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ON THE GREAT WITHDRAWAL

THERE seems no end to the writing of "challenging" books. Indeed, given a certain capacity for dramatic expression, it is probably easy to write them. For subject-matter one has only to look about. So many things have gone wrong with our lives and society—and so many other things threaten—that there is an embarrassment of riches for the writer of challenging books. The audience, moreover, is ready-made. It is not enormous, but substantial and growing—this audience of readers who know enough to be anxious and want to inform themselves in behalf of the several purposes of their lives, in some cases life itself. The books describe various engagements with the world, things that need doing, with accounts, sometimes, of what is required to get them done. They also instruct about the world, or some of it, for background and particulars of the tasks defined.

There is another sort of challenging book, or writing, which has greater generality because it speaks to a deeper anxiety, or even pain, yet only by virtual genius gains the same capacity to hold our attention. Among such writers Ortega y Gasset is pre-eminent. While Ortega sought and valued knowledge of the world, his fundamental inquiry was into the nature of the human being, the self. He, too, believed in engagement with the world, but not as a project for obtaining security. Security, he felt, was not a desirable goal, for the reason that the secure man is tempted—and usually succumbs—to stop struggling for self-understanding and recognition of his own distinctive destiny and for its fulfillment.

Ortega chose Goethe for his study of an artist and thinker whose life and work were reduced by an early security. Born in 1749, in comfortable circumstances, the German poet soon achieved fame with his romantic novel *The Sorrows of Werther*, and he was quite young when Duke Karl August invited him to come to Weimar and in effect, to enjoy a life of ease. The result was a comparative failure. In an essay published in *Die Neue Rundschau* in 1932, the centenary of Goethe's death, Ortega declared that "it is more than evident that Goethe's destiny was basically to soar and sing. He appeared on this planet with a mission—to be the German writer on whom it devolved to revolutionize his country's literature and, through it, the literature of the world." When he went to Weimar, Ortega says, Goethe was still a youth, the course of his life undecided.

> But Goethe accepts the Grand Duke's invitation. At this point I propose that you imagine a Goethe without Weimar—a Goethe thoroughly immersed in the life of the Germany of that epoch, a Germany all ferment, all rising sap, all open pores; a wandering, weather-beaten Goethe, with his material basis (economic and social) *insecure*, without a neat set of boxes filled with duly filed engravings, about which he perhaps never says anything interesting. In other words, the opposite of a Goethe enclosed at the age of twenty in the sterile flask of Weimar and magically desiccated into a *Geheimrat.*

Now comes the second of Ortega's principles of selfunderstanding (the first being, "I am myself and my circumstances"). He goes on:

> Life is our reaction to the basic insecurity which constitutes its substance. Hence it is an extremely serious matter for a man to find himself too much surrounded by apparent securities. Herein lies the cause of the regularly recurring degeneration of aristocracies. What a delight to humanity an insecure Goethe would have been, a Goethe distressed by his surroundings, forced to realize his fabulous inner potentialities!
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> At the moment when the heroic springtime of an authentic German literature begins to appear in that sovereign soul, Weimar isolates him from Germany, tears his roots from German soil, and transplants him to the humus-less flower pot of a Lilliputian court.

One need not knock over Goethe's statue in order to benefit from Ortega's analysis. Goethe remains great. In fact, to turn to some of his work would be to realize this, and to see, perhaps, that Ortega's concern is that he might have been much greater. "Everything that liberates our minds," Goethe said in *Maxims and Reflections,* "without at the same time adding to our resources of self-mastery is pernicious." Yet for all his insight, Ortega believed, Goethe evaded his destiny, that he remained, so to speak, an adolescent, a youth still playing with options, an uncommitted man. "Goethe," he says, "wants to remain . . . available." But life says to us:

> "It is not enough to act; you have to *make* your I, your absolutely individual destiny. You have to make up your mind irremediably. To live fully is to be something irrevocably." Whereupon Goethe, the great magician, tried to enchant life with the beautiful song of the other idea: symbolism. "True life is the *Urleben* which renounces (*entsagen*) subjecting itself to a determinate form," sang Wolfgang to his accusing heart.

Ortega goes to his point:

> Life consists in giving up the state of availability. Mere availability is the characteristic of youth faced with maturity. The youth, because he is not yet anything determinate and irrevocable, is everything potentially. Herein lies his charm and his insolence. Feeling that he is everything potentially he *supposes* that he is everything actually. The youth does not need to live on himself: he lives all other lives potentially—he is simultaneously Homer and Alexander, Newton Kant, Napoleon, Don Juan. He has *inherited* all these lives. The youth is always a *patrician,* always the "young master." The growing insecurity of his existence proceeds to eliminate possibilities, matures him. But try to picture to yourself a man whose youth surrounds him with conditions of abnormal security. What will happen? Probably he will never cease to be a youth, his tendency to remain "available" will be flattered and encouraged and finally fixed. . . . Such was Weimar for Goethe at that decisive period. Weimar made it easy for his youth to encyst, and he remained forever available. His economic future was solved for him at a single stroke, without anything in particular being demanded of him in exchange. Goethe became accustomed to floating on life—he forgot he was shipwrecked. Many of the activities which were destiny in him degenerated into hobbies. In the remainder of his life I do not find a moment of painful effort. And effort is only effort when it begins to hurt.

At the end of this essay, with the sudden turn of a gracious Spaniard, Ortega says: "It would now be proper to show how Goethe, who was unfaithful to his I, was precisely the man who taught us all to be true to ours," and he invites his German friends to undertake the task. In conclusion, he quotes a Goethean maxim, calling it a decisive initiation: "Free yourself from *what is superfluous* to yourself!"

This essay, "In search of Goethe from Within," which first appeared in English in America in the *Partisan Review* in 1949, is available in a Princeton University Press edition of *The Dehumanization of Art and Notes on the Novel* (paperback, 1968).

In another essay included in this book, "The Self and the Other"—again pursuing the self "from within"—Ortega compares human with animal life. He begins by remarking that the animal is totally absorbed in the surrounding externalities of its existence.

> The creature, in short, lives in perpetual fear of the world, and at the same time in a perpetual hunger for the things that are and appear in the world, in an ungovernable hunger which also discharges itself without any possible restraint or inhibition, just as its fear does. In either case it is the objects and events in its surroundings which govern the animal's life, which pull it and push it about like a marionette. It does not rule its own life, it does not live from *itself,* but is always alert to what is going on outside it, to what is *other* than itself.

Is not a human subject to the same harassing externalities, he asks—"surrounded by things that terrify him, by things that enchant him, and obliged all his life, inexorably, whether he will or no, to concern himself with them?"

> There is no doubt of it. But with this essential difference—that man can, from time to time, suspend his direct concern with things, detach himself from his surroundings, ignore them, and subjecting his

> faculty of attention to a radical shift—incomprehensible zoologically—turn, so to speak, his back on the world and take his stand inside himself, attend to his own inwardness or, what is the same thing, concern himself with himself and not with that which is *other,* with things. . . . of course, these two things, man's power of withdrawing himself from the world and his power of taking his stand within himself are not gifts conferred on man. I must emphasize this for those of you who are concerned with philosophy: they are not gifts conferred upon man. *Nothing that is substantive has been conferred upon man.* He has to do it all for himself.

In short, the capacity to reflect, to contemplate, to meditate, to evaluate and to plan is not something that flows through our being like a perfected instinct: we must seize the moments of reflective thought—they are few enough—and do our thinking with the support of will. We do not *have* to do it; we can easily drift and submit entirely to the "other." Yet if a man undertakes this stance within himself, achievement results.

Ortega waxes eloquent:

> Far from losing his own self in this return to the world he on the contrary carries his self to the *other,* projects it energetically and masterfully on things, in other words, he forces the *other*—the world—little by little to become himself. Man humanizes the world, injects it, impregnates it with his own ideal substance and is finally entitled to imagine that one day or other, in the far depths of time, this terrible outer world will become so saturated with man that our descendants will be able to travel through it as today we mentally travel through our own inmost selves—he finally imagines that the world, without ceasing to be the world, will one day be changed into something like a materialized soul, and, as in Shakespeare's *Tempest,* the winds will blow at the bidding of Ariel, the spirit of ideas.

Here, as the quotation from the *Tempest* suggests, Ortega is idealizing a future inhabited by fully developed human beings. He was well aware of quite opposite tendencies in the present, and spoke of what might be achieved in "the far depths of time." But let us note the fact that his conclusions about the working of human nature in these terms are in a sense empirical, based on a reflective study of himself and other humans. He finds in experience that effort is *required* in order to be what we are capable of being. Being human, then, is no providential endowment which proceeds without decision and determination—as we might say of instinct—but calls for continuous attention. We may often and for a time pursue a merely "zoological existence," but when granted a moment of repose, of uninvolvement, man, "making a gigantic effort, achieves an instant of concentration, enters into himself, that is, by great labor keeps his attention fixed upon the ideas that spring up within him, ideas which things have evoked and which have reference to the behavior of things, to what the philosopher will later call 'the being of things'."

> This inwardly directed attention, this stand within the self is the most anti-natural and ultra-biological of phenomena. It took man thousands upon thousands of years to educate his capacity for concentration a little—only a little. What is natural is to disperse himself, to divert his thought outward, like the monkey in the forest and in his cage in the zoo.

We have, then, potentially, this capacity for reflection and thought, yet it is far from well developed. We are not, Ortega says, immediately able to think in the way that fish are immediately able to swim. Had we this gift, we should know ourselves as thinking beings, in essence and in practice, but to suppose we know this now would be "a formidable and fatal error."

> Man is never sure that he will be able to carry out his thought—that is, in an adequate manner; and only if it is adequate is it thought. Or, in more popular terms: man is never sure that he will be right, that he will hit the mark. Which means nothing less than the tremendous fact that, unlike all other beings in the universe, man can never be sure that he is, in fact, a man, as a tiger is sure of being a tiger and the fish of being a fish.

Now comes Ortega's declaration of the very meaning of human evolution, quite apart from any biological process—indeed, it may be seen, as he sees it, as *anti*-biological:

> Far from thought having been bestowed on man, the truth is—a truth which I cannot now properly

> argue but can only state—that he has continually been creating thought, making it little by little, by dint of a discipline, a culture a cultivation, a millennial effort over many millennia, without having yet succeeded—far from it—in finishing his work. . . at this point in history he has only succeeded in forming a small portion and a crude form of what in the simple and ordinary sense of the word we call thought. And even the small portion gained being an acquired and not a constitutive quality, is always in danger of being lost, and considerable quantities of it have been lost, many times in fact, in the past, and today we are on the point of losing it again. To this extent, unlike all other beings in the universe, man is never surely *man;* on the contrary, *being* man signifies precisely being always on the point of not being man, being a living problem, an absolute and hazardous adventure, or, as I am wont to say: being, in essence, drama!
>
> Because there is drama only when we do not know what is going to happen, so that every instant is pure peril and shuddering risk. While the tiger cannot cease being a tiger, cannot be detigered, man lives in perpetual risk of being dehumanized. With him, not only is it problematic and contingent, whether this or that will happen to him, as it is with the other animals, but at times what happens to man is nothing less than *ceasing to be man.* And this is true not only abstractly and generically, but it holds for our own individuality. Each one of us is always in peril of not being the unique and untransferable *self* which he is. The majority of men perpetually betray this *self* which is waiting to be; and to tell the whole truth our personal individuality is a personage which is never completely realized, a stimulating Utopia, a secret legend, which each of us guards in the bottom of his heart. It is thoroughly comprehensible that Pindar resumed his heroic ethics in the well-known imperative: "Become what you are."

Turning to history, Ortega points out that our many physical and moral comforts and securities—what we call "civilization"—could escape or be taken from our hands and "vanish like phantoms." Indeed, today, the opponents of nuclear armaments and war continually point to this possibility. Ortega warns that history reveals innumerable retrogressions, decadences and degenerations, and that "nothing tells us that there is no possibility of much more basic retrogressions than any so far known, including the most basic of them all: the total disappearance of man as man and his silent return to the animal scale, to complete and definitive absorption in the *other."* The fate of culture, he goes on, "the destiny of man, depends upon our maintaining that dramatic consciousness ever alive in our inmost being, and upon our feeling, like a murmuring counterpoint in our entrails, that we are only sure of insecurity."

Earlier in this paper Ortega speaks of his two *bêtes noires*—idealism and progress. Both have a special meaning for him. The "idealism" of the time ignores that the end of thought is *action,* while "progress" means something that can be inherited and enjoyed without understanding how it was achieved and what must be done to maintain it. He by no means disbelieves in progress. But the typical progressivist believes, he says, "that humanity progresses, which is certain, but furthermore that it progresses necessarily."

> This idea anaesthetized the European and the American to that basic feeling of risk which is the substance of man. Because if humanity inevitably progresses, that is almost saying that we can abandon all watchfulness, stop worrying, throw off all responsibility, or, as we say in Spain, "snore away" and let humanity bear us inevitably to perfection and pleasure. Human history thus loses all the sinew of drama and is reduced to a peaceful tourist trip, organized by some transcendent "Cook's." Traveling thus securely toward its fulfillment, the civilization in which we are embarked would be like that Phaeacian ship in Homer which sailed straight to port without a pilot. This security is what we are now paying for. That, gentlemen, is one of the reasons why I told you that I am not a progressivist. That is why I prefer to renew in myself, at frequent intervals, the emotion aroused in my youth by Hegel's words at the beginning of his *Philosophy of History: "When we contemplate the past, that is, history,"* he says, *"the first thing we see is nothing but—ruins."*

Is there, then, in these parlous days, a case for reading, along with the challenging books about what is happening "out there," the works of writers like Ortega, who seek to understand what is happening to so many of us, *inside?* We can do little enough about the "other," including the threats in and to the human environment, and while we do what we can—because we must—would it not be a good idea to recognize and meet the challenge of thinking through the very meaning of our lives?

Suspend for a moment, Ortega says, "the action which threatens to distract us and make us lose our heads. . .suspend action for a moment so that we may withdraw into ourselves, review our ideas of the circumstances, and work out a plan of strategy." Happily, Ortega dared to speak to us in this unaccustomed way.

> Without a strategic retreat into the self, without vigilant thought, human life is impossible. Call to mind all that mankind owes to certain great withdrawals into the self! It is no chance that all the great founders of religions preceded their apostolates by famous retreats. Buddha withdrew to the forest; Mohammed withdrew to his tent, and even there he withdrew from his tent by wrapping his head in his cloak; above all, Jesus went apart into the desert for forty days. What do we not owe to Newton! Well, when someone, amazed that he had succeeded in reducing innumerable phenomena of the physical world to such a precise and simple system, asked him how he had succeeded in doing so, he replied ingenuously: *"Nocte dieque incubando,"* "turning them over day and night"—words behind which we glimpse vast and profound withdrawals into the self.

REVIEW
VICO: "PIONEER OF THINGS TO COME"

ONE of the minor mysteries of our time is the wide and enduring interest of scholars in the work of Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), the Neapolitan scholar who, only lately, has been recognized as the first modern philosopher of history. During the past ten or twenty years, book after book has been published about him. The scholars who specialize in Vico studies seem numbered in scores. They find that he has anticipated practically everybody in thinking about the human and social sciences and locate parallel after parallel in his work with present theories. In the latest volume of this sort, *Vico: Past and Present* (Humanities Press, 1981, $32.50), the editor, Georgio Tagliacozzo, provides an inventory of Vico's achievements:

> The reasons explaining Vico's unique power of attraction today—after over two centuries of almost total neglect—are several and overlapping. The basic ones are the progressive discredit of the Cartesian-positivistic approach in humanistic studies, and the emergence of viewpoints analogous to those which occupied Vico's mind in the most diverse fields of knowledge. When I wrote the preface for *Giambattista Vico: An International Symposium* in 1969, I listed examples of such analogies with aspects of Vico's thought: "philosophical pragmatism, linguistic philosophy, Gestalt psychology and many applications of the Gestalt concept, phenomenology, organismic biology, genetic and social psychology, cultural, philosophical and structural anthropology, certain trends of sociology and of the philosophy of history, the widespread anti-Cartesian attitude, and so on." This list—amply backed by Vichian literature—is still valid today (with slight changes), and indeed now requires the addition of a number of fields and disciplines presently in the forefront of humanistic studies: research on language in all its aspects, rhetoric, some trends in Western Marxism, structuralism, semiotics, literary criticism, and contemporary hermeneutics in its many varieties.

Despite the obscurity of some of these terms, there can be no argument with the editor's decision that "Vico is to be considered a *pioneer* of things to come, a precursor: a *pioneer* of a bold, and still viable, integrating vision of man and his culture."

Vico's most important anticipation—of John Dewey and numerous of other teachers—was in the idea of what and how we are able to know. The social world, he said—the world of men—is made by men, and that is the reason we can know our history. We can know what we do, what we make. This assumption enabled him to declare that history is a *science* with its own sort of certainties. How can we know about people long dead in the past? By the similitude found in ourselves, together with study of how they lived, what they said, of their customs and beliefs. Such knowledge, he admitted, is difficult, yet the power of the imagination may be equal to the task. He called this manner of study and research the "new science" (his most famous book was titled *Principi di una scienza nuova*).

Vico departed from the prevailing Humanist tradition in one important respect. Adopting the view of Lucretius in *De Rerum Natura* that the beginnings of human life on earth had been under "a brutish, savage and almost bestial condition," he argued against the humanistic concept of *prisca Theologia.* This idea is given in the contribution by Emanuele Riverso, who says:

> In few words, the concept of *prisca Theologia* proclaimed that the history of human wisdom and science was not a history of progress from lower and poorer states to higher and richer ones, but rather the history of a marvelous treasure of knowledge with which humanity had been presented by God in ancient times through some privileged men or superhuman beings. This gift, couched in spoken or written messages, was endowed with the power of refining, civilizing, dignifying and ennobling human beings by means of eternal truths and absolute moral rules.

This was a Christianized version of a more ancient pagan tradition (known to the West in Greek and Latin) "that humans had been taught the most important crafts and knowledge by Gods or half-gods or heroes, like Prometheus, Orpheus, Esculapius, etc." Vico decided, doubtless under the influence of Lucretius, that the legacy of antique knowledge was to be found in ancient languages—somewhat as Plato suggests in *Cratylus*—holding that "the knowledge and views embedded in the meanings of old Latin words was less the inquiry or meditation by remarkable philosophers, like Pythagoras, than the cultural and civil development of nations like the Ionians and Etruscans." However, Riverso remarks that "the general idea that lay at the basis of his plan was certainly a concept that paralleled the one of *prisca Theologia."*

Vico's "evolutionism" freed him from the mechanistic conceptions that were in formation during his time. Eugenio Garin says:

> In Vico as in Shaftesbury, according to Croce, one meets "something that appertains to the present and the future": and in both of them it was the new humanism, a philosophy of man constructed in answer to the failure, not only of the great dogmatic systems, but of the physical (scientific) constructions raised on foundations that were not critically justified, and surreptitiously imposed *a priori* on our conceptions of nature. It is precisely on the questioning of the mechanical conception of nature that the whole of eighteenth-century neo-humanism, with all its variety, is founded. . . . The very emphases that sometimes emerge from his [Vico's] work, of a later Renaissance and pre-Romantic vision of a cosmic life, are connected with the rejection of a mechanical universe from which life, the meaning of life, and man's ends and values, are completely banished.

Vico's discussion of "Poetic Wisdom," emphasizing the importance of metaphor in the development of language, recalls Owen Barfield's *Poetic Diction* (Wesleyan University Press, 1973) in which, speaking of ancient man, the author says:

> Men do not *invent* those mysterious relations between separate external objects, which it is the function of poetry to reveal. These relations exist independently, not indeed of Thought, but of any individual thinker. . . . The language of primitive men reports them as direct perceptual experience. The speaker has observed a unity, and is not therefore himself conscious of *relation.* But we, in the development of consciousness, have lost the power to see this one as one. Our sophistication, like Odin's, has cost us an eye; and now it is the language of poets, insofar as they create true metaphors, which must restore this unity conceptually, after it has been lost from perception.

Drawing on Vico's *New Science*, Robert J. Di Pietro (University of Delaware) says: "Humans are guided in their thinking processes by a 'poetic logic' which generates linguistic expression by extending references from what is known to what is not yet understood." He quotes from *New Science* for "the heart of Vico's theory of metaphor":

> All the metaphors conveyed by likenesses taken from bodies to signify the operations of abstract minds must date from times when philosophies were taking shape. The proof of this is that in every language the terms needed for the refined arts and recondite science are of musical origin.
>
> It is noteworthy that in all languages the greater part of the expressions relating to inanimate things are formed by metaphor from the human body and its parts and from the human senses and passions.

This contributor gives Vico's account of the imagination:

> When we think about inventors, we commonly ascribe to them the faculty of a "good" imagination. For Vico, the role of the imagination is much more clearly defined, in that it stands behind any rational act and any elucidation of logical principles. A strong imagination leads to clear logical thought as one of its consequences. Since the language which best serves the imagination is the poetic—the one relying largely on metaphor—we should expect productive inventors to be inclined to making metaphorical associations with the body and its senses at some early stage of the creative process.
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> The inventive mind, drawing heavily on the imagination, is naturally inclined to optimism. It believes that dreams can become realities and it refuses to wallow in criticism. As Verene (1977) has observed in his perceptive study of Vico's humanity, vision, *not* argumentation, leads to action, and vision depends on the productive imagination. The interrelation of vision and imagination is reflected in the many visual references that are found in creative scientific writing. Even the basic phraseology abounds with expressions relating to the sense of sight: "perceptions," "viewpoint," "as I see it," "a man

> of vision," "someone with foresight," "we see the light," "new horizons of science," and so on. Vision, to expand upon Verene's observation, is that capacity to "see beyond" the confusion and the mire of one's present state. All inventors and discoverers have this capacity, however they may express it metaphorically in their writings. . . . Creativity is not static in Vico's view, but is rather a becoming. The natural linguistic accompaniment to this becoming is rhetoric which fulfills a vital function in the ongoing definition of humanity.

Buford Rhea sees in Vico a pioneer of future sociology, remarking that in his view, "man is altruistic before he is selfish, so it is not the appearance of collective goals that requires explanation but, on the contrary, it is the emergence of individual goals, and indeed of individuality itself, that is so puzzling." The social development of humans is not by chance but guided by a kind of specieshood wisdom. Vico said "That which did all this was mind, for men did it with intelligence; it was not fate, for they did it by choice; not chance, for the results of their always so acting are perpetually the same."

In reading this book and the quotations from Vico, one must continually remind oneself that the author lived and wrote in the first years of the eighteenth century. This alone is enough to explain why so many thinkers of the present are going back to him.

COMMENTARY
NEW IMAGES FOR OLD

MASLOW'S account of the low-rating of human beings (see "Children") by both academic and Freudian psychology may go a long way to explain the typically uninspired behavior of the present. As he says, "You simply do not ask questions about ultimate human values if you are working in an animal lab." Many of us belong to a generation brought up believing that it is *normal* to be selfish and indifferent to welfare of others. And if generosity is a "reaction-formation," kindliness a "defense-mechanism," and love an illusion, it becomes natural to regard evidence or admiration of these qualities with suspicion. This outlook is supposed to be scientific, and therefore approved by the authorities of the times.

A thousand years ago, other doctrines prevailed, growing out of the intentions and policies assigned by medieval theologians to the Creator. In his history of the rise of *Rationalism in Europe*, W.E.H. Lecky describes the fate of souls condemned by the Deity to eternal damnation, suggesting that if man is made in the image of God, this might explain the brutish cruelties of the Dark Ages. Lecky said of this theology of terror:

> We may estimate the untiring assiduity with which the Catholic priests sought in the worst acts of tyranny, and in the dark recesses of their own imaginations, new forms of torture, to ascribe them to the Creator. . . . Men were told that the Almighty, by the fiat of his uncontrolled power, had called into being countless millions whom He knew to be destined to eternal, excruciating, unspeakable agony; that He placed millions in such a position that such agony was inevitable; that He had prepared their place of torment, and had kindled its undying flame; and that, prolonging their lives forever, in order that they might be forever wretched, He would make the contemplation of those sufferings an essential element of the happiness of the redeemed. . . . If you make the detailed and exquisite torture of multitudes the habitual objects of the thoughts and imaginations of men, you will necessarily produce in most of them a gradual indifference to human suffering, and in some of them a disposition to regard it with positive delight.

Eighteenth-century Atheism, by comparison, was a magnificent stride of progress! Yet its extremes in the present have produced a politics of terror. The warnings of Ortega and E. P. Thompson need closer attention.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
ON SELF-DISCOVERY

IN 1967 A. H. Maslow gave a talk (before members of the New England School Development Council) on "Some Implications of the Humanistic Psychologies"—a forthright statement of what he regarded as "a great revolution of thought, in the Zeitgeist itself: the creation of a new image of man and society and of religion and science." His paper is in *Conflict and Continuity,* a volume of reprints from the *Harvard Educational Review.* This view of the human being was for Maslow a reversal in familiar thinking, and therefore deserves attention here. "It is," he said, "the kind of a change that happens, as Whitehead said, once or twice in a century." Actually, it may even be more epoch-making—an aspect of the transformation in attitude and conception of knowledge which Willis Harman named "The New Copernican Revolution," representing a change from the cosmic outlook which had been centuries in the making. The advent of the humanistic psychologies, Maslow declared, "is not an *improvement* of something; it is a real change in direction altogether. It is as if we had been going north and are now going south instead."

He first examines the stage-setting of the change as found in the prevailing psychologies of the day. First is Behaviorism, which he identifies as the "experimental, mechanomorphic psychology," born from "the classical conception of science which comes out of astronomy, mechanics, physics, chemistry, and geology." It is, he said, the psychology which (in 1967) dominated in the psychology departments of our universities. He calls this "classical psychology" and comments briefly on its implications, then turns to the assumptions of psychoanalysis:

> Classical academic psychology has no systematic place for higher-order elements of the personality such as altruism and dignity, or the search for truth and beauty. You simply do not ask questions about ultimate human values if you are working in an animal lab.
>
> Of course, it is true that the Freudian psychology has confronted these problems of the higher nature of man. But until very recently these have been handled by being very cynical about them, that is to say, by analyzing them away in a pessimistic, reductive manner. Generosity is interpreted as a reaction formation against a stinginess, which is deep down and unconscious, and therefore somehow more real. Kindliness tends to be seen as a defense mechanism against violence, rage, and the tendency to murder. It is as if we cannot take at face value any of the decencies that we have in ourselves, certainly what I value in myself, what I try to be. . . . I once searched through the Freudian literature on the feeling of love, of wanting love, but especially of giving love. Freud has been called the philosopher of love, yet the Freudian literature contains nothing but the pathology of love, and also a kind of derogatory explaining-away of the finding that people do love each other, as if it could be only an illusion. Something similar is true of mystical or oceanic experiences: Freud analyzes them away.

The humanistic psychologists for whom Maslow speaks "reject entirely the whole conception of science as being value-free." As therapists they consider their work to be "helping the person to *discover* his Identity, his Real Self." He adds: "This doctrine of a Real Self to be uncovered and actualized is also a total rejection of the *tabula rasa* notions of the behaviorists and associationists who often talk as if *anything* can be learned, *anything* can be taught, as if the human being is a sort of passive clay to be shaped, controlled, reinforced, modified in any way that somebody arbitrarily decides."

For teachers with this outlook, "learning is extrinsic to the learner, extrinsic to the personality, and is extrinsic also in the sense of *collecting* associations, conditionings, habits, or modes of action."

> It is as if these were *possessions* which the learner accumulates in the same way that he accumulates keys or coins and puts them in his pocket. They have little or nothing to do with the actualization or growth of the peculiar, idiosyncratic kind of person he is.
>
> I believe this is the model of education which we all have tucked away in the back of our heads and which we don't often make explicit. In this model the teacher is the active one who teaches a passive person who gets shaped and taught and who is *given*

> something which he then accumulates and which he may then lose or retain, depending upon the efficiency of the initial indoctrination process, and of his own accumulation-of-fact process. I would maintain that a good 90% of "learning theory" deals with learnings that have nothing to do with the intrinsic self . . . nothing to do with its specieshood and biological idiosyncrasy. This kind of learning too easily reflects the goals of the teacher and ignores the values and ends of the learner himself. It is also fair, therefore, to call such learning immoral.

The job of the teacher, Maslow says, is rather "to help a person find out what's already in him rather than to reinforce him or shape him or teach him into a prearranged form, which someone else has decided upon in advance, *a priori." Self-knowledge,* he suggests, includes what we have in common with others, and also what is distinctively different or individual, and he adds:

> On the one hand I've talked about uncovering or discovering your idiosyncrasy, the way in which you are different from everybody else in the whole world. Then on the other hand I've spoken about discovering your specieshood, your humanness. As Carl Rogers has phrased it: "How does it happen that the deeper we go into ourselves as particular and unique, seeking for our own individual identity, the more we find the whole human species?" Doesn't that remind you of Ralph Waldo Emerson and the New England Transcendentalists? Discovering your specieshood, at a deep enough level, merges with discovering your selfhood.

Maslow speaks of the two kinds of learning—first the pieces and bits of information we learn in school through drill and repetition; and then, in contrast, what we learn about ourselves from experience: "who we are, what we love, what we hate, what we value, what we are committed to, what makes us feel anxious, what makes us feel depressed, what makes us feel happy, what makes us feel great joy." Recognizing this distinction, Maslow says, results in "a change in the whole picture of a teacher."

> If you are willing to accept this conception of two kinds of learning, with the learning-to-be-a-person being more central and more basic than the impersonal learning of skills or the acquisition of habits; and if you are willing to concede that even the more extrinsic learnings are far more useful, and far more effective if based on a sound identity, that is, if done by a person who knows what he wants, knows what he is, and where he's going and what his ends are, then you *must* have a different picture of the good teacher and of his functions.

What then is science, or the role of science in self-education? It represents the hard work of confirmation and consolidation, and is indispensable. Inspiration in learning may be regarded as coming from a peak experience—a sudden flash of insight, a moment of illumination. Science is the "follow-up work" of testing its promise. The "break-through" insight doesn't do the job all by itself.

> Not only for science but also for psychotherapy may we say that the process begins with an emotional-cognitive flash but *does not end there!* It is this model of science and therapy that I believe we may now fairly consider for the process of education, if not an exclusive model, at least an additional one.
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> We must learn to treasure the "jags" of the child in school, his fascination, absorptions, his persistent wide-eyed wonderings, his Dionysian enthusiasms. At the very least, we can value his more diluted raptures, his "interests" and hobbies, etc. They can lead to much. Especially can they lead to work, persistent, absorbed, fruitful, educative.

It seems appropriate to add here a comment by Wylie Sypher (*American Scholar,* Winter, 1967-68) on science and inspiration, in which he draws on Gaston Bachelard:

> The scientist must repeat his observation if it is to be verified. In scientific experience, "the first time doesn't count." By the time the observation is again confirmed, it is no longer new. In a marvelously poetic vein Bachelard remarks, "In scientific work we have first to digest our surprises." . . . The poet, then, has a privilege which the scientist, as scientist, must forego: the poet's world is forever new. His recognitions may be disturbing, for they are not yet crystalized into explanations. We hardly need be reminded of Keats's spatial experience in first reading Chapman's Homer:
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> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken.
>
> This first time the astronomer feels his wild surmise he is a poet, and the poetry in science is this instant of revelation or epiphany.

FRONTIERS

The Outspoken Admiral

AT the end of last January, on the eve of his eighty-second birthday, Admiral Hyman Rickover—at last compelled to retire from active duty in the Navy—told the Joint Economic Committee of Congress what he thought about the affairs of the nation, including his part in them. To a question from Senator William Proxmire, he said: "To increase the efficiency of the Department of Defense, you first have to abolish it. It's far too large." The following is from a UPI report in the *Santa Barbara* (Calif.) *News Press* for Jan. 29:

> Rickover said radioactivity is an inherent danger in nuclear power and warned that atomic weapons will be used in a future war because history showed that nations use whatever weapons are available to them. He said that both nuclear weapons and nuclear power should be outlawed.
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> "I think we'll probably destroy ourselves," he said. "I'm not proud of the part I played" in fostering the nuclear Navy, beginning with the launching of the first atomic submarine, the Nautilus, in 1958.

He got headlines, of course. No one, apparently, was much upset by what he said. After all, he is an old man and his opinions need not be taken seriously. But they should be, and not alone for his warning about nuclear war. His declaration had a deeper significance, in that it seemed more important to him to give consideration to ourselves and our habits and tendencies than to speculate or warn about what "the enemy" might do. His concern is with what is happening in and to the United States. In the case of this man, age has brought both perspective and the determination to say what he thinks.

A few large corporations, controlling vast resources, have become, he warned, "in effect another branch of government." Speaking of major defense contractors with whom he worked closely for years, he said:

> "Preoccupation with the so-called 'bottom line' of profit and loss statements, coupled with a lust for expansion, is creating an environment in which fewer businessmen honor traditional values. "Political and economic power," he added, "is increasingly being concentrated among a few large corporations and their officers—power they can apply against society, government, and individuals."

Early this year, in the Canadian quarterly, *Our Generation* (Vol. 15, No. 1), E.P. Thompson provided a broader analysis of the "logic" of nuclear weapons systems. He applies the tools of social psychology to all the nuclear powers. It used to be thought, Thompson says, that the arms race proceeds because "the leaders of each side reacted rationally to the behaviour of other side."

> This rationality is now challenged. Weapons innovation is self-generating. The impulse to "modernize" and to experiment takes place independently of the ebb and flow of international diplomacy, although it is given upward thrust by each crisis or by innovations by "the enemy." Weapons research evolves according to long waves of planning, and the weapons for the year 2,000 are now at the R & D (research and development) stage. . . . it is not clear to me that we have found a simple explanation for this incremental thrust in profit-taking (in the West) and in action-reaction (in the East). Weapons research, in both blocs, originates in bureaucratic decisions rather than out of the play of market forces. The state is always the customer: and, in market economies, the state guarantees the high—even arbitrary—profit return, which is passed on (often in hidden allocations), to the taxpayer.

These activities, Thompson proposes, produce an "Exterminist" outlook. He quoted Lord Zuckerman, who has said that the men in the laboratories, "the alchemists of our times," have succeeded in "creating a world with an irrational foundation, on which a new set of political realities has in turn had to be built." Nations can be transformed by such means. Thompson says:

> Superpowers which have been locked, for thirty years, in the postures of military confrontation increasingly adopt militaristic characteristics in their economics, their policy and their culture. What may have originated in reaction becomes direction. What is justified as rational self-interest by one power or the other becomes, in the collision of the two, irrational. We are confronting an accumulating logic of process.

Thompson quotes Emma Rothschild, who suggests that the military industries have become the "leading sector" as "a cluster of industries joined by a common objective and a common customer," with an expanding market and a high rate of profit, stimulating electronic development and related enterprises. Thompson notes:

> Arms-related industries have always received the first priority for scarce resources, including skilled manpower: the good conditions of work and pay attract "the most highly skilled cadres." In 1970, when arms expenditure had levelled off, in the United States one-quarter of all physicists, one-fifth of all mathematicians and engineers, were engaged in arms-related employment. Today's proportions are probably higher.

Thompson explains his contention:

> I am offering, in full seriousness, the category of "exterminism." By "exterminism" I do not indicate an intention or criminal foresight in the prime actors. . . . Exterminism designates these characteristics of a society—expressed, in differing degrees, within its economy, its polity and its ideology—which thrust it in a direction whose outcome must be the extermination of multitudes. The outcome will be extermination, but this will not happen accidentally (even if the final trigger is "accidental") but as the direct consequence of prior acts of policy. . . . As Wright Mills told us long ago, "the immediate cause of World War III is the preparation of it." . . . Exterminism is a configuration . . . whose institutional base is the weapons-system, and the entire economic, scientific, political and ideological support-system to that weapons-system—the social system which researches it, "chooses" it, produces it, polices it, justifies it, and maintains it in being. . . .
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> The need to impose assent on the public (the U.S. taxpayer, the Soviet consumer whose rising expectations remain unsatisfied) generates new resources to manage opinion. At a certain point, the ruling groups come to need perpetual war crisis, to legitimate their rule, their privileges and their priorities; to silence dissent; to exercise social discipline; and to divert attention from the manifest irrationality of the operation. They have become so habituated to this mode that they know no other way to govern.

This is a form of self-examination which lends weight to the declaration, last April, by Barbara Tuchman, that only a groundswell of public opinion can make disarmament possible.