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MORE ON MAKE-BELIEVE

THE claim of Edmund Morgan that—"Government requires make believe. . . . Make believe that the people *have* a voice or that the representatives of the people *are* the people. Make believe that governors are the servants of the people"—belongs to a class of analytical truth affording many parallels. The leader or instructor who uses make-believe with good intentions is like the doctor who says to a patient teetering on the edge of death, "You can get well if you put your mind to it." Or he is like a teacher who encourages a child to believe that, somewhere in him, is the ability to learn arithmetic. Make-believe is often a pejorative expression, a negative way of referring to the power of the imagination, the power which is at the root of all *becoming* at the level of human reality and development. It is a way of thinking about what is not yet, but is possible and might be.

The bad or manipulative use of make-believe is in order to fool people. Its good use is as encouragement—showing people how to find the courage to *do* what they have come to believe in. Make-believe, in this sense, is an essential ingredient of the act of creation. A recent magazine article tells about Jim Thorpe, probably America's greatest all-time athlete, when he was on a ship to Europe to take part in the Olympic Games. The other competitors were running around the ship, exercising, but Thorpe sat in a deck chair, relaxed, his eyes closed. A coach asked him why he wasn't busy training like the others. "I am," he answered. "I am thinking of myself doing what I intend to do." That, the writer suggested, is why he won. But then, there is the Saroyan story about the high school student who wanted to be a runner and who got hold of a book by Coué and started saying to himself, "Every day in every way I am getting better and better." That was all he did, and when the day of the meet came, he fell on his face. (Incidentally, in this case, a story, which is make-believe, is as good as a historical fact. Both are convincing. You can learn from a good novelist as much or more about psychology than from any textbook on the subject.)

Plato's *Republic* was written as a form of make-believe. As Northrop Frye has pointed out, Socrates "is not concerned about setting up his ideal state anywhere: what he is concerned about is the analogy between his ideal state and the structure of the wise man's mind, with its reason, will, and desire corresponding to the philosopher-king, soldiers, and artisans of the political myth." The real Utopia, Frye adds, "is an individual goal, of which the disciplined society is an allegory."

The claim that "all men are equal" is certainly an attempt at make-believe. When taken literally, its fraud results in contempt for excellence and the deliberate leveling down of society to a dull mediocrity. The great half-truth expounded by Herbert Spencer in *The Man Versus the State* is that equality cannot be enforced by political arrangements. But not taken literally, there is magical truth in the idea of equality, as D. H. Lawrence made clear:

> One man is neither equal nor unequal to another man. When I stand in the presence of another man, and I am my own pure self, am I aware of the presence of an equal or of an inferior, or of a superior? I am not. When I stand with another man who is truly himself, and when I am truly myself, then I am only aware of a Presence, and of the strange reality of Otherness. There is me, and there is *another being.* . . . There is no comparing or estimating. . . . Comparing enters only when one of us departs from his own integral being, and enters the material mechanical world. Then equality and. inequality starts at once.

This, obviously, is the sphere of economics, where the law of equality is replaced by the rule of

hierarchy, under which we all live our external lives. Does this really matter? Of course it matters, but one reason it matters so much is that so little attention is paid to the inner reality of each one—"his own integral being"—so that the inequalities become exaggerated far beyond their natural function, resulting in injustice for all. Lawrence, unlike social planners, understood the solution, and expressed it well in a posthumous essay, "Education for the People":

> Here then is the new ideal for society: not that all men are equal but that each man is himself. . . . Particularly this is the ideal for a new system of education. Every man shall be himself, shall have every opportunity to come to his own intrinsic fullness of being. . . . We must have an ideal. So let our ideal be living, spontaneous individuality in every man and woman. Which living, spontaneous individuality, being the hardest thing of all to come at, will need most careful rearing. Educators take a grave responsibility upon themselves. They will be priests of life, deep in the wisdom of life.

Solution though it is, this conception of being human cannot be sold—it cannot even be preached—so what hope is there for a general understanding of it so long as the great majority continue to seek answers to their problems only in politics and economics? Someone may say, "Well, that may be true in some 'higher sense,' but it is necessary to solve our practical problems *first*, in order to have the leisure to give time to that sort of self-development."

But what if there is no solution to political and economic problems unless there is first an understanding of the limits of their importance? What sort of experience, one wonders, is needed to bring this question home to us?

The question—being too big—has no answer, yet there are indirect comments in literature. The really fine poets and essayists, for example, know the rules. Thoreau, for one, wrote:

> Undoubtedly if we were to reform this outward life truly and thoroughly, we should find no duty of the inner omitted. It would be employment of our whole nature; and what we should do thereafter would be as vain a question as to ask the bird what it will do when its nest is built and its brood reared. But a moral reform must take place first, and then the necessity of the other will be superseded, and we shall sail and plough by its force alone. There is a speedier way than the "Mechanical System" can show to fill up marshes, to drown the roar of waves, to tame hyenas, secure agreeable environs, diversify the land, and refresh it with "rivulets of sweet water,' and that is by the power of rectitude and true behavior.

The only way to find out if Thoreau is right would be to put someone like him in charge of education of the young, and we are not about to do that. And the last thing Thoreau was interested in was authority over the minds of other people, knowing it as the high road to self-defeat. He was willing, when occasion allowed, to be Inspector of Snowstorms, but would accept no further responsibility. He would, however, practice make-believe, as in the predictions quoted above, from a book review which appeared in the *Democratic Review*, November, 1843.

Education, we may find, always practices make-believe if there is true regard for the young. An illustration of this is found in Hannah Arendt's chapter, "The Crisis in Education," in *Between Past and Future* (Viking, 1961). She said:

> Normally the child is first introduced to the world in school. Now school is by no means the world and must not pretend to be; it is rather the institution that we interpose between the private domain of the home and the world in order to make the transition from the family to the world possible at all. Attendance there is required not by the family but by the state, that is, by the public world, and so, in relation to the child, school in a sense represents the world, although it is not yet actually the world. At this stage of education adults, to be sure, once more assume a responsibility for the child, but by now it is not so much responsibility for the vital welfare of a growing thing as for what we generally call the free development of characteristic qualities and talents. This, from the general and essential point of view is the uniqueness that distinguishes every human being from every other, the quality by virtue of which he is not only a stranger in the world but something that has never been here before.

Now comes the major responsibility and the honorable make-believe:

> 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.

The assumption of responsibility here called for is, one could say, the necessary make-believe of the human being. What is the ground of that assumption? It is the fact that we are moral agents. Josiah Royce said somewhere that the one thing a moral agent requires is a universe which needs improvement at his hands. Prometheus, in short, is the model that humans spontaneously follow—the Titan defined our calling, although recognizing the laggard response he would get, and paying a heavy price for his optimism. To take responsibility for the world is a Promethean stance which, Hannah Arendt suggests, we owe to the child.

Education is all we can do to effect the transfer of that responsibility to the young, as they grow to maturity. She continues:

> In education this responsibility for the world takes the form of authority. The authority of the educator and the qualifications of the teacher are not the same thing. Although a measure of qualification is indispensable for authority, the highest possible qualification can never by itself beget authority. The teacher's qualification consists in knowing the world and being able to instruct others about it, but his authority rests on his assumption of responsibility for that world. Vis-à-vis the child it is as though he were a representative of all adult inhabitants, pointing out the details and saying to the child: This is our world.

This is one of the practical meanings of love for the child. We introduce the world to the child by degrees, explaining in appropriate terms at each level what we know about the world, and also making clear what we don't know. Ideally, that is, we educate in this way. Hannah Arendt finds that in the present there is an abdication of this responsibility:

> Now we all know how things stand today in respect to authority. Whatever one's attitude toward this problem may be, it is obvious that in public and political life authority either plays no role at all—for the violence and terror exercised by the totalitarian countries have, of course, nothing to do with authority—or at most plays a highly contested role. This, however, simply means, in essence, that people do not wish to require of anyone or entrust to anyone the assumption of responsibility for the course of things in the world. If we remove authority from political and public life, it may mean that from now on an equal responsibility for the course of the world is to be required of everyone. But it may also mean that the claims of the world and the requirements of order in it are being consciously or unconsciously repudiated; all responsibility for the world is being rejected, the responsibility for giving orders no less than for obeying them. There is no doubt that in the modern loss of authority both intentions play a part and have often been simultaneously and inextricably at work together.
>
> In education, on the contrary, there can be no such ambiguity in regard to the present-day loss of authority. Children cannot throw off educational authority, as though they were in a position of oppression by an adult majority—through even this absurdity of treating children as an oppressed minority in need of liberation has actually been tried out in modern educational practice. Authority has been discarded by the adults, and this can mean only one thing: that the adults refuse to assume responsibility for the world into which they have brought the children. . . . It is as though parents daily said: "In this world even we are not securely at home; how to move about in it, what to know, what skills to master, are mysteries to us too. You must try to make out as best you can; in any case you are not entitled to call us to account. We are innocent, we wash our hands of you."

Yet things may not be quite as bad as Miss Arendt has painted them. We *do* live in an epoch of the decline of authority, of breakdown of faith in the certainties we felt able to live by until, say, about the middle of this century. There may be,

that is, essential honesty in parental attitudes which admit to inconclusive views about the meaning of life and of what is actually going on in the world, hesitating, again from honesty, to blame the usual scapegoats for instability and disorder. John Holt has pointed out that the failure of the schools to admit this uncertainty has led to bureaucratic tyranny which *does* make of children an oppressed class, and the home-schooling movement, of which he is a leader, can be recognized as a solution in which parents provide an uninstitutionalized account of what we know about the world the children will be entering, with common sense explanations of what remains to be done. Actually, this sort of thinking and practice is quite plainly a *resumption* of responsibility to take the place of various make-believes that are rapidly breaking down—losing even the partial truth that once was in them. Are we, one wonders, going through some sort of mutation in awareness—call it self-awareness—in which responsibility is being redefined?

Is this an underlying cause of the widespread feeling of confusion, and therefore a good rather than a bad sign? If so, the terms of useful make-believe may need to be altered.

Hannah Arendt's fundamental point, however, remains valid:

> To avoid misunderstanding: it seems to me that conservatism, in the sense of conservation, is of the essence of the educational activity, whose task is always to cherish and protect something—the child against the world, the world against the child, the new against the old, the old against the new. Even the comprehensive responsibility for the world that is hereby assumed implies, of course, a conservative attitude. But this holds good only for the realm of education, or rather the relations between grown-ups and children, and not for the realm of politics, where we act among and with adults and equals. In politics this conservative attitude—which accepts the world as it is, striving only to preserve the status quo—can only lead to destruction, because the world, in gross and detail, is irrevocably delivered up to the ruin of time unless human beings are determined to intervene, to alter, to create what is new. Hamlet's words, "The time is out of joint. O cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right," are more or less true for every new generation, although since the beginning of our century they have perhaps acquired a more persuasive validity than before.
>
> Basically we are always educating for a world that is or is becoming out of joint, for this is the basic human situation, in which the world is created by mortal hands to serve mortals for a limited time as home. . . . Our hope always hangs on the new that we, the old, can dictate how it will look. Exactly for the sake of what is new and revolutionary in every child, education must be conservative; it must preserve this newness and introduce it as a new thing into an old world, which, however revolutionary its actions may be, is always, from the standpoint of the next generation, superannuated and close to destruction.

Every account of what ought to be, as in this passage on "conservative" education, has in it an element of make-believe, since the writer knows quite well how few will deliberately undertake the application of such conceptions; yet there are always some who do. And so the visionary writing goes on. A rather exceptional example is Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots* (Putnam, 1952), which is a full-dress composition of utopian make-believe. yet written, as all her works, to be taken seriously. The book was an account of how France should conduct her public affairs after liberation from the Nazi invaders and might now be read as her magnificent swan song for European civilization. It was, we may think, precisely her capacity for vision that gave her the ability to think so well in practical terms, without illusion. In the conclusion to "Oppression and Liberty" (the title essay in a book of her writings published in 1973 by the University of Massachusetts Press), she considered what might survive of the modern world:

> Our present civilization, of which our descendants will no doubt inherit some fragments, at any rate contains, we feel it only too keenly, the wherewithal to crush man; but it also contains, at least in germ, the wherewithal to liberate him. Our science includes, despite all the obscurities engendered by a sort of new scholasticism, some admirable flashes of genius, some parts that are clear and luminous, some perfectly methodical steps

undertaken by the mind. In our technique also the germs of a liberation of labor can be found; probably not, as is commonly thought, in the direction of automatic machines; these certainly appear to be suitable, from the purely technical point of view, for relieving men of the mechanical and unconscious element contained in labor, but, on the other hand, they are indissolubly bound up with an excessively centralized and consequently very oppressive organization. But other forms of the machine-tool have produced—above all before the war—perhaps the finest type of conscious worker history has ever seen, namely, the skilled workman. If, in the course of the last 20 years, the machine-tool has become more and more automatic in its functioning, if the work carried out, even on machines of relatively ancient design, has become more and more mechanical, the reason lies in the ever-increasing concentration of the economy. Who knows whether an industry split up into innumerable small undertakings would not bring about an inverse development of the machine-tool, and, at the same time, types of work calling for a yet greater consciousness and ingenuity than the most highly skilled work in modern factories? We are all the more justified in entertaining such hopes in that electricity supplies the form of energy suitable for such a type of industrial organization.

Simone Weil was born in Paris in 1909 and died in England in 1943. She wrote the above in 1934.

REVIEW
HISTORICAL AMNESIA

LIKE other readers, we try to keep track of what goes on in the world, and, if possible, to understand what it means, if only to a small degree. We find this effort difficult and discouraging. Yet we do come across writing that is helpful, and is meant to be helpful. Often such aids are articles by writers who have retired from the thick of political and international affairs, and speak of what is going on in the practical terms of many years of experience. It seems well to listen carefully to these writers, especially when they are plainly motivated to tell what they see to be the truth, unaffected by narrow considerations of self-interest and stubborn ideological partisanship. We are thinking, for example, of a thoughtful piece on Lebanon (in the *Christian Science Monitor* for last Sept. 16) by Curtis Jones, who spent twenty-nine years working in the US State Department. The usual press reports on the bloody events going on in that part of the world don't tell us why those people can't get along, but keep on killing each other. In a few brief paragraphs Mr. Jones helps us to understand:

> The nation of Lebanon arose toward the end of World War II out of a delicate inter-sectarian compact fostered by the French. Lebanon was and is a communalist house of cards constructed by France and the United Kingdom. The Lebanese acquired a flag, an anthem, and a government; they never acquired a national consciousness.
>
> Over time, the several autonomous communities were supposed to blend together, but the ancient legacy of communalism was too strong.

Mr. Jones goes on, outlining what has happened as a result. His point is that this artificial political synthesis, engineered by the French and the British, cannot possibly grow into a real nation unless the powers leave them alone. It is just not possible to whip together a "nation" in this way, nor to "fix it up" by military threat or action when the plan doesn't work at all. Israel, Jones shows, thought it could manage Lebanon, but failed miserably, making a horrifying mess, and his point is that we seem to know no better. There is in Lebanon, he says, no consensus to strengthen: "When there is no peace to keep, the international forces risk being drawn into the untenable role of policemen, who have to shoot at both sides,—or—as seems to be the fate of the marines in Lebanon—drawn into the battle as participants, and on the wrong side to boot."

Well, the only clear instruction of this informing essay is that nations must make themselves. They can't be put together with momentary diplomatic mucilage and expected to grow up mature and sensible. The fundamental mistake, in the past and now, is "intervention." One hopes that some day our policy-makers will learn to consult people like Mr. Jones instead of rattling sabres and letting people know they had better do what *we* say.

Another, related story—but not on Lebanon—is an interview with Tomas Borge, "the only surviving founder of the Sandinista movement and Nicaragua's Minister of the Interior," by Jonathan Steele in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* for last Aug. 14. You seldom come across such impartial material in American newspapers, which is why we read the *Guardian Weekly*. Since we Americans are convinced that we have real problems in Latin America why don't we find out what the intelligent people in that enormous region think and say? Borge, for example, said to Steele:

> In order for us to be a threat to the United States, we would first have to have a desire to invade them, and secondly have the resources to do so. We have neither. If we came to an agreement with the Soviet Union to have a nuclear base here, then we would be a threat. But the USSR has never suggested this, nor have we suggested it to the USSR. We don't know what would happen if we asked. Perhaps they would refuse. But if they asked us, we would say no. We don't want a nuclear base. The United States should use common sense.
>
> If we do pose a threat to the security of the United States then it's a moral threat, the threat of a new morality, the threat of a people that have made

> the basic principles of Christianity their own, the threat of a country that represents real human rights, the threat of a people that wants to have an authentic national democratic government of its own.

Jonathan Steele asked Borge a lot of searching questions, getting clear and unambiguous answers. A revolutionary government whose first act was to abolish capital punishment deserves at least a real hearing. What if this man and the other Sandinistas really mean what they say?

This brings us to the reason for the present review; the subject is an essay by an eminent Mexican writer, Carlos Fuentes, a talk he gave before a Harvard commencement audience: an address to America by a man of letters. It appears in the first (September, 1983) issue of the now revived *Vanity Fair.* All Americans who can read should read it. He speaks, he says, "as a citizen of Mexico, and as a writer from Latin America." He has two themes: Revolutions must be made by a people by and for themselves; intervention by other nations is almost always disastrous and a short- or long-term failure. He says:

> Revolutions cannot be exported. With Walesa and Solidarity, it was the internal clock of the people of Poland that struck the morning hour. So it has always been: with the people of Massachusetts in 1776; with the people of my country during our revolutionary experience, with the people of Central America in the hour we are all living. The dawn of revolution reveals the total history of a community. This is a self-knowledge that a society cannot be deprived of without grave consequences.

He recites some history most of us have forgotten:

> Calvin Coolidge convened both houses of Congress in 1927 and—talkative for once—denounced Mexico as the source of "Bolshevik" subversion in Central America. This set the scene for the third invasion of Nicaragua by U.S. Marines in this century. We were the first domino. But precisely because of our revolutionary policies (favoring agrarian reform, secular education, collective bargaining, and recovery of natural resources)—all of them opposed by the successive governments in Washington, from Taft to Hoover—Mexico became a modern, contradictory, self-knowing and self-questioning nation. By the way, she also became the third-largest customer of the United States in the world—and your principal supplier of foreign oil.
>
> The revolution did not make an instant democracy out of my country. But the first revolutionary government, that of Francisco I. Madero, was the most democratic regime we ever had: Madero respected free elections, a free press and an unfettered congress. Significantly, Madero was promptly overthrown by a conspiracy of the American ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, and a group of reactionary generals. . . .

Then, giving the names of well known Mexican writers and artists, he says:

> . . . . we all exist and work because of the revolutionary experience of our country. How can we stand by as this experience is denied, through ignorance and arrogance, to other people, our brothers, in Central America and the Caribbean?
>
> A great statesman is a pragmatic idealist. Franklin D. Roosevelt had the political imagination and the diplomatic will to respect Mexico when President Lázero Cárdenas (in the culminating act of the Mexican Revolution) expropriated the nation's oil resources in 1938. Instead of menacing, sanctioning or invading, Roosevelt negotiated. He did not try to beat history. He joined it. The lessons applicable to the current situation in Latin America are inscribed in the history—the very difficult history—of Mexican-American relations. Why have they not been learned?

In the section "Against Intervention," he speaks as a Latin American friend of the United States—"we, the admirers of your extraordinary achievements in literature, science and the arts and of your democratic institutions, of your Congress and your courts, your universities and publishing houses and your free press—we, your true friends, because we are your friends, will not permit you to conduct yourselves in Latin American affairs as the Soviet Union conducts itself in East European and Central Asian affairs."

> You are not the Soviet Union. We shall be custodians of your own true interests by helping you to avoid these mistakes. We have memory on our side. You suffer too much from historical amnesia.

We must add, in conclusion, all that Carlos Fuentes says under the heading of Nicaragua:

> The problems of Nicaragua are Nicaraguan, but they will cease to be so if that country is deprived of all possibility for normal survival. Why is the United States so impatient with four years of Sandinismo, when it was so tolerant of forty-five years of Somocismo? Why is it so worried about free elections in Nicaragua, but so indifferent to free elections in Chile? And why, if it respects democracy so much did the United States not rush to the defense of the democratically elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende, when he was overthrown by the Latin American Jaruzelski, General Augusto Pinochet? How can we live and grow together on the basis of such hypocrisy?
>
> Nicaragua is being attacked and invaded by forces sponsored by the United States. It is being invaded by counterrevolutionary bands led by former commanders of Somoza's national guard who are out to overthrow the revolutionary government and reinstate the old tyranny. Who will stop them from doing so if they win? These are not freedom fighters. They are Benedict Arnolds.

This article should be made into a pamphlet and spread around.

COMMENTARY
TIME FOR ANOTHER ONE

GETTING out MANAS week after week sometimes seems a Sisyphusian labor. Both the writers and the editors are well aware that they are not engaged in moving "the masses" to do what needs to be done. How, after all, do you say what needs to be done to a population that gives so little evidence of being *ready* to do it; and how—which should have been said first—can the writers and editors be confident that *they* know what should be done?

Well, it is none the less possible to repeat, ad infinitum, the Hippocratic warning, "At least, do no harm!" That much we can be sure of; it is within the capacity of us all to do *less* harm than we are doing. And it is legitimate for MANAS to inventory regularly the areas—as many as we can find out about—where less harm can be done.

At the moment we are thinking of this week's Review, and in particular of Carlos Fuentes' article or address in the September *Vanity Fair*. People who read that article will be less likely to tolerate the harm that may be done by our nation's policy of intervention. Reading it would help to generate public opinion opposed to that sort of harm.

Our review ends by saying: "This article should be made into a pamphlet and spread around." The thought occurred: "Maybe this is something that MANAS could initiate or even undertake." So, after a brief consultation, we decided to do it. But our consultant, a MANAS associate, pointed out that the Los Angeles area, where we live, work, and publish, has now an enormous Spanish-speaking population. These people should know about what a countryman of theirs has to say to the U.S. They are now part of our nation, our culture, and are contributing to our thought and civilization. Some day they will read and speak English as well as any of us, but right now something in Spanish is more important to them.

Accordingly, any reader who wants to help in the production of the Fuentes piece—in two pamphlets, one English, one Spanish—might send us a little money to help. We'll do it anyway, but help is needed. Send it to the Manas Publishing Company, marked Fuentes Fund.

The only other pamphlet (booklet) MANAS has issued was a splendid article on Thoreau, originally in four parts. It seems time to do another one.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

SHAKESPEARE AND DEBS

A WHILE ago we printed here a college sophomore's reasons for taking a course with Harold Goddard on Shakespeare. Going back to the early pages of the first volume of Goddard's *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (University of Chicago Press, 1951), we found other reasons for reading Shakespeare, and of course Goddard, who *illuminates* the poet's work and intentions. A classic, Robert Hutchins said, is contemporary in any age. Those who fail to recognize this quality in Shakespeare are backward in their thinking. For example, the champions of "women's liberation" might give depth to their contentions by adopting certain of Shakespeare's themes. Goddard writes:

> It has been said that Shakespeare has no heroes. If a hero has to be unadulteratedly masculine, there is point in the observation. Otherwise it is a slander.
>
> And his heroines are the counterparts of his heroes. How fond he was of dressing them up in boys' clothes and giving them boyish traits along with their still dominant girlish ones! Those who explain this tendency by the fact that boys played the parts of women in Elizabethan theater are confusing cause with occasion and would do well to look a little deeper. Shakespeare's resourceful heroines are fit companions of his poetical heroes. (The husband of the most feminine of them all greets his wife as "O my fair warrior!") The two types culminate and come together in Ariel, who is so quintessentially both above sex and of both sexes that we do not know what pronoun to use when speaking of "him," and stage directors are at a loss whether to cast a boy or a girl for the role. The imagination, Shakespeare seems to be saying, is an hermaphrodite; in proportion as men and women become imaginative they tend, without losing the dominant characteristics of their own sex, to take on those of the other. Adonis is a far-off prophecy of Ariel.
>
> But note that Venus' masculine behavior is as repulsive as Adonis' maidenly traits are attractive. A mere reversal of the qualities of the sexes on a low plane is as perverted and abhorrent as a harmonizing of them on a higher plane is rare and inspiring.

So it is that Theodore Roszak was right in declaring that the virtues have no sex.

Goddard has no hesitation in adopting the age-old diagnosis that distorted sexuality is the origin of war.

> In *The Rape of Lucrece* the situation in *Venus and Adonis* is inverted. This time it is the woman who is a victim of the lust of man. Allegorically the poem is an extended metaphor asserting the identity of lust and war. As its first line points out, Tarquin comes from the siege of Ardea to the siege of Lucrece, and the imagery in which the author tells the story of the assault is predominantly of the battlefield. *Rape is miniature war* is what the poem says in so many words. *War is rape on a social scale* is what it implies—offensive war, that is. The story seems to have fixed forever in the poet's imagination the concept of royalty as the ravisher of loveliness, to have set up in his mind a lifelong association of power with sensuality, avarice, and tyranny. With the exception of Henry VI—and I am emphatically *not* forgetting Henry V, ravisher of France—he never gives us a full picture of a good king. The Richards and Henrys, the Edwards and Claudiuses, the Caesars and Macbeths, are, all of them, Tarquins in a generic sense, violators in their several ways of innocence and beauty. All early history is mythical. That the Roman tyranny was ended, or mitigated, by the banishment of the Tarquins may be taken in a symbolic as well as in an historical sense. In this sense Shakespeare seems to have felt from the beginning to the end of his life that what the world needs is a fresh expulsion of the Tarquins. It still does. (Those who in our day incline to exclusively economic theories of war might well take notice.)

A file of Dwight Macdonald's wartime (and a little after) magazine, *Politics*, has the same uses as Goddard's book. See for example No. 7 of the "War as an Institution" series (in the March, 1946 issue) written by Simone Weil:

> The most disastrous wars have something in common which, though it may comfort some observers, is their real danger: *they have no definable gains.* Throughout history, the most desperate wars were fought for nothing. . . .
>
> The Greeks and Trojans slaughtered each other ten years over Helen; except for the dilettante warrior Paris, she meant nothing to any of them; they all wished that she had never been born. . . .

> Today, nothing distresses the intelligent observer more than the illusory character of our conflicts. The Trojan war made more sense. At its heart there was a woman at least, a woman of perfect beauty. . . . Our "national security" is a delusion by which we aim to take the means of war from every country but our own. A self-respecting nation, in short, will go to any length, i.e. war, to preserve its right to make war.
>
> But why must there be war? We know no more than the Trojans knew why they defended Helen. That is why the peace-plans of those men of good will, our statesmen, are so worthless. They could find compromises if opposing interests really divided their countries. But when economic and political interests center around the ability to make war, how can statesmen find a peaceful means between clashing interests? The very concept, "Nation," must go. Or rather, "National"; for millions of corpses, orphans, and disabled men, tears and despair, are the content of this otherwise meaningless word.

Readers with access to Macdonald's magazine might read also the censored version of a speech made by General George S. Patton to the men of his Third Army on the day before they took off for the landing in Normandy, for current confirmation of the Shakespeare-Goddard view of war. The speech couldn't be generally printed without extreme "emasculation," but Macdonald reconstructed it from two sources available to him, remarking at the end: "At once flat and theatrical, brutal and hysterical, coarse and affected, violent and empty—in these fatal antinomies the nature of World War II reveals itself: the maximum of physical devastation accompanied by the minimum of human meaning."

Goddard maintains that Shakespeare's development was largely independent of his environment, but then asks:

> Why are Shakespeare's ideas in so many instances indistinguishable from what may be called the ideas of his time? But why, then, we may ask in turn, has the world shown no such consuming interest in the other men who followed those same fashions and held those same ideas? Plainly it is something that differentiates Shakespeare from his age, not something that integrates him with it, that is the source of his attraction for us. . . . There are two ways of fitting into one's environment that are as opposite as night and day. To fit into one's age as mud does into a crack, or to be molded by it as putty is under a thumb is one thing; to fit into it and to use it creatively as a seed fits into and uses soil is quite another. The secret of why the germinating seed selects certain ingredients of the soil, while utterly ignoring others, lies in the seed, not in the soil.

Goddard continually finds contemporary versions of the Shakespearean outlook. After speaking of the contempt for the mob expressed by Coriolanus, he quotes the speech of Eugene V. Debs to the judge who was about to sentence him for opposing America's entry into World War I.

> "Your honor," he said, "years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest of the earth. I said then, and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it, while there is a soul in prison, I am not free." That, admittedly, does not sound like Coriolanus. But now listen to Debs on the mob:
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> "I never saw one that was against me; my experience has been entirely with mobs that were on my side. They were awful. When I got out of jail after my first big strike in Chicago, a crowd of thousands met me; they surged upon me, seized me, and, lifting me up, passed me from hand to hand over their heads. I was safe, of course, but I was afraid. I was afraid of a beast, for those men that bore me aloft all looked alike, they all stared in the same direction, and their eyes were not the eyes of men, but of animals. They smelt like a beast, too. The odor of hate, the smell of animal ferocity! No, I never want to meet that again.

FRONTIERS

Agriculture and Culture

FRONTIERS is a department which lends itself to various purposes, but its fundamental objective is to call attention to ideas, groups, and individuals whose work seems to constitute basic starting-points—seeds, germs, catalysts—for the kind of changes a great many people long for, yet find it difficult to plan or contribute to. While most of us have no problems or inhibitions in dreaming about an "ideal society," deciding on the practical steps that might be taken remains a formidable task. What, in a framework like the present, can we actually do?

People often speak of the need of "a change of heart," but are careful, as they should be, in giving direction as how to bring about so fundamental a reorientation. Fortunately, there are places where something like a change of heart has already begun. History, we are inclined to think, should be a systematic study of such beginnings, in order to gain hope and confidence in the capacity of what seem such fragile enterprises to send down roots and to grow in influence and in both moral and practical strength. Some current history might well have attention through the reports of what people are saying and doing at a center such as the Land Institute near Salina, Kansas. What is the Land Institute? It is a focus on the question of what may be involved in altering the craft of agriculture in behalf of a better future for all humans. The quality of the undertaking may be seen by the persons on the Land's honorary board of directors: Wendell Berry, David Brower, Alan Gussow, Joan Gussow, Amory B. Lovins, Paul Sears, William Irwin Thompson, John Todd, Donald Worster, E.F. Schumacher (1911-1977).

What do the founders, faculty, and students at the Land Institute do? One chief objective is described by Walter Pickett in the Summer 1983 *Land Report* (which comes out three times a year):

> At the Land Institute we are working toward perennial crops that can take care of themselves as the prairie plants do. These crops would live and produce year after year, with little or no herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, or tillage.
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> One way to do this is to domesticate the native prairie plants, selecting for higher seed yield and other agronomic traits. We are doing this, but at present most have low seed yields, and there is no developed market for such new grains. Therefore, we are also trying to make perennials of some of our current crops, such as rye, sorghum, wheat, and corn.
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> To make these crops into perennials, we first must get genes for perennial habit from related perennials. We don't make just any cross we can. We have made some rather wide crosses, but only after first studying the way the crop species evolved. This gives us clues as to what kinds of genetic changes each species is adapted to accept.

Pickett writes in enough detail to give the reader insight into how plant breeders work—how they learn from the processes of plant evolution (when they are known), and which experiments are likely to be successful. A subject most people know nothing about is made intensely interesting.

Marty Bender tells about the Herbary—a third of an acre made into "a living museum of wild native and nonnative perennial plants from the prairies, plains, and forests." Seeds are sometimes given to the Herbary by plant breeders in other parts of the world, which the Institute people germinate and develop for study under prairie conditions. Since field trips to other places to collect seeds are expensive, Bender says: "I deeply encourage friends of the Land to send us seeds of wild perennials whenever the opportunity exists, here in the U.S. or abroad." Plants in the Herbary are used to observe "how each perennial might fit into an agriculture based on polycultures of perennial grain crops."

Why would perennial grain crops be a good thing? For a number of reasons. First, plowing would be reduced since perennials bear year after year. Some perennials may be more pest- and disease-resistant than grain-bearing annuals; some may harbor insects that would control other insect

pests; some are good at nitrogen-fixation. The collaboration with the Land Institute of a number of professors and researchers—biologists and agronomists in universities—gives evidence of the respect for the work done there. Now and then there is a valuable critical note:

> Angus Wright, Professor of Environmental Studies at California State University in Sacramento, talked to Land people on June 30 about the Green Revolution in Mexico. He explained that agricultural research in Mexico which led to the "Green Revolution" was not "innocent," but was part of a political program. The research effort was requested by Mexicans and put forward by the Rockefeller people in the U.S. to maintain certain economic interests in Mexico. The new wheat benefitted large land-holders, many who received government subsidies to build irrigation infrastructure for growing basic grains, but then turned to the production of "luxury crops" for cities and foreign export because the return was much higher.

There is plenty of detail and local color on life at The Land—about weeding by suddenly drafted guests (for three minutes); about adding forty feet of elevation to their windmill; about critical relations with the rural water district, which seems to be encouraging real estate developers to use up what ought to remain agricultural land; and about the objectives of the Kansas Natural Resources Council while keeping track of proposed legislation. Finally, a note on the student intern program—forty-three weeks (Feb. 13 to Dec. 14) in which students are paid a stipend and given full tuition scholarships.

> Candidates should be graduates or upper-level undergraduates who are interested in pursuing a graduate degree. They should be comfortable studying scientific papers as well as books and articles exploring ethical, philosophical or social questions. Candidates should be concerned about environmental issues. Good health and stamina are necessary qualifications.

Deadline for application for the 1984 program is Dec. 1, 1983. (Address: Route 3, Salina Kansas 67401.)

Wes Jackson, founder of the Land Institute, tells at some length of a visit to Amish communities in Ohio, where there are forty thousand of these farmers. He and his companions (Wendell Berry, Marty Bender, and a youngster) learned a great deal:

> Among all U.S. farming communities, the Amish must rank at the top as far as the percentage of their total farm activity which is run on sunlight. Most proponents of nuclear power are forever reminding us of how bleak it is all going to be if we don't put large amounts of energy to work for us. But the hard-working Amish seemed content and prosperous. . . . They avoid the high capital costs for large, expensive equipment and for fuel. Their water flows downhill from a spring or is pumped by the wind, instead of by electric or gasoline pumps. Amish fire insurance is direct. If a barn burns down, it is often rebuilt by the members of the church community in one day, with wood provided by one of their sawmills. They don't have to set money aside for retirement. When the parents get old, they move into smaller quarters on the farm and are provided for. . . .
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> During the entire trip I observed more "appropriate technology" than I have ever seen since the A.T. movement began. I saw more of an application of a land ethic than I have seen anywhere else in the U.S. I saw more examples of "small is beautiful" in three counties than I have seen in three hundred counties across this land. Yet I never heard any of the phrases which are in the terminology of the alternative movement. . . . In a world with a shrinking energy pie, an Amish settlement would be an asset as a model of how to save the land and run agriculture and culture on sunlight.