VOLUME XXXVIII, NO. 42
OCTOBER 16, 1985

HOW WE THINK

IN a paper called "Two Evolutions" which appeared in a 1984 issue of *On Nature,* published by Boston University, Huston Smith, author of *The Religions of Man,* says:

> Self-image affects behavior, and to see oneself as descended from noble stock is to assume that one is made of noble stuff. This in turn disposes one to behave nobly, though of course it does not guarantee such behavior. Something like generational rub-off occurs, for where there is noble ancestry there are noble role models; also, shoddy conduct cannot be blamed on shoddy genes. Traditional societies may have sensed such things, for Marshall Sahlins tells us that "we are the only people who think themselves risen from savages; everyone else believes they descended from gods." (*Cultural and Practical Reason,* p. 53.)

Prof. Smith is concerned, we suspect, with the fact that human behavior in the present is seldom godlike and that part of the explanation of our ordinariness is that we have little reason to expect anything more of either ourselves or others, considering our origin—the supposed naked apes. Except for a handful of specialists in the biological sciences, our beliefs about ourselves are largely mythical, for what is a myth but a cultural generalization that a population has come to believe?

The Darwinian myth, Huston Smith thinks, is poorly founded; it took hold of the mind of the West at a time when the active intellects of the "advanced nations" believed the time had come to replace the Biblical myth concerning human origins—and the origin of everything else—with reliable "facts," and today, a century later the facts of the Darwinian myth, as passively accepted by educated people, are being called into question. Prof. Smith puts it this way:

> An age comes to a close when people discover that they can no longer understand themselves by the theory their age professes. For a while its denizens will continue to think that they believe it, but they feel otherwise and cannot understand their feelings. This has now happened to us. Darwinism is in fact dying, and its death signals the close of our age.

The evidences of the passing of Darwinism are impressive, if one looks up the references given in Prof. Smith's notes, but myths die hard. The general public has been protected from realizing that biological science has in many ways divorced itself from Darwinian theory. The biologists are still evolutionists, but as much for lack of an alternative as for respect for the nineteenth-century pioneer who was able, by reason of the mythic character of religious belief, to give the hungry minds of his time what seemed undeniable "facts" with regard to how evolution takes place. It is this "how" that has been largely abandoned, today, especially by those scientists who have devoted their lives to the study of the fossil record, where most of the evidence for the Darwinian theory is supposed to exist.

For Huston Smith, this practical release from the ape-origin theory opens the way to another kind of thinking—the metaphysical—which is a way that has fallen under a cloud during the generations of reliance on "fact," yet is still a natural way of assigning causes for human beings. It is not easy for us, now, to consciously adopt metaphysical thinking. Prof. Smith says:

> Two difficulties are involved. First, in our empiricistic age the metaphysical imagination has to a large extent atrophied. The scientific account of origins, with its consistent theme of the qualitatively *more* deriving from the qualitatively *less,* so dominates our horizon that it is difficult to take seriously the opposite outlook which until five hundred years ago everyone took for granted. The second problem is of the opposite sort. The version of the Great Origins hypothesis that is most bandied about today puts that hypothesis in a bad light. I refer, of course, to Creationism, whose apostles have so muddied the waters with simplistic readings of the Scriptures, and scientific claims that are sometimes

> bogus, that it is next to impossible for the Great Origins thesis to gain a fair hearing.

What does he mean by "the Great Origins" thesis? This is the view that the universe has meaning, that our lives have a meaning, too, expressive of the spiritual reality from which we came. The Darwinian view is a "Small Origins hypothesis." It holds that both the world and all its living things came about by chance, without plan or realization of meaning. In contrast the Great Origins theory holds "that we derive from Something that is superior to ourselves by every measure of worth we know."

> These transcendent objects include the ultimates of the great religious traditions—Allah, God, Brahman, Sunyata, the Tao, the Great Spirit—as well as philosophical ultimates, provided that they exceed human beings in intrinsic worth. Clearly included, for example, is the Neoplatonic One from which beings proceed by emanation rather than by creation, and the Whiteheadian God whose primordial and consequent natures conspire to work upon the world their everlasting lure. I hope this latitude in the Great Origins thesis will keep it from being dismissed as Creationism.

The other difficulty:

> The other bar to the Great Origins thesis, the poverty of the metaphysical imagination, is more difficult to deal with. Scientists who by virtue of their sensitivity are equally humanists are rhapsodic in hymning the grandeur of the universe. Einstein referred to its "radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms." What is lacking is anything resembling Aristotle's Prime Mover, a first and final cause which in its very essence is luminously conscious and good. And if one does not sense the decisive difference these attributes make to a world view, this is the atrophy of which I speak.

Huston Smith would like to see a restoration of the metaphysical imagination, we may suppose, because this would bring recognition of our natural powers and give us confidence in them. The legends and allegories which find the origin of mankind in a race of gods descended to earth may be but an echo of primordial reason, the metaphysical construction of ancient philosophers, as found, for example, in Plotinian teachings. What is the merit, the desirability, of such ideas? The resolve of people everywhere to live up to the example set by their ancestors is sufficient justification. As Prof. Smith says, "to see oneself as descended from noble stock is to assume that one is made of noble stuff," disposing one to act nobly. A human who thinks of himself as a member of a line begun by Hercules has more reason to call himself to account than one who looks back to an anthropoid ape as his ancestor. By a parity of reasoning, a generation of youth schooled in the thought of the Founding Fathers will feel called upon to behave as responsible citizens, since they *belong* to the nation which men like Washington and Madison and Paine created. No matter what the Behaviorists say, our feelings of identity play a part in determining what we do with our lives, by suggesting what we may be capable of.

In 1924, when Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Pathan follower of Gandhi, was released from prison by the British, he returned to his home in the Northwest Province. Thousands of Pathans gathered to welcome him. They asked him to speak to them. He was worn by prison life, with sunken cheeks and thin shoulders, but he rose and told a story:

> One day a lioness attacked a flock of sheep. She was pregnant, and during the attack she gave birth to a cub. In the course of birth the lioness died, and her cub was left to grow up with the flock of sheep. It learned to graze and even bleat.
>
> One day a lion from the forest attacked the flock and was surprised to see a lion cub running away from him, terrified and bleating like a sheep. Outraged, he managed to catch the cub and draw it away from the flock, down to a nearby river. "Look in the water!" he commanded the cub. "You are not a sheep, you are a lion! You have nothing to fear. Stop bleating like a sheep and roar!"
>
> Khan waited. The gathering was still. He felt his strength again. "O Pathans!" he boomed, "so also I say to you. You are lions, but you have been brought up in slavery. Stop bleating like sheep. Roar like lions!"
>
> The Pathans roared. . . .

Ghaffar Khan spoke to his people out of a heritage they knew, and through his understanding of them was able to organize an "army" of a hundred thousand non-violent Pathans who challenged the authority of the British without fear.

Modern man, sheeplike in many respects, has embraced a heritage that leaves little for a leader like Ghaffar Khan to call upon. Taking their beliefs from a vague understanding of Darwin, Marx, and Freud, they suppose (in a summary provided by Joseph Wood Krutch in *Human Nature and the Human Condition*):

> (1) that man is an animal, (2) that animals originated mechanically as the result of a mechanical or chemical accident; (3) that "the struggle for existence" and "natural selection" have made man the kind of animal he is, (4) that once he became man, his evolving social institutions gave him his wants, convictions, and standards of value; and (5) that his consciousness is not the self-awareness of a unified, autonomous *persona* but only a secondary phenomenon which half reveals and half conceals a psychic nature partly determined by society, partly by the experiences and traumas to which his organism has been exposed.

Mr. Krutch comments:

> Thus though man has never before been so complacent about what he *has*, or so confident of his ability to *do* whatever he sets his mind upon, it is at the same time true that he has never before accepted so low an estimate of what he *is*. That same scientific method which enabled him to create his wealth and to unleash the power he wields, has, he believes, enabled biology and psychology to explain him away—or at least to explain away whatever used to seem unique or even in any way mysterious. . . .
>
> He is the great master of know-how but incapable of Reason or Wisdom. He cannot control himself because he is inevitably what heredity and environment have made him; he cannot choose good rather than evil because the society in which he lives (perhaps, if he is Marxian, even the "instruments of production" he has devised) determine what will seem good or evil. Truly he is, for all his wealth and power, poor in spirit.

Small wonder, then, that a thoughtful man like Huston Smith sees in the decline of the authority of Darwin (concerning who and what we are) an opportunity for renewed self-determination. He begins the paper we have been quoting by saying:

> There exists in the contemporary West no coherent theory of human nature, no consensus view such as prevailed in thirteenth-century Europe, in seventeenth-century New England, or in traditional societies still. Whether these views were true or false, they were viable beliefs. They animated their cultures and gave life its meaning. They were outlooks people tried to live by.
>
> In contrast to such embracing theories, what we have today is a miscellany of *notions* as to who we are. These notions do not cohere, but they do fall into two rather clearly demarcated camps. On the one hand is the view backed by modern science, that the human self can be understood as an organism in an environment, endowed genetically like other organisms with needs and drives, who through evolution—natural selection working on chance mutations—has developed strategies for learning and surviving by means of certain adaptive transactions with the environment. Over and against this is the Judeo-Christian view that the human being was created in the image of God with an immortal soul and occupies a place in nature somewhere between the beasts and the angels. At some point humankind suffered a catastrophic fall in consequence of which we have lost our way and, unlike the beasts; become capable of sin and seek after salvation.

Both these views, as Huston Smith says, are now only "notions," not integrated outlooks, and he hopes that the time has come when we can feel and reason our way, by the use of metaphysics, to a comprehensive understanding of who and what we are. We are at last free to do this, and we need to do it since our behavior needs changing, and without a conception of the nature and possibilities of our being we shall continue merely to drift.

What, then, is metaphysical thinking? Actually, there seems a sense in which all real thinking is metaphysical—above, that is, the physical level of existence. It may appear that we reason about the things in the physical world, but do we reason about physical things or about idealizations of them? In *Men and Nations*

(Princeton University Press, 1962), Louis J. Halle, discussing how we think, begins with a straight line, noting that while we may draw on paper a straight line, it cannot be as straight as the *idea* of a straight line, which is perfect. And we think in terms of the idea, not its imperfect representation on paper. Prof. Halle says:

> As a materialist I could proceed to say that only the line on paper has the value of what I call reality, while the conceptual line of the definition, having no material or measurable existence, is an illusion. I note, however, that in this case the conceptual line, the idea, assumes the fundamental role in the human mind. It is more "real" for the mind than the visible phenomenon. It comes first, since it was what we were trying to represent when we put pencil to paper. It also comes last, for when we look at what has been set on the paper our mind of its own accord eliminates as defects to be disregarded the width of the line and its irregularities of direction. Our mind translates the visible, replacing it with the idea, which was the model by which the shape of the visible was determined. Therefore the idea, in the end as in the beginning, has the more vivid reality. The material phenomenon is only an imperfect imitation of it. . . . In the very act of saying that a line is not perfectly straight we proclaim the existence of an idea, of the perfectly straight line that can have no material embodiment. It follows that the world of ideas is fundamental.

In short, we think metaphysically. We deal with ideas, not things. The things are only imperfect copies of ideas. Thinkers are metaphysicians by nature. As Prof. Halle says:

> The man who draws a straight line has the idea before he begins drawing. The sculptor has the idea of his statue before he addresses himself to the block of stone. When Robespierre assumed direction of the French Revolution he had an idea of the society which he meant to produce. . . . Thus according to Socrates, the human idea of beauty corresponds to a truth of nature. It represents the human apprehension of what is divine. The sculptor who expresses it in a statue, although himself mortal, is expressing an eternal truth, a truth which existed before him and will remain after.

But how can we be sure that *our* minds give expression to portions of the eternal truth, and not partisan distortions of it? That is the great question. Plato met this question with the discipline he called the Dialectic, by means of which companions in quest of truth would subject their ideas to endless interrogation, to elicit more of the full-bodied truth. In the practice of science, investigators put their questions to nature, usually finding, sometimes after many years, that the answers they have obtained were either incorrect or incomplete. And then, we say, there is a revolution in science, such as was accomplished by Albert Einstein. And now, with the breakdown of the gospel according to Darwin, we find ourselves at loose ends—no better off, that is, than the philosophers who merely "reason" about the origin of the world and the ancestors of humanity.

How, then, shall we do as Huston Smith proposes: enrich the powers of our metaphysical imagination? By using it, is the first and obvious answer. And by checking our conclusions with one another, verifying as well as we can the theorems proposed in a geometry of soul. And it would be well to admit that there may be no escape from uncertainty, no ultimately "sure thing" that earlier in this century we thought was possible by means of the scientific method.

Interestingly, in *Algeny*, in the chapter devoted to recent thinking about the origin of life, Jeremy Rifkin remarks that "the new theories of biogenesis lean toward the idea of the universe as mind." And—

> In this way one eventually winds up with the idea of the universe as a mind that oversees, orchestrates, and gives order and structure to all things. If this idea of the universe as mind seems to bear uncanny resemblance to the idea of fields, it is no accident. When scientists grope to define "fields" in the universe, they are edging closer and closer to the concept of nature as mind. Here is the final juncture where clocks and fields, organisms and environments, fuse together to form the beginning of a new unified theory of biological development, one based on a temporal approach to evolution.
>
> In this new temporal theory, the idea of nature as mind is virtually indistinguishable from the idea of nature as fields. If there is any difference at all

> between the idea of mind and fields, it probably lies in the fact that a field is a scientific way of framing the idea of mind. . . .

By developing our metaphysical imagination, we may be able to come closer to the mind of nature, which the ancients called the *Logos*. A truly wise human, one might say, is himself an expression of the *Logos*, who becomes a teacher of mankind. Once more we quote from Louis Halle, who says:

> We men identify the ideas of propriety that each of us respectively entertains with the *Logos*, each of us basing his allegiance to them on the belief or assumption that they represent what is right in terms of what God or nature intended. "There is," says Cicero, ". . . a true law—namely right reason—which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal. . . . It will not lay down one rule at Rome and another at Athens, nor will it be one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law, eternal and unchangeable, binding at all times upon all peoples. The man who will not obey it will abandon his better self and, in denying the true nature of man, will thereby suffer the severest penalties."

But Prof. Halle raises the question of human differences, pointing out: "The *Logos* itself may be the same at Rome as at Athens, tomorrow as today; but the identification of it by the men of Rome has been different from the identification of it by the men of Athens, and the identification made by men of one age has been abandoned in favor of another identification by the men of the next."

Even so, we are learning how to think. Developing our metaphysical imagination might hasten the process.

REVIEW
"IN THE NAME OF PROGRESS"

LITTLE by little, the general reader is learning that his confidence in the policies and programs of modern nations has been misplaced. The "prosperity" we enjoy is eroded by ruthless tendencies of the market, and more and more people are beginning to wonder if their "happiness" would not be more secure if they could return to the ways of living of their forefathers. Yet a return to the past hardly seems possible, since the very structures of what we have regarded as progress are now essential to our life-support systems. Meanwhile the governments and policymakers of our time are so remote from our everyday lives, and seem so largely indifferent to our opinions, that the introduction of changes for the better—supposing we knew what to do—would require the adoption of methods in which we have come to have little faith. The result, for the most part, is *drift*, and increasing feelings of helplessness. A reading of the daily newspaper—any issue—is enough to reveal this state of mind, despite the gloss of expertise on which the press relies to give the impression of well-being.

Most recent among the revelations of national folly is a book issued by Energy Probe, a Canadian research group which began in 1975 to take a close look at the effects on both land and people of large projects undertaken in behalf, as it is claimed, of economic and social benefit. This book, *In the Name of Progress,* published by the Canadian Doubleday, is by Patricia Adams and Lawrence Solomon, who work for Energy Probe. Its content is largely expose after expose of "the huge energy projects, especially the hydro dams, that flood thousands of people off their land to uncertain and usually unhappy fates, in the process robbing them of their livelihood, destroying their culture, and trampling on their religious rights." A summation is provided in the last chapter:

> In the name of progress tribal people in Brazil's Amazon are being thrown off their land to provide cattle with grazing pastures. Haitian peasants are being dispossessed to make way for hydro dams that will provide power for multinational manufacturing companies. Tamil lands in Sri Lanka are being irrigated so they can be settled by the majority Sinhalese, and peasants in India are losing their traditional forests to the commercial interests of the national government. Rather than being the exceptions, these projects are, in fact, the rule throughout the Third World, their victims sacrificial lambs offered to the god of progress in grand designs to develop the "underdeveloped" Third World. But the god is a false one, the progress illusory, and the grand designs only undermine the often precarious ability of the average Third World person to provide for himself.

The requests for aid of this sort may come from the rulers of the Third World countries, who are anxious to imitate the industrial West, but they do not come from the people themselves, who have other, much simpler ideas of progress. And for the people, these ideas are right, as E. F. Schumacher discovered in the 1950s and early 60s, thereafter calling for "intermediate technology" to provide the sort of help the people wanted and were asking for. But neither the rulers nor the large banks which fund aid are interested in the simplicities Schumacher advocated. The banks want large projects that require large amounts of money, projects that will supply electricity for the rapid development of industry, which will in turn require markets for the goods to be manufactured. Consumption, it is assumed, will follow, and the banks will have their loans repaid. The authors give an example:

> The Ten-Year Energy Program of the Philippine Government, under which 31 hydroelectric dams are scheduled to be built in lands presently occupied by tribal minorities, provides a disturbing example of the extent to which foreign aid projects can be disruptive, and the extraordinary measures that can be required to complete them.
>
> Major foreign aid donors participating in this program include the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank although, according to the Anti-Slavery Society [a London-based group which fights abuses outlawed by the UN as practices "similar to slavery"], this program "threatens the

mountain homes of many minorities and a total of one-and-a-half to two million people."

To carry out the program, the Philippine government felt it necessary to enact legislation giving what amounts to police powers to the country's electric utility: it has been granted the authority to restrict or prohibit farming within the watershed of a proposed dam and the authority to relocate residents to areas outside the watershed.

Such projects were rejected and resisted by people who would be left homeless and without land, and the government resorted to military force.

Ambushes by the local people and retaliation by the government troops, which has escalated to bombing, have become common. Deaths have been rising on both sides and innocent villagers have been terrorized by military atrocities. Violence aside, the villagers have suffered from restrictions on their farming activities: they are allowed to tend their fields for only six hours a day and only if they secure permits. The livelihood of these once-prosperous people has been so seriously disrupted that they face severe food shortages. . . .

In most cases the affected populations have endured hardships far beyond what their national governments imagined because the resettlement plans did not proceed according to schedule; yet the sheer enormity of the projects and the speed with which they were implemented guaranteed that the schedules would not be met. In most cases, because a shroud of secrecy hangs over these projects, the affected populations have been denied the right to public hearings that would question so much as how they would be moved, or how much compensation they were entitled to, let alone the rationale justifying these human rights abuses.

Things of this sort are allowed to go on because of the general feeling that it is inevitable, and therefore right, that a few should suffer for the sake of national development, but the "development" does not really take place, and—

Evicted from their valleys, the poor move either into nearby forests, which they clear to farm, or onto smaller or less fertile plots in more marginal areas. In these new lands, which they usually farm under crowded conditions and where they are always fearful of being uprooted again, their traditional care in husbanding the soil often falls by the wayside. When this occurs, the soil soon becomes farmed to exhaustion, and the poor must then cut down more forests for more land to farm.

This cutting of trees is a major cause of deforestation, and with deforestation comes loss of topsoil and the spreading of more deserts. That means less food, less fuel, and the continuation of a downward spiral that causes the destruction of the local environment upon which the poor, and their descendants, depend.

As a final irony, the topsoil lost from the land goes into the river basins and ends up filling the dam reservoirs, cutting the useful life of the dams by up to one half. Then, whatever industrial development depends on power from these dams will have to either stop or find some new source of power. These dams, which are considered but a means to an end, will no longer be a means, and neither will the ends be secured. But the river valleys on which thousands had depended for their livelihoods will have been destroyed, yielding no more harvests and providing no more power.

So long as the rights of these people are virtually ignored by both governments and financiers, there will continue to be appeals such as the one signed by 2,622 T'bolis of Lake Sebu in the Philippines to the Asian Development Bank, in which they said:

The proposed dam will flood our most precious land and destroy our food and source of livelihood. . . . In all this we have never been directly approached, advised or informed regarding the planning of the dam. Do we not have rights? Are we not also Filipino citizens capable of planning for our future? . . . We do think that real development has to be realized with the free participation of the common people no matter how poor they are.

The authors point out that while the inhabitants of Third World countries are 70 per cent of the world's population, they use only 13 per cent of the energy consumed. They repeat the familiar reproach that one North American "consumes as much energy as three Japanese, nine Mexicans, 16 Chinese, 53 Indians, 438 Malians, or 1,072 Nepalese." If all the world were to use as much as the average North American, we would need five times the energy now available. And if everyone in the world used as much oil as that

same North American, the world's remaining known oil reserves would last only five years.

Manuel Ayau, of a university in Guatemala, has said that "one of the main causes of the sad state of affairs in Latin America" is the policy of the donor banks. Their alliance with spendthrift politicians is responsible for the fact that "a continent rich in natural and human resources is now regressing to a standard of living of pre-debt days, having mortgaged its own—and its children's—future." The authors say:

> In the last three decades, no capital projects have received more funding, or caused more grief, than energy projects. Most prominent among them are hydroelectric dams, which generally flood large numbers of rural people off their land to uncertain, and usually unhappy fates. Because the river valleys which are flooded tend to be fertile, these people are almost always agriculturally successful (even if monetarily poor), and they are often minorities with cultures and traditions irreplaceably tied to their land. The electric power that the dams produce almost never benefits the local people but is transported to the industrial centers, where the national government resides, primarily for the benefit of the state industries or multinational corporations that are situated there.

Our space is limited and we have been able to give only one or two examples of the projects which the authors examine in detail, but dam-building is now a formula applied throughout the world—in Africa, in India, in Sri Lanka, and other Third World countries. In all these cases, the same mistakes are being made, the same suffering caused to the people. The authors conclude that "there may be very little for us to teach those in societies so different from ours, and that the best contribution we can make to the Third World's problems may be not so much in what we do for them, but in what we stop doing to them."

COMMENTARY
A THING OF BEAUTY

IT sometimes happens when we have a crowded issue—and especially when there is extra content like the Statement of Ownership on page 8 (required by law)—something which seems to be especially good is pushed out. This week we took the tail-end of the "Children" article and put it here in this space, since the quotation from Mr. Krutch seems fully as important as anything else in the issue.

While this writer died years ago, what he said hardly ever seems dated. We keep his books close by and browse in them regularly, wondering, now and then, why he thought so clearly and expressed himself so well. Krutch enjoyed a large following for his work in the *Nation* and later in the *American Scholar*. His nature writings, however, done mostly in Arizona, where he spent the later years of his life, are probably best of all. Our suggestion is to watch for his books in used stores and be sure to snap up what you find. The following is a good reason:

Find a milkweed plant in your neighborhood, he says, and then look for a green and black striped caterpillar which loves milkweed, and put them together in a box with an upright twig and a daily supply of fresh milkweed leaves to feed the caterpillar. Eventually the caterpillar will grow sluggish and crawl up the twig.

> There it will fasten itself and, if you are lucky, you may see it suddenly drop its skin to reveal perfectly formed and exquisitely shaped a decorated urn—"the green coffin with the golden nails." What we call ugliness has suddenly become a thing of beauty, but that is only the beginning.
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> In surprisingly few days the coffin will break open and out of it will crawl a crumpled and seemingly deformed Monarch butterfly. Gradually the crumpled wings spread in all their rich brown beauty. Now move the twig gently out-of-doors, and presently the wings will give a preliminary flutter and then the butterfly will sail away. . . .
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> Few children who have ever seen this miracle will ever forget it. Many may want to read in some book just how it all happened—how the caterpillar formed the green coffin just below its skin—how the substance of its body dissolved almost into an egg again, and then was incredibly reorganized—or was born again—as a creature in every respect new and different. But the miracle is enough in itself. Life will remain forever after something miraculous and beautiful no matter how much physiology or biochemistry we may learn. And I think that is something very important in an increasingly mechanized world.

And indeed, a good start in life.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
A START IN LIFE

THE appeal of Joseph Wood Krutch is to the spontaneous qualities of human beings, no matter what their age. In one of his essays (in *If You Don't Mind My Saying So*, William Sloane Associates, 1964), he writes on introducing a small child to the world of nature. In our traditionless society, the obligation of the parent to do this is often overlooked. Krutch would have us remedy this neglect. He says:

> By nature and by instinct the child's earliest interests are in the earth and its living creatures. He reaches out his arms toward the moon, and he clutches the woolly bear we give him in his cradle. He cries out with delight at the first sight of a dog or a cat because he recognizes that this is the world into which he was born and of which he is a part. Unfortunately his joy is one from which the busy and demanding world will try to wean him. He may or he may not recover it—as some do—and he may as an adult find in it his deepest satisfactions and consolations. But there is no reason why he should ever lose it at all, and of the advantages which we are so anxious to give our children none is more valuable than a chance to let its love of nature grow instead of wither.

"Growing up" for Krutch meant, among other things, freeing oneself from the layers of artificiality which shape our lives and dictate more and more of our intentions. For the adult, this liberation requires the cultivation of a critical spirit, but for children, who have years of positive growth to go through before balanced criticism becomes possible, the encouragement of the natural response to nature is a way of strengthening the child against the largely meaningless tendencies of the age.

Technical knowledge about nature's laws, Krutch points out, is the business of the physicist and the biologist, but "for those of us who are neither, 'knowledge about' the natural world is less important than appreciation of its beauties and wonders."

> The only soil out of which such an appreciation can grow is love. That is what the infant is prepared to give when he clutches his teddy bear. It is also what I would advise any parent to encourage first, and that kind of interest in nature is likely to begin with a pet and most likely to become a joy and consolation.
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> Into the smallest child's room I would put at least a goldfish in a bowl or a parakeet in a cage, and I would remember that no child is afraid of any animal unless he has learned the fear from an adult. Don't recoil from a harmless garter snake, and don't say "ugh" when you see a toad. If you do you may dispose him to draw up into one of those unfortunates who pick their way timidly through the world and are uncomfortable even on a picnic because they don't know what terrible things may be hidden in the grass.

How seldom these simplicities are thought of in our lives! Yet they are the foundation of a good life. While we cannot ever shape our children's lives—that is a job they must do—we can give them a good start, help them to establish tendencies which are natural and wholesome. We may be grateful to Mr. Krutch for writing about fundamental things at a time when the world seems far more impressed by matters which no one is really able to understand. He goes on:

> I would give the child no pet he can touch until he is old enough to realize that to be alive means to be capable of pain as well as pleasure, and I would see to it that he not only knows but realizes this fact. "A cat," said the mad poet Christopher Smart, "is an instrument for children to learn benevolence upon." But if they learn cruelty instead it will be a curse to them as well as to those who suffer from it. A dog is a better first pet than a cat because it is tougher, but cats come next.
>
> From pets I would lead the child—and he will be easily led—to the creatures living their own lives close at hand—the bird that comes to the window tray to feed or the rabbit that must be reluctantly discouraged from too close attention to your flower bed. Going for a walk to see what one can see rather than merely to get somewhere is the first step in the education of a naturalist. But never let your child feel that since the dandelion and the rabbit are not immediately useful to you they are therefore to be classed as vermin or weed. The dandelion and the rabbit may be out of place but we would miss them nevertheless.

Now all this, someone may say, is decidedly "middle class" and conventional, which is true enough. But most people, after all, are both, and Krutch was writing more for the benefit of their children than for them. And it is a great mistake to suppose that conventional people are not worth bothering with. We all start somewhere or other, and the conventions stand for where most people begin. Krutch, for one, broke with the conventions of scientific learning early in his career, setting down his own convictions against the grain of the times in *The Modern Temper* (1929), and for a great many readers thereafter his has been a voice of sanity in a world apparently determined to go in the wrong direction. He wanted to live both a natural and a useful life, and as his autobiography, *More Lives Than One,* shows, he did. Writers like Krutch may "lend" their strength to well-intentioned movements, but they are stronger than and more important than movements, being free of the ills to which movements are almost without exception prone. A movement, one could say, is the result of the conventions established by organizers on the basis of what unusual individuals have said and done. The best of us usually learn patience with movements, using them for educational purposes, but never are submerged by them. John Muir is a good example of this.

Krutch continues:

> Today as never before any bookstore can supply dozens of good books covering every aspect of natural history and adapted to every age. But to begin with, no elaborate directions are necessary. I distrust youthful experiments which involve drastic interference with nature's own processes, and I prefer those activities which involve a maximum of observation and a minimum of manipulation. Nevertheless, the child who sees what can be seen on a country walk will want to bring some of it into the house with him. One never knows what will suddenly strike an imagination, but whatever it is, that is the thing to be pursued. I think it was a bean sprouting in the sawdust between two pieces of glass which first made me feel the wonder of plant life, and I have never gotten so much excitement from any subsequent garden as I did when, as a child, the notion came to plant all sorts of things I had never seen growing—unroasted peanuts from the candy store, flaxseed from the medicine chest, cotton from I do not remember where, etc., etc.
>
> There is really no wrong place to begin so long as the child thinks it is the right place. But I have one suggestion which will bring delighted wonder—not to every child, perhaps—but to all those who will later develop a taste for the small miracles of nature.

FRONTIERS

Some Who Say "NO!"

OUR report on conscientious objection (March 6), taken from the *WRI* (War Resisters International) *Newsletter*, gave figures on the increase of applications for C.O. status in West Germany—a total of 68,334 in 1983. The number of conscientious objectors in East Germany, where the obstacles are great and the punishments heavy, is also increasing. Nearly all are given prison sentences ranging from eighteen to twenty-four months, and the men are sent to penal institutions around the country in order to conceal their number.

An earlier report (Jan. 16) took from the *War Resisters League News* the emergence in Israel of *Yesh Gvul*—translated "There Is a Limit"—a group of Israeli soldiers who have pledged themselves to refuse to serve in Lebanon. The first 985 issue of the *WRI Newsletter* printed a letter from *Yesh Gvul*, written in December, 1984, which began:

> The war in Lebanon continues and Israeli soldiers continue to serve in Lebanon. The army is increasing the use of repeat call-ups.
>
> As the war continues, wider sections of the public are ready to support or accept the right of conscientious objection. The official magazine of the Israeli Defense Force, *Bamachine*, has admitted that 17% of those that have just been. drafted, support or accept conscientious objection to serve in Lebanon.
>
> In view of this, the military authorities try to halt the opposition to the war and to prevent refusals to serve in Lebanon by increasing the severity of the punishment.

The letter continues by telling the story of Max Bloch, one of the objectors, who is now serving a third sentence in military prison—or was at the end of 1984.

> Max Bloch (46) was born in Belgium. His father was killed in a Nazi concentration camp. He arrived in Israel in 1948. He has a Master's degree in physics. He works as a computer programmer. Max is married, has a son serving in the Israeli Defence Force and an eight-year-old daughter.
>
> At a *Yesh Gvul* meeting in Tel-Aviv after his second stint in prison he said: "At first I was not involved in what was happening in Israel. I went along with the others. It seemed that there were terroristic attacks on Israeli's northern border. The first day of the war I was drafted and I went like I always do. Later news started to come out about our actions in Lebanon—bombing of civilians, interrogations and torture, and concentration of civilians in camps. I felt unwilling to take part in such actions and I began to take an interest in the causes that led to this war. I realized that unlike other wars in which there was a real threat from the neighboring countries, there was no threat this time (although today I question all policy from 1948). It was a war planned by Sharon and others who are eager to carry out all kinds of military actions. I was first tried in August this year and sentenced to fourteen days in prison. The second time was at the end of October—for 28 days. The officer tried to convince me not to refuse to go to Lebanon and said: "Why get into trouble, you'll go to prison again and again. In the army you must obey orders. What would happen if everybody refused to go?" I told him that if this would happen it will be for the good of the whole country. Prison itself is a terrible thing, denying one's freedom. Imprisonment emphasizes and sharpens the question of my faith in the society I live in. This act is a statement that this person does not take part in the society in which he lives but with every day in prison I can sum up that I have full confidence in what I did. Today we are the oppressors and so the first thing that we have to do is to declare our will to have peace with the Palestinians and stop relating to the subject through the use of force, then it will be possible to proceed. We must recognize the Palestinians' national right for independence."

Max Bloch was sent to prison a third time late in November, 1984, under sentence for thirty-five days. The story ends with this concluding note by the *WRI* editors:

> As Israeli prison sentences are erratic and frequently shortened or repeated, WRI advises to you to general terms about service men or women sent to jail who have "drawn the line" at warring in Lebanon or refused to do "service" in occupied territory among displaced Palestinians—or—for example, you can ask

if Max Bloch is still in jail or likely to be convicted again.

Letters may be sent to the Israeli embassy in one's area, or to the Israeli ambassador, to the Israeli delegation to the U.N., to the Israeli Prime Minister at the Knesset, or to the Israeli Minister of Defense.

Another article in the *Newsletter* relates:

> On November 9, 1984, history was made in the French armed forces when a lieutenant in the air force "deserted." His reason: "I could no longer stand the thought of serving as a firing officer on the Plateau d'Albion because this job involves using nuclear weapons." Twenty-five-year-old Jean-Louis Cahu was one of the 20 officers with the second key—on the order of the President *they* would be responsible for launching France's 18 ground-to-ground ballistic nuclear missiles.
>
> Jean-Louis Cahu joined the army as a volunteer in 1979 and under his present contract was due to stay until November 1986—but his conscience intervened. "I was convinced of the need for the French deterrent and stood firmly by this defense policy until May 1984. Then, confronted with the increasing number of nuclear weapons, their threat to humanity and their expense, the growing wastefulness of the so-called 'industrialized' countries and the poverty of some in the third world, I renounced the Utopian and dangerous 'security' of the deterrent force. I made the decision by myself," he says. "I'm not a member of any party. . . . I'm not being manipulated either by a foreign power or by another person. My action stems from a purely personal conscientious decision. What I want to show is that at any time in your life, no matter what responsibilities you have, you can say *No."*

Jean-Louis Cahu was charged with "desertion in peace time," which brings a four-year sentence.

According to another news note, the socialist government of Greece limits conscientious objection to noncombatant duties within the army or the four-year sentences given to Jehovahs' Witnesses. "Greece considers itself at war with Turkey and its government believes that if CO status was available they could not maintain an army."

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

1. Title of Publication—MANAS

IA. Publication No.—968640

2. Date of Filing—September 30, 1985.

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

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

3B. Annual Subscription Price—$10.00

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

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

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

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

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

8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 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 preceeding 12 months—3,000. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date 3,000.

B. Paid circulation. 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—182; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—194. 2. Mail subscriptions—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,280. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,305

C. Total paid circulation—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,462; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,499.

D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means samples, complimentary, and other free copies—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 month—130; Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—126.

E. Total distribution (Sum of C and D)—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—2,592. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—2,625.

F. Copies not distributed. 1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—320 Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—288. 2. Returns from news agents—Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months—88, Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date—87.

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

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

DIANE LAWSON, Mgr.