

TOWARD A BETTER WORLD

THERE are various ways to regard the almost universal turmoil and strife in the present-day world, but the one likely to prove most useful is that both large and small groups of humans are engaged in a struggle, partly for survival, but also for the realization of a dream. Each identifiable epoch of human history reveals an animating drive which is in some sense the energy guided by a dream, shared by the people with variable interpretations. The eighteenth century, it is clear, was characterized by the struggle to define and establish a social order based on the conceptions of justice of that time, involving the principles declared in both America and France—in America in the Declaration of Independence, in France in the slogan of revolutionary intent, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." These were the dominant ideals of the time, and they remain in the present as frames of reference for criticism and redefinition of goals.

The nineteenth century saw two major historical developments, nationalism and industrialism, both of which led to changed ideas concerning the achievement of an ideal social order. Yet as we now realize, nationalism has not only made fraternity virtually impossible, but the weapons produced by industrial technology have also, in the context of a world of nation-states, come to threaten the lives of nearly all peoples. The nations have made war the "normal" condition of life, while industrialism, in addition to arming governments with unimaginably destructive weapons, has turned the free activity of economic acquisition—once admirable in its display of ingenuity, improvement of methods, and enormously enterprising energy—into tyrannies which have subverted the equalitarian aspect of the social dream. There have been corresponding psychological effects, variously labeled by social psychologists, who speak of

"alienation," "anomie," feelings of "powerlessness," and "frustration," framed by conditions which are as bad if not worse than the widespread poverty of feudal times. Virtually hopeless misery is now common in many parts of the world; there is not enough food for ever-growing populations, nor is there any effective consensus of what to do about this threat of hunger.

There were a few prophetic souls in the nineteenth century who saw the way the world was going. Thomas Carlyle was among them. In 1829, in the *Edinburgh Review* under the title of "Signs of the Times," he wrote about the oncoming "Age of Machinery," saying:

Our old modes of exertion are all discredited, and thrown aside. On every hand, the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one. The shuttle drops from the fingers of the weaver, and falls into iron fingers that ply it faster. . . . There is no end to machinery. Even the horse is stripped of his harness, and finds a fleet fire-horse yoked in his stead. . . . For all earthly, and for some unearthly purposes, we have machines and mechanic furtherances. . . . We remove mountains, and make seas our smooth highway; nothing can resist us. We war with rude nature; and, by our resistless engines, come off always victorious, and loaded with spoils.

Dramatic as were these external transformations, the psycho-social impact of machines interested Carlyle more:

What changes, too, this addition of power into the Social System; how wealth has more and more increased, and at the same time gathered itself more and more into masses, strangely altering the old relations, and increasing the distance between the rich and the poor. . . .

What worried Carlyle most was the fear, as another writer put it, that "mind will become subjected to the laws of matter; that physical science will be built up on the ruins of our spiritual

nature; that in our rage for machinery we shall ourselves become machines." Carlyle connected the spirit of the machine with John Locke, of whom he said, "His whole doctrine is mechanical, in its aim and origin, in its method and its results." Primarily concerned with man's inner life, he declared that, "free in hand and foot, we are shackled in heart and soul with far straiter than feudal chains."

A little later, in the philosophical manuscripts of 1844, Karl Marx was recording similar reflections, saying that "The *devaluation* of the human world increases in direct relation with the *increase in value* of the world of things," coining the term "alienation" to describe this effect. A few years later, in America, Emerson would write:

Things are in the saddle,
And ride mankind.
There are two laws discrete,
Not reconciled,—
Law for man, and law for things;
The last builds town and fleet,
But it runs wild,
And doth the man unking.

But while Emerson hoped and worked for an inner transformation in his countrymen, Marx, an impatient moralist, decided to enlist the alienated and growing proletariat in revolution to take possession of the machines and turn their fruit to juster purposes. In order to do this, he divided mankind into two species (as Louis Halle has noted), the bad capitalists and the good workers. In the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, he shows contempt for the idea of one humanity, declaring for the class struggle of proletariat against bourgeoisie, replacing the goal of fraternity with the dynamic of hate. We are now aware of the long-term consequences of this division.

Meanwhile, in America, Edward Bellamy was shaping the thought that finally, in his utopian novel, *Looking Backward* (1887), proposed a classless socialism, structured somewhat like the "organic state" of later political theory in which all inequalities are erased. In 1935, when Columbia University asked three distinguished men of the

time, John Dewey, philosopher, Charles Beard, historian, and Edward Weeks, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, to name the books which had had the most influence during the previous fifty years, they each listed Marx's *Das Kapital* first and Bellamy's *Looking Backward* second. William Allen White (1868-1946), well-known editor of the *Emporia Gazette*, said that the best of his generation in school and college at the end of the nineteenth century all read and talked about Bellamy's work, and that "out of his vision for the young men of yesterday we elders of today dream our dreams."

The forms of these visionings in the past no longer excite admiration—the verdict of history seems against them—yet the animating spirit continues to inspire later dreamers. There is one new vision that has today found an increasing number of elaborators and adherents—the conception of the small community in a decentralized society. It happens that Bellamy's biographer, Arthur Morgan (1878-1975), leading American engineer, director of TVA, resuscitator of Antioch College, founder of Community Service, Inc. (Yellow Springs, Ohio), and author of a number of books on rural sociology, began much of the thinking about the importance of the small community. Like Carlyle and Bellamy, Morgan was primarily interested in the development of the moral excellences of human beings. This, he early decided, was the key to just social arrangements. From his youth he gave wondering thought to the question: What shapes human character? He decided that, despite unsolved mysteries, both the practical and moral attributes of the small community made it the best matrix for the development of character.

This theme is especially developed in two of his books, *The Small Community* and *The Long Road* (both available from Community Service, Box 243, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387). He said in the first of these volumes:

For the preservation and transmission of the fundamentals of civilization, vigorous, wholesome

community life is imperative. Unless many people live and work in the intimate relationships of community life, there can never emerge a truly unified nation, or a community of mankind. If I do not love my neighbor whom I know, how can I love the human race, which is but an abstraction? If I have not learned how to work with a few people, how can I be effective with many?

These simplicities are now becoming the foundation of much of the effort in this country to form nuclei of natural community life. They fit with the ideals behind ecological thinking and its mandate for decentralization. The verities declared by Morgan are timeless, but we owe to him their explicit restatement in our time, in wholly understandable language. He said in *The Long Road*:

There is scarcely any more effective means for bringing about social change than the "apostolic succession" that results from the intimate association of persons of clear purpose and great commitment with small groups of young people. Leaders in business and in public life are men of exceptional native ability, who project onto the larger scene of action the motives and methods they have acquired during early years. Although mature persons of good intelligence continue to profit by experience and responsibility, and grow as they work, yet for most of us the main drives of purpose and our fundamental ethical controls usually are carried over from youth. Thus the environment of childhood and youth actually determines the quality of the leadership of a few years later. If there exist throughout our country many homes, neighborhoods, schools, churches, colleges, and informal fellowships, within which such qualities of character as I have described are dominant, then out of such environment will emerge men and women who will give the same qualities to the management of business and government. In fact, I see no other source of leadership than such centers of influence, which may be ever so humble and unseen, yet be potent.

These ideas were set down by Morgan shortly after he had been appointed Chief Engineer and Chairman of the Board of the Tennessee Valley Authority by President Roosevelt, in 1933. They formed the essential inspiration for the work of Community Service, a non-profit corporation he founded in 1940 to serve, as his biographer,

Walter Kahoe, has put it, "as a focus, information center, and rallying point for research on the nature and role of the small community and to help plan and carry out community development and group activities." The background considerations and philosophy of this work obtained expression by Morgan in a book he published fifteen years later, *The Community of the Future*, in which he said:

There are three major approaches toward bringing about better communities and a better world. One of these is the process of violent revolution—the tearing to pieces of society as it is and the effort to rebuild it by a better pattern. The French Revolution has been the classic example. The second method is that of living within communities we have, doing what we can to keep their better elements alive and strong, and gradually removing or improving what falls short of a good pattern. That is the way which seems open to most of us.

The third approach is by creating new communities or other societies by new and better patterns. . . . The method of patiently maintaining the good qualities and adding needed qualities to existing communities, and that of creating new ones, each has influence on the other. . . . The creating of new communities, and the more deep-seated of the efforts for creation of new patterns and ways of life in and among communities, have been among the more important and universal ways in which societies the world over have maintained their vitality and have advanced in type.

The quality of Morgan's thinking attracted the attention of the Gandhians, who issued an Indian edition of *The Community of the Future* in 1958, by reason of the essential kinship of its themes with Gandhi's lifelong struggle for the restoration of village life in India. Noting this American parallel with Gandhian ideas, the publisher said in a foreword:

. . . our history for the past half-century is, at least in part, a record of the struggle of some of our greatest men to give to the word *swaraj* [self-rule] not merely a political meaning on the modern western pattern, but a social and economic meaning in which the ancient democratic communities of the villages should be purified and strengthened, and made the basic units of a free and better India.

Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* was, as it were, the manifesto of this "community movement"; it is a declaration of faith in the old, small community. His constructive programme is a programme of community service; the *charkha* [spinning wheel] is the symbol of the economic self-reliance of a healthy local community. The work of Vinoba Bhave, the campaign for *Gram-dan* and *Gram-swaraj*, carries the same movement further in the context of political independence. With dramatic clarity and force it sets before the nation the vision of a new society, a society of integrated, inter-related village communities, rooted in the best of the old wisdom and alert and open to the best of the new science. The reading of *The Community of the Future* may enable us to see more clearly, in a world-setting, the significance of what is happening in India.

While *Hind Swaraj*, published in 1909, embodies the principles which animated Gandhi's career, he continued to elaborate on them for the rest of his life. He wrote in *Harijan*, his weekly paper, in 1942:

My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbors for its vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. . . . The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean supply.

Gandhi, however, was thoroughly aware of the obstacles standing in the way of the regeneration of village life. The developing economic system of India, modelled on Western industrialism, had set going tendencies in an opposite direction, and the peasants had become passive sufferers with little hope. Urging his followers to take part in his Constructive Program, he said:

We must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, wash their clothes and pots, and in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses. . . . Lionel Curtis described our villages as dung-heaps. We have to turn them into model

villages. . . . The village movement is as much an education of the city people as of the villagers. Workers drawn from the cities have to develop village mentality and learn the art of living after the manner of villagers. This does not mean that they have to starve like the villagers. But it does mean that there must be a radical change in the old style of life. . . .

We must have an unquenchable faith in our mission. We must be patient with the people. We are ourselves novices in village work. We have to deal with a chronic disease. Patience and perseverance, if we have them, overcome mountains of difficulties. We are like nurses who may not leave their patients because they are reported to have an incurable disease.

This was Gandhi's fundamental motive in seeking the political freedom of India, which was accomplished on August 15, 1947, when the British passed the sovereign power to a new Indian government headed by Gandhi's choice, Jawaharlal Nehru, and other Congress leaders. Gandhi was assassinated a few months later, on Jan. 30, 1948, by a partisan of sectarian Hinduism. It then remained for Gandhi's followers to continue the struggle to free India from the habits acquired from the British and to liberate the country from the weaknesses which Gandhi regarded as the real enemy of India's freedom. Fortunately, a small book, *Since Gandhi*, by Mark Shepard, has been issued by Greenleaf Books (Weare, New Hampshire 03281), in which the fortunes, the ups and downs, of the Gandhian movement during the years since his death are described in some detail. Shepard says at the beginning:

The Congress had adopted Gandhi's policy of nonviolence during the freedom struggle because it seemed a practical course for a people with few weapons; and in any case nonviolence was Gandhi's condition for leading the struggle. But after coming to power, Congress leaders had few qualms about taking charge of India's armed forces, or of using them when they thought necessary.

Besides nonviolence, Gandhi had tried to win Congress to his vision of India built on a basis of strong villages, politically autonomous and economically self-reliant. He urged Congress to initiate the social and economic development to make

such a society possible. But Congress leaders, themselves of the urban, British-educated elite, were mostly not committed to decentralism or village development, after the British withdrawal. They wanted a strong industrial nation.

Shortly after Gandhi's death, his closest colleagues announced his "last wish": Congress should drop out of politics and become a league of "people's servants." But the Congress politicians were already settled into the lavish offices of New Delhi, the imposing capital built by the British. They comfortably took their places at the top of the massive bureaucracy the British had set up. It was almost as if British rule continued, but now with Indian names and faces in charge.

The Gandhians in the Congress, being outnumbered withdrew to work in other ways, while some remained with the government. Those who resolved to continue the work as Gandhi had planned it, under the leadership of Vinoba Bhave and later of Jayaprakash Narayan, named themselves the Sarvodaya Movement—for the good of all—and found inspiration in Vinoba's Bhoodan movement, which involved seeking gifts of land for the landless. Narayan tells how this program of voluntary land reform began (in a talk given in England in 1958, reprinted in *MANAS* for Jan. 7, 1959), and how he and Vinoba planned to gain gifts of land for the benefit of the landless poor in all India. "We hope," he said, "to extend this movement to every village in India. We have a total of 550,000 villages so you can imagine what a stupendous task we have ahead of us." The movement grew in strength and acquisitions of the land for the poor, during the years following, but it apparently became too large too rapidly, and lost its momentum. (Shepard includes a bibliography of writings on how this happened.)

Narayan (commonly known as JP) had left socialist politics to join with Vinoba in 1954, but in 1971, when the Gramdan movement (Bhoodan, "gift of land," had been changed to Gramdan, "gift of village") seemed close to collapse, he began working to free India of political corruption. He became increasingly critical of Indira Gandhi

(Nehru's daughter), who seemed to him to oppose his efforts, and he organized a political coalition and movement which eventually defeated her at the polls in 1977. The "reform" government, however, accomplished little and Mrs. Gandhi was able to return to power in 1980. Shepard thinks an unwarranted optimism and haste in attempts at social change were responsible for the comparative failures which had come about, and he tells what is happening in India, today, to give new strength and coherence to the many still devoted Gandhians. As he says:

The Gandhians are needed. Thirty-five years after Independence India's society, economy and government are in a shambles. Neither capitalism nor centralized socialism has worked for India, and she has blindly stumbled down wrong paths. There is a greater willingness among many to take action to bring change. With this awareness and willingness has come an interest in looking back at Gandhi.

Gandhi is also a growing inspiration in the West, and the ideal of the small community is increasingly the goal throughout the world. The dream of Morgan and Gandhi now has many adherents, and a vigorous literature is spreading its conceptions.

REVIEW

REQUIEM FOR THE RENAISSANCE

IN these days of rampant publishing—*Harper's* for February reports that 45,000 new books are now coming out every year, and "within the narrowest of scientific disciplines the number of journals can be counted in the hundreds"—the attention of anyone responsible for review may be drawn to the old question: How is the human mind shaped, and how does the publication of books and magazines contribute to this process? So vast a number of words as are now continuously appearing hardly seems useful. What has been our experience?

A book that helps with a question like this is *The Classic Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 1949) by Gilbert Highet, subtitled "Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature." Mr. Highet, it may be recalled, was the translator of Werner Jaeger's *Paideia*, a three-volume study of "the Ideals of Greek Culture" (also OUP, 1944), providing an ideal background for conveying to readers an understanding of the transmission to our civilization of the great ideas of the past. These are—or were—the roots of our culture, but we seem now to be making little use of them. In 1960, a year before his death, Prof. Jaeger, then teaching at Harvard, wrote that "to learn what classical scholarship was like in a country where classical humanism did not exist, one must come to America."

The Renaissance, Prof. Highet shows, was essentially a time of the discovery and translation of classical texts. By this means the mind of Europe was emancipated, stimulated, and enriched. He says in summary:

During the Middle Ages, each of the European countries in the west had two literatures. They had books written and songs sung in their own dialects and languages, and they had Latin literature old and new. Thus there were separate national literatures, and there was an international literature—both constantly growing.

Sometimes the two interpenetrated. When they did, the synthesis could be a nobler creation than any purely national or purely Latin work of its age. Such was Dante's *Comedy*. As the Renaissance

approached, they interpenetrated more often and more deeply. The contacts which had been rare and difficult became easy, delightful, fertile. New ideas poured into the national literatures; new patterns were learned and utilized and developed; the ardently competitive spirit of the men of the Renaissance was challenged, and their greedy intellectual appetite was fed, by the newly revealed books in Latin and Greek, greater than any their fathers had written, but not (they felt) greater than they themselves could write.

The inspiration they drew from these books was sometimes direct, as when Montaigne digested Seneca's essays and made Seneca's thoughts into parts of his own mind. Sometimes it acted remotely, by intensifying the nobility of their work and subtilizing their art. A Renaissance comedy on contemporary persons and themes is far more comically complicated than anything the Middle Ages ever conceived, because its author has enjoyed, at first or second hand, the intricacies of Plautus. But, more and more often during and since the Renaissance, writers who wish to live in both worlds and make the best of both, find that translations of classical books serve them well. The current flows between the two worlds more and more richly. Amyot translates the Greek biographer and moralist Plutarch into French. Montaigne seizes on the translation and lives with it the rest of his life. North turns Amyot's translation into English. Shakespeare changes it into *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar*. Great books, in Milton's words, are the life-blood of a master spirit. Through translations the energy of that life-blood can be given to other spirits, and can make some of them as great, or greater.

Are we as well off as these eager thinkers and writers of the Renaissance? Their sense of discovery is in their work; the fire of their minds had much to do with stirring the vision of the revolutionary epoch of the eighteenth century, which gave birth to modern times. The printers of the Renaissance were themselves ardent Humanists, eager to place great books of the past in the hands of hungry minds.

Today printers (or publishers) are a very different breed. Their very survival, Nat Hentoff shows (in the February *Progressive*), depends upon providing a diet of mediocrity. For example, the market for textbooks in populous Texas is so enormous that what Texas will buy becomes what all the other states will get. Hentoff says:

Publishers tailor their textbooks to what they believe will be accepted in Texas, and if they turn out to be right, those are the texts they will sell elsewhere in the country, it's too expensive to print other editions which put back what was left out for Texas.

For instance, the word "evolution"—let alone the teaching of the theory of that name—is in some disrepute in Texas. Thus, a publisher who wants to play it safe will follow the example of Laidlaw Publishing, a division of Doubleday: "Laidlaw Publishing doesn't even mention the word 'evolution' in its new nationally distributed biology texts," ABC reporter Ron Miller pointed out last summer.

Nat Hentoff comments:

With exceptions, of course, college teachers seem to have a diminished sense of responsibility to their students. If the students' potential was, indeed, maimed in high school the attitude of many professors, including those who select texts, is that the damage is irreversible. . . . The attitude of both professors and textbook editors is fatalistic. There is also what might be called collusion in letting students sink to their lowest level. A professor at UCLA mourns, "Students today are a lot less tolerant of difficult books than they were when I started teaching." Once the "difficult" books are allowed to disappear altogether, the students may become less tolerant of any books. . . .

While some professors who add to their income as consultants to publishers admit to being appalled by the low quality of "certain bowdlerized texts" put out by the publishing houses that retain them, "they will never say so publicly." An Oregon official fighting censorship of school texts said recently, "We received help from teachers. But not from publishers."

Is the printed word becoming an intellectual pollution in the last years of the twentieth century? And why, one may ask, has the perfection of techniques in the communications industry been accompanied by a vulgarization of quality? In his editorial in the February *Harper's* Lewis Lapham, once more this magazine's editor, writes briefly of "the world that can be imagined by the mythographers at *Time* or NBC":

The oddly narrowing effect of the big media has been remarked upon by critics of all political denominations. They notice that somehow the larger

and more expensive the technique the smaller and poorer the meaning. Partly this is because so much of the media has become an institutional Wizard of Oz. The functionaries who operate the machinery come to imagine that they already know all the answers worth knowing, and they tend to choose the texts and photographs that confirm their worst suspicions of the world. The editors of *Harper's* assume they know a good deal less than a lot of other people not confined to the editorial cloisters of New York and Washington. They proceed on the premise that it is their business to open things out, not to wrap them neatly up.

(In this editorial Mr. Lapham is informing the readers of his plans for changes in the content of *Harper's*, to begin with the March issue.)

By reason of their conceit, the media, Lapham says, put on airs:

What so annoys people about the media is not its rudeness or its stupidity but its sanctimony. Maybe they do it unwittingly, but the fine ladies and gentlemen of the fourth estate too often exude the condescension habitual among the minor English nobility and the maitres d'hotel in newly arrived French restaurants. They presume to tell people what to say about the season's newest book, how to behave in the presence of money, what thoughts to think while drinking chilled white wine on the beach at Acapulco, what moral attitude to adopt in a discussion about abortion or the hydrogen bomb. Some readers apparently welcome this sort of thing, and they expect their magazines to clothe them with opinions in the way that Halston or Bloomingdale's dresses them for the opera.

Was, after all, the Renaissance a far better time than the present to live and get an education? The technology may have been primitive in those days of Western history, but the world of thought was uncluttered, except for the debris of a dying outlook. Once again, the meaning and definition of "progress" need serious attention. Do we have any real idea of what it is?

At least a few among those 45,000 books which come out every year offer serious discussion of this question.

COMMENTARY
THE ONE GREAT QUESTION

JUDGING from the contents of this week's issue, the old philosophical question of what is good—good to have, good to do—is still the fundamental inquiry. For several centuries the acquisition of things has been the dominant motivation, and only recently has there been serious questioning of this conventional pattern of behavior. More and more people are beginning to realize that the acquisitive drive does indeed "run wild," as Emerson said, with resulting dehumanization.

A further realization, now dawning more widely, is that determined pursuit of acquisition by the skillful and astute inevitably fills the world with injustice. This undeniable fact throws an unavoidable light on the meaning of "good"—a private account of what is good, without further consideration, leads to public disaster and misery, eventually followed by inchoate rage and conflict.

Some particulars of this process are examined in this week's Review. Publishing, which really shouldn't be a "business" at all, as business is now conducted, has made education a sham, so far as textbooks are concerned. And Lewis Lapham renders a similar verdict concerning much of the content of contemporary magazines. For these reasons, it seems fair to say that as a mass culture, the United States is a failure. We too, have "thought control," although the practice of its techniques is still, so to speak, voluntary, and so is submission to it. Our weaknesses have been turned into conventions and are even celebrated as virtues by those who have found out how to make a good living from them.

What then does one do? One does, we think, what the few individuals named in this issue do. We mean what Carlyle, Emerson, Bellamy, Morgan, and Gandhi (and the Gandhians) have done and are doing, as well as they can.

What do they do? They educate on how to identify the true good, and they practice what they preach, however difficult this may prove.

A profound irony, however, affects the preaching. What is poor, trivial, second-rate and self-indulgent, it appears, can be indoctrinated—regard the mass media and the advertising business for evidence. But when it comes to true and good ideas, indoctrination doesn't work. It becomes a contradiction in terms. Another method must be used. What method? For answer to this question one goes to the dialogues of Plato for a start. In this program of education one might start with Plato and end with E. F. Schumacher.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

EDUCATION OF IMAGINATION

BROAD and general theory in thinking about education has high importance, yet at the same time may seem difficult to apply. Actually, any educational theory worth attention is at the same time a study of the nature of the human being, since whatever else it may be, education is—or ought to be—fundamentally concerned with individual human growth. The overarching structure of an educational undertaking is made of assumptions about the human mind, which is a virtual synonym for the term "soul," and since the true educator realizes this, he recognizes that his work is essentially a philosophic enterprise involving mysteries and unanswered questions. Frederick Froebel understood this; so did Bronson Alcott; and so did Abraham Maslow.

We have been reading a book, *Insight-Imagination—The Emancipation of Thought and the Modern World* (Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, Conn. 06881) that deserves attention for its fruitful inquiry into how the human being learns. The author is Douglas Sloan professor of history and education at Teachers College, Columbia, and an editor of the *Teachers College Record*. (The book was published last year.)

A passage in Mr. Sloan's preface called to mind Plato's story of the Cave (in the *Republic*), which actually sets the problem for all teaching and education. The inmates of the Cave take shadows on the wall for realities, and spin elaborate theories based on the flickering images they see. If anyone should be so fortunate as to free himself, leave the cave, and discover what can be seen in broad daylight, and then returns to tell his companions, still shackled in place, about the sun, he may find that they do not believe him. They are completely wrapped up in their theories and resent his interfering discoveries.

Much of modern educational theory, Mr. Sloan shows, is cave theory, indifferent to the clearer light it is possible to have. He says:

Our conceptions of knowledge and ways of knowing, the grasp of reality that these make possible, and the values that follow thereon are all intimately connected. One of the chief problems of the modern world is that our conceptions of knowledge frequently give rise to views of reality that provide little place and support for the values and personal-social commitments necessary for a rich, whole, and life-enhancing existence. What might be called an orthodoxy about how we know and what we can and cannot know a kind of epistemological orthodoxy, has settled over the modern mind. This orthodoxy has adopted a narrowly quantitative, materialistic, and functionalist view of knowledge with such zeal that it tends to exclude feeling imagination the will, and intuitive insight from the domain of rationality—or to accord them only the most limited importance—and to deny any place for mind, meaning, and persons as constituent of reality. In its extreme forms, which are by no means rare, this orthodoxy maintains that we can know only what we can count, measure, and weigh. In this view, all things having to do with the qualitative dimensions of experience are regarded as having little or nothing to do with knowledge and are frequently even disparaged as sources of irrationality. And in this view, there is often an undisguised contempt for the possibility that the kind of world we are able to know and experience may be integrally bound up with the ways of thinking and knowing made possible by the kinds of persons we are.

If one were to ask Mr. Sloan, What is a human being?, and if he relied on what he says in this book, he might reply: A human being is an image-maker, a generator of wider fields of experience and understanding through the power of the imagination. We may have bodies, which have various uses, but essentially we are the work of our creative minds. We live in the ranges of our own imagery, which may bind or release according to its character. *That* is what we really are. In a central chapter the author writes:

In a major study of how philosophers since David Hume and Immanuel Kant have thought about the imagination, Mary Warnock speaks of the imagination as "our means of interpreting the world"

and "also our means of forming images in the mind." The images make possible our interpretations; for they are *the* way in which we see and interpret the world and objects in the world. The imagination, the image-making power of the mind, therefore, shapes our everyday perception of the world, for there is no perception separated from interpretation. The imagination lifts perceptions from raw, undifferentiated experience and gives them their shape, form, and significance. It is, therefore, the imagination, Warnock says, that enables us to see the world as significant and as representing that which is not immediately present. There is in the imagination "a sense that there is always *more* to experience, and *more* in experience than we can predict." And it is the image-making that enables us "to present this vision to others, for them to share or reject." The imagination then, is necessary for perceiving and understanding the world, makes possible human discourse and purposeful activity, is the source for creating and understanding works of art, and is that "by which, as far as we can, we 'see into the life of things'." And it arises from the emotions as much as from the intellect, from the heart and from the head. The imagination is an unbroken field encompassing the whole human being. And it is that which joins us in knowing-interplay and participation with others and the world. To neglect the imagination, to miseducate, to abuse it, to narrow and confine it, is to choke the human lifeline at its source.

How is the imagination evoked, developed, trained? Not, surely, by talking about it, although this has its uses, as in what Coleridge and Wordsworth had to say on the subject. Drenching oneself in the poetry and art of William Blake might provide unexpected instruction. The reading of Robert Jay Wolff's *On Art and Learning* (Grossman, 1971) would give various illustrations—in fact, studying what good artists think and say, and how some of them teach, might make the best beginning. And the letters from parents who are teaching their children at home, published in John Holt's paper, *Growing Without Schooling*, are rich in suggestions.

Mr. Sloan makes these common-sense observations:

The cultivation of imagination does not mean the rejection of hard, lucid, logical thought. It is, rather, the bringing of thought to life, permeating

concepts and abstractions with life-giving images and inner energies through which thinking can penetrate and participate in the fullness of reality. Nor does the cultivation of imagination necessarily require the rejection of tradition. Indeed, an education of imagination will value the expression and presence of imagination wherever it manifests in human history. There is a sense, for example, in which the great artistic achievements of tradition are potentially always new, always radical, because they possess the ability continually to burst the bonds of our ordinary perceptions and ways of thinking. Hence, an education of imagination will view with alarm the alacrity with which the traditional wisdom and insight are abandoned by an age convinced that it alone has found the truth and can therefore, change any and everything at will and with impunity—an age so enamored of itself that in its culture and education it thinks it alone has the key to innovation and change, when so often in reality it is conventional, dull, and philistine through and through. . . .

The result is to strip public deliberations of all cultural contents and to cripple the capacity of the public and its leaders to deal with the qualitative dimensions of public life. The ensuing cultural impoverishment becomes manifest at nearly every point in the society.

In this book the criticism is incisive and effective, as valuable as the stimulus to reflection on the powers of the mind and the uses of the imagination.

A good example of how the imagination may be used by a scientist was given a few weeks ago in *Review*, with quotation from Jonas Salk's *Anatomy of Reality*. Dr. Salk tells about his method of thinking.

. . . very early in my life I would imagine myself in the position of the object in which I was interested. Later, when I became a scientist, I would picture myself as a virus, or as a cancer cell, for example, and try to sense what it would be like to be either. . . .

Evidently, new currents of thought about the nature of man are entering the luminous zone of our attention. These conceptions of human possibility may be the key to the changes we need, if they can be spread around.

FRONTIERS

Convergences

HISTORY, it is commonly supposed, is made by wars of conquests and wars for independence, and by the plans and projects of national rulers. Superficially, this may be so, but beneath the scene of appearances other factors are at work, chiefly the gradual changes in human attitudes. Twenty-four years ago, writing in the *Listener* for Feb. 18, 1960, Czeslaw Milosz, Polish poet and essayist, drew attention to the decline in the sense of national identity, with interests and concerns turning in another direction. He said:

There has never been such curiosity about the whole past of Man on the Earth, nor so many signs of exploring civilizations in their sinuous growth. We are entering a sesame of our heritage, not limited to one continent. And this is accessible to the many, not only to some specialists. For instance, there has never been so great an interest in the art and music of the past. A price has to be paid, and recorded music or reproductions of paintings have their reverse side in cheap "mass culture." There is also a danger of syncretism. Yet a new dimension of history, understood as a whole, appears in all its interdependence. We deplore the dying out of local customs and local traditions, but perhaps the rootlessness of modern man is not so great, if through individual effort he can, so to say, return home and be in contact with all the people of the various races and religions who suffered, thought, and created before him.

Needless to say, the spread of communications technology has played an enabling part in this cultural internationalism, wearing away at national frontiers and opening the way to recognition of the common humanity of all the world. Even "big business" has made its contribution, although hardly intentionally, to such changes. The president of the IBM World Trade Corporation said recently: "For business purposes the boundaries that separate one nation from the other are no more real than the equator. They are merely convenient demarcations of ethnic, linguistic and cultural entities. They do not define business requirements or consumer trends."

Indeed, the multinationals have been defined as economic principalities which have international instead of national identity.

Meanwhile, today, common folk throughout the world are uniting in their efforts to reduce or put an end to the threat of nuclear war. The obstacles they encounter, mainly in the irrational continuation by nation-states of insistence on "the right to prepare for and, if necessary, make war," have the effect of changing peoples' minds regarding the importance of national sovereignty. Human identity is gradually becoming more important than national identity.

Another process of decline is having a converging effect: the dying out of traditional beliefs and faiths. Only the shell remains of orthodox religion, made noticeable by the anxious and aggressive efforts of fundamentalist sects to shore up old dogmas which have lost their hold on the rest of the population. One result of this trend has been a fresh investigation of ancient religions and philosophies—an interest gaining impetus from the cultural mixing and exposure of Americans in the great wars of the century, especially World War II, which took so many soldiers to the Far East. One book in particular, *Richer by Asia* (1947), by Edmond Taylor, shows the impact of Indian thinking and philosophy on an American army officer, and in recent years numerous centers of Buddhist learning and practice have sprung up in the United States. Last January 13, in an interview published in the *Los Angeles Times*, Joseph Campbell, well known author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, spoke of the surging interest in primitive and ancient myths which became manifest in the 1960s. He said that the cause might be the weakening of family and community ties brought by the industrial revolution and the loosening effect of countless technological developments. Campbell went on:

So people see this structure disintegrating all around them. You don't have to wait for the atom bomb; it's already happened as far as the structuring of life is concerned. So you've got to go back to the

individual finding his way. That's what the hunter had to do. The peasant—everybody's working together. But the hunter's luck is something else, and the hunter's skill is individual. So we're in a hunter's jungle, you might say.

The *Times* writer, Garry Abrams, continued:

Campbell contends that what the world needs now is a mythic system that fits with the modern world. A new myth must deal with traditional themes such as "the transformation of childhood into adulthood and dying instead of lasting forever, but it has to deal now in terms of a scientifically interpreted universe and in terms of a society that is in flux."

He also argues that any new myth must have worldwide appeal because he believes that national and regional boundaries are artifacts of the past. "The new society is the planet, not any little group." The universal similarity of beliefs is a continuing chord in Campbell's work. "What I'm trying to show is that all these differentiated religions are really the same religion."

One attempt to develop mythic thinking consistent with scientific inquiry is the Gaia Hypothesis of James Lovelock, suggestive of the idea, believed in by the ancients, that the Earth is a living organism, an enormous being, of whom we are parts, and which has metabolic needs and processes that must be preserved. Gaia is the Greek goddess of Earth. There is also an altered form of science—ecologic science of the sort practiced by the New Alchemy Institute on Cape Cod, established some twelve years ago, its declared purpose being "To Restore the Lands, Protect the Seas, and Inform the Earth's Stewards."

Another converging tendency is growing out of the domestic unmanageability of the major powers, whose restless cultural divisions are striving for more autonomy. This is the subject of a small book by Colin Graham, a Canadian scholar living in British Columbia. Under the title, *A Small-State Solution*, Mr. Graham presents some of the evidences of this change, quoting from John Naisbitt (in *Megatrends*) that "centralized structures are crumbling all across America. . . . decentralization of America has transformed

politics, business, our very culture." Graham also notes the decentralist movements of Europe—in Britain, France, and Spain—while giving the most attention to the separatist tensions in the Soviet Union where the Russian element, so long dominant, is having trouble holding together other linguistic and ethnic groups, especially the Georgians. Meanwhile the Russian birth-rate is declining, while the Moslems are multiplying at a great rate, already comprising a fifth of the population of the Union. In thirty years they may constitute a third. There has been no "revolt" so far, but future troubles may accelerate the drive for more independence.

It hardly seems necessary to repeat that today the moral and intellectual energies of the time are no longer devoted to making the present social organizations work, but are concerned with their radical transformation. The best thinking is going into agricultural reform, bioregional and ecological studies, and various modes of self-reliant nongovernment organization in behalf of autonomous communities. Multiple tendencies, both positive and negative, point in this direction for the future of mankind.