesis, to put it bluntly, is that from late Neolithic times in the near East, right down to our own day, two technologies have recurrently existed side by side—one authoritarian, the other democratic, the first system-centered, immensely powerful, but inherently unstable, the other man-centered, relatively weak, but resourceful and durable. If I am right, we are now rapidly approaching a point at which, unless we radically alter our present course, our surviving democratic technics will be completely suppressed or supplanted, so that every residual economy will be wiped out, or will be permitted only as a playful device of government, like national balloting for already chosen leaders in totalitarian countries.

What I would call democratic technics is the small-scale method of production, resting mainly on human skill and animal energy but always, even when employing machines, remaining under the active direction of the craftsman or the farmer, each group developing its own gifts, through appropriate arts and social ceremonies, as well as making discreet use of the gifts of nature. . . . This democratic technics has underpinned and firmly supported every historic culture until our own day, and redeemed the constant tendency of authoritarian technics to misapply its powers. Even when paying tribute to the most oppressive authoritarian regimes, there yet remained within the workshop or the farmyard some degree of autonomy, selectivity, creativity. No royal mace, no slave driver's whip, no bureaucratic

directive left its imprint on the textiles of Damascus or the pottery of fifth-century Athens.

Today this conception is called "Intermediate Technology." E. F. Schumacher was formulating his thinking on this key idea in the 60s, when Mumford wrote, and in the 70s launched what became a great crusade in behalf of the moral qualities which have support and nourishment from small-scale technology. "Intermediate Technology" as a name is in many ways superior to the academicized version, "Appropriate Technology," because "Intermediate" retains the tension involved in a comparison of methods and serves as a spur to independent thinking. (See *Small Is Beautiful*, Harper paperback.)

Interestingly, a current economic analysis—a kind of "progress report" by Tom Bender in *Rain* for July—brings urgent confirmation of the ideas of George, Mumford, and Schumacher. Writing critically of the multinational corporations—those enormous concerns which operate in many countries—he says:

Case studies made in the Philippines, Indonesia, Indochina, Yugoslavia, Brazil, India and other countries have strongly documented a direct link between International Monetary Fund development loan requirements to abolish import controls, devalue currencies, to control wages while dismantling price controls, and to provide greater hospitality to foreign investment—all of which put a country at the mercy of the international trade economy controlled by the multinational corporations—and the subsequent collapse of successful indigenous development. In Indonesia these methods forced large numbers of native-owned industries to close down due to contraction of the money supply and favoritism given to foreign industry. In the Philippines the result was an increase in profit taken out of the country from \$200 million to \$990 million in five years and an increase in foreign debt from \$275 million to \$737 million. In Argentina the results of such an austerity program were a 20 per cent decline in per capita consumption, a flight of capital and a 400 per cent increase in the cost of living.

In contrast, the achievements of the few countries that have been able for a significant period to resist the pressures and lures of debt-financed, trade-centered development are impressive. . . . A few

years ago we would have laughed at the thought of self-reliant economies, believing as we did in the myths of economy of scale and benefits of specialization and having our eye on other countries oil or bauxite or tin. Now, however, we need to examine it seriously, for its benefits are becoming apparent, parallel with the costs of a trade economy. The mechanisms, values and technologies appropriate to self-reliant economies are being demonstrated. The local and decentralizing nature of renewable energy and the technologies for its direct and effective use have become apparent. Small scale, locally controlled industrial processes and institutional structures which can implement economic self-reliance at many scales are no longer a dream but off-the-shelf items. And we are beginning to understand what actions may be taken to refocus our economies and regain our control of them.

The underlying truths don't change, but only the way we talk about them. Putting them in the language of current economic developments seems a practical necessity for bringing about necessary changes. Transcendence, in the full meaning of the term, may not come until we no longer *need* to embody our moral aspiration in economic language.

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 26, 1979.

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

4. Location of known office of publication—3630 McKenzie Avenue, Los An

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 1 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—3,000. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,950.

B. Paid circulation. 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—172 Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—175. 2. Mail subscriptions—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,340. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,260.

C. Total paid circulation—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,512; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,435.

D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary and other free copies—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—130; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—17.

E. Total distribution (Sum of C and D)—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,642; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,562.

F. Copies not distributed. 1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—300, Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—330 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—58.

G. Total (Sum of E, F1 and 2—should equal net press run shown in A)—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—3,000; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,950.

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

DIANE LAWSON
Circulation Manager

12. For completion by publishers mailing at the regular rates (Section 132.121, Postal Service Manual).

39 U.S.C. 3626 provides in pertinent part: "No person who would have been entitled to mail matter under former section 4359 of this title shall mail such matter at the rates provided under this subsection unless he files annually with the Postal Service a written request for permission to mail matter at such rates."

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