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PROMETHEAN AFFIRMATION

IT seems time to call attention to a striking contrast in the present forms of discourse. There is a great deal of brilliant, accurate criticism—the kind of writing Americans do best—and a modest amount of what is meant to be affirmation and synthesis. The criticism is analytical, almost scientific in its precision, and persuasive because it makes undeniable sense, although at the same time extremely discouraging for obvious reasons. The affirmation is heart-felt but vague, hortatory, and largely ineffectual, needed but lacking in impact. The motive behind the criticism seems to be that if people can be made desperate enough, they'll start to "do something." Perhaps so, but *what* will they do? The critics often add a program that they have worked out, made up of steps that on paper seem reasonable, but for the most part these forms of action are to be powered by energy generated through fear. We *have* to do these things, we are told, or the frightening predictions will all come true. To confront such anticipations we have little more than childlike hope. Surely *something* good will happen, we say to ourselves.

Why doesn't the affirmation accomplish more for our state of mind? There is some really good affirmation, if we can manage to come across it, and it may lift us for moments at a time, but there is an essential difference between criticism and affirmation. Criticism deals with things that have already happened—after the fact. For nearly all of us affirmation is concerned with what has not happened yet. It presents conceptions to which the reader must add a contribution of his own, or they remain static—finely drawn pictures but inanimate. They have symmetry but no generating power. A great teacher—not just a teacher but a great teacher—is able to combine criticism and affirmation in the right proportion for his time. He may speak of fearful things, but not to arouse fear. What does he speak to? The latency in the hearer which has become explicit in the speaker? That seems about right. Then there are resonances in the teacher's words that set into motion strings too long untouched. The Sermon on the Mount is an example. Plato's *Phaedo* another. Emerson's *Circles* and *Nature* are more. We should probably add that it takes genius to communicate affirmation effectively, and that after its expressions have been turned into clichés it has to be done again—and again. Whitman was capable of it, but who will dare recite Whitman today? The living quality of affirmation is very difficult to define, as are other qualities which are kept alive only by continual rebirth in new forms.

First let us look at some effective criticism. We have at hand a book published last year—*Crisis and Opportunity* (Schocken, $15.95)—by Arnold Simoni, an industrialist who now lives in Canada where he serves as co-founder and director of the Canadian Peace Research Institute. In his first chapter Mr. Simoni draws attention to our loss of faith in the doctrine of "progress"—a belief that dies hard because it seems so reasonable, so healthy, so good. Yet it is being rapidly emptied of meaning.

> To find oneself suspecting that progress is a hollow doctrine in a world committed absolutely to the pursuit of progress is like learning, high over the Atlantic, that the pilot is an imposter and the co-pilot a drunk. All in all one would prefer not to know. Yet the knowledge can't be put by. The glossy fruits that progress has set out for our delectation are but apples of Sodom after all, ashes in the mouth. World unity is the ramshackle mockery of the United Nations—or worse, it is the fact that everyone drinks Coca-Cola. Peace is a state of stiffened terror presided over by the hydrogen bomb. Justice has been quietly throttled in police cells from Rio to Prague and Johannesburg. The doctrine's so-called higher content has all boiled away; what remains is mere prosperity, and that prosperity is for us alone: if we always are to have as much as we are accustomed to having, then the dream of a decent livelihood for

all—Taiwan, Korea and Singapore to the contrary notwithstanding—is simply a palliative for bad conscience.

Prosperity has been our solace, our recompense, our toy. Prosperity has held our hands through nights when we have wondered if the logic of world wars is like that of fairy tales—everything happens in threes, and after the third event the story is over. Prosperity has inured us to the very penalties of prosperity: the deterioration of nature, the rising empire of vast and inimical institutions, the dangerous resentment of the unprosperous. In fact prosperity can reconcile us to everything except the loss of prosperity itself. But now we confront that too. Our grandfathers had means and ends; we have lost confidence in the means and the ends have turned themselves inside out. Ours is a teleology not of hope but of dread. We no longer expect peace: we merely beg that we won't be blown up. We have abandoned the dream of unity: let the worst befall others so long as it does not befall us! Even the dream of plenty is slipping away: all we can do now is pray that we won't go broke.

This is not so much criticism as an account of how we feel as a result of all the things that are going wrong, and about the "good" things that have turned into traps. When, for example, does having a car become worse than not having one?

My car is freedom, mobility, and power, and it is all these things on my terms because the variety of cars on the market is such that I was able to buy one exactly suited to my personality. Of course my car and I can be said to embody freedom and power only when we are considered in isolation and this isolation ends the moment I have to pull up to a gas pump. For in buying gas I am putting myself in thrall to the oil companies, the tanker companies, the OPEC cartel, and various governments foreign and domestic—an expenditure of independence heavy enough to bankrupt a hermit. There is at least one other institution in this case: the institution that uses me as it will for eight hours every working day. In return it provides me with the money to buy the gas to run the car in which I roll down the highway like a king at his ease, one hand on the wheel, one elbow out of the window, the very epitome of power and independence and regal self-expression. But where is the highway that will take me out of the empire of the institution? The car enlarges my freedom of action just as the telephone extends my sphere of communication; yet in doing so the car, the telephone, and a hundred other tokens of our civilization's technological prowess have managed to render nugatory the very gains they have given us. Thanks to the car I can wake up in the same motel room with the same headache in a thousand places across America, and always with the conviction that I might as well have stayed home. My car is in fact a sort of toy, a consoling simulation of the freedom and power I don't really have.

This speaking to the psychological and emotional condition of people in the present is the basic quality of Mr. Sirnoni's book. It is the same with the threat of nuclear war. While adequate attention is given to the present forms of armament, the stress is on the largely unanticipated consequences, and on the radical difference between nuclear war and ordinary war, from which people can recover within a generation. "After a nuclear war the dying would go on for years"—"the radioactive debris spewed out by the bombs and scattered impartially by wind and rain would attack the foundations of living nature itself." The arguments for armament no longer have meaning.

The bomb cannot be used to restore the security it has destroyed, and it has destroyed our security completely. The security that we apparently enjoy, by virtue of our high standard of living, our stable government, our vast military establishment, and the sheer mass and complexity of our civilization, is wholly an illusion. We may at any moment find ourselves naked and shivering in the rain, and the rain will be radioactive.

The author reaches this conclusion:

Disarmament is a chimera. That is not to deny that it would be a good thing; it would be a very good thing indeed, but the plain fact is that the interested parties are not about to agree to it. The point to bear in mind is that nuclear weapons are not the cause of the world is trouble (though they vastly magnify that trouble), but an effect of it. Thus *disarmament cannot be the cause of peace, but only the product of peace.* Again, the way to avoid a nuclear war is not to address the weapons of war but the circumstances that inexorably tend to war—the conflict of interests that has placed half the world in a state of perpetual confrontation with the other half. If this can be resolved, disarmament will take care of itself.

Removing the "conflicts of interest" means changing our interests, and this means taking power out of the hands of the institutions which were organized to pursue our present interests. This is a second conclusion, that "if we intend to survive, then we must arrange the matter ourselves."

> We can scarcely expect the initiative for fundamental change to come from existing institutions, given that the victims of any such change would be those very institutions. In any case a crisis is by definition a failure of current leadership, existing institutions, or both. It is unlikely that satisfactory answers to our problems will come from the very agencies that have created the problem. This isn't to say that we can blame our situation on our leaders or even on the institutions over which they preside: if they have made a mess, it has been our complicity that has given them the power to do it. Or if, as is largely the case, they have made that mess without troubling to consult us about it. It has been our passivity that has made such cavalier behavior possible.
>
> . . . Learning to appreciate the fact that our only alternatives are radical reformation or radical destruction is the first and perhaps the most difficult task ahead of us.

We hardly need explanation of why it is so "difficult." Involved at the outset is the definition and spelling out of "radical reformation," and for reasons better than fear of "radical destruction." If the task, as Mr. Simoni says, is recovery of "our own deepest sources," fear cannot possibly help us in this. Fear may lead us to ask necessary questions, but of itself fear generates only the dual effect of hysteria and paralysis.

In setting the problem, the author justly says in his introduction:

> An important characteristic of our predicament is that no *particular* persons or institutions can be held to account for it; assigning blame is as irrelevant as giving praise. If the wickedness and folly of leaders and governments were responsible for the present crisis then the compassion and wisdom of leaders and governments could resolve it. The matter goes much deeper than that, and the revolution I have in mind would not be an uprising of "us" against "them" (whomever we might construe "them" to be), but a revolt against *ourselves*—against our own settled habits of thought, our familiar premises, our established limits of imagination.

What is the audience to whom this carefully constructed paragraph is offered? The author would have to say, everybody. It is more pertinent to ask, Who is able to hear what he says? Or, still more pertinently, What element in the people who hear is likely to respond? For readers of Simoni's book, this is likely to be the recurring question. Can we get an answer out in the open?

It might be helpful to list some of the individuals who will need no persuasion but will agree with him spontaneously. What sort of people are they? They, after all, are the ones we need more of. First to come to mind is Thoreau. Can we take him for a model? In "Life Without Principle" he wrote:

> We may well be ashamed to tell what things we have read or heard in our day. I do not know why my news should be so trivial,—considering what one's dreams and expectations are, why the developments should be so paltry. The news we hear, for the most part, is not news to our genius. It is the stalest repetition. . . . We should wash ourselves clean of such news. Of what consequence, though our planet explode, if there is no character involved in the explosion? In health we have not the least curiosity about such events. We do not live for idle amusement. I would not run round a corner to see the world blow up.

No weapon would be formidable enough to frighten Thoreau. While it is difficult to imagine a country peopled by Thoreaus, we at least know that it would never engage in war. If asked about the importance of national defense, he would say—or rather has said:

> Do we call this the land of the free? What is it to be free from King George and continue the slaves of King Prejudice? What is it to be born free and not to live free? What is the value of any political freedom, but as a means to moral freedom? Is it a freedom to be slaves, or a freedom to be free, of which we boast? We are a nation of politicians, concerned about the outmost defences only of freedom.

This mention of politics brings to mind Scott Buchanan. More than twenty years ago, while at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, he proposed for discussion a number of Propositions, of which the first three were:

> I. Each human being is responsible for evil anywhere in the universe.
>
> II. Each citizen is responsible for justice anywhere in the Community.
>
> III. All men by nature will that justice be done.

In discussion Buchanan turned to ancient Greek drama to support the first proposition:

> The dramatists fix and elaborate one situation after another, typically and pre-eminently in the stories of Orestes and Oedipus, in which the virtuous and rational man seeks his highest good unwaveringly until he discovers in the resulting sea of troubles the unknown, unintended, irresolvable evils for which he must recognize and acknowledge his responsibility.

We go next to a computer expert, Joseph Weizenbaum, who teaches computer science at MIT, for a recent reverberation of this idea. In *Computer Power and Human Reason* (Freeman, 1976) he says:

> For the present dilemma, the operative rule is that the salvation of the world—and that *is* what I am talking about—depends on converting others to sound ideas. That rule is false. The salvation of the world depends only on the individual whose world it is. At least, every individual must act as if the whole future of the world, of humanity itself depends on him. Anything less is a shirking of responsibility and is itself a dehumanizing force, for anything less encourages the individual to look upon himself as a mere actor in a drama written by anonymous agents, as less than a whole person, and that is the beginning of passivity and aimlessness. . . .
>
> I recently heard an officer of a great university publicly defend an important policy decision he had made, one that many of the university's students and faculty opposed on moral grounds, with the words: "We could have taken a moral stand, but what good would that have done? " But the good of a moral act inheres in the act itself. That is why an act can itself ennoble or corrupt the person who performs it. The victory of instrumental reason in our time has brought about the virtual disappearance of this insight and thus perforce the delegitimation of the very idea of nobility.

Here a paragraph from an essay, "Power and Purity," by John Schaar has direct application:

> One of the most important differences between great actors—think, say, of Gandhi, or Lenin, or Lincoln, or Malcolm X—and most of the rest of us is that they hold their views and ideas in a way that we do not. They *are* their views. We *have* views. And most of us, when we think clearly, can acknowledge that we took, or received, most of what we call "our" views from others. We did not create them. . . . Great actors of course also take some of their views from others. Some they forge themselves. But once the idea or vision is forged or assimilated, it is held in a certain way. The actor . . . lives his views. . . . great actors are their ideas. More of their lives are contained in, or centered on, their views. In that fascinating way, great actors have a mode or experience of selfhood and identity that is different from ours. That difference makes us uneasy, for we know that at bottom the great actor is demanding of us that we change our lives. (*American Review,* No. 19.)

Not remarkably, our quotations all come from persons who were or are teachers. They all speak of acceptance of and acting upon responsibility in a way that our world does not at all understand. This is where the change must come, if we are to recover, in Mr. Simoni's words, "our own deepest sources." What are they? They are summed up in the character of a single mythic figure—Prometheus. He is the model needed for all the world.

We have another quotation, this one from Hannah Arendt (in *Between Past and Future*)*:*

> Insofar as the child is not yet acquainted with the world, he must be gradually introduced to it; insofar as he is new, care must be taken that this new thing comes to fruition in relation to the world as it is. In any case, however, the educators here stand in relation to the young as representatives of a world for which they must assume responsibility although they themselves did not make it, and even though they may, secretly or openly, wish it were other than it is. This responsibility is not arbitrarily imposed upon educators it is implicit in the fact that the young are

> introduced by adults into a continuously changing world. Anyone who refuses to assume joint responsibility for the world should not have children and must not be allowed to take part in educating them.

Is there anything to be added? It may be useful to consider, finally, some words by Eric Gill, distinguished artist and sculptor, who died in 1940. From a collection of passages in his writings issued recently by the Lindisfarne Press ($9.95), under the title, *A Holy Tradition of Working*, we take the following:

> What is man? Man is matter and spirit, or to give the word *spirit* a more definite meaning, let us say, man is matter and mind. And by the word *mind* we must understand both intellect and will, and we must remember that those faculties are only separable in words; they are not separable in actuality. The will cannot function without the intelligence (you cannot will what you do not know), and the intelligence cannot function without the will (you cannot know even the smallest thing without a prompting of the will).

Nothing much of importance will be changed without adopting the attitude and mood which led to Gill's questions:

> Considering the history of the last three hundred or five hundred years, ask yourself whether the control of politics by people whose one aim in working is the making of money can be good for politics.
>
> Ask yourself whether the division of human beings into two classes, the responsible and the irresponsible, the people who control and the people who are controlled, a minority who do what they choose and a majority who have no power of choice, can be a good thing.
>
> Ask yourself whether it can be a good thing to divorce the useful from the lovable, the necessary from the delightful, the artist from the workman.

REVIEW
MEADOWS YET, AND MOUNTAINS

TURNING the pages of *American Odyssey* becomes part of the discovery of America for the reader. This book (Rand McNally, 1979) is a large paperback edition of the story of the expedition of Lewis and Clark, in the first years of the nineteenth century, to find a northwest route to the Pacific ocean. The content is journal entries of the two explorers, with photographs (260) of the country they traversed by Ingvard Henry Eide, who is also the editor.

How does one discover one's own country? For Jawaharlal Nehru, who wrote *The Discovery of India,* this meant absorption in the almost timeless culture of an ancient civilization. For Americans it means experiencing the fabric and texture of their native land—its rivers, lakes and seas, its mountains, plains, and deserts. In the days of Lewis and Clark, American culture was in the making, and that process, too, comes alive for the reader of *American Odyssey.* It is somewhat salutary to read the letters of a President (the country's third) which were written by himself out of direct concern for the welfare and future of the nation. A flush of legitimate pride in being an American makes itself felt in the arteries of the reader. What splendid men we had in those days—nearly all of them. Reading about Lewis and Clark, what they said and did, makes the old feel young, and fills the young with a sense of responsibility. This is the way things ought to be done!

The book begins with the letter of Thomas Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis, a Captain in the U.S. Army, in February, 1801:

> Dear Sir
>
> The appointment to the Presidency of the U.S. has rendered it necessary for me to have a private secretary. . . . Your knolege of the Western country, of the army and of all it's interests & relations has rendered it desireable for public as well as private purposes that you be engaged in that office. . . . Accept assurances of the esteem Dear Sir your friend and servt.
>
> Th: Jefferson

Lewis, then twenty-seven, was happy to accept. Two years later the President informed the Congress of his intention to send a party of men led by officers to explore the land "even to the Western Ocean," in behalf of an act "for establishing trading houses with the Indian tribes," and in the interests of commerce. Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, said in a letter to Jefferson that "the future destinies of the Missouri country are of vast importance to the United States, it being perhaps the only large tract of country, and certainly the *first* which lying out of the boundaries of the Union will be settled by the people of the U. States. . . . The great object to ascertain is whether from its extent and fertility that country is susceptible of a large population. . . ." In a long letter of instruction to Captain Lewis, Jefferson said: "The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as, by its course & communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent, for the purpose of commerce." The President also wanted to know just about everything the explorers could find out, about the country, the Indians, and any white settlements along the way. Jefferson also appointed Captain William Clark as co-leader with Lewis, the two men being friends. Their partnership was unfaltering. In an introduction A. B. Guthrie says:

> Hardships such as they endured make men cranky. Day after day of exhaustion. Days of collapse and sore feet and sore-footed horses, of dawn-to-dark effort in an alien land. Days of uncertainty, as when they came to the confluence of the Marias and Missouri, and, against the hunches of the entire crew, the two leaders agreed that the right course was south. Days of no feed, of survival on stinking salmon, unknown roots, horse flesh and dog meat. Days of frustration. Days of rain and mist and of snow and of heat, of mishaps and swarming mosquitoes. Who wouldn't quarrel, one with another? Except Lewis and Clark!

Guthrie also has lines which say what we would like to be able to say here, but he can say them better because he is saturated with the tale, and has been to many of the places:

> What an empire, stretching from the Falls of the Ohio or St. Louis—depending on your reckoning—to the misty mouth of the far Columbia! It stares at you, this country does, from old reports, made real here and now, by inadequate description. Inarticulation has its rightness and its eloquence. What say about a world known by no one save fractionally by aborigines? How get the feel of first-trod spaces? . . . How bring home the awe of finding rivers never charted, much less named, of lifting eyes to mountains not imagined, of gazing dizzy over plains and prairies beyond the little measurements of woodsmen?

What of all this land today?

> The wild Great Falls is in servitude now, a tame domestic of the Montana Power Company. Elsewhere the plow, the bulldozer, the town dump and the irrigation ditch have changed and defaced the wonderland of Lewis and Clark. But these liberties, regrettable if often warranted, are minute by comparison with those undertaken by the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, hereafter called the Engineers, because—cite what contributions to welfare you will—both are despoilers, both the ready arms of the pork-barrelers in Washington. Neither one gives a hoot about history or knows as much about ecology as your nearest country agent.

There is no point in expanding on such depredations. Already enough experts are working on the dramatic crimes and continuous misdemeanors of those who are supposed to be in charge of our *welfare,* but have never thought at all about its meaning. We still have the country, a bit scarred and mutilated, but still resilient and untouched enough for Ingvard Eide to find a great many views almost unchanged from the spectacle experienced by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. His pictures are breath-taking, making the repetition of the only adjective—"butifull"—quite forgiveable in Clark's reports. The love of country grows upon the reader as he follows this path to its roots in natural history.

Plans for their journey, long in Jefferson's mind, were made in secrecy until it could be announced that France had sold Louisiana to the United States. The two captains gathered their crew—fifty or sixty men—and made St. Louis their winter quarters, using the season for training. Lewis and Clark spent the time in Philadelphia learning the use of scientific instruments for finding their position on the trail. On May 14, 1804, they started up the Missouri in three boats, making a difficult ascent to Bismarck, North Dakota, where they passed the next winter with the Mandan Indians, some of whom had fair hair. In April 1805 they started out again, going as far as the three forks of the Missouri, which they named Jefferson, Gallatin, and Madison. Then, with a guide and horses obtained from the Shoshones, they pushed westward through the Rockies and in October embarked in canoes on the tributary of the Columbia river, reaching its mouth on the fifteenth of November. They had come some 4,000 miles, encountered dozens of Indian tribes, made friends with some of them, acquired collections of specimens of interest to science, and were the first explorers to reach the Pacific by crossing the continent north of Mexico. They returned by another route involving other explorations, arriving in St. Louis in September, 1806.

To take his pictures, Eide traveled more than 57,000 miles, being sure to record the views at the same time of year that Lewis and Clark saw them. Ansel Adams, with whom Eide studied photography, said of his work: "It is refreshing to find in these decadent days something as clean and vital as this remarkable book."

On November 7, 1805, Clark wrote in the log:

> Great joy in camp *we are in view of the* Ocian (Gray's Bay), in the morning when the fog cleared off just below last village (first on leaving this village) of Wariacum) *this great Pacific Octean* which we been so long anxious to See, and the roreing or noise made by *the waves brakeing on the rocky Shores* (*as I suppose*) *may be heard distictly.*

Then, on February 14, 1806, Lewis made this entry:

> . . . on the 11th inst. Capt. Clark completed a map of the country through which we have been passing to this place. . . . We now discover that we have found the most practicable and navigable passage across the Continent of North America . . . by way of the Missouri (falls of the Missouri) to the entrance of Dearborn's river . . . from thence to flathead (Clarks) river (by land to) at the entrance of Traveller's rest Creek to the forks, from whence you pursue a range of mountains which divides the waters . . . of the Kooskooke river by water to the S.E. branch of the Columbia . . . and with the latter to the Pacific Ocean.

For appropriate conclusion we turn again to Mr. Guthrie:

> Men besides me have made sure of camping sites and pitched camp where the Expedition camped, have seen what Lewis and Clark saw and have answered to it richly in poor words. And as it was, so it is yet. We are the captains and the crew. They turn into us. . . .
>
> There are meadows yet and mountains, hollows and headlands, passes and pines not yet devoured, landforms and foaming creeks—all identifiable, all remindful of America's greatest journey.
>
> Time will chip away at them, time and transmutation in the name of progress, but they remain, lying or standing or streaming like fugitives from the future; and the man who knows our history revives and reincarnates himself by seeing them.

COMMENTARY
"NUCLEAR CULTURE"

A BOOK published two years ago—*Nuclear Culture* by Paul Loeb—which we have read only lately, through the kindness of a reader and friend, tells about the state of mind which prevails in Hanford, Washington, once a tiny farm town in the southeast corner of the state, where the managers of the Manhattan Project, charged with the making of the atom bomb, decided to erect the reactors for the production of plutonium of weapons grade. This desert region is now the site of 570 fenced and guarded square miles where reactors projected to cost thirteen billion dollars are under construction. The first plutonium produced at Hanford was taken to Los Alamos, where it was shaped into the bomb that destroyed Nagasaki. The Hanford workers now occupy three cities where they and their families pursue a social life of conventional goals pervaded by the shadows and lights of an economy based on nuclear war.

There are of course other ways of thinking of "nuclear culture." One keynote was set by Jonathan Schell in *The Fate of the Earth*, and another by Freeman Dyson in his recent four-part series in the *New Yorker*. Then, in this week's lead article, quotations from Arnold Simoni's book reach the conclusion: "Learning to appreciate the fact that our only alternatives are radical reformation or radical destruction is the first and perhaps the most difficult task ahead of us."

While daily life in Hanford is hardly typical of the rest of the country, it shows what can happen in a community where environmental pressures dictate acceptance of national policy:

> When the kids reached high school age they attended an Institution, Columbia High, whose athletic teams—called the Bombers—wore jerseys and helmets proudly displaying an exploding mushroom cloud. The mushroom cloud emblem labeled by the principal "a symbol of peace," also went with variations, on a huge green pennant that hung over the gym on pep club brochures, on bleacher seats and souvenirs, and even on graduation programs and yearbooks. The class of '68 donated an inlay of a finned bomb that was set into the administration building floor. . . . Columbia High's emblems were treated as casually as if they'd been images of miniature toothpaste tubes adorning the sweaters of children of Colgate workers.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

MISCELLANY

IN a paper on "The Development of Poetic Intuition in Children," published in *Language Arts* for last September, Justin Vitiello, who teaches Ttalian at Temple University in Philadelphia, tells about the poetry written by children between six and ten years of age. The children attend the Germantown Friends School in Philadelphia, with whom Vitiello spends thirty minutes once a week. For background he used two books by Kenneth Koch—*Wishes, Lies, and Dreams* and *Rose, Where Did You Get That Red?*

As friend and representative of Danilo Dolci in the United States, Vitielio is attracted by non-violent themes, which the children may or may not produce. In one of the rooms where they work there's a poster which says: "It will be a great day when our schools get all the money they need and the Air Force has to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber."

Prof. Vitiello says various things about the poems by the children, one of them called "Reflections on a wishbone."

I wish I had all the Star Wars things in this world

I wish I had all the money that was in the world

I wish my mom and dad were Superman and Supergirl

If you could be anyone or anything, what would you do?

If I was a policeman, I would set a burglar alarm in my house

If I was a cheerleader, I would be on President Reagan's side because I want to get shot

If I were the Space Shuttle and I didn't want the Russians to fly in me, I would konk out just as we were leaving earth

These images, Vitiello says, are "encrusted with the dross of our society"—"the results of a pseudo-culture produced for the masses' consumption and for the maintenance of the status quo." The answer to a question, "What makes you mad?" brought a more genuine response:

It makes me mad when my mother tells you to do the piano lessons and I yell at my mother because my teachers
says I have to do my lessons and if you don't practice you're fired

It makes me mad when my mother gets mad at me
and hits me and I hide in my room

In time other themes brought other lines:

Once I was . . . but now I am . . .

Once I was a little baby
but now I'm a person

Once I was me
and I'm still me

Once I didn't know my friend
but then I knew her

Once I was a pebble
now I'm a rock

Once I was a pebble
but now I'm a girl

Shades of Empedocles!

Comparisons of the immense with the familiar:
The ceiling looks like the solar system
The fish look like little balloons floating around
Looks are like poems
The solar system is like a clock
The trees and plants are like the solar system
Stars are like snowballs

Another poem:

What do you hear when it's all silence?
When it's silent there's
birds chirping
a squirrel going up a tree and breaking nuts
cats meowing
dogs barking
trains going choo-choo-whooo
pencils moving all around
the wind howling
a blackboard drawing
lights

A seven-year-old story-teller began a tale:

Once upon a time there was a picture in a classroom of two trees, two flowers, two suns and one rabbit. So the rabbit said to itself one night, "this is getting lonely," so he hopped out of the picture, ran out the door, went into the playground, went on the swings, had fun and got back into the picture just in time for when the people came to school.

* * *

Following are some extracts from a contribution by Robin Beebe to the *Holistic Education Network Newsletter* for last November:

> As I write this I hear the insistent question of a two-year-old who followed me around the house asking "Why?" to everything I did and anything I might say. At three, the question changed and became: "How do you know?" How different these questions were from those of the sixth and seventh graders I was then teaching in Harlem who asked "When is it due?" "How long does it need to be?", "Will we have a test on Friday?" While the questions of these students were much easier to answer than the persistent questions of my small son, I grieve now at the difference. . . .
>
> Now, working with adults, I am usually greeted with a baffled silence when I ask a new group what their questions are. I know the questions are there; the questions are what brought us together, yet they remain unarticulated, lying beneath the surface of consciousness, obscured by the Western tradition of the student-teacher relationship in which the teacher is the source of both the questions and the answers, and reinforced by at least twelve years in a classroom answering someone else's questions.
>
> What would happen if we were instead to follow the practice of the great teachers of initiation, to test, in the best sense, by asking them what their question is?

* * *

In the *Fourth World News* for last November-December, edited by John Papworth, Joan Constanza describes her return to square A:

> I use an entirely Italian product for washing up and for washing clothes, which indulges in no publicity whatever and keeps going only by merit of its quality (the usual 80% biodegradable). I cultivate my land without any chemicals or poisons, have a small car and use it only when I can't avoid doing so. I have no television because although there are some excellent programs there is also a lot of mere soporific stuff to lull us into not thinking.
>
> Nations have got out of control because we have to such a great extent lost control over our own lives. I notice this particularly when I am in my very primitive cottage in the country. There I have only a well for water, but at least I am completely in control of the situation. If it is running low, I can go to four springs which are within about a maximum of an hour's walk away, or nearer. I have only candles for light (Cobbett would have recommended to make my own but it really isn't worth it), and although the light is not very strong it is adequate and I am never without it. I have wood for cooking and heating, and I know just how much there is on my land and how economical or extravagant I can be with it.
>
> When I come back to town, I may well find no electricity in the flat because of some unpredictable event beyond my control; the water may have been turned off—also by remote control. In the days of animal transport, one was also much more in control of the situation. Instead of running to the doctor for every minor ill and wasting hours in his waiting room, I cure myself with plant remedies. And I find people will listen to my arguments and some will begin to follow my example.

In short, the best return to the self-reliance of square A is to do it step by step. Actually, no other way is sensible or will work.

FRONTIERS

Verdict on "Development`'

AT the suggestion of a reader, we asked the UN Office in Geneva to send us a copy of *Development Forum* for last October. It arrived, and we read the article recommended: "Deadly Development" by Claude Alvares. The line of his comment is not new; Ivan Illich has been saying similar things for years; but Mr. Alvares, like Illich says them very well and he deserves repetition. His point is that the meaning of development, as imposed on the "under-developed" countries by the industrial powers, needs to be turned around.

He begins by calling development a con game, "set out to increase poverty and unhappiness under the guise of eliminating them." The idea is used by the ruling classes "to induce people to accept not only enormous sacrifices, but the destruction or mutilation of older cultural patterns and physical and moral environments, and debilitating forms of dependence."

> Objectively, one is astounded at the battles that have been fought in the field of development, with the pro-industrialists (and inevitably the profiteers) on one side, the traditionalists on the other. The major issue has been resource use—of land, forests, the seas, non-mechanized work. As the industrial system expanded, it did not hesitate to uproot all those who refused to be part of the "great adventure of progress." But the un-developed soon got the message—the brave new world they were being goaded into was not one over which they would have any control whatsoever. In battling for their lifestyles they were fighting for local autonomy, self-reliance, decentralized technologies using labor and inherited, centuries-old rights and values. . . .
>
> However, what has never been explained is why those who are supposed to benefit from the "great adventure" have not joined the picnic even after a great deal of cajoling, but have met development programs with apathy, indifference and hostility.
>
> Traditionally, development has always claimed to be counterposed to poverty, but in a sense this is misleading. In establishing a new economic order, the modernizers in fact increased poverty, especially among the members of the "subsistence" society. For development has always suggested that self-reliant producers must be deprived of their skills (e.g. by converting subsistence farmers into agricultural workers) and rights before they can start to benefit from the new system.
>
> All "inefficient" modes of subsistence or low productivity must be replaced by the more modern, "efficient" system, that is, the industrial system, ran the development argument. Indeed the view has always prevailed that industrialization must necessarily involve the uprooting of people for their own benefit in the long term (Marx himself described the uprooting of people in India during colonialism as a "social revolution," and therefore as a factor partly redeeming colonialism).

Today, however, the argument for industrialization has worn itself out. The theory has created a damned-if-you-do and damned-if-you-don't situation. As Alvares says:

> Today the development debate has got itself into some exceedingly hopeless traps over the poverty-growth question. The old school still argues that without economic growth poverty cannot be tackled. On the other hand, the system cannot have further growth because the internal market too small, and therefore unless poverty is directly tackle; there can be no growth. But it is also obvious that *with* economic growth, there will also be an increase in poverty for this growth presupposes the use of resources hitherto used by subsistence people for survival.
>
> Moreover, from the days of historical colonialism industrial expansion has meant intolerance (and destruction) of the existing systems of local industry. One has only to read accounts by patriotic Indians in the 19th and 20th centuries, for example, to observe how unhappy they were that British manufactures were killing Indian industry, that a formerly industrious and self-sufficient country like India was being converted into a producer of raw material for the outside manufactures of the colonizer. Similarly, in today's colonial ism it is not considered wrong to kill off subsistence work (ironic since much of it survived the earlier colonial onslaught), since the process is part and parcel of the process of "healthy" industrialization.

To call the destruction of subsistence agriculture and crafts a necessity of "healthy" development is now recognized as entirely fraudulent. This raises the question: Are there

forms of development that do not destroy the harmonious economic structures of the past, but build on them instead?

The answer is *yes.* A while ago we received a copy of a paper presented as part of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Annual Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, held in Trinidad last November. It is John Todd's report of "Trials of the Ocean Pickup, a High Performance Sail-powered Trimaran in the Artisanal Fisheries of Guvana." Todd is president of Ocean Arks International, 10 Shanks Pond Road, Falmouth, Mass. 02540. He begins:

> In 1978 the author began research to develop a modern sail-powered vessel for the intercontinental transport of live agricultural and aquacultural materials. A fifty-foot long, one-fifth scale model was developed to test modern rig concepts. Concurrently an overall evaluation of the viability of commercial sail in transport and fisheries was undertaken. The study indicated that the greatest need for modern sailing craft was in the artisanal fisheries of tropical countries with reliable wind regimes. Many nations are experiencing shortages of foreign exchange, and as a result, imported spare pasts are often unavailable and fuel is expensive. As a consequence, artisanal fisheries are widely jeopardized. To find a viable long-term alternative, Ocean Arks International, a non-profit research and communication organization, started development of the Ocean Pickup for use as a commercial fishing vessel. The Ocean Pickup is a sail-powered multihull. Inherent in its design were three basic goals, namely that it be a high performance vessel capable of speeds equivalent to most motorized fishing vessels, that it be adapted to building in tropical countries, and finally that no more than fifteen per cent of the costs be in imported components. Fuel and foreign exchange savings for fishermen were central to the development of the concept.

The report has ten pages of detail of the construction and use of this vessel. "Guyana," Todd says in his conclusion, "is currently evaluating the option of building a fleet of Ocean Pickups." The catches of fish on trial runs of Ocean Pickup were impressive and the savings in fuel were enough to pay for the craft in eighteen months. Ocean Arks International will provide designs and technical training if the project is adopted. A comparable project for Costa Rica is in the planning stage. Involved are boat-building infra-structures and the reforestation of coastal regions—in the long term, throughout the Caribbean region. Such undertakings deserve every encouragement and support. They represent the right sort of development. Not much financial help has come through for Ocean Arks International. "We are working for the poor," Todd explained.