

THE MISSING ELEMENT IN OUR CULTURE

HOW has serious thought in America altered its patterns over the two hundred years of the history of our country? For a scholarly answer to this question, we would need a book as least as long as Vernon Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*, but there are fundamental changes which are obvious enough. At the time of the birth of the nation, the *Federalist Papers* would be a sufficient source of the thinking of those days. The concern, in short, was with the best form of government. To complete the picture, the agrarian dream of Jefferson should be added. Then, after more than fifty years, there was the passionate argument about slavery, terminated by the Civil War. The higher themes of this epoch are found in the work of the Transcendentalist philosophers. "Transcendentalism," remarks Harold Goddard, in his study of the subject, "was a system of unflinching optimism. With this theory a tendency appears in the writings of these men—varying, however, in different cases very greatly—to minimize, to soften, or simply leave out of account the ugly facts of life." They saw, perhaps, no particular benefit in stressing them.

After the Civil War, the acquisitive mood in America became uninhibited, and capitalism took unambiguous charge, while, contesting its sovereignty, the visionary socialism of Gene Debs enjoyed a brief golden age, until Debs was imprisoned for opposing the draft and the postwar prosperity was brought into being by mechanization and mass production. But after a decade of exploitation of our new "leadership" in the world, the Depression descended on the country, generating radical thinkers and the political literature of the thirties. This was followed by the second world war and the emergence of another sort of radical—the anarcho-pacifist thinking expressed by articulate conscientious objectors.

But in the middle of the thirties an event which is still unforgotten took place, a parent of the thinking going on today, which is consideration of the relation

of humans to the planet. In a recent essay, Donald Worster, who teaches environmental studies at Brandeis University, describes the dust storms which haunted the thirties. He tells how Hugh Hammond Bennett, director of the Soil Conservation Service, was on his way to testify before a Congressional Committee:

. . . Bennett learned that another great storm was blowing in from the western plains. Stalling and dawdling, he managed to keep the committee in session until a copper gloom settled over the capital city and blotted out the light. "This, gentlemen," he announced with an impresario's flourish, "is what I have been talking about!" Congress saw and Congress acted. Without the Dust Bowl's potential for theater there most likely would not have been such a large commitment of money and federal personnel to protect the soil. Wind erosion accounted for only a small part of America's soil losses; by 1934, 262 million acres—an area 2.5 times the size of the Dust Bowl—had been severely damaged or destroyed by erosion, for the most part by water runoff. But wind erosion was the calamity that moved people to act.

The Dust Bowl, like the Depression with which it coincided, like the long heritage of soil erosion going back to Jefferson's time and before, was largely the outcome of an economic culture. That culture had turned a continent into wealth, had created vast fortunes, had made American agriculture more of a business than a way of life, had taken immense chances with fragile environments, and had always left many bills to be paid by the next generation.

The point of beginning our discussion with this quotation is to suggest that such matters are the really important focus for serious thinking in the present. If men like Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine, and of a later generation, a man like Randolph Bourne, were with us today, this is what they would be working on and writing about. For if this challenge is set aside and remains unfaced, nothing else will matter very much. Already a general recognition of this stark reality is becoming evident. The Dust Bowl was only the beginning of the recognition, aiding Bennett in his need for legislative

support. There have been other important forerunning signs—Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. And within the past decade or so, dozens of useful periodicals have come into being, all devoted to our responsibility to the land, the streams, the seas, and the air we breathe. And there seem to be scores of groups of ecologically oriented people who see that, as Wendell Berry has put it, agriculture is the foundation of culture. The title of the publication from which we took the above quotation from Donald Worster, *Agriculture and Human Values*, is a confirmation of Berry's view. This journal, now in its third year, is published by the Department of Philosophy in the University of Florida and has a number of distinguished editors.

We now return to Donald Worster's essay. A beginning, he says, was made in 1935 to alter the attitude toward the land to feelings and ideas of social responsibility, but the exploiting view which dominates American enterprise is deep-rooted and difficult to replace.

We have remained at heart an entrepreneurial people, a people with eyes intently fixed on the marketplace and profitability and world economic demand. Although we have accepted the fact that there will be no fresh land left when we wear out the existing stock, we have come to hope that technology can be an effective substitute for the old frontier. What we destroy, we like to think, we can fix up with a little know-how. Therein lies the persistent hope of the past half-century in American agricultural conservation: that technology will relieve us of the difficult task of changing our social philosophy, our ethic toward others and the land. Put another way, the hope now is that modern chemistry and modern apparatus, not institutional or attitudinal reform, will save us from our deeply rooted habits of land exploitation and abuse.

The Soil Conservation Service has itself been heavily responsible for the post-Depression effort to think technologically, not socially or ecologically. It has boasted repeatedly that it offers "scientific" solutions to land problems. What that increasingly has come to mean is that SCS is an agency of engineering. . . .

This drifting back into well-worn cultural ruts has been due to the fact the SCS, like other New Deal agencies, was a bureaucracy, and the first law of

bureaucracies is to survive. Men who had been frightened by the spectre of unemployment now had government jobs and wanted to make them as secure as possible. They wanted to see their mission grow and prosper, to see others like themselves hired, and to see their agency become a permanent fixture on the American landscape. That is a difficult, perhaps impossible, set of ambitions to hold if one is also trying to challenge persistent habits of mind. Since the 1930s the surest way to power and success in the American political complex has been the way of accommodation to powerful interests and prevailing notions of success: in short, to endorse the economic culture, not to criticize it.

But this, Worster shows, is no more than a sophisticated form of folly.

We can no more manufacture a soil with a tank of chemicals than we can invent a rain forest or produce a single bird. We may enhance the soil by helping its processes along, but we can never recreate what we destroy. The soil is a resource for which there is no substitute. Like the earth itself, it is a network of activity that we cannot yet understand, let alone replicate. Yet it is more than a resource, which is to say, more than an instrument of production. Any patch of soil, whether we use it or not, is not so much a value that we have defined as it is a value we have begun to discover.

At the beginning of this discussion we asked how serious thought was changing in America. In his concluding paragraph Donald Worster provides one answer to the question:

Thought, it has been said, grows in the interstices of habit. Over the past few decades, as old habits of commodity-thinking, economic rationality, and individualistic ethics have reasserted themselves, these new thoughts about soils and our relation to them have simultaneously begun to appear in the interstices. I have suggested that these thoughts, for want of a better label, might be called ecological. They have arisen in part out of the work of scientists who are unhappy with traditionally reductive ways of perceiving the soil, ways found in their own ranks sometimes as they are elsewhere. The new ideas come too from an advance guard of environmental philosophers who are looking beyond the entrepreneur's short horizon and even beyond the thirties-style thinking about resources and communal needs: who believe that our best hope for a permanent agriculture requires above all the maintenance of biological diversity and complexity in all our

environments, the soil included. We have before us now these new thoughts as we have some old, still vigorous habits left over from past dealings with the earth. A few choices have to be made.

The idea of "choices to be made" takes us to the modest publication of the Land Stewardship Project which originated not long ago in Minnesota (512 West Elm, Stillwater, Minn. 55802), the *Land Stewardship Letter*. The Summer 1986 issue (Vol. 4, No. 2) prints a section of a talk given by Wendell Berry in St. Paul last February, "A Defense of the Family Farm," in which he began by pointing out the simplifications which journalism and common habits of mind impose on matters where choices have to be made. These are his first two paragraphs:

To defend the family farm is like defending the Bill of Rights or the Sermon on the Mount or Shakespeare's plays. One is amazed at the necessity for defense, and yet one agrees gladly, knowing that the family farm is both eminently defensible and a part of the definition of one's own humanity.

And yet, having agreed to this defense, one remembers uneasily that there has been a public clamor in defense of the family farm throughout all the years of its decline—that, in fact, during all the years of its decline the family farm has had virtually no professed enemies, but that some of its worst enemies have been its professed friends. That is to say that "the family farm" has become a political catch-word, like democracy and Christianity, much evil has been done in its name.

What does he mean by that? He means, in effect, that popular treatment has objectivized the substance of "family farm," making it amenable to statistical treatment which ignores the subjective values which Berry believes are at stake. By "family farm" Berry means a farm operated by the family, the same family, perhaps for two or three generations—by people who have developed a peculiar intimacy with *that* farm, and a deep regard, however inarticulate, for its living components, the farm having become, quite literally, a part of their beinghood. This family farm, then, has essentially a moral character and needs to be so regarded, and this means not judging its problems to be merely economic, although that may be one measure that needs consideration. Berry says:

The idea of the family farm, as I have just defined it, is conformable in every way to the idea of good farming: farming that does not destroy either farmland or farm people. The two ideas may, in fact, be inseparable. If family farming and good farming are as nearly synonymous as I suspect they are, that is because of a law that is well understood, still, by most farmers, but has been ignored in the colleges and offices and corporations of agriculture for thirty-five or forty years. The law reads something like this: land that is in human use must be lovingly used; it requires intimate knowledge, attention, and care.

The practical meaning of this law is that (to borrow an insight from Wes Jackson) there is a ratio between eyes and acres, between farm size and farm hands, that is *correct*. We know that this law is unrelenting—that, for example, one of the meanings of our current high rates of soil erosion is that we do not have enough farmers; we have enough farmers to use the land, but not enough to use it and protect it at the same time.

In this law, which is not subject to human repeal, is the justification of the small, family-owned, family-worked farm. It is this law that gives a pre-eminent and unrevokable value to *familiarity*: the family-life that alone can properly connect a people to a land.

This is a connection, admittedly, that is easy to sentimentalize, and we must be careful not to do so. There is no guarantee that family farming will be good farming. We all know that small family farms can be abused because we know that sometimes they *have* been. It is nevertheless true that familiarity *tends* to mitigate and correct abuse. A family that has farmed a farm through two or three generations will possess not just the land but a remembered history of its mistakes, and of the remedies of those mistakes. It will know, not just what it *can* do, what is technologically possible, but also what it *must* do, and what it *must not* do. The family will have understood the ways in which it and the farm empower and limit one another. That is the value of longevity in land-holding. In the long term, knowledge and affection pay. They do not just pay the family in goods and money, but they pay the family and whole country in health and satisfaction.

Berry broadens the argument, showing that if the family farm of the sort he is talking about cannot survive in our economy, we have an economy made by people who do not care about the dignity of work, the value of craftsmanship, and the need of self-

respecting workmen to take pride in what they make and to find pleasure in making it.

The small family farm is one of the last places—they are getting rarer every day—where men and women, and girls and boys too, can answer that call to be an artist, to learn to give love to the work of their hands. It is one of the last places where the maker—and some farmers still talk about "making the crops"—is responsible from start to finish for the thing made. This will perhaps be thought a spiritual value, but it is not for that reason an impractical or uneconomic one. In fact, from the exercise of this responsibility, this giving of love to the work of the hands, the farmer, the farm, the consumer, and the nation, all stand to gain in the most practical ways: they gain the means of longevity and dependability of the sources of food, both natural and cultural. The proper answer to the spiritual calling becomes, in turn, the proper fulfillment of physical need.

Here, in only a few words, is put the basic change in thinking that the modern world needs, and requires if it is to survive. It has to do with the nature of man and his place and part in the world. Berry describes the bond of feeling, the rich content of the sense of obligation which must now take the place of nationalistic patriotism. One of the most encouraging things about this moment of history is the increasing number of Berry's readers and the unqualified admiration for him as writer and thinker on the part of discriminating critics.

Not remarkably, the same issue of the *Land Stewardship Letter* provides a report on Wes Jackson's discussion of land stewardship during the Land Institute's Prairie Festival last June. We need, Jackson says, to break away from the traditional idea of ownership.

If we are to have "intergenerational justice," he said, we must understand that the deed to a piece of land gives us the right to take care of something that belongs to the future. "As soon as a person is born, he or she loses *title* to the land and inherits an obligation toward it," Jackson said. "What right does a farmer have, for example, to lose 200 tons per acre of soil a year, or for that matter, 7 tons?" . . .

One way to work against the destruction of community in rural areas, he said, would be "doing things on a local level" (such as setting soil conservation standard) that we tend to assign to big government. Jackson sees the community as the level

on which to work in the farm crisis as well. We cannot save individual farmers unless we also save the communities within which they interact, he said. Unless the cash flow slows in the local communities, farmers just "launder" money for agribusiness.

Jackson told a story about an Amish farmer who stopped at the top of a hill while out plowing with his team. From that spot he could see 17 neighbors plowing their own land. The farmer said he knew that if he got sick, those 17 teams would be plowing his land, just as they had once put up his barn in one morning. By holding their communities together, and maintaining a stewardship ethic, taking only as much from technology as will not "contribute to the sin of pride," the Amish remain some of the most successful farmers in this country. Needless to say, they do not waste the soil in their care. As Jackson pointed out, they suffer far fewer effects of the farm crisis than do many farmers who have let go of these values.

There is, Jackson said, a terrible momentum in the acquisitive way of life, which has made us use up soil carbon and neglect genetic diversity at a rate which gives our agriculture "the proportions of a dramatic tragedy." We are merely diminishing resources "unless we change our whole way of dealing with the world." What can we learn from a cost-benefit analysis if we ignore the fact that the problem bothering us has thrown the whole system out of balance? We have to deal with the system as a whole, including the context in which the problem occurs. Doing this would amount to joining the world community of life. Economic analysis may help to show us that we are doing something wrong, but it doesn't tell us what we ought to do. It hasn't the vocabulary. This is the great lesson of our time. We must develop a moral vocabulary—something required by human ecology—and use it practically in making decisions. That is the change in our thinking that has already begun. There will be crisis after crisis, in every department of our lives, until this change is largely accomplished.

REVIEW

OVERCOMING DELUSIVE HABITS

HAVING for review another book edited by Mary Morain, *Enriching Professional Skills Through General Semantics* (published by the International Society for General Semantics, P.O. Box 2469, San Francisco, Calif. 94126, \$7.50 in paperback), our first obligation is to give the reader some idea of what is meant by General Semantics. It is, we could say, a discipline developed earlier in this century by Alfred Korzybski for avoiding serious mistakes in thinking which come about through the limitations and misuse and misunderstanding of language. The general character of these mistakes may be illustrated by a passage from Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion* (1910). While language is only briefly referred to by Angell, the parallel to mistakes based on language seems clear enough. He wrote:

If Russia does England an injury—sinks a fishing fleet in time of peace, for instance—it is no satisfaction to Englishmen to go out and kill a lot of Frenchmen or Irishmen. They want to kill Russians. If, however, they knew a little less geography—if, for instance, they were Chinese Boxers, it would not matter in the least which they killed, because to the Chinamen all alike are "foreign devils"; his knowledge of the case does not enable him to differentiate between the various nationalities of Europeans. In the case of a wronged Negro in the Congo the collective responsibility is still wider; for a wrong committed by one white man he will avenge himself on any other—American, German, English, French, Dutch, Belgian, or Chinese. As our knowledge increases, our sense of the collective responsibility of outside groups narrows. But immediately we start on this differentiation there is no stopping. The English yokel is satisfied if he can "get a whack at them foreigners"—Germans will do if Russians are not available. The more educated man wants Russians; but if he stops a moment longer, he might see that in killing Russian peasants he might as well be killing so many Hindoos, for all they had to do with the matter. He then wants to get at the Russian Government. But so do a great many Russians—Liberals, Reformers, etc. He then sees that the real conflict is not English against Russians at all, but the interest of all law-abiding folk—Russians and

English alike—against oppression, corruption, and incompetence. . . . An English patriot recently said, "We must smash Prussianism." The majority of Germans are in cordial agreement with him, and are working to that end. But if England went to war for that purpose, Germans would be compelled to fight for Prussianism. War between the States for a political ideal of its kind is not only futile, it is the sure means of perpetuating the very condition which it would bring to an end. International hostilities repose for the most part upon our conception of the foreign State, with which we are quarreling, as a homogeneous personality, having the same character of responsibility as an individual, whereas the variety of interests, both material and moral, regardless of State boundaries, renders the analogy between nations and individuals an utterly false one.

Anyone can see, from what Angell said so long ago, the host of errors—leading to disasters—which grow out of these simplifications in thinking, and it is equally plain that the habit of making such mistakes is embodied in language. General semantics sets out to expose such errors and to prevent their repetition by a program of intellectual training.

Those who teach its techniques tend to be good writers and Mary Morain's book has in it some of the best. Its contents are selected from the first forty years of the publication of *Et cetera*, the journal of the General Semantics Society, from 1943 to 1983. We gravitate naturally to the contributions of Wendell Johnson (which are several) because of the illuminating way in which he uses the method of analysis. This is due, we think, not because of any "technique," but to his extraordinary ability to put himself in the place of another. He was a professor of speech pathology and psychology at the University of Iowa, which may in part explain his ability. In his first article he writes about the failure of therapists to understand the handicapped—say, stutterers, both child and adult. He was especially qualified to do this because he had been a stutterer himself. He starts out:

I want to try to tell you, if I can, what the handicapped child or adult would tell you if he could,

if he knew enough about you, about your work, and if he knew enough about his own difficulties.

To begin with, I think that the representative handicapped child would tell you, if he could, that he is very grateful for the work you are trying to do. I think he would be impressed by your tests, your standardized interviews, if you have any (there are psychologists who do not believe in them), remedial measures, your play therapies, etc. He would try to tell you that he thinks you are doing great work and he would mean it. I say this with considerable conviction, because I have been on the other side of the desk. As a stutterer, I am very grateful to everyone who has attempted to help me.

But the handicapped child would also want to tell you something else. He might find it very difficult to find the words, but somehow he would want to say to you that there is something missing, that he wishes that we, as professional workers, were able to understand him a little better. He realizes that we understand him to a certain extent, but he feels that our understanding of him is often rather highly specialized. We understand him only as a particular type of individual. The understanding is somehow partial. It may even be the kind which precludes our paying attention to certain phases of his problem, or of him as an individual or of the situation in which the problem has meaning for him. There are, for example, psychologists and other kinds of clinical workers, who tend to become very dogmatic about their methods and points of view, and who refuse to consider certain aspects of a given case. The child on the other side of the desk feels that such a worker is not paying attention to certain things that to the child are very important. There are times, I think, when he would feel that he was just being out-and-out misunderstood. . . .

Some of you will sense the semantic basis of the view that an important reason why we do not understand handicapped children and adults better than we do is that we tend to see them through our own individual evaluational filters. We never really see a unique individual child. We see only what we are prepared, psychologically and evaluationally, to see. We are able to feel only what we are prepared, psychologically and evaluationally, to feel. . . .

You can understand only what you are prepared to understand. It does not matter what books you have read, either—at least, it does not matter as much as we sometimes think it does.

The therapist cannot himself *be* the patient, enter into his being and feel as he does, yet he can *try*.

And how can we do that? Well, I think we do it mainly in two ways. One is by never being dogmatic when it comes to how the other individual feels. We do not know for sure how he feels, and I think we ought frankly to face that. The other thing we tend to do, I think, if we have this point of view, is to be more ready to ask the child what he thinks about the problem and about our approaches to it.

Wendell Johnson ends this paper by recalling how an old-time Western cowboy was able to find a horse that had wandered off on the range. The experienced cowboy was very good at this. What did he do?

He asked himself, "Now what kind of reason would I have for wandering away if I were a horse? With such a reason, where would I go?" Apparently, it is possible to empathize with a horse a good deal—to feel like a horse to a surprising degree. At any rate, the cowboy would imagine that he was the horse, that he had the horse's reason for going, and then he would go to the place he would go if he were the horse—and usually he would find the horse. . . .

The next time you see a stutterer holding his breath with all his might when he is supposedly trying to say, "Hello!" see whether you can do what the old cowboys did, and ask yourself, "Why would I hold my breath if I were he?" It is a very simple thing to practice—and I think that one can develop a lot of skill in doing it. It is the kind of skill that the child on the other side of the desk will interpret by saying that he feels as though he were being understood.

Well, there are about forty contributions to this volume, and we have used up our space on one of them—because this seemed the best way to serve our readers. We won't say all the others are equally good, because they are not, but they all have something of value in them. Another virtue is that they are mostly all short, and they are all, in one way or another, accounts of how we betray ourselves and others by the misuse or misunderstanding of language. One paper that seemed particularly useful was by Thomas T. Lewis on the harm that may be done by psychiatric labels. People who do odd things are

not necessarily insane, but diagnostic labels may cause them endless trouble in their lives. Another valuable investigation is by Allen Walker Read, who writes about linguists who develop a sense of mission and devote their lives to programs of language reform that cannot and will never be adopted.

We conclude with a quotation from S. I. Hayakawa, for years editor of *Et cetera*, on baby books.

There are, I am told, pediatricians who won't let mothers read baby books. The reason they forbid mothers to read is not that the books are bad, although some of them may be it is that many mothers, unused to scientific ways of thinking, and perhaps over-anxious too, often misread the books they read.

A mother wrote him anxiously that her small child would eat only two ounces of milk a day when the book she had been reading said the baby should have eight. She felt better when it was suggested to her that two might be *enough* for her baby. She needed to read with common sense, and the book ought to have explained the difference between the general and the particular.

COMMENTARY

A KNACK WITH THE EARTH

ABOUT three weeks ago we received from Wes Jackson a copy of his introduction to a new book, *Inside The Land Organism*, which has impressed him very much. We shall hope to have a review copy before long. Meanwhile, we offer some of the things Jackson says about it in his introduction.

Here is a book that will help us in that long stretch before us. This is not one more "ain't it awful" book. It is a book written by two poets and an essayist and fiction writer who have worked together on farmland issues for eight years. Pay no attention to the cynic's sneers that myth and songs cannot stop sheet erosion. Just remember that the single vision of hardheaded science and technology has been used to accelerate the loss of useful atoms from our nation's slopes. And remember, too, that the National Soil Loss Equation does not measure the indignity of a future with more potbellied children who will never learn to read. That equation measures "acceptable loss."

This is more than a book about soil and survival. The authors have been much too modest in their title selection. This is a book about soil and life, soil and our roots, soil and culture, soil and civilization. As far back as 1940, E. B. White could "see no reason for a conservation if people have lost their knack with the earth." White could see "no reason for saving the streams to make the power to run the factories if the resultant industry reduces the status and destroys the heart of the individual." He called this the most "frightful sort of dissipation." White saw the necessary connections, yet in the nearly half century that has passed since he wrote those words, nearly all our efforts at protecting soil and water have ignored this dimension and we have failed miserably.

Here is a book then which seeks to make that connection which seeks to help us all establish that "knack with the earth." What we should have learned in the half century since the Soil Conservation Service was formed is that protection of our soil and water is not an engineering problem alone. . . . To the entire array of efforts already tried individually and together we now know that we must add the thoughts of those who have studied and listened to the human heart. We must add the missing content that, as Aldo Leopold said, will "change our loyalties and effections."

The "knack with the earth" is far from being a matter of technique, although technique is surely involved. "It is the source from which all things flow. The proper implementation of technique is a derivative of that source, that 'knack.' The authors deal with that 'knack.'" Their diagnosis, in short, is on the plane of mind and feeling, where all things of any human value begin.

That, as we understand it, is what Wes Jackson is saying. He is also suggesting that practical desperations may become the parents of a philosophical awakening, when the old remedies bring only further disaster.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves MISCELLANY

The people who are moved to write for MANAS are seldom over-burdened with time, so that when something comes in for inspection as possible material, we begin by regarding it with a certain resistance which the material, if it is to get attention, must somehow overcome. This applies to the book catalog we received recently from a family bookstore which calls itself the Orange Cat, 442 Church Street, Garberville, Calif. 95440—typed and lithoed on newsprint, 104 pages in all. It arrived mussy with the cover page torn, but the contents were so interesting—telling mostly about books for children—that we looked at every page, reading many of them, even though feeling a bit guilty for taking all that time. The writer of the catalog, who signs herself Kathy, has a fairly new baby who gets coverage along with the books. Drawings, most of them lifted from the books offered, garnish the pages, along with Kathy's enticements.

Many years ago—thirty-five to be approximately correct—one of the MANAS editors was father of a small girl who was beginning to read, and, being professionally a printer, he looked through a children's book catalog his firm had just completed, issued by one of the largest bookstores in Southern California. There it was, a listing of hundreds of books, coming out twice a year, but hardly much good to the editor—there were just too many to choose from. So he put the catalog aside and started looking in the stores for books he had loved as a fairly small boy. In a used book shop he found a copy of James Baldwin's *Fifty Famous Stories Retold*, and got a copy for his daughter, and later obtained *Thirty More Famous Stories Retold*, also by Baldwin—who was not related to the famous James Baldwin of today. The Baldwin we are recalling was being published before the present James Baldwin was born. Our point, now, is simply that the Orange Cat catalog is so interestingly composed that the frustrations of our editor back in the late forties are not repeated—you just kind of want to look at the books. If and when the great-

grandchildren of that editor start coming along, we'll send the Orange Cat missive to the father and mother. Incidentally, it's free.

Next we have a review of a paper by Stephen Brookfield on adult community education. George Sibley, who wrote the review, kindly sent it along to us as of possible interest. Sibley found Brookfield's division of community education into three "dimensions" of the most value. One dimension, which could be called conventional, provides programs like those in existing institutions such as the community school. The second dimension attempts to support learning as it occurs outside of educational institutions, as in the workplace or in social groups. The third dimension seeks to inculcate into the community attitudes and "value judgments" which will, it is hoped, "move the community from its present state of inadequacy to a new, qualitatively improved, state of being." Following is Sibley's comment on the usefulness of regarding community in terms of these three dimensions.

It seems to imply a natural hierarchy in the community adult education process, with a logical progression from the first through the third dimensions, for the community able to work its way through the evolution of the process. The process starts in the first dimension with conscious, maybe even self-conscious adult education programs of a formal-schooling type, based on readily expressible needs or desires. If participation becomes good at that level, not just in the program itself but in the process of bringing it about, then it seems inevitable that the enhanced interactive communication and consciousness shared among a substantial number of community members involved in a school-centered experience would begin to filter out into the community at large, creating the potential for the second-dimension "outreach" of "adult education in the community." And as facilitators and community members worked to "identify and then support the educational component in non-educational activities," the level of social, political, and cultural awareness in general would gradually rise to the point where constructive social change would be possible in areas where a more direct initial effort to "liberate" the

community from its fundamental inadequacies and inequities would be met with angry reaction.

In Western Colorado's North Fork Valley, I worked on a number of community projects with a local historical society that had been created out of interest generated by a couple of extension classes in local history; most of the projects we were working on, including a home-grown centennial pageant, were very much "outreach" oriented, moving from the first to the second dimension of community adult education. In many communities, I think, the League of Women Voters is a good example of movement from the second to the third dimension—the coffee klatsch turned into an educative process, with the group then working coherently to raise the general level of social and political awareness in the community through panels, programs, candidate support, et cetera.

I would imagine that all successful community education must be driven to some extent by a vague but heartfelt desire of the adult population for some kind of "third-dimension liberation" from the cultural inadequacies and inequities that ultimately drag a community down. But I have also seen how "direct frontal assaults" on ingrained cultural inadequacies and inequities fail miserably and destructively, despite the best intentions of all participants. Both experience and common sense seem to dictate that, just as the child must crawl before it can walk, so must the community go through an evolutionary process of "learning to get up on its hind legs," with a lot of slow and careful work through the most "liberal" means affordable in the first and second dimensions. . . . In this sense, community education is democracy's best answer to communistic or fascistic structures for which the end (an orderly society) justifies any means, no matter how destructive to naturally evolved human order. If the end is a freer, more equitable and open society—then the end must *become* the means for its own achieving.

A report in the *Los Angeles Times* for August 28, telling about artists who are working on "Art in Other Places"—they gathered in Los Angeles for a three-day session—gives several examples of community education. One of the speakers was Bill

Cleveland, who is director of Arts-in-Corrections, which means in prisons. California has been a pioneer in bringing cultural programs to prisons. Such programs began after the efforts in 1977 of Eloise Smith to obtain grants for the first in-prison arts program. The writer of the *Times* report, Beverly Beyette, relates:

After a decade of "fits and starts," Cleveland said, there is now a statewide partnership of state agencies, nonprofit organizations and 200 independent artists giving 40,000 hours of multimedia arts instruction annually to 15% of the state's 55,000 prisoners. . . . Whereas prison administrators were in the beginning "neutral to negative" on the whole idea, Cleveland said, most have come to realize that the arts can have a profound effect on the lives of the inmates of whom more than 90% will be released back to society.

A study conducted in 1983 found that the prison arts program was beneficial both to taxpayers and to inmates.

Inmates themselves have written about sublimating their aggressions through immersion in jewelry making and bookbinding, paint and sculpture, of having for the first time feelings of self-esteem and respect for others, of these activities being as exciting as stealing once was to them.

Cleveland also put it in human terms: "The truth is, many of the people we send to prison are very bad, and in prison badness is power. . . . You must learn bad or accommodate bad to survive." Artists are not there to save souls, he said, but to provide "a powerful alternative" for those wishing to extricate themselves from despair.

And that, he said, happens quite often.

There is a lot more in this article about art in prisons—about, for example, the poets in the Texas institutions, all twenty-eight of them. The man concerned with this program said that some of the poetry the inmates write is "absolute dribble," but others write to affirm their humanity and individuality in an environment that is "tremendously violent—they write about the things they can't say to anyone else."

FRONTIERS Who Are the Civilized?

IN the second year of the publication of *MANAS* (in the March 16 issue of 1949), the lead article suggested some reading for those unaware of the ruthlessly genocidal treatment of the Indians of our continent. Recommended were Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor*, Dr. S. F. Cook's *The Conflict Between the Californian Indian and White Civilization*, and John Collier's *The Indians of the Americas*. Lately we have been reading in *Environment* (July/August) an article by a contemporary Indian (Creek/Cherokee Metis), Ward Churchill, who is director of the Educational Development Program at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Plainly, it is time for a similar set of books which will bring up to date the record of the disgraceful behavior of white "civilization" toward the Indians.

We are still haunted by the conception that the native Americans before the Europeans arrived here were wandering bands of "primitives" who lived by hunting and gathering. A long note accompanying Churchill's article shows that this image of the Indians as hand-to-mouth nomads is both distortion and error. The Indians, it is now known, "adhered to an economic structure that not only met their immediate needs but provided considerable surplus of both material goods and leisure time. Not only did our constitution-makers draw on the pattern of the Iroquois confederacy for some of their fundamental ideas, but the native Americans had made achievements in preventive medicine, calendrical mathematics, astronomy, and architecture, "all without engendering appreciable environmental disruption."

Moreover—

Unlike Europeans, Native Americans achieved a profound intellectual apprehension that human progress must be measured as an integral aspect of the natural order, rather than as something apart from and superior to it. Within this structure, elaborated and perfected through oral tradition and codified as "law" in ceremonial and ritual forms, the indigenous

peoples of this hemisphere lived comfortably and in harmony with the environment, the health of which they recognized as an absolute requirement for their continuing existence. . .

Key to the indigenous American world view is the firm acknowledgement that the human population may expand only to the point, determined by natural geographical and environmental circumstances, where it begins to displace other animal species and requires the permanent substitution of cropland for normal vegetation in any area. Indian populations never entered a trajectory of excessive growth, and even today, many Native American societies practice a self-regulation of population size that allows the substance of their traditional world view with its interactive environmental relationship to remain viable.

While technically, on the law books, the Indians retain fundamental rights to their lands, the government, over the years, has emptied those rights of any significant substance. Churchill says: "The U.S. government has steadily usurped Native American national sovereignty by imposition of its own jurisdiction over Indians' reserved land base, supplanting traditional governmental and juridical forms in the name of a self-proclaimed "trust-responsibility." In 1887 the Dawes Act declared that "American Indians should not practice collective ownership of their treaty areas (national territories), but that each individual should own a private parcel of 160 acres."

This policy, backed by the U.S. Army, was intended to "civilize" the Indians, in effect to deliberately undercut the traditional way of relating to the land. Once each eligible Indian (as defined by the United States) had received his or her parcel, the remainder of the reservation land base was declared "surplus" and opened up to non-Indian acquisition. In this manner, Indian land-holding within the 48 contiguous United States was reduced from 138 million acres in 1887 to 48 million acres in 1934.

In 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act said that traditional Indian governmental structures were not legitimate, and thereafter the tribal councils established by the IRA became the only form of Indian representation the federal government would acknowledge or deal with.

However, in this century it was found that the residual base left to the Indians was extremely resource rich:

. . . some 60 per cent of all known U.S. domestic uranium reserves and one-third of its low-sulfur coal lie under Indian land. In addition, about one-quarter of the oil that the United States counts as its own, and perhaps 15 per cent of the natural gas, are in reservation areas. Substantial assets of commercial and strategic minerals such as gold, copper, and bauxite are at issue, as are water in the arid West and subsidiary considerations such as grazing land timber, and the like.

With such holdings, it would seem logical that the 1.5 million Indians would be among North America's wealthiest inhabitants. However, as even the government's figures reveal, they receive the lowest per capita income of any population group and they experience by far the highest rates of malnutrition, disease, death by exposure, infant mortality, and other signifiers of poverty. The government has discovered long since that, by keeping Indian resources pooled in reservation areas under trust, it is able to channel the resources at very low rates to preferred corporations, using the tribal council apparatus it established in 1934 as a medium for leasing purposes. Thus, as of 1984, Indians were receiving for uranium extracted from their land an average of 3.4 per cent of the market value, 1.6 per cent of the value for their oil, 11.3 for natural gas, and about 2 per cent for coal. These figures run as much as 85 per cent under the royalty rates paid to non-Indians for the same items.

The corporation given the first contract to mine the uranium was careless about pollution, and Navajo miners working for less than the off-reservation wage scale eventually began dying of radiation-induced lung cancer. The water where uranium was mined became contaminated and misuse of the tailings spread contamination. Page after page of this account is devoted to listing various kinds of contamination, wasting of waters, and condemning Indian lands as "sacrifice" areas used to store toxic wastes. "Every inch of land returned to its rightful Indian occupants," Churchill concludes, "is an inch withdrawn from the ravages of the present industrial order." The text with which he begins this shocking analysis is from Red Cloud, who said in 1882:

*The white man made us many promises,
but he kept only one.
He promised to take our land,
and he took it.*